

TOWN OF WEBSTER



August 07, 2019 Board Meeting Minutes

The Board of Commissioners for the Town of Webster met for a regularly scheduled board meeting at Town Hall, 1411 Webster Road at 5:15 p.m.

Members/Staff Present: Mayor Tracy Rodes; Vice-Mayor Leigh Anne Young; Commissioners Billie Bryson, Kelly Donaldson, Allan Grant, and Danell Moses; Town Attorney William Morgan; Town Clerk Debbie Coffey

Members Absent: None

Guest Speaker: Jackson County Planning Director Michael Poston

Others Present: Louise Stephens; Eric Myers; Pam Krauss

GENERAL MEETING

Call to Order/Ethics Statement: Mayor Tracy Rodes called the meeting to order at 5:15 p.m. and read the Ethics Statement. No board member expressed any conflict of interest.

Approval of Agenda:

MOTION: Commissioner Moses moved to approve the agenda. Commissioner Grant seconded. Motion carried.

Approval of Minutes: The Minutes of the July 3, 2019 Board Meeting were emailed prior to the meeting for review.

MOTION: Commissioner Grant moved to approve the July 3, 2019 minutes. Commissioner Young seconded. Motion carried.

Minutes of the July 23, 2019 Joint Meeting of Governmental Units will be adopted following adoption by the County Commissioners.

Informal Comments by Public:

Pam Krauss addressed the board with concerns about traffic safety on North and South River Roads. Ms. Krauss lives in Webster ETJ on South River Road and has helped form a citizens group known as Citizens for River Road Safety. This group has formed to address the issues of speeding and dump trucks traveling on North and South River Roads. The group has addressed the County Commissioners, NCDOT, and the Jackson County Sheriff's Office with their concerns. Meetings have been requested with officials at Western Carolina University and NC Highway Patrol. They have also purchased a speed radar and conducted traffic counts with results corresponding closely to the results of the speed study conducted by NCDOT at the request of Mayor Rodes.

Ms. Krauss believes they are part of a game of "bureaucratic ping pong" with Chip Hall saying law enforcement resources are not available to provide additional coverage and DOT saying speed enforcement by law enforcement is the solution. Citizens for River Road Safety would request the town consider the following to help with the problem:



1. We request that the Town of Webster ask for additional speeding enforcement to the Jackson County Sheriff and NC Highway Patrol for River Roads. Please follow this up with a subsequent request on the number of tickets or other enforcement efforts that have occurred. Accountability is needed.
2. Please place a request to the Jackson County Sheriff for the speed calming device to be utilized on River Roads.
3. According to NCDOT, a reduction in speed limit can only be requested by an incorporated municipality. Since the ETJ is not officially part of the incorporated area, NCDOT sets their own speed limits and will not entertain our request for a reduction. Quite the contrary they claim, based on their data and formula, they could raise the speed limit. Consequently, we would like to explore what is involved with being added to the incorporated area of Webster. More specifically:
 - A) Is there a possibility under state law to add the ETJ to the incorporated area,
 - B) If it is possible, what is the process, and
 - C) What would be the consequences (taxes, additional zoning or other regulations), and
 - D) Would Webster be willing, should this be possible, to add the properties?

Commissioner Grant expressed his concern about narrow lanes and overall road width, especially on North River Road, as being the primary safety risk.

CONSENT AGENDA

Financial Report:

June Financial statements have been provided prior to the meeting. July transactions currently include:

July deposits and expenses will be provided by email following the meeting.

Current Account Balances as of August 1st are:

\$ 55,103.27 - Checking

\$ 45,088.85 - Elite Plus Money Market

\$ 38,372.43 - 48 Month CD

MOTION: Commissioner Moses moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Commissioner Young seconded. Motion carried.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS

Mayor's Report:

- Mayor Rodes thanked Commissioners Bryson, Donaldson, and Grant for attending the Joint Governmental Units Meeting held on July 23rd. The meeting was focused on the Hwy. 107 DOT project. Plans are not at the 65% completion point at this time and Mayor Rodes urged board members to make sure all information they share is accurate and not part of the misinformation that is circulating at this time.
- Law Enforcement officials have been responsive to the request for additional patrol on North and South River Roads and the dump trucks appear to have slowed down at this time.
- The temporary signs urging motorists to slow down have been effective in drawing attention to the safety issues along that route, but Mayor Rodes cautioned that signs in



DOT right of way could be mowed over during roadside mowing operations and become litter.

