

**TOWN OF BOONE
COMMUNITY APPEARANCE COMMISSION
MEETING MINUTES
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 22, 2022, 5:30 P.M.**

COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Vice-Chair Paige Smith, Barrett Conner, Kendell Holshouser, and Evan Warren

TOWN COUNCIL LIASION MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Pro-Tem Edie Tugman and Dalton George

STAFF MEMBERS PRESENT: Jane Shook, Director of Planning and Inspections, Jessica Mitchell, Long-Range/Special Projects Planner; and Brandon Wise, Environmental Planner

OTHERS PRESENT: Benjamin Baldwin and Paul Stahlschmidt

CALL TO ORDER

Vice-Chair Paige Smith called to order the Boone Community Appearance Commission meeting held via WebEx, a video conferencing software on Tuesday, November 22, 2022, at 5:32 p.m.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Member Warren made a motion, seconded by Vice-Chair Smith to adopt the agenda as presented.

Vote: Aye – All
Nay – None
The motion passed.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Member Conner made a motion, seconded by Member Warren to approve the October 25, 2022 meeting minutes as presented.

Vote: Aye – All
Nay – None
The motion passed.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Mitchell noted there were two people who had contacted the Planning and Inspections office that wanted to watch the online meeting. No individuals requested the opportunity to speak during public comment.

PLANNING AND INSPECTIONS PRIMER

Ms. Jessica Mitchell, Long-Range/Special Projects Planner explained that at the last meeting, she had reviewed the material in the sections of Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) Article 25, 31, material for Appendix D Downtown Local Historic District guidelines, material in Appendix C that relates to the standards in Article 31.

Ms. Mitchell continued the primer presentation beginning on packet page forty-eight through fifty-four regarding the Comprehensive Plan and the Urban Forestry Management Plan. She reminded members that the UDO and the Comprehensive Plan are related and the regulatory language for them is in Article One.

Ms. Mitchell reviewed the following sections of the Comprehensive Plan including policies and actions, Section 2.3, Section 2.1.1., Section 2.1.2., Section 2.1.3., Section 2.2.1., Section 2.2.3, and Section 2.2.5. These portions of the Comprehensive Plan related to The Community, The Economy, Infrastructure, and environment-related Policies and Actions. The other portion of the presentation was regarding the Urban Forestry Management Plan.

Chair Caroline Knight joined the meeting at approximately 5:39 p.m.

Ms. Mitchell noted that Ms. Jane Shook, Director of Planning and Inspections and Mr. Brandon Wise, Environmental Planner were attending the meeting and they are available if needed to answer questions.

As Ms. Mitchell read the from Comprehensive Plan, Section 2.3., she explained that is an example of how the UDO and the Urban Forestry Plan are related. She said that sign policies and standards are currently being reviewed and updated by the Planning Department. She said the Planning Staff has prepared a text amendment for signs and will present it at the next joint Public Hearing and Planning Commission meeting.

Ms. Mitchell explained that while the Comprehensive Plan is being updated the Planning Staff and Board members still rely on these policies and actions statements. She pointed out that the update process also involves other Town departments besides the Planning Department such as the Public Works and Public Utilities Departments.

Ms. Mitchell referenced Section 2.3.1., Section C.4 relating to the Community Appearance Commission, and she said as we move forward with the Comprehensive Plan process, we will work together to figure out ways to have active participation.

Council Liaison Edie Tugman asked Ms. Mitchell if the CAC would be involved in the upcoming sign ordinance text amendment. Ms. Mitchell said that Ms. Shook had been working on the text amendment for signs and she was not sure of the CAC's involvement in the sign text amendment. Council Liaison Tugman said she asked because if the CAC had an interest in seeing something move through the public hearing process, the sign text amendment will be discussed at next week's public hearing. Ms. Shook responded and said that the CAC is welcome to attend the public hearing, and that it is a great opportunity for the CAC to see how the process works. She noted that there will also be some proposed map amendments to be discussed as well.

Ms. Shook explained that the proposed changes to the sign ordinance text amendment was to bring the language into compliance with current case law for temporary signs and the sign ordinance was reorganized. She said the sign ordinance standards did not change. As a result, there was not a lot of input needed from any of the boards on the proposed changes to the sign text amendment.

Council Liaison Tugman and Ms. Shook agreed that the CAC could benefit by attending the public hearing, which will have both text and map amendment cases on the agenda. Ms. Shook confirmed the public hearing will be a virtual meeting. Ms. Mitchell said she could point out to the CAC where the public hearing information can be found later in this meeting.

Ms. Mitchell discussed Section 2.3.2., Subsection D.2 talks about supporting the Town's tree preservation standards. She noted that this topic was previously discussed along with the residential tree cutting in the Town. She said that the Planning Staff will continue to monitor the decisions of the General Assembly regarding the tree preservation standards.

Ms. Mitchell talked about Section 2.3.2, Subsection E, and that the standards in Article 25 give the guidance for new development, redevelopment and rehabilitation of structures and sites in the community. She said there is also some emphasis on keeping our neighborhoods as a major housing source and making sure we have a livable community, as well as evaluating the roads and street systems, and ensuing that development does not expose residents to harmful effects of incompatible development or environmental hazards.

