
TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

Regular Meeting, August 18, 2016

Call to Order, Chairman West

The Transylvania County Planning Board met in regular session on Thursday, August 18, 2016 at 7:00pm in the County Commissioners Chambers. Members present were Chair Mike West, Maureen Copelof, Wayne Hennie, Daryle Hogsed, Kris Hovey, and Mack McNeely. Jackie Whitmire was absent (excused). Staff members present were Planning & Community Development Director Mark Burrows, County Planner Joy Fields, and Program Assistant Kalen Lawson. Also present were twenty citizens and Derrick McKissock of the Transylvania Times.

I. Welcome

II. Public Comment

- Scott Barnett, avid cyclist, asked if the Ecusta Trail will be discussed during the meeting and chose to view the review of the Comprehensive Plan before making comments.
- Mark Burrows asked Planning Board to allow comments during discussions of the Comprehensive Plan and they agreed.

III. Approval of Agenda

A motion was made by Maureen Copelof to approve the August 18, 2016 agenda, which was seconded by Wayne Hennie, and carried unanimously.

IV. Approval of Minutes (July 14, 2016)

A motion was made by Wayne Hennie to approve the minutes of the July 14, 2016 regular meeting. The motion was seconded by Daryle Hogsed and carried unanimously.

V. Subdivision Approvals and Updates

Joy Fields notified the Planning Board that sixteen exception plats and one 1-lot subdivision had been approved since July 15, 2016. Mack McNeely asked how long since a subdivision has been approved. Mark Burrows stated it has been several years since a large subdivision has been approved, noting there are still many empty lots in existing subdivisions.

VI. Old Business: Comprehensive Plan – Goals and Strategies

- Mike West noted this final draft of the plan is the culmination of two years of work.
- Mark Burrows noted the timeline to create the plan has been reasonable considering the amount of community input and the fact it was done in-house.
- Mark Burrows said Joy Fields will go through a presentation this evening which can also be used as the presentation of the plan to County Commissioners.
- Joy Fields gave a presentation (attached) giving an overview of the process to develop the plan and the plan itself.
- Mark Burrows noted the draft plan continues to be posted on-line for public viewing on the Planning & Community Development Department website.
- Mark Burrows stated that staff needs general guidance and feedback.
- Maureen Copelof liked the layout and found it an informative, well-illustrated and readable document.
- A citizen asked how influential the community survey was on the document versus individuals on planning board. She also wanted to know how representative the community survey was of residents. Mark Burrows gave a history of the community survey and its intention of being representative and inclusive. It was noted that door-to-door requests were made for those communities where there was a concern they may be under-represented. Advertising in the newspaper and on-line skip-ads were utilized. It was noted that the results of the community survey have been posted on-line on the Planning & Community Development Department website for citizens to review in detail. It was noted that the Planning Board also used Census data and other proven statistics in their decision making process. Joy Fields addressed survey questions outlining demographics of those who took the survey. Maureen Copelof detailed the outreach efforts for overall representation in the survey. Wayne Hennie stated the survey shaped the goals and objectives. Mike West stated approximately 8% of the county completed the survey. Kris Hovey noted the document is, by nature, a compromise that was hashed out in great detail over many hours and cannot have everything that everyone wanted.
- Mark Burrows noted that multi-use paths/trails (like the Ecusta Trail and others) are addressed in the plan under Focus Area 4, Objective 4, Strategy b, “partner with public and private entities to promote multi-use trails”. Mark Burrows noted this provides a broader scope for multi-use trails, rather than naming just one trail. Wayne Hennie suggested this point be brought up in County Commissioner presentation.
- Mark Burrows also noted that in Focus Area 1, the Bicycle Section mentions the Ecusta Trail by name and also highlights the regional priority trail between Mills River and Pisgah Forest.
- A citizen expressed a concern that there has been mixed messages and inconsistency from Planning Board regarding the Ecusta Trail. She referred to Planning Board comments stating a lack of support for the Ecusta Trail from the May 2016 Planning Board meeting. She reiterated that the Community Survey showed overwhelming support for the Ecusta Trail. She expressed concern over the apparent disconnect between the Planning Board’s stance and the request of the community. She also pointed out that the Ecusta Trail would serve many more people than just bicyclists. Mike West pointed out Watco hasn’t given up the line. Mark Burrows stated that the current strategy in the Comprehensive Plan was intentionally broad and general – including not just the Ecusta Trail, but multi-use trails in general. Mark Burrows noted that if the Ecusta Trail project does go forward, the Comprehensive Plan will show county support for grants. Mack McNeely’s perspective was

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that jobs are the priority and he is not ready to give up the infrastructure of the railroad.

Kris Hovey noted the final decision on the rail line is up to its owner. Mark Burrows referred to the Infrastructure Section of the Comprehensive Plan noting that section also supports the bike industry. He noted the county is working with NC DOT to provide wider shoulders for cyclists on roads that are being improved.

