

COLUMBUS PLANNING BOARD
Minutes of Regular Meeting
Tuesday, January 14, 2020

The Town of Columbus Planning Board met on Tuesday, January 14, 2020 at 6:04 p.m., at the Columbus Town Hall, 95 Walker Street, Columbus, North Carolina.

Roll Call: Kathleen Nowakowski
Virginia Green
Catherine Elliott
Marshall Watkins

Staff Present: Timothy J. Barth, Town Manager
Shana Atkins, Assistant Town Clerk

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m. A roll call was taken, and the chairman acknowledged all present except Jimmi Buell.

Public Comment

There were no public comments

Consideration of Minutes of the December 3, 2019 Board of Adjustments Meeting

Mrs. Nowakowski asked if there were any changes to the December 3, 2019 minutes. There were no changes requested. Mrs. Elliott made a motion to approve the December 3, 2019 minutes as written, Mr. Watkins seconded, and the motion carried unanimously.

Discussion of Section 3 (Existing Conditions) of the Comprehensive Plan

Dale Holland gave an overview of section 3, noting that the existing conditions section of the comprehensive plan is divided into sub-sections of environmental, community facility, transportation, and land use. Mr. Holland thanked the Town staff for all their help.

Distribution of Section 4 (Projections/Future Demand) of the Comprehensive Plan

Mr. Holland distributed section 4 of the comprehensive plan and stated it is intended to lay a foundation for a future land use map, goals, strategies, and implementation actions.

Discussion of Goals

Mr. Holland stated that he had received goals from three Planning Board members, which he consolidated, and from which has drafted eleven goals. Mr. Holland asked the Planning Board members to review the goals to ensure that they reflect what they want to see in the future for Columbus. Mr. Holland stated that once the Planning Board Members receive all the sections of the comprehensive plan, each member should review all sections and suggest any changes before the draft plan is taken to Town Council for final approval.

Discussion of Mid-Project Review Meeting

Mr. Holland stated that at the mid-project review meeting he will make a presentation of where the Town is with the comprehensive plan, present the future land use map draft, and give the

public an opportunity to ask questions and offer input. Mr. Holland suggested that the mid-project review meeting be held on February 4 at 6:00 pm as a joint meeting with Town Council.

Board Member Comments


Mrs. Nowakowski asked Mr. Barth what is going to be done to the old gas station near the interstate. Mr. Barth stated that the Department of Transportation (DOT) is going to buy the old gas station property. Mrs. Green stated that giving Main Street a facelift was one of her goals and that she would like to see all the historical buildings restored and updated to their natural beauty. Robert Williamson stated that years ago the Town had some street scape designs drafted that went from Walker Street to Blanton Street that could help with facelift ideas. Mr. Watkins suggested that the town streetlights be replaced and that something be done with the overhead wiring to improve appearances. Mrs. Nowakowski asked Mr. Barth if DOT is still going to widen the street. Mr. Barth replied that DOT is going to widen the street to three lanes starting where Bojangles is and go all the way to the library. Mr. Watkins asked if there is any kind of an incentive to give to a business to update their facade. Mr. Barth stated that other towns have created a fund to help businesses update their facade. Robert Williamson stated that the North Carolina Main Street program will offer grants to help beautify downtown areas, but the Town must be a part of the Main Street program to apply for the grant. Mr. Watkins stated that the Town is very dated, and he would like to see some improvements to the downtown area to help attract visitors and new businesses.


Mr. Barth stated that the owner of Blue Water Pools and Spas stated that he will finish work on the exterior of the building and landscaping once funding becomes available. Mr. Watkins asked if a date for compliance could be set. Mr. Barth stated that he could send a letter to the business or ask the owner to come before the Planning Board with an explanation for delays.

Robert Williamson stated that Bojangles' outdoor lighting illuminates his back yard at night because the business does not turn their lights off after closing, which is a clear violation of the town's zoning ordinance. Mr. Barth stated that Bojangles has been notified that they must turn the lights off at night after closing, and if the problem persists, he will take further action.

Mrs. Nowakowski stated that she would like to step down as chairman of the Planning Board, but that she would still like to be a board member and asked if anyone else is interested in position of chairman. Mrs. Elliott expressed interest and mentioned attending training classes on May 15 in Asheville. Mr. Barth stated that the town will cover the cost of the training. Mr. Barth stated that he has received several applications for the Planning Board and that he will take the applications before the Town Council to appoint two alternate members.

There being no other business to discuss Mrs. Elliott made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Watkins seconded, and the meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.


Kathleen Nowakowski, Chairman


Shana Atkins, Assistant Town Clerk