

MINUTES
OF THE
HENDERSON COUNTY PLANNING BOARD
March 18, 2010

The Henderson County Planning Board met on March 18, 2010 for their regular scheduled meeting at 5:30 p.m. in the King Street Meeting Room located at 100 North King Street, Hendersonville, NC. Planning Board members present were Jonathan Parce, Chair; Tommy Laughter, Vice-Chair; Renee Kumor, Stacy Rhodes, Suprina Stepp and Rick Livingston. Others present included Anthony Starr, Planning Director; Autumn Radcliff, Senior Planner; Parker Sloan, Planner and Kathleen Scanlan, Secretary. Board members absent were Mike Cooper, Steve Dozier and Gary Griffin.

Chairman Parce called the meeting to order of the Henderson County Planning Board. He asked for the approval of February 18, 2010 regular meeting minutes. Renee Kumor made a motion to approve the minutes and Rick Livingston seconded the motion. All members voted in favor.

Adjustment of Agenda. Ms. Kumor mentioned that referring to her comment about steep slopes at last month's meeting she followed up the request to compose a letter to the Commissioners and has a draft of that for the Board's consideration. She asked that her item be added under Old Business after Item 4. Chairman Parce said her item would be heard as Item 4A.

OLD BUSINESS

Continued Discussion on the Etowah and Horse Shoe Communities Plan Implementation – R1 Residential Zoning Map Recommendation near the Etowah Golf Course - Presentation by Autumn Radcliff, Senior Planner. Ms. Radcliff stated at last month's Planning Board meeting there was much discussion concerning the proposed R1 zoning district near the Etowah Valley Country Golf Course. The Board asked Staff to discuss the proposed zoning with former committee members to determine why some of the area adjacent to the golf course was included and other adjacent areas were not. Ms. Radcliff showed the map with the Etowah-Horse Shoe Plan recommended zoning and two other maps that provided two proposed options based on the Boards' discussion. Option 1 recommendation is to expand the proposed R1 zoning to include parcels south of Joshua A. Ridge Road. This option would include 124 parcels and 102 acres. Option 2 recommendations are to apply the R1 zoning to the golf course property only and those parcels that connected between the existing R1 up to the golf course. There was some discussion regarding sewer availability. Ms. Radcliff said that it is in the vicinity of this area. Mr. Livingston asked Staff whether they contacted anyone on the Etowah-Horse Communities Committee regarding these proposals. Ms. Radcliff said that she had tried to get in touch with the Chairman and another Committee member, but they had not returned her call. After some brief discussion among Board members, it was the general consensus that they favored the Option 2 recommendation. Ms. Radcliff said that Staff can make the change. She stated that when Staff comes back with all of the final recommendations for approval, the Option 2 map will be included in the document and the properties will be posted before the Planning Board makes its final recommendation.

Letter to Commissioners regarding Steep Slopes – Renee Kumor. Chairman Parce stated that the reason for this interest was because of the numerous problems and articles concerning Carriage Park and their steep slope problems. Ms. Kumor had suggested at last month's meeting that a letter be drafted to the Commissioners asking whether they would like the Planning Board to look into the steep slopes and land slide issues relative to recent responses to protecting homes by increasing engineering designs and at some point, look into any response they would want the Planning Board to make regarding the USGS map in relation to these issues. She presented a letter to forward to the Board of Commissioners. Chairman Parce said if the Commissioners send this issue back for the Planning Board to study, then the Board should establish a subcommittee to study the issue with Staff to see what the Board could do. Ms. Kumor said she feels the Planning Board can be proactive so we can let the community know that we are aware of what is happening in the community and to try to offer guidance and advice to the County Commissioners. She said this can give the Commissioners

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the option to either let us go forward with studying these issues, wait until the USGS are complete or that they will take care of the issue, but she feels that the Planning Board at least should acknowledge to them our awareness of these issues. Chairman Parce stated that he would take care of sending the letter out to the Board of Commissioners.

NEW BUSINESS

Etowah and Horse Shoe Communities Plan Implementation – Open Space Plan Discussion – Presentation by Parker Sloan, Planner. Chairman Parce said that the Planning Board back in November, 2009 set a tentative monthly schedule to discuss specific topics of the Etowah and Horse Shoe Community Plan including Open Space Plan. This discussion's timeframe was for March and continuing through April and covering such topics as existing planned parks, trails and greenways, bike routes and sidewalks, unique natural features of developed areas that should be reserved, and sensitive areas such as floodplains, ridge tops and view sheds. Chairman Parce added that Staff wants us to discuss and give opinions on data sources and methods for identifying priority conservation areas of an Open Space Plan, appropriate regulations to fulfill this recommendation and prioritization of improvements such as sidewalks and greenways.

