

**Town of North Wilkesboro**  
**Planning Board Meeting Minutes**  
**April 14<sup>th</sup>, 2022**  
**Town Hall and on Zoom at 5:30 pm**

Planning Board Members Present: Nichols, Cox, Espin, Turner, Queen, Suddreth and Long  
Also Present: Meredith Detsch, Planning Director, Danny Johnson, Town Attorney, Michael Parsons and Angela Day, Board of Commissioners, Fred Costello, applicant, on Zoom: Evan McCracken, Matt Baker and Pat Crosby.

Chair Nichols called the meeting to order at 5:31 pm.

Chair Nichols asked for approval of the February 10<sup>th</sup> minutes. Long moved to approve the minutes as submitted and Turner seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously 7-0.

Chair Nichols asked for approval of the February 23<sup>rd</sup> minutes. Cox moved to approve the minutes as submitted and Long seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously 7-0.

Vice-Chair Nichols asked if there was anyone here tonight to speak about a matter not on the agenda, there was not.

Chair Nichols explained she had attended the last Board of Commissioners meeting on March 24<sup>th</sup>, the last meeting Multi-family was discussed and relayed to the board a quick overview of the wishes of the Board. Chair Nichols thought lessening the regulations for multi-family in the General and Highway Business Districts was a good idea. Discussion occurred among the board members of looking at just Highway Business and General Business with making it simpler and permitted by right. The board would take on the other districts at a later time. Detsch explained she did not have redlined text for tonight's meeting but did have an exercise for the board to run through to determine what they were interested in keeping or removing. Detsch explained there were several options to consider for tonight's discussion. The items for review are: Density, Setbacks/lot requirements, Landscaping, Architecture of buildings, Site Design (including parking and creating open space/parks). Staff was bringing this to the Planning Board for the technical review. Nichols noted landscaping, setbacks and architecture were already being reviewed as standard zoning ordinance requirements. Nichols asked if that was changing and Detsch noted no. In tonight's purview, the supplemental standards were brought in as well as Morganton's text for multi-family by right for the board to review. Nichols noted we should have some regulations but for it to be simpler so developers will have opportunities to come in. Detsch explained that currently you have to rezone the property, have a civil site plan and architecture plans before you are given the approval to submit for permitting. What is before the board tonight is to remove the rezoning requirement for developing multi-family in the Highway Business and General Business Districts. Detsch asked the board to speak on if they would like it permitted by right or permitted by right with supplemental standards. Detsch went through each item on the staff report with the board. Detsch asked if density was an item they board wished to keep or let it be market driven. Turner asked how that would work and Detsch explained developers will do a cost estimate and determine how many units will work on the site. The watershed overlay district will still restrict density. Currently the MF-CD has ten units per acre and the board felt that was very small. Detsch went over the setback requirements, currently its 50' front, 50' side, 50' back which places the buildings in the center of the

lot. Detsch noted she would not recommend a density cap as we currently have one in the watershed and we need other areas of town to be less restrictive to promote growth, not density in the watershed. Long noted the setbacks were very tough and look at something less. Detsch recommended the underlying General and Highway Business Districts to set the setbacks. The Corridor Overlay District is going to limit the height and Detsch imagined these proposals may be built in the Corridor Overlay District, something to consider changing at a later date. The current ordinance has additional landscaping on top of the buffer, parking and Corridor Overlay Districts. Espin asked about the buffer setback and Detsch explained them. Cox asked about setbacks and Detsch would propose them to follow the zoning district they are in. Turner asked if this was just in Town limits and Detsch noted it was both the ETJ and the Town limits, all of the zoning jurisdiction. Architecture guidelines were discussed. Detsch noted some examples in town where apartments have different architecture elements. Detsch mentioned she could water down the guidelines and bring them back to the next meeting. Espin noted some developments have intentionally designed as a neighborhood to offer diverse options. Detsch asked about the open space requirement and the board didn't feel it needed to be mandatory. Currently it's 25% of the land dedicated to open space/parks. Detsch will bring the board working text in May and a public hearing in June. The Commissioners would hear this item in late June, early July.

