



Planning Board Minutes

Thursday, January 10, 2019, 5:30 p.m.
Bryant Womack Justice & Administration Center
40 Courthouse Street
Columbus, North Carolina 28722

Members Present: Gerald Pack (Acting Chair), Neal Barton, Alexander Hagerty, Lee Barker

Member(s) Absent: Wayne Horne, Warren Watson, John Rose, Libby Morris

Staff Present: Cathy Ruth (County Planner) and Hannah Lynch (Secretary)

Members of the Public Present: Tommy Melton (County Commissioner), Emily Clark

- I. **Call to Order** – As Chair Libby Morris was absent, Gerald Pack was named acting chair to move forward with the meeting.
 - Acting Chair Gerald Pack called the meeting to order.

- II. **Approval of Agenda**
 - Barker made a motion to approve the agenda. Hagerty seconded. All voted in favor and the motion passed (4-0).

- III. **Approval of August 9, 2018 Minutes and November 9, 2018 Minutes**
 - Barker made a motion to approve the August 9, 2018 and November 9, 2018 minutes. Barton seconded. All voted in favor and the motion passed (4-0).

- IV. **Wireless Telecommunication Ordinance updates**
 - Board resumed discussion regarding C.O.W.s from the August 9, 2018 and November 9, 2018 meeting. County Planner Cathy Ruth proposed the changes to Board. All agreed to remove the words “emergency basis” from the COW definition.
 - Planner Ruth gave presentation on federally mandated addition to Wireless Telecommunication Ordinance on Small Cell Wireless Facilities.

- Board agreed on postponing the decision on this recommendation to the next meeting.

V. Zoning Ordinance Updates

- Planner Ruth gave presentation on residential Wind Energy turbines.
 - Pack suggested bringing in an expert on the subject at the next meeting to explain more about turbines. Board agreed that more education on the subject would be helpful. It was agreed that Staff would try to find someone to speak with knowledge of wind energy.
- Planner Ruth went over proposed changes to incorporate Board of Adjustment (BOA) member information in Zoning Ordinance from three alternates to five.
- Planner Ruth went over proposed change to remove “structure” from the definition of “Building Height” in Zoning Ordinance. Board agreed on this.
- Ruth discussed Zoning Ordinance Staff Report to Board of Commissioners for the changes for BOA vacancies, and clarifying standards, definitions, and processes with consistency statement.
 - Pack made a motion to approve the changes discussed and plan is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan in the Staff Report. Barker seconded. All voted in favor and the motion passed (4-0).

VI. Other Business - None

VII. Public Comments

- Tommy Melton there will be concerns with the height, the noise, and the visual appeal of wind turbines.

VIII. Adjournment

- Pack made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 PM. Barton seconded. All voted in favor and the motion passed (4-0).



Planning Board Minutes

Thursday, February 14, 2019, 5:30 p.m.
Bryant Womack Justice & Administration Center
40 Courthouse Street
Columbus, North Carolina 28722

Members Present: Lee Barker, Alexander Hagerty, Libby Morris, Gerald Pack, John Rose, and Warren Watson

Member(s) Absent: Neal Barton and Wayne Horne

Staff Present: Cathy Ruth (County Planner)

Members of the Public Present: Tommy Melton (County Commissioner) and William Deck (Calvert Commons)

I. Call to Order

- Libby Morris called the meeting to order.

II. Approval of Agenda

- Gerald Pack made a motion to move Item IV Planning Board Chair Vote following Item VII Wind Turbines, seconded by John Rose. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

III. Approval of January 10, 2019 Minutes

- Gerald Pack made a motion to approve the January 10, 2019 minutes, seconded by John Rose. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

IV. Calvert Common Extension Request

- William Deck from Calvert Commons was present to request an extension of one year of his approved minor subdivision, which is permissible under the Subdivision Ordinance. He explained he has had some interest in buyers and hopes to work out a deal soon.

- Gerald Pack made a motion to extend the minor subdivision for one year, John Rose seconded. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

V. Wireless Telecommunication Ordinance updates

- Planner Ruth gave presentation on federally mandated addition to Wireless Telecommunication Ordinance on Small Cell Wireless Facilities and Carriers on Wheels or Cell on Wheels (COW).
- Libby made a motion to include the phrase, “The Planning Board has found this request is consistent with the Polk County 20/20 Vision Comprehensive Plan, adopted March 15, 2010, amended September 18, 2017.” This was seconded by Gerald Pack. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

VI. Wind Turbine Discussion Updates

- Planner Ruth told the Board there will be a speaker at the March meeting from Appalachian State University, Brent Summerville from the Department of Sustainable Technology and the Built Environment.
 - The Board discussed including in upcoming meetings the topics of solar panels, cradle to grave requirements, and lighting regulations.