- Discussed possibility of purchasing digital traffic signage for River Road in the future to make motorists aware of their speed. Consider for a grant project.
- A community work day may be called in the future to clean around the monument. Elite Landscaping provided debris removal following the severe storms that came through over the weekend.
- Trash cans may need to be added to the ball field to prevent the accumulation of litter.
- Information on building permits issued by Jackson County for Webster are available on the county's website. A condensed report is also available according to Mr. Poston.

Council Members' Reports:

Commissioner Young attended last night's Planning Board meeting. She noted that in October the Planning Board will begin meeting on the third Tuesday evening of the month to allow for better flow of information. The September meeting will remain as scheduled for the 3rd. Steve Williams from NCDOT will be in attendance at the September meeting to address upcoming NCDOT projects as they relate to the Land Use Plan.

Commissioner Moses noted that the new building at SCC will have walls going up by mid-October.

Clerk's Report

- The LGC-203 has been submitted.
- Bronwyn Burleson was here on July 24 to perform pre-audit field work.
- Jon Welch of Workplace Solutions performed a tuneup on the computer system. He suggested that when the system is replaced the town consider an Intel processor with a solid state hard drive and a minimum of 8 to 12 gigs memory.
- Jaye Deitz ran the phone and internet line wires into the drop ceiling and installed wire covers to improve safety in the office.

NEW BUSINESS

None.

OLD BUSINESS

1. **Jackson County Unified Development Ordinance (UDO):** Mr. Poston reported that the County Commissioners adopted the JC UDO at their board meeting last night. This measure was taken to streamline ordinances and bring them up to date with state statutes. Mr. Poston reviewed provisions for Cluster Developments, which are generally used in watershed areas to allow for more undisturbed land. They allow for houses to be built more closely but have more stringent requirements for open space. In most cases Cluster Subdivisions are major subdivisions and not considered minor subdivisions. Commissioner Young asked about the ability to regulate aesthetics. Mr. Poston noted that under North Carolina law aesthetics can only be regulated in



historic districts, high-density developments of seven or more units per acre, and for manufactured homes. Aesthetic requirements in subdivisions can be set forth in covenants but not by ordinance.

2. **Review of Jackson County Subdivision Ordinances:** Mr. Poston noted that no wholesale changes were made to the Jackson County subdivision ordinances under the new UDO, but North Carolina has set the definitions of major and minor subdivisions. Lot sizes are mandated by zoning regulations. The same standards are applied; however, some definitions have changed. Cluster and Conservation Subdivisions have been added in keeping with watershed protection. Mayor Rodes asked if the county could administer subdivision ordinances for the town, should the town draft their own set of ordinances. Mr. Poston stated it would be much easier to administer for the town if it adopted what the county had, but it was not out of reason to say they could do it. That decision would have to be made once a draft of the town's ordinances could be reviewed by county officials. Mr. Poston does feel it may be possible to adopt sections and not the entire agreement. Subdivisions that were platted prior to the adoption of subdivision ordinances are not covered by these ordinances.
3. **Review of the Interlocal Agreement:** This agreement is the same as the former agreement, with few exceptions. This document provides more clarification and combines several existing agreements into one. These include administration of building inspections, zoning, National Flood Insurance Program, sedimentation and erosion control, subdivision regulations (should the town decide to adopt county standards), mountain and hillside development, telecommunications, historic preservation, and includes a provision for fee-based planning services. It was noted that Webster has a separate Board of Adjustment, unlike some municipalities where the Board of Commissioners serve as the Board of Adjustment. When asked about a timeline, Mr. Poston stated that a specific date for adoption is not set, but would like to see it wrapped within a reasonable amount of time.
4. **Review of the Speed Study Results:** It was the consensus of the board to review the Speed Study Results next month.

ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Commissioner Grant moved to adjourn. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

Next Meeting:

Regular Board Meeting- September 4, 2019 at 5:15p.m.

Tracy Rodes, Mayor

Debbie Coffey, Town Clerk