

WEBSTER PLANNING BOARD

NOVEMBER 18, 2021 Meeting Minutes



The Webster Planning Board met via Zoom on November 18, 2021, at 5:30 p.m. for a regularly scheduled meeting to review the draft Land Use Plan and public survey, and to provide an opportunity for public dialogue about the plan.

CALL TO ORDER: Eric called the meeting to order at 5:35 pm.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Sara Stahlman, Leigh Anne Young, Jenny Resinger, Eric Myers, Dale Collins (arrived late), Will Whitfield (left early), Tonya Basse (left early)

MEMBERS ABSENT: Walter Turner

OTHERS PRESENT: Tracy Rodes, Mayor. James McGinnis, property owner on Buchanan Loop, called in from Virginia.

GENERAL MEETING

Eric read aloud the ethics statement. No conflicts were expressed.

Approval of Agenda and Minutes:

The agenda and October 14th meeting minutes were reviewed.

MOTION: Jenny motioned to approve the agenda, Tonya Basse seconded. Motion carried. **MOTION:** Jenny motioned to approve the October 14th meeting minutes, Will Whitfield seconded. Motion carried.

Informal comments by the public: None

Administrative Reports: Leigh Anne shared updates from the Town Board. Appreciation was expressed to the Planning Board for work on the Land Use Plan (LUP), and Dale was congratulated for his election to the Town Board. Planning Board vacancies and membership will be discussed tonight further in the agenda. County grant in process, plan to make a simple application soon.

Chair Report: None, just curiosity around community LUP input. Hopeful that we are close to presenting a draft LUP to the town board.

Planning Board member reports: None

OLD BUSINESS

1. Public dialogue on the draft Land Use Plan for Webster

Mr. McGinnis joined the meeting to hear the discussion. His properties are along Buchanan Loop and include one residential house, in the rental market. McGinnis has deep ties to the region; 4-5 generations in Webster cemetery and great-great-Grandfather established the cemetery. Very interested in the "Loop." Talk of the sidewalks and bike lanes - old enough to remember walking when the loop was gravel and one lane. Has already changed a lot in his lifetime. James McGinnis expressed surprise about the lack of citizen participation at the meeting. He asked about responses to online feedback surveys. We had 28 responses. McGinnis mentioned less coverage in the local paper about Webster happenings. Mayor Rodes acknowledged that reporters no longer attend Town meetings, possibly due to staff shortages.

Eric brought up a potential addition to include statistics on the number of citizens in the ETJ and Webster. It

may take some research to determine. A feedback survey comment indicated a need for more inclusion of ETJ residents.

Mayor Tracy Rodes mentioned that we publish meeting date information in the Sylva Herald, town website, and sunshine list email list (of residents, media, & interested parties) to communicate with both Webster and ETJ residents. Mr. McGinnis indicated that it's not a lack of effort on the part of the town - he lives hundreds of miles away and knew about what was happening. Mayor Rodes acknowledged that some citizens may not be set up for Zoom meetings, and reminded citizens to sign up for the Webster sunshine email list by emailing Town Hall, or by stopping in.

Mayor Rodes indicated her appreciation for the Planning Board's work, and her desire for citizens to be at the meeting and discuss concerns.

MOTION: Dale Collins made a motion to conclude the public dialogue portion of the Planning Board meeting. Tonya seconded. Motion carried.

2. Review and document public input from citizens regarding draft LUP

All Planning Board members have reviewed survey responses, read the comments, discussed overall themes, and expressed gratitude for those citizens who took the time to complete it.

Eric will draft a summary of major themes.

Planning Board members noted a tricky balance between comments encouraging safe recreation opportunities and "keeping things the same." Most public comments were felt to have been addressed in the draft Land Use Plan.

Speeding was recognized as a systemic issue on all of our roads, influencing the safety of bikes and pedestrians.

The Planning Board agreed to accept edits submitted by Daniel Manring from TWSA and Jackie Moore from Safe Routes to School (SRTS).