VII. Planning Board Chair Vote

- Cathy Ruth read the bylaws for voting for Chair. She opened the floor for nominations. Warren Watson nominated Libby Morris as Chair, seconded by John Rose. No other nominations were presented. Libby Morris was voted as Chair unanimously.
- Cathy Ruth handed the floor back over to Chair Libby Morris. Alexander Hagerty nominated Warren Watson for Vice-Chair, seconded by Libby Morris. Warren Watson was voted as Vice-Chair unanimously.
- Libby Morris nominated Hannah Lynch as Secretary, seconded by Warren Watson. Hannah Lynch was voted as Secretary unanimously.

VIII. Other Business – County Tours

- Cathy Ruth explained when the 20/20 Vision Plan was being made, the Board members were offered tours of the county. It gave great insight as the overall plan was being created. She offered the same tours to the Planning Board on March 5th at 9 a.m. and March 6th at 1 p.m. She asked members to call the office if they were interested.

IX. Public Comments

- Tommy Melton said there will be concerns with the public with wind turbines and light regulations.

X. Adjournment

- Gerald Pack made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Lee Barker. All voted in favor and the motion passed.



Planning Board Minutes

Thursday, March 14, 2019, 5:30 p.m.
Bryant Womack Justice & Administration Center
40 Courthouse Street
Columbus, North Carolina 28722

Members Present: Lee Barker, Alexander Hagerty, Libby Morris (Chair), Gerald Pack, John Rose, Wayne Horne, Neal Barton

Member(s) Absent: Warren Watson

Staff Present: Cathy Ruth (County Planner), Hannah Lynch (Secretary)

Members of the Public Present: Tommy Melton (County Commissioner), Jason Faulds, Joann Leen, Emily Clark

I. Call to Order

- Libby Morris called the meeting to order.

II. Approval of Agenda

- Neal Barton made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by John Rose. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

III. Approval of February 14, 2019 Minutes

- John Rose made a motion to approve the February 14, 2019 minutes, seconded by Lee Barker. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

IV. Wind Energy Presentation & Discussion

- Brent Summerville of Appalachian State University gave a presentation on wind turbines, a copy of which is hereby incorporated by reference into these minutes. Mr. Summerville explained the history of wind turbines in Boone, NC and went over several examples of turbines around the area. He answered questions from the Board and the public. The Board agreed to review the information presented to discuss further at a future meeting.

V. Other Business – Cradle to Grave Requirements for Solar Farms and Lighting Regulations

- Planner Ruth passed out a handout on Lighting Regulations from surrounding counties including Henderson County, Cleveland County, and Buncombe County.
- Planner Ruth spoke on the existing presence of a Cradle to Grave requirement for solar panels in the Polk County Zoning Ordinance.

VI. Public Comments

- The public asked questions on wind turbines and regulations.

VII. Adjournment

- Lee Barker made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Gerald Pack. All voted in favor and the motion passed.



Planning Board Minutes

Thursday, April 11, 2019, 5:30 p.m.
Bryant Womack Justice & Administration Center
40 Courthouse Street
Columbus, North Carolina 28722

Members Present: Alexander Hagerty, Gerald Pack, John Rose, Wayne Horne, Neal Barton, Warren Watson (Acting Chair)

Member(s) Absent: Libby Morris, Lee Barker

Staff Present: Cathy Ruth (County Planner), Hannah Lynch (Secretary)

Members of the Public Present: Tommy Melton (County Commissioner), Jake Johnson (County Commissioner), Emily Clark, Mike Rigney

I. Call to Order

- Warren Watson called the meeting to order.

II. Approval of Agenda

- Alexander Hagerty made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by John Rose. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

III. Approval of March 14, 2019 Minutes

- John Rose made a motion to approve the March 14, 2019 minutes, seconded by Wayne Horne. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

IV. Wind Energy Discussion

- Cathy Ruth briefly went over the presentation by Brent Summerville at the March 14, 2019 meeting. The Board discussed whether or not it would be beneficial to address wind turbines in the Zoning Ordinance, and how to restrict them. Neal Barton requested a copy of the Henderson County Zoning Ordinance which addresses wind turbines. The consensus of the Board was to table this issue for a few months for further review.

