

Town of Montreat
Planning & Zoning Commission (P&Z)
Meeting Agenda
July 27th, 2023, 10:30 a.m.
Montreat Town Hall, 1210 Montreat Rd., Black Mountain, NC 28711
And via Zoom (please visit the Town website)

I. CALL TO ORDER

- Welcome
- Moment of Silence

II. ADOPTION OF AGENDA

III. ADOPTION OF APRIL 27, 2023 & JUNE 15, 2023 MEETING MINUTES

IV. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

- Hillside Development Subcommittee
- Montreat Sign Ordinance Subcommittee
- Zoning Ordinance Amendments Research Subcommittee

V. NEW BUSINESS

- Comprehensive Plan Public Engagement Summary from Board of Commissioners Meeting 7/14/23.
- Discuss amendment of P&Z Ordinance and bylaws for participation by non-board members.

VI. NEXT MEETING

- October 19th, 2023, 10:30 a.m.

VII. PUBLIC COMMENT

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Board members: Wade Burns
Dan Dean
Julie Schell
Bill Scheu
Sally Stansill, Alternate Representative
Bill Tucker, Alternate Representative
Allen Crawford, ETJ Representative

Board members absent: John Hinkle
Liz Johnson

Town staff present: Kayla DiCristina, Zoning Administrator
Angie Murphy, Town Clerk

There were no members of the public present. Mr. Scheu called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m., and led the group in a moment of silence after a brief welcome.

Agenda Approval

Julie Schell moved to approve the agenda as presented. Allen Crawford seconded and the motion carried 7/0.

Meeting Minutes Adoption

Dan Dean moved to approve the January 19, 2023 Meeting Minutes. Sally Stansill seconded and the motion carried 7/0.

Subcommittee Updates

- Hillside Development Subcommittee: Wade Burns advised that his subcommittee is looking at the ordinance with regards to the restriction of development area that creates an issue of math. The subcommittee is also looking at what the community would like to see happen with Hillside Development as well as what the Comprehensive Plan states. The next meeting of the Hillside Development Subcommittee is Wednesday, May 3rd at 4:00 p.m.
- Montreat Sign Ordinance Subcommittee: Kayla DiCristina advised that she passed on the draft sign ordinance to Chair John Hinkle for review and she was just waiting on him to schedule a meeting.
- Zoning Ordinance Amendments Research Subcommittee: Dan Dean stated that his subcommittee is still waiting for the Montreat Lodge controversy to resolve itself before

moving forward with zoning ordinance amendments. The hearing is set for the first week in May.

New Business

Kayla DiCristina mentioned that at the back of the meeting packet there was a list of examples of language that would allow amendments of planned unit developments. At a training that occurred in January it was brought up that Montreat's current zoning ordinance does not allow any revisions to approved planned unit developments. Ms. DiCristina also advised that the NC General Statutes dictates that any amendments that are allowed need to be specifically spelled out in the ordinance. Ms. DiCristina stated that there was no action needed on this subject but she wanted to make sure everyone had the information.

Ms. DiCristina advised that the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee is in the process of wrapping up the Comprehensive Plan preparation process. Ms. DiCristina anticipates the Committee to recommend approval of the plan at their next meeting on May 30, 2023 at 10:00 a.m. in Town Hall. The NC State Statute requires that to adopt a Comprehensive Plan certain advertisement requirements must be accomplished. Because of those requirements Ms. DiCristina is looking at a potential July Board of Commissioners adoption as well as a Planning & Zoning review and recommendation of approval before the final adoption. Ms. DiCristina will make sure that the Planning & Zoning Commission has the completed plan a week in advance of the scheduled Special Meeting.

Next Meeting

Special Meeting Thursday, June 15th at 10:00 a.m.

Regular Meeting Thursday, July 20th at 10:30 a.m.

Public Comment

There was no public comment at this time.

Adjournment

Dan Dean moved to adjourn the meeting. Sally Stansill seconded and the meeting was adjourned at 10:41 a.m.

Bill Scheu, Chair

Angie Murphy, Town Clerk

Board members: Wade Burns
Dan Dean
John Hinkle
Liz Johnson
Julie Schell
Bill Scheu, Chair
Bill Tucker, Alternate Representative
Allen Crawford, ETJ Representative

Board members absent: Sally Stansill, Alternate Representative

Town staff present: Kayla DiCristina, Zoning Administrator

There were several members of the public present. Mr. Scheu called the meeting to order at 10:30 a.m., and led the group in a moment of silence after a brief welcome.

Agenda Approval

Julie Schell moved to approve the agenda as presented. Allen Crawford seconded and the motion carried 8/0.

