

**MINUTES – WORKSHOP/RETREAT
BOONE TOWN COUNCIL
January 22, 2020**

CALL TO ORDER

Town Council members in attendance: Rennie Brantz-Mayor, Loretta Clawson-Mayor Pro Tem, Sam Furgiuele, Nancy LaPlaca, Dustin Hicks, and Connie Ulmer (arrived at 9:11 a.m.)

Planning & Inspections Staff in attendance: Jane Shook-Director of Planning & Inspections, Stacey Miller-Deputy Director/Chief Building Inspector, Marty Little-Senior Planner, Brian Johnson-Urban Design Specialist, Christy Turner-Senior Planner, and Brenda Henson-Administrative Support Specialist

Other Town Staff in attendance: John Ward-Town Manager

Legal Counsel in attendance: Allison Meade-Town Attorney

Mayor Brantz called the meeting held at 1500 Blowing Rock Road to order at 9:09 a.m. and introductions were made.

PLANNING AND INSPECTIONS UPDATE

Jane Shook began by explaining the organization of the Planning & Inspections Department as outlined in the meeting packet.

Training

Stacey Miller addressed the issue of training for building inspectors. He noted there were a lot of requirements that had to be met in order to become an inspector in the State of North Carolina. Mr. Miller explained that there were three levels of certification for inspectors, with five trades for inspectors to become certified in: building, electrical, fire, mechanical/gas, and plumbing, with each trade requiring 6 hours of continuing education each year. Ms. Shook added that the goal was to have all of the building inspectors at a Level 3 as soon as they were able to complete those levels in the time frames set forth by the State.

Mayor Brantz asked if there was a required number of inspectors that a town the size of Boone had to have. Mr. Miller replied there was no required number and noted that towns were only required to have an inspections department that could perform inspections within 72 hours and do permitting.

Ms. Shook stated there was other certifications required for employees other than building inspectors. She noted that Brian Johnson was a Certified Floodplain Manager, a Certified Arborist, a Certified Municipal Specialist Arborist, and would be attending upcoming training to become a Certified Profession in Erosion and Sedimentation Control. Ms. Shook stated these certifications required a lot of training on an annual basis with conferences and on-line training. She stated that Mr. Miller would be working toward becoming a Certified Zoning Official in the coming year, which would allow him to become more familiar with the zoning side of the Department. Ms. Shook noted that other staff members, herself included, attended workshops and training to stay up to date on best practices and legislative updates.

Programs

Ms. Shook outlined the programs that Planning & Inspections oversees such as; long range planning, text and map amendments, subdivisions, annexations, small area plans, Arbor Day, Bee City, Community Rating System, Earth 1st Friday, Tree City, Watch For Me NC, zoning and building permits, special use permits, variances, appeals, Neighborhood Conservation Districts, Caring For Our Neighborhoods, and UDO and Town Code enforcement.

Ms. Shook asked Mr. Johnson to explain the Community Rating System. Mr. Johnson stated the Town participated in the Community Rating System (CRS) program through FEMA in an effort to help lower flood insurance rates for Town residents. He noted that the Town was currently at a Class 7 which reflected a 15% discount for flood insurance through the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP). Mr. Johnson stated there was approximately \$60,000,000 of flood insurance in the town which would create a significant savings with the 15% discount. He

noted that the Town was informally reviewed on an annual basis and reviewed formally every five years in order to make sure the Town was keeping up with the standards. Mr. Johnson stated that at some point he would like for the Town to try to obtain a Class 6 rating, which they were not far from. He noted that a Class 6 rating would reflect a 20% discount for flood insurance. Mr. Johnson explained that the better rating you tried to obtain, the more onerous the requirements and he felt staffing to keep up with those requirements could be an issue, however he would like to see a Class 6 rating in the future. Ms. Shook added that the Town got points for activities they did that were in compliance with the CRS manual and the more points the Town obtained the better their rating.

Zoning Map

Ms. Shook explained the zoning map, noting the different zoning districts and overlays, as well as the percentages of property in each zoning district as outlined in the meeting packet. Mr. Ward noted that the Town had a very high percentage of non-taxable areas.

General Process

Ms. Shook reviewed the general process for cases going before boards and permit application submittals, outlining the steps taken to process each from the time of submittal to the end of the case or project. These processes are fully outlined in the meeting packet.