V. Wireless Telecommunications Ordinance Discussion

- Cathy Ruth explained the Board of Commissioners' request for the Planning Board to study the option of allowing towers in areas that have limited cell service, and address the requirements for obtaining a wireless communication tower permit. She gave a presentation with information on the current cellular and broadband coverage in the county.
- Mike Rigney, a member of the public and homeowner in Hunting Country, explained he was able to speak to an analyst at Verizon about his lack of coverage. It was determined by Verizon that while there is coverage at his home, he is in a "dead spot" due to the topography of the area. He also stated Verizon believed it financially infeasible to put enough towers in a sparsely populated area to eliminate the dead zones. He explained he sits on the Hunting County Homeowner's Association Board and while they are happy with their current zoning not allowing towers, they would be open to considering a tower if a company were to come forward to propose one.
- County Commissioner Tommy Melton stated nothing is more important in Polk County than the youth, and every child should have the same opportunities to learn and promote themselves. If there are children without adequate cellular and broadband coverage, however, they do not have that opportunity. He questioned if the Board would want to look at zoning the currently unzoned area for towers, to which Cathy Ruth replied currently, it is already easier to get a tower in unzoned areas than in zoned areas.
- The Board requested staff members find an expert on the subject to present at a future meeting.

VI. Other Business

- Cathy Ruth informed the Board about Volunteer Appreciation Month and thanked them for their time and service.

VII. Public Comments

- Mike Rigney acknowledged the subject of wireless towers is difficult and thanked the Planning Board for their effort.

VIII. Adjournment

- Gerald Pack made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Wayne Horne. All voted in favor and the motion passed.



Planning Board Minutes

Thursday, July 11, 2019, 5:30 p.m.
Bryant Womack Justice & Administration Center
40 Courthouse Street
Columbus, North Carolina 28722

Members Present: Alexander Hagerty, Gerald Pack, Wayne Horne, Neal Barton, Lee Barker, Libby Morris (Chair)

Member(s) Absent: Warren Watson, John Rose

Staff Present: Cathy Ruth (County Planner), Hannah Lynch (Secretary)

I. Call to Order

Libby Morris called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

II. Approval of Agenda

Lee Barker made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Wayne Horne. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

III. Approval of April 11, 2019 Minutes

Neal Barton made a motion to approve the April 11, 2019 minutes, seconded by Lee Barker. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

IV. Crick Holly Acres Extension Request

Scott Roach from Odom Engineering was present to request a one-year extension of the preliminary approval of minor subdivision Crick Holly Acres. He explained all other permits obtained for the project were still valid.

The Planning Board discussed and agreed a one-year extension would be appropriate. Gerald Pack made a motion to extend the preliminary approval of minor subdivision for one year, seconded by Neal Barton. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

- V. Presentation from Keith Conover – NC Broadband Infrastructure Office**
Keith Conover from the North Carolina Broadband Infrastructure Office was present to give a presentation on broadband availability in Polk County. Also attending were County Manager and Pangaea Board of Director, Marche Pittman, and representatives from Pangaea, Executive Director, Ron Walters, and Operations Director, Ken Griffin.

Cathy Ruth explained the Board of Commissioners requested the Planning Board study the option of allowing towers in areas with limited cell service, and address the requirements for obtaining a wireless communication permit. She requested a better understanding of the correlation between cellular towers, broadband, fiber, and other resources.

Mr. Conover explained the role of broadband in Polk County and several factors that can prohibit companies from coming into the county. Marche Pittman went over the current technology in place in the county with the assistance of Ron Walters and Ken Griffin from Pangaea. The Board asked questions of all speakers and agreed to look further in depth at the Wireless Telecommunication Ordinance at the next meeting.

- VI. Ordinance Updates – Junkyard, Subdivision, and Well Ordinances**
Cathy Ruth discussed necessary updates to the Junkyard and Subdivision Ordinances to change the name of the health department to the Polk County Health and Human Services Agency.

Cathy Ruth also explained Jana Berg, County Attorney, recommended repealing the Construction and Abandonment of Wells Ordinance due to the state having jurisdiction over well regulation. The Board discussed all changes and asked whether the 1000' guideline in the existing Construction and Abandonment of Wells Ordinance was enforceable due to it being a more stringent requirement. Cathy Ruth agreed to ask Jana Berg about this, and the Board agreed to table the decision to the next meeting.

Alexander Hagerty made a motion to postpone the decision, seconded by Libby Morris. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

- VII. Other Business - None**

- VIII. Public Comments - None**

- IX. Adjournment**

Wayne Horne made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Gerald Pack. All voted in favor and the motion passed. Meeting was adjourned at 6:52 PM.