Special Note

The Town Clerk was absent from this meeting and the recording was not started until after the meeting began. The minutes below pick up where the meeting is in progress.

Recommendation on *Montreat Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan*

Dan Dean suggested adding a period after “..are increasing)” on page ten in the top of the second column. Chair Bill Scheu suggested removing “it is believed” from second column of page ten. Zoning Administrator Kayla DiCristina stated that the Steering Committee specifically chose to use the words “it is believed” but stated that if everyone was comfortable those words could be removed. Chair Scheu also suggested adding an “s” to the word strain in the sixth sentence up from the bottom of page ten. Bill Tucker referenced an inconsistency in Figure 2-4 on the bottom of page ten in which the verbiage in the paragraph above the graph stated that Montreat’s full-time population had been steadily increasing since 2010. Mr. Tucker felt the inconsistency was with the

graph because the graph showed a decrease in population in 2011 and 2012. I was decided to change 2010 to 2012.

Dan Dean suggested a minor change in the second column on page eleven. The sentence shall read "Home values are rising more slowly in Montreat than in the county and state." Chair Scheu requested more delineation in the coloring of the graph in Figure 2-6 on page eleven.

Dan Dean expressed some issues with the maps in Figure 2-7 on pages twelve and thirteen with respect to the colors for full time residency and unimproved lots. Ms. DiCristina stated that the consultants looked at the owner's address and the property address and if they were the same it was considered to be full time residency. Ms. DiCristina mentioned that the maps might need to be removed because they could be considered misleading.

Dan Dean had a comment about bike suitable roads which are pictured in Figure 2-8 on page fourteen and discussed on page seventeen. The discussion mentions that Land-of-Sky Regional Council identified the bike suitable roads of Virginia Road and West Virginia Terrace. Ms. DiCristina stated that she was under the impression that the bike suitability report came from Buncombe County rather than Land-of-Sky Regional Council. Ms. DiCristina asked MS Consultants for clarification of bike suitable roads and they were unable to provide any to her. Mr. Dean questions the accuracy of saying that Virginia Road and West Virginia Terrace are bike suitable. Ms. DiCristina stated that she would again ask for clarification as to what plan bike suitability derived and is she does not get an answer the data set can be removed a general statement about bike suitability/friendly can be added. Dan Dean asked for further clarification on "high value recreational uses" on page seventeen. It was suggested to remove "high value" from that sentence.

Dan Dean stated that "EJT" should be corrected to "ETJ" on the bottom of page twenty-two.

Dan Dean suggested removing the word "conception" and adding "inception" on page twenty-five.

Bill Tucker suggested adding the word "is" after the word "debris" on page twenty-six. Dan Dean suggested changing "cost" to "caused" in the block on page twenty-six entitled "Wildfires & Landslides". Dan Dean also pointed out that in the caption under the bottom picture the word "and" needs to be changed to "an".

Dan Dean suggested adding some punctuation to a sentence on page forty-three. Dan Dean also suggested inserting the word "which" in front of "may" in the left column.

Bill Scheu suggested inserting "which" before "Montreat" and "may face" after "Montreat" in the narrative in the left column on page forty-eight. Bill Scheu also suggested some consistency in tense in the colored blocks by adding "will" in between "Montreat" and "value". Bill Scheu also suggested that the Board of Commissioners create some additional boards and committees to take on the objectives laid out in the Comprehensive Plan.

Dan Dean asked for clarification around the word “conveyances” in the top block on page fifty-five. Ms. DiCristina advised that it relates to infrastructure. It was suggested to switch out “conveyances” for the more easily understood word of “infrastructure system”.

It was suggested that on page fifty-seven a standalone sentence should be added as follows: “To date, this plan has not been implemented”.

Dan Dean wondered if there needed to be more clarification about which campus is being discussed in the first block on page fifty-eight. Bill Scheu suggested removing “near the campus” from that sentence.

Ms. DiCristina took a few moments to quickly review the changes as suggested by the Planning & Zoning Commission. Another change was made in the second paragraph under Community Context. The change shall read as follows” “Prior to incorporation, the area of the town was owned by the Mountain Retreat Association (MRA) founded in 1987. In 1967, the Town of Montreat was officially incorporated through the N.C. General Assembly”. Bill Tucker suggested capitalizing “Town” in the first sentence under Land Use & Zoning. Julie Schell suggested striking “and bike suitable roads” under Recreational Uses on page seventeen. After further discussion, Ms. DiCristina suggested removing the “Bike Suitable Road” route from the map on Figure 2-8 and the subsequent one as well. The final paragraph in the first column on page seventeen should be rewritten as “The roads in the municipal boundary of Montreat are generally considered to be bike suitable and bike friendly”. All other changes were accounted for in the minutes above.