Team Zones & 2019 Code Enforcement Actions

Mr. Miller explained that building inspectors and planners work together as teams on projects and each team has a designated area that they cover. A team zone map is located in the meeting packet.

Mr. Miller noted there had been a total of 137 enforcement actions taken in 2019 including sign investigations, stop work orders, occupancy investigations, minimum housing investigations, building code violations, condemnations, neighborhood parking stickers, and other miscellaneous investigations.

Boards & Commissions

Ms. Shook stated that Planning & Inspections was responsible for staffing and related work associated with the Board of Adjustment, Community Appearance Commission, Historic Preservation Commission, Planning Commission, and Sustainability Committee. She noted that Planning & Inspections also provided staff and assistance to Town Council, the Transportation Committee, the Alternative Transportation Committee, and any other board as needed. Ms. Shook noted that the Board of Adjustment currently had no term limits but noted that Council had expressed a desire to implement them. She stated this item was on the P&I Work Plan. Ms. Shook noted she would like for Town Council to consider the possibility of the Board of Adjustment going back to monthly meetings instead of having meetings every other month. Ms. Shook reviewed the membership, cases, and activities of each board that Planning & Inspections staffs.

Council Member Furgiuele stated he thought that language in 160D required the Community Appearance Commission to have seven members so they may not be able to decrease the membership of the CAC to five members like they had previously planned. Ms. Shook noted that Town Council currently participated as voting members of the CAC because there were four vacant positions on the Commission.

Ms. Shook stated the UDO currently required the Historic Preservation Commission to have seven members with two of those being Council members. In order to decrease the membership number to five for HPC a text amendment would be required to remove Council members from the membership number.

2018/2019 Permit Comparison

Ms. Shook stated that Planning & Inspections received approximately 300 more permit applications in 2019 than in 2018. She felt the difference was due to the fact that a large apartment complex applied for separate permits to change out HVAC units and water heaters in each of their apartments. Ms. Shook noted that project values were higher in 2019 due to several large ASU projects. She stated that the number of inspections also increased. Ms. Shook stated there were very few major developments in the pipeline and cautioned that 2020 permit numbers may drop significantly. She stated that most of the large projects were currently under construction and would remain under construction for 1-2 years.

P&I Needs, Concerns, Legislative Updates

Ms. Shook stated the Department had a critical need for time to work on the website, forms, brochures, and file maintenance. She noted there was not enough time in a day for staff to accomplish the housekeeping type tasks as well as maintain the daily work flow. Ms. Shook stated that staff wanted to take care of the desires of the Council but asked if P&I could be given a little time to catch up on some of these other items.

Ms. Shook stated she also needed to get some direction regarding food trucks, incidental structures, home occupations, and temporary mobile classrooms. She felt the Ordinance needed to provide more guidelines for these uses. Ms. Shook stated that temporary mobile classroom regulations were originally designed for the hospital but there had been a growing need for temporary mobile classrooms for the school system as the town grew. She noted that temporary mobile classrooms were currently limited to three years and asked if Council would be willing to consider extending that time limit for educational uses. Mr. Ward felt that the Town did need to try to help the school system with this issue but cautioned that regulations should be written tight enough so that the extended time limit would apply only to the public school system. Mr. Ward noted that Hardin Park School's temporary mobile classroom was nearing its expiration but the need for the classroom had not gone away. Ms. Shook stated that this issue would need to be addressed before the fall of the year so the school could still have their classes.

Top 4 Priorities

Ms. Shook noted that the top four priorities assigned to Planning & Inspections by Town Council were the Downtown, parking, R3/R4, and stormwater.

2019 NC Legislation Related to Planning and Development Regulation

Ms. Shook explained that statute 160D took former statutes 153A county and 160A town and merged them together and these statutes will be effective in January, 2021 so municipalities will have one year to come into compliance. Ms. Shook provided Council members with a handout entitled "G.S. Chapter 160D Checklist of Changes to Local Ordinances, Policies, and Practices". She noted that 160D would affect more than just Planning and would affect the Town as a whole. Ms. Shook felt that 160D would have to be at the top of the P&I Work Plan.

Council Member Furguele felt there were a huge number of ambiguities in 160D that could possibly involve litigation. He felt this change would require a lot of work and time and would be ongoing. Council Member Furguele stated he did not think the Checklist of Changes covered everything.

