

Buncombe County Planning Board
August 19, 2013

The Buncombe County Planning Board met August 19, 2013 in the meeting room at 30 Valley Street. Members present were Bud Sales, Jim Young, Josh Holmes, Vice Chairman Bernie Kessel, Michelle Wood, Catherine Martin, and Greg Phillips. Also present were Michael Frue, Staff Attorney; Josh O'Conner, Zoning Administrator; Terry Gentry, Assistant Fire Marshal; and Gillian Phillips and Debbie Truempy, Planning staff.

Call to Order

Vice Chairman Kessel called the meet to order at 9:31 am.

Approval of Agenda

Mr. Holmes made a motion to approve the agenda as submitted. Mr. Sales seconded and the motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes (June 17, 2013)

Mr. Holmes made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted. Ms. Wood seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Discussion

Family Developments

The Board discussed the family subdivision exemption and the family exemption contained within the Mobile Home Park Ordinance. Terry Gentry was present to discuss the difficulties of emergency services in getting to certain areas of the County due to inadequate access. Mr. Gentry provided examples of such roads. Mr. Sales, who was previously a Chief at one of the County's volunteer fire departments, also provided the Board with examples of sub-standard access for emergency service and talked about the importance of these issues. Mr. Gentry talked about the speed at which fires spread if you could not get to a property. Mr. Young brought up the issue of cost. The Board discussed the issues regarding access, and the need to regulate access. The Board discussed with Mr. Gentry what the minimum requirement for access to a subdivision was. Mr. Gentry discussed issues regarding home owner's insurance if a home was not accessible by emergency services.

Public Utilities/Solar Power

Mr. O'Conner discussed the need to regulate public utilities, including regulating solar power farms, in reference to size, disturbance, and decommissioning of sites through the Conditional Use Permit process. Mr. Young discussed some of the requirements for a large solar farm, as the company he was employed with had a division that constructed solar farms. He indicated that he could have someone from the company come speak to the Board if they so desired. Mr. O'Conner described some of the companies that had already contacted him regarding development of solar farms in Buncombe County. There was discussion regarding solar panels on roofs and solar shingles, and how the proposed regulations would affect them.

Wind Energy

Ms. Phillips discussed the need to regulate wind energy at a further scale given the safety concerns associated with wind turbines. Ms. Phillips described the different types of wind energy facilities staff was proposing, that they require a Conditional Use Permit within most zoning districts, and the creation

of a separate ordinance regulating the facilities similar to the Telecommunications Ordinance. Ms. Phillips then went on to describe some of the concerns associated with wind turbines including shadow flicker, noise, issues associated with disrupting bird migration, decommissioning of sites not being used, and safety issues. There was discussion regarding where wind energy facilities were located in the Appalachian Mountain Range. Mr. Kessel discussed the issues with one near property his family owned in West Virginia. Mr. Young discussed federal and state tax credits available for projects similar to this and solar farms.

Black Oak Cove Slide

The Board then discussed the recent issues with a slope failure and foundation failure at the Black Oak Cove area in Beaverdam. There was discussion regarding how our overlay regulations would have affected the construction of the house in question, and what issues at the site contributed to the slope failure. There was discussion regarding how the slope failure had affected not only the homeowner but surrounding neighbors whose access to their property had been cut off.

Public Comment

There was no one present who wished to make public comment. Staff reviewed the status of the Asheville ETJ, and indicated that since the zoning of the area had passed we would have a period where map amendments within the ETJ were free, and might see an increase in the number of map amendments.

Adjournment

Ms. Wood made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Sales seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.