Powell Jones of 421 Appalachian Way thanked the Planning & Zoning Commission for their service to the Town of Montreat. Mr. Jones also thanked the Town leadership for their work in updating the Comprehensive Plan, as well as, the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee Members. Mr. Powell encouraged Town leadership, Town Council, P&Z Commission and Board of Adjustment to pay close attention to pages fifty-six and fifty-seven on Development. Mr. Jones specifically pointed out Item 4 which states “Preserve, protect, and enhance the character of Montreat by evaluating and improving existing allowable uses, densities, and dimensional regulations in each Zoning District” and Item 7 which states “In the spirit of the long-term success of the Town of Montreat, work collaboratively with the institutions of the Town, including, but not limited to, Montreat College and the Mountain Retreat Association, on any future development plans to support the vitality and future of the institutions and the Town”. Mr. Jones felt that the citizens of Montreat need to be certain that if the Plan is approved as written that it will be interpreted with consistency.

Stephen Jones (could not hear his name on recording) from Mississippi Road stated that in last year’s ordinance review process the Planning & Zoning Committee made explicit reference to historic structures by saying that it should not be included in the Zoning Ordinance but made a reference to it in the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Jones reviewed the new Comprehensive Plan and found only a small reference to historic structures. The present plan has no recommendations like

the previous plan to protect historic homes or buildings. Mr. Jones questioned why the new plan did not carry over the previous plans intentions to protect historic homes or buildings. Ms. DiCristina gave a brief review of historical controls of residential structures in North Carolina. The Steering Committee discussed this at length and voted against exploring establishing a historical district. (Most of this conversation took place away from microphones so the recording did not pick up the conversation.)

Brad Hestir of 192 Mississippi Road and Chair of Tree Board mentioned that the Comprehensive Plan states that the Tree Board should collaborate with other entities in the Town on a variety of different things and Mr. Hestir thinks it's a great idea. Mr. Hestir feels that updates are needed for the current Tree Management Plan for more consistency.

Ms. DiCristina advised that she would take the recommendations of this Committee and incorporate them into a final document which will be posted on the Town website on June 29th. The public will be able to make comments during the Public Hearing Periods at the July and August Town Commission meetings. There will be no action taken by the Council at the July meeting. Liz Johnson asked if copies of the Comprehensive Plan could be available for pickup in the Town Hall.

Dan Dean moved to recommend from the Planning & Zoning Commission to the Montreat Town Council the Montreat Tomorrow Comprehensive Plan as developed by the Steering Committee with revisions from the Planning & Zoning Commission and a recommendation of two Public Hearing periods for Public Comment. Julie Schell seconded and the motion carried 6/0 (Allen Crawford left the meeting early and Bill Tucker abstained from voting).

Ms. DiCristina advised that a summation/cover letter with revisions from the P&Z Commission was included in the packet and it will be submitted to the Board of Commissioners with the final document. Ms. DiCristina asked for P&Z to review the letter prior to it being sent to the Commission. She reminded P&Z that content changes would require a public meeting but grammatical changes could be accomplished via email/phone.

Next Meeting

Regular Meeting Thursday, July 20th at 10:30 a.m.

****Note from the Secretary/Town Clerk****

I was not in attendance at this meeting due to personal issues so I had to rely on the zoom recording to prepare the minutes. Not everyone chose to use a microphone so the minutes are not complete in some areas. It is imperative for everyone, including those in the audience, to use a microphone at all times.

Adjournment

Dan Dean moved to adjourn the meeting. Wade Burns seconded and the meeting was adjourned.

Bill Scheu, Chair

Angie Murphy, Town Clerk

DRAFT

NEW BUSINESS

Comprehensive Plan Public Engagement Summary from Board of Commissioners Meeting 7/14/23