- A citizen noted that the railroad used to go up to Lake Toxaway around forty years ago. Another citizen asked about the City of Brevard's multi-use path system and Mark Burrows noted it is in the City of Brevard's planning jurisdiction.
- A citizen asked if the Planning Board understood that there would need to be an active approach to build the Ecusta Trail or other trail and noted a *Transylvania Times* article. Mike West stated that Watco still owns property. Mark Burrows stated the strategy in the plan is to "support" the development of multi-use trails – it is up to County Commissioners how it would take place. Mark Burrows noted that there are groups trying to make the Ecusta Trail happen now.
- A citizen stated her appreciation for the Planning Board's hours and work. She stated that lack of a zoning plan from the Planning Board is short-sighted and that the county misses out on attracting the right businesses to our county over the lack of zoning.
- Mark Burrows gave an overview of next steps to finalize the plan and asked if there were any other changes the Planning Board would like to make before submitting to County Commissioners who would then have public hearings before adopting the plan.
 - The Under Construction sections will be moved into an appendix (planning board approved).
 - Mack McNeely asked about the stated size of Gorges State Park on Page 21, and Joy Fields explained how the acreage was figured and noted it included easements. Joy Fields is working with Gorges State Park to confirm the accuracy.
 - Mack McNeely asked if the water resources sentence on Page 22 should say "Eastern Continental Divide", and Joy Fields agreed and will make the change.
 - Mack McNeely asked to change "low pressure" to "low flow" on Page 14 in regard to water wells and Joy Fields will make change.
 - Maureen Copelof said she found some grammatical corrections and will give her notes to Joy Fields.
- Wayne Hennie asked Joy Fields if his comments he had sent earlier in the week in regard to the appendices were included. Joy Fields reviewed what was incorporated from his comments.
- Mark Burrows thanked the Planning Board, Joy Fields, Kalen Lawson and the active community citizens for their support and efforts.
- Mark Burrows directed those interested in reading the plan go to the Planning & Community Development Department website.
- Daryle Hogsed made a motion to approve the draft plan with aforementioned changes, which was seconded by Maureen Copelof. Kris Hovey asked to amend the motion to include that Staff will present the plan to the County Commissioners. Mark Burrows suggested the plan be presented jointly with staff and Planning Board. Kris Hovey withdrew his amended motion and the original motion was approved unanimously.

VII. New Business:

A. Planning Director's Update by Mark Burrows

- Mark Burrows stated that he and Joy Fields will be attending the American Planners Association (APA) Conference in Asheville in September and that Joy Fields will also attend the NC Bicycle Pedestrian Conference.
- Bike/Ped Grant update
- The September 15, 2016 regular meeting of the Planning Board will be held in the Community Services Building Conference Room.
- On September 20th at 7:00pm there will be a screening of the 1916 flood documentary, "Come Hell or High Water" with a panel discussion to follow. Mark Burrows invited Planning Board members to attend, noting that staff is responsible for floodplain management in the county.

B. Other

- none

VIII. Public Comments

- Dawn Rouse noted there seems to be misconceptions about the Ecusta Trail and its place in the plan. Some other citizens had given her letters to pass along to the planning board and she gave them to Mark Burrows (attached). She said she now understands the Ecusta Trail was not taken out completely. She noted she appreciates the Planning Board's hard work and time.
- Jackie Hovey thanked the Planning Board members for all their hard work and especially wanted to thank Jackie Whitmire who should be honored for her extra efforts. She also thanked Mark Tooley for his input as a previous board member. Mark Burrows noted that her sentiments are shared by all.

IX. Planning Board Member Comments

- Kris Hovey applauded everyone's efforts on the compromise document that was thoroughly discussed at length with a positive end result.
- Mack McNeely shared that he was impressed with the resulting plan after thinking back over the last two years and remembering all the outreach to the community and the debates among the board. He noted that disagreement was helpful for plan, but most items were agreed upon together.
- Maureen Copelof stated the strength of board is in its diversity and many viewpoints represented. She is happy with this document that can lead the county to meet its vision and future. She expressed appreciation to everyone who gave input, found it a good team effort and noted the final decisions were better because of the debates that led to consensus.
- Daryle Hogsed stated it had been a pleasure to be part of this process. He encouraged everyone to read plan and found it to be an excellent resource to better understand this county and its different aspects. He thanked all involved citizens, staff and fellow board members. He found the plan a very good document, attractive and enjoyable read. He then encouraged citizens to stay involved.

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- Mike West thanked staff and everyone involved, noting everyone's tremendous work. He stated there has been give and take and that the plan reflects the diversity of board and county. He noted it had been an open process, thanked the community and recognized certain citizens that have given much of their time and had attended so many planning board meetings. He noted he appreciated the debates.
- Wayne Hennie agreed with all previous comments. He stated the journey has been interesting, going through data, and he has learned a lot. In the end, it is about the citizens of county and what serves them best. He stated he had enjoyed the process. He announced that he will ask County Commissioners to accept his resignation from the Planning Board and he thanked everyone.

X. Adjourn

There being no further discussion, a motion was made by Kris Hovey to adjourn, seconded by Daryle Hogsed and carried unanimously.

MINUTES APPROVED



Mike West, Chair



Kalen Lawson, Recording Secretary