Ms. Mitchell talked about Section 2.3.3 Subsection D regarding innovative and flexible land planning and development practices are encouraged to create livable developments. Ms. Mitchell explained that in Section 2.3.3, Subsection D.1 we continue to evaluate opportunities in the zoning ordinance for flexible designed and located single-family and multi-family residential developments. She said that housing is going to be a big component for the Planning Staff to consider while updating the Comprehensive Plan. She said there has been continued interest to make sure that there is a focus on housing in the Town of Boone. Ms. Mitchell explained that in Section 2.3.3, Subsection D.2 we are to continue our relationships with Appalachian State University departments to work together on affordable housing, infill development, neighborhood livability standards, design standards and multi-family development.

Ms. Mitchell talked about Section 2.3.4, Subsection A., and how public involvement shall be encouraged in decisions concerning land use and development. She said that the Planning Staff is aware that there are other community groups interested in housing and the Planning Staff has been a part of those meetings. She concluded that the Planning Staff posts a meeting packet for the public to view and mails out adjoining property owner letters to notify neighboring properties regarding what is being proposed for a property. She said it is a good policy and action statement for the Planning Staff to continue to give updates on board meetings and wanting the active participation from the boards. Ms. Mitchell talked about Section 2.3.4, Subsection D. regarding special committees, advisory panels, educational forums, public workshops, leadership seminars, and town meetings. She said the Planning Staff continues to try to enhance the effectiveness of citizen involvement in community planning and action.

Ms. Shook explained that regarding public involvement the Council has adopted standards in some of our processes that require certain developments to have neighborhood meetings prior to application to improve the communication with the applicant.

Ms. Mitchell reviewed Comprehensive Plan Sections 2.1.1., 2.1.2., 2.1.3., 2.2.1., 2.2.3, and 2.2.5. – Environment Related Policies and Actions.

Ms. Mitchell referred to Section 2.2.5.A., she said that the Public Works and Utilities departments are involved with the public sewage collection and treatment facilities.

Ms. Mitchell talked about Section 2.2.5.C. She said that Mr. Brandon Wise, Environmental Planner, would be involved in the development activities in the 100-year floodplain. She said there are different environmental regulations throughout the state and UDO regulations to follow as well as the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Wise referred to Section 2.2.5.A and Section 2.2.5.C., regarding development on ridgetops, excessive slope development, and floodplain development. He pointed out that the UDO standards match up with the Comprehensive Plan for floodplain, landscape, grading and erosion control. He said the Planning Staff is going to discourage development on excessive slopes; additionally, he explained that at the same time, the excessive slopes can be developed to a certain extent, if the developer can meet the requirements of the UDO. He said if a developer cannot meet the requirements of the UDO for excessive slopes, the Comprehensive Plan will strongly discourage this type of development.

Council Liaison Tugman pointed out that the Village at Meadowview Apartments located in Boone is an example of steep slope development. She said that it is important to be aware of this type of development. Mr. Wise said those apartments also fall under the Viewshed regulations. He explained that Viewshed is anything you can see while standing on a major corridor like King Street, Highway 105, Highway 321 or Highway 421. He said if you look up towards the mountains, there are protections above the upper areas to make the developments as less visible as possible from these major corridors. Ms. Shook described the Viewshed regulations, and confirmed that the Viewshed does include , Highway 105, Highway 321 or Highway

421. She said it is called a presumed Viewshed and within this area it is a property-by-property evaluation for development.

Ms. Mitchell talked about Section 2.2.5, E., and noted that the Comprehensive Plan is encouraging development, which preserves natural features on a site including existing topography, streams and significant trees and vegetation and it shall be reflected in the Town's Development Standards. Ms. Mitchell talked about Section 2.2.5.E. 1., about innovative zoning techniques such as density bonuses and the transfer of development rights in exchange of preservation of environmental features.

Ms. Mitchell talked about Section 2.2.5. O., and reminded the CAC they had previously discussed native species when reviewing Appendix C. She noted that in the past, the CAC had been asked to review bird and bee health, and she thought the CAC may review this topic again in the future to look at, for example, pollinators or wildlife. Ms. Mitchell reviewed Section 2.2.5.P., which is to ensure that landscape and pesticide management practices are minimize impacts to the environment including impacts to pollinators. Ms. Mitchell reviewed Section 2.2.5.P.1., which is to create least toxic pesticide management plan for use by the Town which also can be distributed to the community as an education tool. Ms. Mitchell reviewed Section 2.2.5.P.2., which to create a landscape management plan for the Town using best management practices, to revise the UDO to include pollinator-friendly plant material, support environmentally friendly, light industries and alternative transportation methods through planned systems of pedestrian ways, bikeways, greenways and to encourage other similar facilities.