Mr. Sloan gave a PowerPoint presentation and discussed the open space priorities.

1. To develop and adopt an open space plan for the Etowah and Horse Shoe Communities in order to protect wetlands and flood areas and to further regulate floodplain development.
2. Protect rural character through open space regulations in the Etowah and Horse Shoe Communities.

Mr. Sloan stated that Staff has identified the priority conservation areas that are considered open space, which could be modified or added to.

1. Floodway and 100 year floodplain.
2. Steep slopes – 40% and greater and the associated protected mountain ridges in the Etowah-Horse Shoe area.
3. Existing Conservation Easements.
4. Natural Heritage Areas (swamps and bogs).
5. Potential Greenways and public parks.
6. Important area viewsheds and undeveloped land that connects additional open space. (Some of the areas were identified in the EHS Plan, such as Horseshoe Mountain and Ivy Knob, which are predominately comprised of undeveloped mountain tops and the areas that connect those mountains to the floodplain and rivers. They are bounded by roads and existing development boundaries.

Mr. Livingston asked who designated the natural heritage areas. Mr. Sloan stated that they are designated on a federal level and a state level for the species that are there, which are identified as endangered or threatened species in the swamps or bogs.

Mr. Sloan stated that the Greenway system has already been proposed by the Apple Country greenway Commission. He stated that the Etowah-Horse Shoe Plan specifically recommended:

1. Consideration on establishing a greenway between Hendersonville and Brevard on the existing Norfolk Southern railroad line.
2. Consideration on establishing a planning area service district for EHS to create revenue to support requested recreation improvements.

Mr. Sloan added that the greenways within Etowah-Horse Shoe boundary are approximately 15.8 miles and an additional 8.9 miles if you include the rail trail within Etowah-Horse Shoe boundary. Mr.

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Sloan added that the possible rail trail within Henderson County boundary is 12 miles and if Transylvania County is included, would make a total of 22 miles.

Mr. Sloan said that the Etowah Horse Shoe Plan request adding pedestrian-friendly measures in the core of the communities and to require sidewalks for all new commercial businesses along any road frontage located in areas zoned commercial. He said the sidewalk plan that we would create would be a long term vision for the Etowah area. He added that Staff has mapped out a possible sidewalk network, with total linear feet of 39,200. He said these maps were created with future needs in mind and based on existing land uses and key destinations. Mr. Sloan said that Staff would like to hear feedback from the Board on the locations of these sidewalks. He said NCDOT provided the various approximate costs noted in this presentation for sidewalks, but would be contingent upon final locations and the extent of commercial zoning. These costs do not include curb and gutter, stream crossings or any other stormwater controls. Mr. Sloan stated that the sidewalks can be funded in a variety of ways and would ultimately depend on the regulations and standards that the County might come up with. The approximate costs of some of the suggested areas are as follows:

- Morgan Road for both sides – 4,000 linear feet - \$ 66,500
- Portion of Highway 64 (Morgan Road area), single-sided sidewalk - \$ 66,500
- Single Sidewalk from Etowah Elementary to Etowah Park – 1,500 linear feet - \$ 25,000
- Brickyard Road sidewalk on one side – 2,000 linear feet - \$ 33,300
- Horse Shoe area – single sidewalk along their commercial zone and down All Star Lane to the potential greenway, to create a pedestrian loop in that area – 6,500 linear feet – total cost of \$ 108,000.

Mr. Sloan stated that the last of the open space items is dealing with public parks. Etowah Horse Shoe recommendations were to consider adding corner and neighborhood parks at central locations in the Planning area. County acquisition of land and major subdivisions fulfilling open space requirements could facilitate the establishment of parks. He said small parks serve the recreation needs of communities while enhancing the aesthetic appeal of commercial areas. Smaller parks could be privately maintained by HOAs if broader public use is not needed.