The first item under new business was a text amendment for self-storage in our Central Business District. Mr. Fred Costello at 307 9<sup>th</sup> Street, Parcel ID 1401335 is the applicant. Detsch presented this item. The Board is to have discussion, a public hearing and vote if they choose to on this item tonight. The two sections of the Zoning Ordinance that are proposed to be changed are Article VI. Zoning Districts 6.7 Table of Uses and Article XI Supplemental Standards for Certain Uses, 11.3-11 Warehousing, self-storage. Anytime we conduct a text amendment, the Planning Board needs to consider the Comprehensive Plan. For this text amendment the following goals and policies support it: *Goal B.1 - Develop and Utilize Flexible Land Use Controls, Policy 11 - Allow for more mixing of uses, Goal B.2 Maximize Redevelopment Potential for Vacant Structures and Parcels, Policy 20- Encourage building reuse by district, Policy 21- Encourage the use of existing buildings and sites within current town limits, Goal B.3 - Strengthen Community Appearance, and Policy 32 - Continue to work with property owners to revitalize downtown buildings.* Staff recommends to adopt the language including the supplemental standards. Nichols asked about the entrance to the storage units and if it's on the front. Detsch read the proposed text which stated: *(P) An existing building within the Central Business District may be used for self-storage as long as a storefront with a minimum of 30' depth is maintained on the street front (excluding alleys) and access to the units shall be along the rear or side entrance of the building.* Detsch explained this proposal would be only along the rear or side of the building; it would accessory to the retail but renting it out to others. Detsch explained the rationale behind the changes. The first item struck was the minimum lot size. Staff recommended the new language on fire codes to be included with storage of vehicles as that is potentially very dangerous. The next item struck was the minimum storage bay size requirement, the market should drive that requirement. The height limit was struck also as the underlying zoning district should be what regulates it. This ordinance appears to be written solely for the outside storage units you drive around. Circulation around the buildings shall only apply to the outdoor storage units. Lighting was written to match our current text. Detsch also included stronger language on if the storage units are adjacent to residential properties. Item P was added as Detsch mentioned earlier. Fred Costello, applicant, noted he wanted to enhance our downtown while also allowing more uses in the downtown. Michael Parsons asked if this was storage on Main Street and 30' on the main floor. Detsch noted yes, but a minimum 30' would have to be preserved on the front of the building for retail, professional, etc. Dimensions were discussed. Angela Day noted if her building

had that limited amount of space for her retail space she would not be successful. Long noted the 30' was just the minimum and could have it larger. Costello noted the iPhone repair shop as an option where you have a front commercial unit and something else behind it.

Discussion on the footage depth needed to be determined and how to preserve the storefronts. More than thirty feet was needed and the board discussed percentages. A participant on Zoom noted they were here just for listening and to see how the board wished to change the supplemental text. Suddreth asked Day what worked well for her business. Day noted she has a very deep building with a lot of retail in it. She did not want us to lock down our retail building sizes. Espin asked for clarification on the text for who could use the storage, anyone could rent it, not just the business owner. The board felt fifty percent of the building would be sufficient for splitting up the building. Turner noted retail businesses should have a good amount of space for the patrons to shop. Queen moved to adopt the language as amended. The Town of North Wilkesboro's Planning Board deems the proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, in regards to warehousing, self-storage, is consistent with the Town's comprehensive plan, any small area plans or elements thereof and, does support the Comprehensive's Plan goals and policies. Further the proposed amendments regarding warehousing, self-storage is reasonable in the public's interest. The Planning Board recommends to approve the amendments to the Zoning Ordinance as written with one modification to include the following language in item (P) *An existing building within the Central Business District may be used for self-storage as long as a minimum of 50 percent of the store front is retained on the street front (excluding alleys) and access to the units shall be along the rear or side entrance of the building.* Turner seconded the motion and it passed unanimously 7-0.