Once approved by the Planning Board, the Town Board will post an updated, edited LUP on the website, and invite public comment.

2. Consider complex issues such as lot size, housing clusters, short term rentals, etc. which were left vague in draft LUP

Tabling feedback on critical issues for now because they are not detailed in the Land Use Plan. Survey results and comments will be informative for future discussions on these issues.

3. Determine when and how to transmit final draft LUP to Webster Town Board Eric will summarize the public feedback gathered from the survey. This summary information will be included along with the basic survey graphs. This information will be provided to the Town Board, as well as included on the website along with all the other supplemental documents.

Leigh Anne will add content to the LUP section on Community Involvement (page 6), with details on the Planning Board's public outreach efforts, including survey reach, participation numbers, and any strong consensus among survey participants.

Sara will incorporate suggestions previously shared from community partners, TWSA & SRTS. With these changes and additions, the LUP will be ready for planning board approval at the next regular meeting with the expectation that it will be presented to the Town Board at their meeting in January.

4. Discuss Planning Board membership and officers.

Several Planning Board members' terms expire this month, and it is expected that at least two current members may be stepping down. Eric indicated that he is ready to step down if there are people willing to serve.

Leigh Anne asked if the current alternates, Tonya Basse and Will Whitfield, might like to move from their roles as "alternates" and assume two of those vacated seats. The Planning Board, once reassembled, will need to choose a Chair and Secretary, if those positions are vacated.

Current board members should consider if they wish to be appointed for another term, and reach out to Leigh Anne soon if they no longer wish to serve.

There are currently three potential interested future planning board members.

The Town Board will be looking to re-appoint, as well as appoint new members to fill any vacancies, at their December Town Board meeting.

NEW BUSINESS

Accept new assignments from Town Board

Mayor Rodes indicated that at a later date, the town needs to consider membership of the Board of Adjustments, a quasi-judicial board that meets as needed. We need to verify if current members are still available to serve.

Any planning board member should consider taking the Essentials of Municipal Government training through UNC SOG. Great training available online for anyone who's interested. This course includes Ethics in Leadership training. The town would cover costs.

Future Planning Board assignment - new state legislation (*G.S. 14-4*) about decriminalization of municipal ordinances requires having fines, and the dollar amounts, written into each specific ordinance. The Planning Board might need to look at those ordinances and make amendments to stay in compliance.

Signed minutes from this meeting documenting consideration of public input will need to be at Town Hall

before Town Board votes on the LUP. Eric will sign them when he returns to town.

MEETING SUMMARY:

- Reviewed community feedback. Accepted suggested edits from Tuckaseegee Water and Sewer (TWSA) and Smart Routes to School (SRTS). The plan is to edit, vote at the next meeting, and then pass it on to the Town Board.
- Eric will write a summary of the public survey responses to accompany the LUP's delivery to the Town Board, and it will be included among the supplemental, supporting documents on the town website.
- Leigh Anne will summarize the public outreach and survey response to add to the Community Involvement section in the LUP, and attach a basic version of the survey responses to the website. - Leigh Anne will check in with Tonya and Will to ask whether they are interested in being full members, and will also reach out to potential future planning board members.
- Sara will add edits from Daniel Manring and Jackie Moore
- Sara will send an updated draft prior to the December meeting.
- Put a final draft out after our December meeting
- All will consider whether they would like to take the UNC SOG municipal government training.

NEXT MEETING: The Planning Board will meet on December 16th, via Zoom for a brief organizational meeting. Jenny will be traveling and will probably be unable to attend the meeting. Newly appointed Planning Board members may not be in place for that meeting. We will need to confirm a quorum prior to meeting.

MOTION: Jenny motioned to adjourn at 7:15 pm. Dale seconded. Motion carried.

REMINDER: Next meeting will be December 16th at 5:30 p.m. via Zoom for a brief organizational meeting, and to approve an updated draft LUP to present to the Town Board.

Sara Stahlman, Webster Planning Board