Ms. Mitchell reviewed the Urban Forestry Management Plan. She noted that it was adopted in 2009 and is available on the Town of Boone website, and that Planning Staff will consider updating this plan during the Comprehensive Plan process. She said the current plan guides developments for preservation and expansion of the existing tree canopy in Boone. She explained about public property in which the Town is to be responsible for the publicly owned areas, and private land owners are responsible for their properties. She said the Planning Staff can conduct a tree inventory analysis and assess tree canopy cover and they will manage and update the plan as different data is received. She said that the Planning Staff had received planimetric data that Mr. Wise would be reviewing along with other Town departments.

Ms. Mitchell reviewed the maintenance, care and management of trees and said explained that there is section in Appendix C on these topics which include, but are not limited to, routine pruning, fertilization, irrigation, insect and disease control and mulching.

Ms. Mitchell noted that there are methods provided by the Town to increase urban forestry canopy cover with amendments to the UDO and Town Code that depend on legislation decisions for tree preservation.

In summary, Ms. Mitchell noted that the CAC will be involved from time to time with new tree and vegetation projects from time to time. She asked them to review the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Wise pointed out that the Urban Forestry Management Plan is a type of comprehensive plan solely for trees and publicly maintained trees as well as the ordinance for these trees. He said Planning Staff are working on updates to the plan that have occurred over the years. He pointed out that the tree maintenance is done by the Town arborist.

Council Liaison Tugman talked about how private trees encroach onto public highways and roads in the Town including impacting the sight triangles. She said that those trees have to be pruned by the Town to make the roadways safe for public transportation. She thought it would be interesting to see how this process would be incorporated into the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Wise pointed out that some tree cutting by the Town is done based on the requirements of the utility companies. Ms. Shook said the Town does their best to ensure that the line of sight is maintained in the sight triangles on Town Streets. She noted that occasionally the

Town has to cut a tree down for the greater good, and she exemplified that the Town recently planted around 300 to 400 trees.

Council Liaison Dalton left the meeting at approximately 6:24 p.m.

Ms. Shook asked Mr. Wise to explain the importance of monitoring the tree canopy and the benefits that we get from it. Mr. Wise said the most visible benefit is the beautification of the Town. He said from a scientific point of view there are environmental benefits like more green space. He said there has been research on the socio-economic and community benefits that include the loss of CO2 in the air. He added that the more trees we have the better the tree coverage would be in the entire Town. He said the Planning Staff needs the CAC to help them figure out the best way to get better tree coverage. Ms. Shook said we can monitor the tree canopy on Town property, but the question is how do we monitor and regulate the rest of the tree canopy that affects the Town.

Ms. Shook said that Mr. Wise has been working on measuring how the Town has done on their tree canopy since the last time it was measured in 2009. She said that Mr. Wise will report the results of his work to the CAC and to Council.

Ms. Mitchell showed the CAC where they could find the Comprehensive Plan and the Urban Management Plan on the Town website.

DISCUSSION ON CAC TASKS

Ms. Mitchell explained that the Planning Staff had recommended that the CAC review the existing Comprehensive Plan and the Urban Forestry Management Plan. She told the CAC that this Primer Presentation was an introduction for reviewing these plans. Secondly, she told the CAC to continue to consider and take mental notes of the different design components that they might see in the Town of Boone or other jurisdictions they might visit. She asked them to look up the appearance standards of that particular area to see if there are some design components that are of particular interest, and it might be used to incentivize architectural creativity.

Ms. Mitchell explained that in 2023 the CAC would need to begin to look at their work plan, which will be reviewed and approved by Council. She said as the Comprehensive Plan is worked on the Council will give more specific direction to the CAC for their work plan.

Ms. Mitchell explained to the CAC that the Planning Staff and Council have been participating in work sessions to review the Comprehensive Plan. She said in the next work sessions, the Planning Staff has invited business owners to attend, which is the beginning of the stakeholder meetings. She said there will be continued meetings with Council that are related to the Comprehensive Plan throughout 2022 and 2023. She said that the Planning Staff can discuss with Council at one of the next work sessions or at the Planning Retreat about the CAC tasks related to the comprehensive plan. She explained that the Planning Retreat is held each year around mid-January with the Council and the Planning Staff.

OTHER DISCUSSION

Ms. Mitchell said that the CAC had previously decided that their November 22, 2022 meeting would be virtual because of the holiday and they would cancel their December 27, 2022 meeting. She stated they would discuss again in early January how they wanted to have their future meetings whether it would be held virtually or in person. Chair Knight suggested that the CAC wait until January to discuss how they would like to conduct their future meetings because currently they do not know what their tasks will be. She noted that she would like to have the option of having virtual or in person meetings.

Ms. Mitchell pointed out that the January CAC meeting is scheduled for January 24th. She suggested emailing the CAC the week of January 9 to poll the CAC to determine which format they would like to proceed with for their future meetings. Chair Knight agreed that the week of January 9 would be enough time for the CAC to determine how they would like to proceed with their meetings.

In summary, Ms. Mitchell said that in January the Planning Staff will have more information for the CAC regarding their work plan.

ADJOURNMENT

Vice-Chair Smith made a motion, seconded by Member Holshouser to adjourn the meeting at 6:43 p.m.

Vote: Aye – All
Nay – None
The motion passed.

Paige Smith, Vice-Chair

Marlene Crosby, Board Secretary