Mr. Ward noted that P&I's Work Plan already contained a year's worth of work with nothing else added to it so, with the State legislature changing, the Work Plan would have to be reprioritized. He stated that 160D had to be done in order to comply with State law so this would push back the accomplishment of a lot of the items on the Work Plan.

Mr. Little addressed the 2019 NC Legislation Related to Planning and Development Regulation information contained in the meeting packet beginning on page 38. These regulations were effective in 2019. Mr. Little noted some of the changes included no third-party down-zoning without property owner consent, conditional zoning conditions must be consented to in writing by the petitioner, conditions on quasi-judicial permits cannot include things that the local government has no authority over, there can be no minimum square footage for one and two-family dwellings subject to the State Building Code, the applicant may choose if they would like to have their application reviewed under old or new rules, vested rights change, and other changes.

Mayor Brantz called a break in the meeting from 10:58 a.m. until 11:09 a.m.

DOWNTOWN RELATED PLANS UPDATE

Ms. Shook thanked Eric Plaag, Chair of the Historic Preservation Commission, Brian Williams, Chair of the Community Appearance Commission, and Lane Moody, Downtown Boone Development Coordinator for attending this portion of the meeting and asked Mr. Johnson and Mr. Williams to begin with their presentation of the Downtown work done by the Community Appearance Commission.

To provide a timeline, Mr. Johnson stated that the Community Appearance Commission started the process in 2010 of identifying issues or concerns from the Design Guidelines that were adopted in 2006. During the process it was discovered that the Downtown was in need of some attention. Mr. Johnson stated that the Commission spent a couple of years trying to figure out what the appropriate look for Downtown should be. He noted that the Community Appearance Commission's guidelines were intertwined somewhat with the Historic Preservations Commission's guidelines and the two commissions had met jointly several times since 2011. Mr. Johnson stated there had also been numerous joint meetings between the CAC and Town Council in order to get direction. He noted there was a noticeable increase in development and redevelopment in 2015, 2016, and 2017 that alarmed the CAC. Mr. Johnson stated that in April, 2018 interim B1 guidelines were adopted to help regulate some things such as building materials, building size and scale. He felt the Commission was getting close to completing the Design Guidelines.

Mr. Johnson stated that Brian Williams had been the Chair of the CAC for the past six years. Chair Williams noted the CAC sent out a survey through the Downtown Boone Development Association and on the Town's website in 2015 asking ideas on the appearance and direction for Downtown and received some good feedback.

Mr. Johnson explained that two different districts would be proposed for the Downtown, one being the Downtown Core and the other a Downtown Interface. He stated that the Downtown Core would include the primary Downtown area and would regulate things such as building facades, first floor finishes, and building scale while the Downtown Interface would include areas just outside the Downtown Core that would provide a complimentary transition into the Core. Mr. Johnson stated the CAC had tried to make their Downtown Design Guidelines consistent with the HPC's guidelines but noted they would need to meet with the HPC to work out some details.

Chair Williams stated the CAC chose a fairly large area for the Downtown Interface in order to give the Downtown room to grow and be the Interface area would be complimentary to the Downtown Core but not mimic it.

Ms. Shook noted that the goal of the two different work products from the CAC and HPC was preservation. She explained that the work product produced by the CAC would require General Use Text and Zoning Map Amendments to rezone the existing B1 and areas outside the existing B1 to either B1 Downtown Core or B1 Downtown Interface. The work product produced by HPC would require General Use Text and Zoning Map Amendments to add an overlay on top of the existing zoning designation, meaning underlying zoning requirements would still apply with the addition of the requirements of the Historic District Overlay requirements. Mr. Johnson added that HPC's standards would take precedent over CAC's standards in the Historic District.

Ms. Shook stated there had been discussion with Council about having separate Articles in the UDO for each zoning district and noted this suggestion was incorporated in the Downtown proposal.