Planning Board Minutes

Thursday, August 8, 2019, 5:30 p.m.
Bryant Womack Justice & Administration Center
40 Courthouse Street
Columbus, North Carolina 28722

Members Present: Libby Morris (Chair), Neal Barton, Wayne Horne, John Rose, Alexander Hagerty, Warren Watson

Member(s) Absent: Lee Barker, Gerald Pack

Staff Present: Cathy Ruth (County Planner), Hannah Lynch (Secretary)

I. Call to Order

Libby Morris called the meeting to order at 5:34 PM.

II. Approval of Agenda

Libby Morris requested items four and five of the agenda be swapped. John Rose made a motion to approve the agenda with the proposed change, seconded by Wayne Horne. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

III. Approval of July 11, 2019 Minutes

John Rose made a motion to approve the July 11, 2019 minutes, seconded by Neal Barton. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

IV. Ordinance Updates – Junkyard, Subdivision, and Well Ordinances

Cathy Ruth discussed necessary updates to the Junkyard and Subdivision Ordinances to change the name of the health department to the Polk County Health and Human Services Agency.

Cathy Ruth also explained Jana Berg, County Attorney, recommended repealing the Construction and Abandonment of Wells Ordinance due to the state having jurisdiction over well regulation. At the July 11, 2019 meeting the Planning Board requested clarification from Jana Berg on whether the 1000' setback imposed by the county could be enforced. Jana Berg confirmed the county cannot enforce this and the Well Ordinance should be repealed.

A recommendation was issued by the Planning Board to the Board of Commissioners for the proposed changes to the Junkyard and Subdivision Ordinances, and for the rescission of the Well Ordinance. Libby Morris made a motion for this recommendation to be accepted, seconded by John Rose. A vote was taken and all were in favor.

V. Wireless Telecommunications Ordinance Discussion

Cathy Ruth gave an overview of the presentations from the July 11, 2019 Planning Board meeting and went through the requirements for a new wireless tower to be constructed within Polk County. The Planning Board discussed these requirements and the benefits of making the Zoning Districts in Polk County more liberal to potentially allow more towers in areas they are currently not permitted.

Warren Watson made a motion to have Cathy Ruth and the Planning Department look at the impact of making all Zoning Districts within Polk County where towers are not currently permitted a Conditional Use permit. This was seconded by Libby Morris. A vote was taken and all were in favor. This information will be presented at the September 12, 2019 Planning Board meeting.

VI. Other Business - None

VII. Public Comments - None

VIII. Adjournment

Libby Morris made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Wayne Horne. All voted in favor and the motion passed. Meeting was adjourned at 6:16 PM.



Planning Board Minutes

Thursday, September 12, 2019, 5:30 p.m.
Bryant Womack Justice & Administration Center
40 Courthouse Street
Columbus, North Carolina 28722

Members Present: Libby Morris (Chair), Neal Barton, Lee Barker, John Rose, Alexander Hagerty, Warren Watson, Gerald Pack

Member(s) Absent: Wayne Horne

Staff Present: Cathy Ruth (County Planner), Hannah Lynch (Secretary)

I. Call to Order

Libby Morris called the meeting to order at 5:32 PM.

II. Approval of Agenda

Gerald Pack made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by John Rose. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

III. Approval of August 8, 2019 Minutes

Libby Morris made a motion to approve the August 8, 2019 minutes, seconded by Gerald Pack. All voted in favor and the motion passed.

IV. Wireless Telecommunications Ordinance Discussion

Cathy Ruth gave an overview of the August 8, 2019 discussion regarding relaxing wireless tower requirements in the county. She explained the Planning Board requested all areas not currently zoned to allow towers be made into Conditional Use Permit required districts. She explained this would be appropriate for towers 60' or taller currently requiring a non-administrative approval, but unfortunately for towers less than 60' this would be excessive. Towers less than 60' in height require an administrative approval which is a shorter timeline than non-administrative, and making these conditional use would make the approval process 30-60 days. The State has required Small Wireless Facilities be approved or denied within 30

days, or an automatic approval is granted, and making these Conditional Use would make the timeline too long.

The Board discussed making administratively-approved towers less than 60' in height a permitted use in the county. The Board agreed this would give county citizens the most opportunity to receive better cellular service, and thus allow the children and students in the county access to the technology needed in today's age for school. This would also allow neighborhoods not wanting these towers to have their voices heard at the public hearing for the change.