Mr. Livingston had questions concerning the recommendation under greenways regarding creating revenue to support requested recreation improvements. Mr. Starr stated that the statutes allow the counties to establish service districts after holding a public hearing and with a majority vote by the Board of Commissioners for several public services, one of those being fire service. There are two areas under the general statutes where fire tax districts can be established. One is the same area that the recreation service district can be established and it has its own statute. He said there is also beach erosion, recreation, sewer, and could be used for a higher level of recreation service than the rest of the county, but it would be restricted for that use. Mr. Livingston asked whether that would be voted on by the people of the area or would it be imposed on them. Mr. Starr stated that the statute does not authorize a referendum on the issue, it allows the Board, after holding a hearing gives them a couple of findings to vote on it, but it doesn't prohibit a referendum either. He said the referendum could be the deciding factor. Mr. Livingston added that he would not support this, unless it was put to a vote. He said if we were, the Planning Board could include a recommendation that the Commissioners seek a local bill or referendum to implement a service district for recreation as part of this Plan. Mr. Starr stated that the Recreation Advisory Board is also looking into this matter, as they will be looking directly at the recreation issues of the Etowah-Horse Shoe plan. He added that the Advisory Board is looking at a full scale recreational facility in that area. Based on the discussion regarding sidewalks, Chairman Parce feels the reason the Committee requested sidewalks in his opinion is to give it a smaller-town feel and a more walkable atmosphere. Mr. Starr added that he feels it was recommended because of esthetics, recreation, and a sense of community feeling. Chairman Parce said this Board in making recommendations, needs to keep an eye on what is

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feasible to do and what we would like to do and understand that there are some things we can not do. Mr. Starr added that the Committee did not have any expectation that the greenways, sidewalks and other things be done in a one-year or five-year or even ten-year period. They were looking at fifteen years or longer to accomplish all of their recommendations. Mr. Laughter said it is the charge of the Planning Board is the implementation of all of their recommendations. Mr. Starr said that Staff wants the Planning Board's feedback on whether the locations of the sidewalks and open space make sense and if they do, then how should they be prioritized. Mr. Livingston said that when you look at the needs that Henderson County has and you prioritize those needs, sidewalks in Etowah are not needed as he feels there are other things more crucial. If we decide on sidewalks for this community, then we need to do it for other communities of the County, should they request it.

Chairman Parce asked members if they are in agreement about the areas that the EHS committee identified as greenways. He added that he is in favor of the greenway trails near the river(s) and the rail to trail idea, but he also knows that there are limitations, as to whether or not it gets accomplished. Mr. Livingston stated that he would support the greenways along the river, but is unsure at this time about the railway trail, as he mentioned that more information needs to be provided, particularly concerning safety. He added that he would support the greenway trails over the sidewalks, because he doesn't feel that all of the sidewalks proposed will be used. Board members felt that sidewalks would be beneficial in the areas shown on the map indicated in dark red only, which is the most intense commercial development includes the Community Commercial frontage proposed in the Etowah Horse Shoe Plan which would include Brickyard Road to the Etowah Library and Etowah School Road area. In the Horse Shoe area, Board members felt the areas for sidewalks should be from the Horse Shoe Hardware Store to the Post Office (the dark red area indicated on the map).

Regarding the open space recommendations, Mr. Livingston stated that he was in favor of our floodplain areas being in our open space areas, but feels there should be more restrictions in the floodplain. Other Board members were also in favor of Mr. Livingston's comment and that the floodplain and floodway priorities were the most important. Regarding viewsheds and undeveloped land that connects additional open space; there importance was not a priority. They discussed the Natural Heritage areas and felt that more information should be brought back to Board members to review and discuss but should be left for the State Federal governments for regulations. The Existing Conservation Easements priority in the open space should be considered by the Carolina Mountain Land Conservatory (CMLC) and identify what the community has identified as open space. It was suggested that the CMLC come to our Planning Board meeting to discuss what open space areas they are working on. At next month's meeting there will be a continuation of the open space.

Staff Reports. Mr. Starr stated that the Board of Commissioners will be holding a public hearing for the Stormwater and Watershed Rule Amendments on March 30 at 7 p.m. The Commissioners will be discussing the French Broad River water intake at the April 5 Board of Commissioners meeting. Mr. Starr also reminded Board members to make sure to fill out the census form that was mailed to everyone. On the form, there are ten questions to answer and it should only take 10 minutes to fill it out. Questions concerning census can be found on the website at www.blueridge.com.

Public Input. Mr. Larry Rogers felt that the Chairman of the Etowah-Horse Communities should have been at the meeting to answer questions that were brought up by the Planning Board. Ms. Radcliff stated that she did contact the Chairman about this meeting, but received no call back.

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Adjournment There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m. All members voted in favor.

Jonathan Parce, Chairman
Henderson County Planning Board

Kathleen Scanlan, Secretary