Ms. Shook asked Eric Plaag to present the Historic Preservation Commission's work. Chair Plaag stated he started on the HPC in 2013 and noted the Commission had been working for several years prior to that on developing a set of design guidelines. After about a year of working on the guidelines, Chair Plaag stated he contacted the State Historic Preservation Office and found out that the Town needed to first survey properties in order to determine a historic district and then prepare design guidelines that would be appropriate for that district. Chair Plaag stated that in 2014/2015 HPC changed direction and Council authorized them to proceed with a survey. He noted that the survey process started by holding public information sessions so that the property owners affected could learn more about what was proposed. Chair Plaag felt educating the public and having their participation was the most important part of the process. Ms. Shook noted that Chair Plaag performed the survey at no charge to the Town and Council members expressed appreciation.

Chair Plaag explained that there was about a year of field work, then it took approximately two years to research the history of each building surveyed which produced the Downtown Historic Resources Survey that was given to Town Council in August, 2019 for review. After some edits and approval by Town Council, the document was sent to Annie McDonald with the State Historic Preservation Office in December, 2019 for her review and that review is scheduled to take place in February, 2020. Chair Plaag noted that the survey document did not have to be approved in any formal way by the State in order to move forward with the next steps. He stated he had been working on the Designation Report process and HPC has worked on the Design Guidelines. Chair Plaag stated that the State would

have to provide feedback on the Designation Report before the process could proceed and he was working on the final draft of that document that he hoped would be reviewed at the February HPC meeting. The final draft Designation Report would then be sent to Council for review and recommend review by the State. Chair Plaag noted that the State had 30 days to respond to the Designation Report and their feedback could be incorporated or ignored and then a vote could be taken to designate the district.

Ms. Shook noted that neither the CAC nor the HPC documents had been reviewed by the Town attorney.

Chair Plaag stated, at this point, there was a draft set of Design Guidelines, a survey report, and the Designation Report would tentatively be ready in February. He suggested having the Town attorney review the Design Guidelines and the Designation Report once it is completed, then schedule a public information session. Chair Plaag noted that Annie McDonald had offered to come to the public information session to help lead the discussion. He felt the more transparent the process, the more it would help address the concerns of property owners. Any feedback could then be incorporated into the documents, if necessary, and the Designation Report could be sent to the State for review.

Chair Plaag expressed some concern about the Downtown Core boundary not matching the Historic District and felt that may cause confusion. Ms. Shook replied that the boundaries were not required to match and noted that public input and public education would be critical moving forward. Ms. Meade agreed with Chair Plaag, noting that not having the boundaries be the same could effectively cause an area of regulation that did not apply to anyone else. Council Member Furgiuele disagreed. He stated there should not be a property in the Historic District that was not in the Core but felt it was totally appropriate to have three gradations of zoning districts.

Mr. Ward stated there could be some potential conflict due to the fact that the Sustainability Committee wanted to encourage solar rooftop units and this may not be consistent with the historic or appearance guidelines.

Mayor Brantz called a break in the meeting from 12:18 p.m. until 12:38 p.m. for lunch.

Ms. Shook stated that the Community Appearance Commission, the Historic Preservation Commission, and the staff who staffed those boards had provided many years of hard work. She noted that the next steps in the Downtown related plans process were to complete the documents, have the documents reviewed by the Town attorney, gather public input (this would include bringing Planning Commission up to date on the process), review and revise documents as needed, formal hearings, and adoption.

Council Member Furgiuele asked when the public information sessions might take place. Ms. Shook replied that she would like to have both documents completed, have time to do staff training, and do some work on the UDO first and stated that 2-3 months would be the earliest the sessions could take place but that would be pushing it. Council Member Furgiuele noted the construction season would start soon and he would like to get this process started soon, if possible.

Ms. Meade stated, from her cursory review of the materials during this meeting, she would like to meet with Mr. Johnson and Chair Williams and possibly Chair Plaag to discuss the documents.

Ms. Shook suggested a joint meeting with Town Council, Planning Commission, Historic Preservation Commission, and Community Appearance Commission sometime prior to the public input session(s) in April or May.

Chair Plaag asked when the CAC would finish their work. Ms. Shook felt they would be finished by mid-February.

Mr. Ward asked Council if work on 160D should take precedent over work on the B1. Council Member Furgiuele stated he did not want to stop working on the B1.

Ms. Shook stated she would update Council at their February meeting as to the status of the work, get feedback on how Council would like to structure the public input session(s), and look at dates for a joint meeting in March.

Ms. Shook and Council members thanked Chair Williams and Chair Plaag for their work and they and Ms. Moody left the meeting at 1:16 p.m.