- (name not heard) Nesbitt Lane? – Requested tax revenue sources section be added to the new plan as it was in the previous plan. This was raised as an issue by the community but was not addressed in the plan.
- Priscilla Hayner 319 Assembly Drive – Says it's a good plan and covers a lot of the issues. Submitted proposed language to the BOC ahead of time (included after this page). Wanted to see the vision statement for Community Character and Development and the subsequent objectives reflect something more defined for historic preservation. Doesn't want it to be a radical change, but should have more "uhmpf". Also, echoed the previous comment about the need for a revenue section in the plan and possible future revenue sources.
- Shirley Mitchell 201 Harmony Lane – Asks if the plan includes everything in the book. Thinks the date of the founding of Montreat by the Conference Center is incorrect.
 - *K - Checked this and I think she may have been looking at an older version of the plan. The MRA was founded in 1897 and the Town was incorporated in 1967. This is correct in the plan.*
- Rusty Douglas 227 Alabama Terrace – Asks about the Special Use Permit process and says he hopes that the process remains unchanged in the new plan. Also asked whether the MRA pays a different tax for people who come to use the Town's recreation facilities versus who come for religious programs.
 - *K - I emailed him 7/18/23 the process and stated that it remains unchanged as the comprehensive plan is not the regulating document for the town.*
- Powell Jones 421 Appalachian Way – Commented at the Planning and Zoning Commission. PZC recommended he speak to the BOC with his comments. Stated that he hopes that the interpretation of the plan stays consistent with the needs and concerns of the community expressed today. Also, echoed the previous comment about the need for a revenue section in the plan and possible future revenue sources.
- Brad Hester 192 Mississippi Road – Chair of the Tree Board. Glad to see an objective that provides an opportunity for the Tree Board to collaborate with the MRA and additional entities and the need to review of trees. Noticed that a clear implementation section was missing from the plan.
- BOC Discussion:
 - No decision made. Public hearing also scheduled for August.
 - Questions:
 - Commissioner Widmer asked why the revenue sources were not included in the plan since it was brought up several times by community members at the meeting tonight. Mayor Helms said that we are already working on this and are actively seeking new sources of revenue, but it is hard for a committee to identify these resources and that it is a task that staff should be responsible for. Each objective has been assigned to a specific department in the Town and will be addressed by staff. This is an ongoing process and state statutes can change to make certain revenue sources illegal or legal.
 - Commissioner Alexander said that she was happy with the plan and that they, as a Commission, will continue to revisit the plan as they implement it.

- Commissioner Widmer asked what the next steps were. He said that he understood that the next meeting will have additional public comment and an opportunity for the BOC to make a decision on the plan, but asked if there was any additional review opportunities. Mayor Helms said that if the BOC wants to have a work session to review the plans that they can. Mayor Helms asked the BOC to review the plan themselves so that time in a work session or at the next BOC meeting can work efficiently.

Discuss amendment of P&Z Ordinance and bylaws for participation by non-board members

- Question of whether non-Planning and Zoning Commission members could serve as Subcommittee members was raised.
- Per NCGS 160d-306, the ordinance establishing such boards shall specify the composition and duties of such boards. In other words, the PZC can specify that non-members are permitted to serve on subcommittees if it chooses to. The ordinance establishing the PZC back in 1968 is vague, but the PZC's bylaws (adopted in 2003) are specific about the composition of subcommittees (see Rule 27 in the bylaws).
- If y'all want to open up subcommittees to non-PZC members, we'd have to amend the bylaws. I'm not sure if a formal ordinance approved by the BOC making this change in allowable composition is needed as well.

HAYNER COMMENTS TO BOC

Suggestions for the 2023 Comprehensive Plan of Montreat

July 13, 2023

The below suggestions are proposed for consideration by the Board of Commissioners, with appreciation. This reflects input from a number of community members as well as from experts at the Preservation Society of Asheville and Buncombe County.

1. Development: Vision Statement and Objectives

Suggestions are provided in red:

Page 46 – Development Vision Statement

Montreat will be a community that respects **and preserves** buildings with historic value, encourages new development to **be compatible with** the surrounding architecture, and strives for resilience in the face of a changing climate.

Page 54 and 55 – Development Objectives

1. Support private property owners in the creation of conservation easements and/or deed restrictions on land with **conservation or** recreational value to the public.

[Insert new Objective 2.] Support private property owners in the creation of historic preservation easements.

6. **Encourage the protection of buildings with historic value, and give support or encouragement to the rehabilitation of historic structures. Organize or** support activities with local, regional, and state partners to educate the public about the value of historic properties and landmarks.

[We suggest making #6 a short-term rather than a long-term objective.]

7. In the spirit of the long-term success of the Town of Montreat, **and guided by the above vision statements and objectives,** work collaboratively **with citizens and** the institutions of the Town, including, but not limited to, Montreat College and the

Mountain Retreat Association, on any future development plans to support the vitality and future of the institutions and the Town.

2. Revenue Challenges

We note that there is not a section in the new Comprehensive Plan on revenue challenges for Montreat, although there is a brief mention in the executive summary and in the summary of the Mini-Meetings. We wonder if a short new section on this subject might be appropriate.

The issue of revenue sources for Montreat is of course a perennial challenge, and (as noted) was highlighted and robustly discussed in many of the Mini-Meetings. This has many roots. We thought the language in the 2008 Comp Plan handled this quite well, offering a number of possible approaches especially to encourage revenue support from the two major non-profits of Montreat, a long-discussed and challenging issue. We would especially refer to section 3.3.3 of the 2008 Comp Plan (page 37) as providing language that may make a helpful addition to the 2023 Plan.