The Board agreed on issuing a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners to make all Zoning Districts where towers are not currently permitted with an administrative approval (Towers *see Polk County Wireless Telecommunication Ordinance^{xix}), permitted with conditions (P*), and also to make all Zoning Districts where towers are not currently permitted with a non-administrative approval (Towers - Non-Administrative Approval, Section 304 *Polk County Wireless Telecommunications Ordinance^{xix}), permitted with a Conditional Use permit (C*).

A recommendation was issued by the Planning Board to the Board of Commissioners for the proposed change to the Polk County Zoning Ordinance. Gerald Pack made a motion for this recommendation to be accepted, seconded by John Rose. A vote was taken and all were in favor.

V. Other Business

- **United States Census 2020** – Cathy Ruth went over a presentation for the 2020 United States Census and the Complete Count Committee being created to spread the word about the upcoming Census. She gave historical information on the background of the Census and talked about the merits of high participation for the county. The goal for the state is 80% participation, but Polk County is hoping for 100%, as this has a direct effect on the funding received and the representation for the state of North Carolina.
- **2019 County Map Book** – Cathy Ruth went through the 2019 County Map Book published by the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners. This publication lists the rating for all counties in North Carolina for many different attributes. The Board discussed several of these and what it means for Polk County.

VI. Public Comments - None

VII. Adjournment

Gerald Pack made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Lee Barker. All voted in favor and the motion passed. Meeting was adjourned at 6:34 PM.

PLANNING BOARD
November 14, 2019 - 5:30 PM
Bryant H. Womack Building
40 Courthouse Street
Columbus, NC 28722
MINUTES

Members Present: Libby Morris (Chair), Neal Barton, Lee Barker, John Rose, Wayne Horne, Gerald Pack

Member(s) Absent: Alexander Hagerty, Warren Watson

Staff Present: Cathy Ruth (County Planner), Hannah Lynch (Secretary)

1. Call to Order

Libby Morris called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM.

2. Approval of Agenda

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Lee Barker, seconded by Gerald Pack. A vote was taken and all were in favor. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Approval of Minutes

A. Approval of September 12, 2019 Minutes

A motion to approve the minutes from the September 12, 2019 Planning Board meeting was made by Gerald Pack, seconded by Lee Barker. A vote was taken and all were in favor. The motion carried unanimously.

4. Group Development Application - Brandon Searcy

Cathy Ruth (County Planner) presented the application from Brandon Searcy, and a recommendation from the Planning and Zoning Office, for a group development consisting of storage units and the existing garage located at 1814 NC Hwy 108 #, Columbus, NC 28722, Polk County tax parcel P97-42. Ruth explained the use of storage units requires a conditional use permit in the Multiple Use zoning district. A site plan was handed out. Buildings A-D were previously approved on a past Conditional Use permit, and recently buildings E and F were approved for a Conditional Use permit. The garage and some of the units are already located on the property, however a group development was needed.

Lee Barker noted the use fits well and is in harmony with the neighborhood in which it is located. Gerald Pack agreed.

Gerald Pack made a motion to approve the group development as written in the recommendation from the County Planner, Libby Morris seconded. A vote was taken and all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.

5. Group Development Application - Jonathan Rowe

Cathy Ruth (County Planner) presented the application from Jonathan Rowe, and a recommendation from the Planning and Zoning Office, for a group development consisting of storage units located on Hwy 9 in Green Creek, Polk County tax parcel P97-4. Ruth explained for this application, and all further applications requiring a conditional use permit and a group development, the Planning Board would be deciding on the group development prior to the approval of the conditional use permit by the Board of Adjustment.

Lee Barker expressed concerns over the use being located in an area surrounded by many residences, and the use not being in harmony with the existing neighborhood. Ruth explained the question of harmony would be decided by the Board of Adjustment, however Barker does believe it is within the jurisdiction of the Planning Board to also consider this point.

Jonathan Rowe answered questions from the Planning Board about the aesthetics of the plan in regards to lighting and screening of the property.

Libby Morris made a motion to approve the group development application by accepting the recommendation as written by the County Planner, with the request for a planting to be installed at the top of the steep berm to the east of buildings 7-10, and for the lighting to be low-impact and respectful. Gerald Pack seconded the motion, and a vote was taken. Five members voted in support with Neal Barton abstaining. The motion passed.

Abstain: Barton

6. Other Business

Cathy Ruth briefly discussed NC Chapter 160D and went over changes to all ordinances that will be required by the end of 2020.

Ruth also discussed the four positions open on the Planning Board and losing Libby Morris for a year due to term regulations.

7. Public Comments

8. Adjournment

Gerald Pack made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:21 PM, seconded by Wayne Horne. A vote was taken and all were in favor. The motion passed unanimously.