Board of Adjustment

Ms. Shook stated it was pending on the P&I Work Plan to not allow Board of Adjustment members to serve unlimited terms. Also on the Work Plan was a text amendment that Town Council would select the Chair and Vice Chair of both the Board of Adjustment and Planning Commission. Ms. Shook also noted her request to have monthly Board of Adjustment meetings instead of every other month. Ms. Meade agreed that monthly meetings worked better and encouraged a return to that schedule. Council Member Furguele stated he had proposed meeting every other month as a way to help lessen the burden on staff but if that schedule was not working well he had no objection to going back to monthly meetings. Ms. Shook suggested the return to monthly BOA meetings begin in May, 2020 and there was consensus of the Council for the Board to meet monthly.

Mayor Pro Tem Clawson asked how many served on the Board of Adjustment. Ms. Shook replied that there were 5 regular and 3 alternate member positions with 2 of the alternate positions currently vacant. She stated she would love to have those vacancies filled sooner rather than later. Ms. Meade added that the lack of alternate members had caused some difficulty in obtaining a full Board.

Council Member Furguele felt that the BOA Rules of Procedure should be made available at all Board of Adjustment meetings and not just provided on the Town's website.

Ms. Meade felt that the short and long agenda choices in the Rules of Procedure should be done away with because they did not function as intended. She stated there were several changes that needed to be made to the Rules of Procedure and asked how Council would like to have those changes made. Council Member Furguele felt changes to the BOA Rules of Procedure should be suggested by the Board of Adjustment and then approved by Town Council. There was a consensus of Council regarding changes to the Rules of Procedure.

Council Member Furguele felt the Town Council should appoint the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board of Adjustment because it would provide a level of protection the Town needs.

Mayor Pro Tem Clawson asked if there had ever been term limits for Board of Adjustment members and Ms. Shook replied that there had not. Council Member Furguele stated it was a very technical board that had a very complicated process and learning the rules was difficult but he felt it was important to have an infusion of new blood on all of the Town committees. There was consensus of the Council to recommend term limits on the Board of Adjustment of 3 terms of 3 years each.

Council Member LaPlaca stated she did not think it was a good idea for Town Council to select the Chair and Vice Chair of boards. She felt that was part of being a volunteer on a board. Ms. Shook explained that this would apply only to the Board of Adjustment and Planning Commission and possibly Historic Preservation Commission when it became quasi-judicial.

Community Appearance Commission

Ms. Shook noted that the Community Appearance Commission was in dire need of volunteers to serve on the Commission. She stated that a previous request by Town Council to reduce the membership from seven to five would not be possible due to State Statute requirements. Ms. Shook explained that there were two Council members who were currently serving as voting members instead of liaisons because they were needed to make quorum. Ms. Shook noted that there were currently only three citizen members serving on the CAC and two of those would be going off the Commission in June.

Council Member Furguele stated that the CAC also served as the Tree Board and thought that if more people knew that, they might be more interested in serving.

Mr. Ward stated that he planned to feature Town boards in an upcoming Facebook post.

Council Member Furgiuele suggested making it a part of every Town board's agenda to announce the vacancies on all boards at the beginning of every meeting.

Council Member LaPlaca suggested having time limits on meetings because she felt that people did not want to volunteer for lengthy meetings. Ms. Shook noted there were no Town boards that had time limits on their meetings. Council Member LaPlaca felt it should be a goal of the Town to ensure shorter meetings in order to foster greater public participation. Mr. Ward stated he had received similar feedback regarding meeting length. He also felt that people were more likely to volunteer for specific projects than a broader range of unknown tasks. Ms. Shook stated that each individual board may need different amounts of time to complete their agendas. Council Member Furgiuele suggested that each board make a recommendation to bring back to Council regarding a reasonable meeting length for their respective boards.

Ms. Shook noted that the Board of Adjustment, Historic Preservation Commission, Planning Commission, and Community Appearance Commission are required by State law to have members who reside within Town limits.