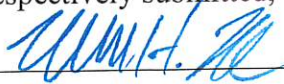
The next item under new business was a proposed text amendment to a text amendment for ground floor residential in our Central Business District. Mr. Fred Costello at 307 9th Street, Parcel ID 1401335 is the applicant. Detsch presented this item. The board will have discussion, a public hearing and vote if they choose to on this item tonight. The two sections of the Zoning Ordinance that are proposed to be changed are Article VI. Zoning Districts 6.7 Table of Uses and Article XI Supplemental Standards for Certain Uses, 11.7-12 Ground Floor Residential. This proposal would permit more buildings in our downtown to have ground floor residential. Again with text amendments, we want to look at our Comprehensive Plan much like the previous submittal. Those goals are: *Goal B.1 - Develop and Utilize Flexible Land Use Controls Goal, B.2- Maximize Redevelopment Potential for Vacant Structures and Parcels, and Goal B.3 - Strengthen Community Appearance.* Long asked if this text amendment had been before the Planning Board recently and Detsch noted it had. Detsch went through the language and noted the proposed changes. Currently our Zoning Ordinance only permits downtown residential units with a Special Use Permit, the footprint must be 4,500 square feet or larger and basement units are not permitted. Mr. Costello is looking to change the text to permit all buildings in our downtown to have the opportunity to put in first floor residential units. Other changes to the text include reducing the minimum square footage of the units, the first thirty feet must be retail or a restaurant and also add professional as an option for the front. The last item was a requirement for the interior of the commercial space visible from the street shall be in a finished condition prior to occupancy of the residential space. Nichols asked Detsch if she had given Mr. Costello the background on this text amendment and she had. Additionally Detsch noted after additional research her recommendation was to keep the Special Use Permit as each building downtown was different and unique and should be looked at individually verses a blanket approach. Nichols noted when this item came before them, it was months of meetings and was a very heated topic. Mr. Costello explained this proposal will be only permitting them in the rear. Mr. Costello noted it could be 50% like the self-storage text amendment. Mr. Costello noted the last item with the finished look in the front was added as the downtown currently

has areas unfinished and he was sensitive to that in the downtown. Detsch showed the board the downtown blocks with the different widths and lengths of buildings in just one block. Discussion of keeping the Special Use Permit and 50% frontage occurred among the members. Long noted using 50% may not add up to a 500 square footage for the units. Detsch noted that the market and building code will also regulate the size of the living quarters. Costello passed out a picture of his building and noted the front door on the street level with access to the top floor apartments. Discussion of permitting a door on the ground floor for top floor apartments is permitted but not if it's a ground floor apartment. Detsch read item 8, *No entrance, other than a side hallway along the property line mirroring existing CBD facades, is allowed from residential units to the street front.* Detsch explained that Building Code requires egress and ingress and we don't want the Zoning Code contradicting the Building Code. It was determined this item did not need to be amended. Long asked if it was consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Detsch noted these the goal from the Comprehensive Plan: *Maximize Redevelopment Potential for Vacant Structures and Parcels and the policies: Policy 20- Encourage building reuse by district, Policy 21- Encourage the use of existing buildings and sites within current town limits.* Discussion occurred regarding if the current text is still consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and if the newly proposed text is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan. Long moved to deny the proposal. The Town of North Wilkesboro's Planning Board deems the proposed amendments to the Zoning Ordinance, in regards to the Ground Floor Residential, is consistent with the Town's Comprehensive Plan, any small area plans or elements thereof and, does support the Comprehensive's Plan goals and policies. Further the proposed amendments regarding the ground floor residential in the Central Business District is not reasonable in the public's interest. The Planning Board recommends to deny the amendments to the Zoning Ordinance. Turner seconded the motion and it passed unanimously 7-0.

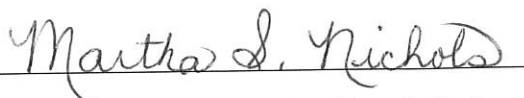
The last item of business was the staff reports. Detsch went over both the Planning & Inspections report and the Code Enforcement report with the board. The Outdoor Economy Plan is wrapping up and there will be more information on it in the coming months. The ADA and Greenway projects are currently on hold. The multi-family text is being worked on. We are working on lots of grant applications for Smoot Park. Traffic Calming is wrapping up and staff is looking at bump outs on Main Street and speed bumps on 6<sup>th</sup> street have been installed. Detsch went over the permits issued recently. Code Enforcement items were presented Detsch noted Bill Bailey replaced John Ganus and was catching up on the items. Detsch noted the violation from Nichols on 8<sup>th</sup> Street and staff will look into it.

With no other discussion Chair Nichols asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting. At 6:38 pm Turner moved to adjourn the meeting and Suddreth seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously 7-0.

Respectively submitted,



Meredith Detsch, Planning Director



Martha Nichols, Planning Board Chair *or*  
Danny Long, Planning Board Vice-Chair