Ms. Shook stated that the Community Appearance Commission's number one priority was to complete the Downtown Design Guidelines. After that was complete they would begin working on recommendations for tree preservation in residential districts as well as recommendations for relevant items from the Watauga Food Council report. Council Member Furgiuele noted one assignment Council had directed that Ms. Shook did not mention was bee and bird habitat preservation. Ms. Shook apologized for missing that and stated she would add that to the Work Plan. Ms. Shook asked Council if the three assignments mentioned were the assignments they wanted the Community Appearance Commission to work on. Council Member Furgiuele felt those were important issues that should be addressed.

Mr. Johnson stated that the Tree Board had been overshadowed by work on the Design Guidelines and needed to be marketed again as not just the Community Appearance Commission but the Tree Board as well. Mr. Johnson noted he just got confirmation that the Town's application was accepted for their 27th Tree City USA award.

To recap, Ms. Shook stated that the Community Appearance Commission's assignments would remain as planned, there would be no reduction in membership, and Town Council members would continue to vote until a higher membership was obtained. There was consensus of Council members on all of the items Ms. Shook mentioned.

Historic Preservation Commission

Ms. Shook stated that it had previously been discussed that Council members be moved from voting members to liaisons. She noted that the UDO currently required there to be seven members on the Historic Preservation Commission with two of those members being Council members. Ms. Shook asked if this would create any kind of problem when the HPC moved to a quasi-judicial process. Ms. Meade replied that she had not researched that but would doubt this would be a problem because there was no appeal to Town Council of an HPC decision. Ms. Meade stated that it might be confusing to have liaisons on a quasi-judicial board. Mayor Pro Tem Clawson agreed and felt that Council members might need to go off of the HPC. Council Member Furgiuele stated he would want to be free to talk with members of the public about issues that he might not be able to do if he were a member of a quasi-judicial board. Ms. Shook stated this would require a text amendment to remove the requirement of two Council members to make up the Historic Preservation Commission and require those positions to be community members. She noted there would also be no Council liaisons for HPC. Council members were in agreement with those changes.

Ms. Shook stated there had also been a recommendation that once HPC completed their work for the Downtown Historic District they would move their meeting to every other month. She suggested that meetings remain monthly so that there would be less delay in addressing Certificates of Appropriateness. Ms. Meade added that it was easier to cancel regular meetings than it was to schedule special meetings. Council members were in agreement with monthly HPC meetings.

Ms. Shook stated that HPC was currently working to complete the survey for the Boone Cemetery. Ms. Turner noted that HPC was also working on the Junaluska Marker, the Hayes-Bryan Cemetery, and the Burrell Monument.

Council Member Furguele asked if, once the Downtown Historic District work was complete, there was a plan to designate historic landmarks outside the district. Ms. Turner replied that this could be added to HPC's assignments if directed by Council. Council Member Furguele felt it was important.

To recap, Ms. Shook stated a text amendment would be initiated to remove Town Council members as members and there would be no liaisons on the HPC. She stated she would add to the Work Plan that HPC would continue to review potential landmark designations after the completion of the Downtown Historic District.

Planning Commission

Ms. Shook noted the Planning Commission was made up of seven members and there was currently one vacancy which was the ASU representative's one-year term. Council Member Furguele stated he liked the idea of having the SGA announce the vacancy before considering directing the task of filling the vacancy to one department at the University. Mr. Ward suggested advertising board vacancies, as appropriate, on the Government Channel on campus as well. Council members were agreeable to this advertising strategy for the ASU representative.

Ms. Shook stated, as previously mentioned, that Town Council would begin selecting the Chair and Vice Chair of the Planning Commission.

Sustainability Committee

Ms. Shook stated there were eight members of the Sustainability Committee as well as two Council liaisons. She noted this was a time-limited committee that was set to end on April 10, 2021 unless extended by Town Council. Ms. Shook stated she would like to have some of term expiration dates changed so there would be more staggering of the membership.

Ms. Shook felt the Sustainability Committee was close to completing their "toolkit". Mr. Ward asked if the "toolkit" would result in recommendations for the departments that would go above what the departments had already done. Ms. Shook replied that it would. Mr. Ward noted that the Jimmy Smith Wastewater Treatment Energy Analysis would be presented to Council in February and they would let the Sustainability Committee know in case they would like to come to that Council meeting.

Council Member Hicks stated they needed to figure out what charge made sense, noting there was a lot of expertise on the Committee. Council Member Hicks added that, in the long run, this work may need to be done by staffed positions because the amount of work that needed to be done would be difficult for a committee that met monthly to accomplish. Council Member Hicks noted that the University had an entire office dedicated to sustainability and felt it would be a wise goal for the Town to have that as well. Council Member Ulmer agreed that would be necessary at some point. Council Member Furguele stated the Town would either have to raise taxes or cut Police funds. Council Member LaPlaca agreed with Council Member Hicks and stated that sustainability issues were not going to go away. She felt the issues were too important and dismantling the Committee would be a mistake. Mr. Ward noted that some of this was budgeting issues and he would have some ideas to present at the upcoming Budget Retreat about sustainability.

Ms. Shook stated there were so many moving parts to sustainability that there had to be some focus, otherwise meetings were not productive. Council Member LaPlaca suggested, as a former member of the Sustainability Committee, that members have some input on the topics they discuss. Mr. Ward stated that there were times that Town Council discussed items related to sustainability in their Town Council meetings and felt it might be a good idea to invite Sustainability Committee members to attend those meetings.

Council Member Furguele suggested that the Sustainability Committee make three recommendations to Town Council of what they would like to be tasked with. Council members agreed with this idea.

Ms. Shook stated that the Planning Department staffed the Sustainability Committee but noted there were times when the items discussed did not relate to the Planning Department. She suggested there be regular attendance to the meetings by other departments in order to provide answers to questions that Planning Staff would not know. Mr.

Ward felt the most efficient thing would be to make a list of the questions or issues that arose during a meeting, send that list to him, and he would reach out to others for those answers as opposed to sending a lot of other staff to meetings. Ms. Shook suggested that the Sustainability Committee, when coming up with their list of three recommendations, identify the stakeholders so representatives from appropriate departments could be requested to attend the meetings. Council members agreed with this idea.

COUNCIL DISCUSSION

Work Plan

Mr. Ward stated in the past year there had been several large topics that resulted in a tremendous amount of staff time and public input that, in the end, did not have the support of Town Council to continue with the topic. He stated, as a new Council, if there was something listed on the Work Plan that they were not in support of and would like to have it removed, it would be helpful to staff so they could work on other items. Mr. Ward noted that between the Work Plan and the State mandated changes it could be 2021 before staff could get to any new assignments.

Ms. Shook stated there were 17 items on the Work Plan that were currently in progress, 25 items not yet started, and 19 items that were completed in 2019. She noted that the Work Plan did not include Board work or day to day work items but were Council directed assignments. Ms. Shook stated the top four priorities set by Town Council on March 5, 2019 was the Downtown, parking, R3/R4 (potential rezoning), and stormwater. She noted that amortization was on the priority list but after the failed motion by Council that topic was moved off of the priority list.

Council Member Furguele stated that, while parking was important, he felt 160D had to move in front of parking on the priority list. He also felt the most important neighborhood protection item was the R3/R4 (potential rezoning) and felt it should be high on the priority list. Mr. Ward asked what the number one priority would be. Council Member Furguele replied that the number one priority would remain as the Downtown plans from CAC and HPC. At the same time, he felt that work on 160D should begin now. Ms. Shook explained that Staff would not work on item number one, complete it, then move to item two. She stated Staff could work on multiple priorities at the same time. Ms. Shook reminded Council members of her request for time to address some critical needs of the Department related to housekeeping. She felt the Planning & Inspections Department would function much better in the long run if the website was updated, forms were updated, files were organized, etc. but Staff had little time to maintain these types of things due to the workload.

Council Member LaPlaca felt Staff was very capable and she was okay with Staff setting the priorities. Mr. Ward stated that planning related items had doubled on Town Council's agenda and they were already unable to address all of their agenda items at times so even if he increased the number of Planning Staff there would still be only so many items Town Council could address in a normal meeting cycle.

Ms. Shook noted that just because Council set priorities now did not mean they would have the same priorities in the coming months and the priority list could change. She stated that Staff could work in smaller items on the Work Plan but she preferred that Town Council provide some direction to Staff on the larger assignments.

Council Member Furguele stated he would be willing to do a six-month moratorium on adding agenda items to the Planning Department if that would be helpful. He added that this would not prohibit Mr. Ward or Ms. Meade from proposing changes that might be necessary due to changes in the law. Mr. Ward felt that might be helpful and give Staff an opportunity to catch up a little. Ms. Shook agreed.

MOTION

Council Member Furguele made a motion that the Council not place any new burdens on the Planning Department before the October, 2020 Council meeting. The motion was seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Clawson. Mr. Ward noted there would still be quite a few Planning items on Council's agenda as they completed tasks. Council Member Hicks asked about revising the Comprehensive Plan and asked for an anticipated time when that might be done. Ms. Shook replied that Comprehensive Plans were meant to be updated every five years and the updating process had been started. She felt it was critical to look at all of the Town's adopted plans when updating the Comprehensive Plan and noted that she would let Council decide a timeframe for that work.

to take place. Ms. Shook felt they should get through the Downtown project and 160D before Council decided about the Comprehensive Plan. Council Member Furgieuele stated that 160D mandated a review of the Comprehensive Plan by July 1, 2022 and he would like to see the R3/R4 completed before the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. Shook noted that large projects such as the Comprehensive Plan require a great deal of public input.

Council Member LaPlaca stated she would like to suggest something called “Step Up, Step Back”. She explained that this meant that people who talked a lot should step up to speak and then step back to allow others an opportunity to speak. She felt this would provide more evenness and shorten conversations that go on for long periods of time.

Ms. Meade stated she felt Ms. Shook was trying to express to Council the importance of good housekeeping and have them recognize the need for time to make that happen. She added that she was concerned with Council officially saying that members could not come forward with agenda items. Ms. Meade felt Council members had the right to come forward with agenda items so she was uncomfortable with an official moratorium. She stated if Council members wanted to volunteer to adhere to the suggestion of no new agenda items that would be great. Council Member LaPlaca agreed with Ms. Meade that this should be an informal decision. Council Member Ulmer stated she did not think Council should vote on the motion and should just take the suggestion personally. Council Member Hicks agreed and mentioned the possibility of an intern help with the housekeeping needs.

Mayor Brantz stated there was a motion on the floor and called for a vote.

RESULT:	APPROVED [4 TO 1]
MOVER:	Sam Furgieuele, Council Member
SECONDER:	Loretta Clawson, Mayor Pro-Tem
AYES:	Clawson, Furgieuele, Ulmer, LaPlaca
NAYS:	Hicks

Continued Discussion

Ms. Shook asked if there were items on the Work Plan that Council would like to change. She noted there were several tasks that were created as a result of the R3/R4 (potential rezoning) discussions that could possibly be considered separately from the potential rezoning and asked if Council would like to have those tasks addressed individually. Council Member Furgieuele stated he did not really care if they were addressed separately. Ms. Shook replied that she would not modify the Work Plan at this time but noted that she may modify it if Staff had time to address any of those items while trying to complete the Downtown and 160D tasks.

Ms. Shook felt the priority list would now contain five top priorities; Downtown, 160D and other legislation, parking, potential rezoning, and stormwater. Council members agreed with this list.

ETJ

Mr. Ward stated that last year Town Council asked him to see if the Town could get legislation reintroduced and the Town was unsuccessful and asked if Council would like for the Town to continue to work toward that goal or not. Council Member Furgieuele stated there were some ambiguities in 160D regarding enforcement of ordinances and he stated he was okay with not having zoning authority as long as the Town was not making construction possible in unzoned areas. He felt stormwater was a bigger issue. Mayor Pro Tem Clawson felt that, politically, things were in the same shape now as they were previously. Mr. Ward felt the requirement of annexation to receive Town water or sewer was working well to bring some properties into Town limits. Council Member Hicks stated he did not feel it was worth pursuing the return of the ETJ until there was a turnover in legislation.

OTHER MATTERS

Mr. Ward reminded Council members that their next meeting was scheduled for January 27, 2020 at 3:30 p.m. and

this was a joint meeting with Appalachian State University representatives. This meeting would be followed at 6:00 p.m. by the Public Hearing with Planning Commission. Council Member Ulmer stated she would be a little late to the 3:30 p.m. meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION

Mayor Pro Tem Clawson made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:52 p.m. The motion was seconded by Council Member Ulmer.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Loretta Clawson, Mayor Pro-Tem
SECONDER:	Connie Ulmer, Council Member
AYES:	Clawson, Furgiuele, Ulmer, LaPlaca, Hicks

Brenda Henson, Admin. Support Specialist

Rennie Brantz, Mayor