

**Town of Montreat  
Planning & Zoning Commission (P&Z)  
Meeting Agenda  
July 17, 2025, 10:30 a.m.  
Montreat Town Hall  
1210 Montreat Road, Black Mountain, NC 28711**

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**I. ADOPTION OF JULY 17, 2025, MEETING AGENDA**

- **Suggested Motion:** To adopt the meeting agenda as presented/amended

**II. ADOPTION OF APRIL 17, 2025, MEETING MINUTES**

- **Suggested Motion:** To adopt the April 17, 2025, Meeting Minutes as drafted/amended.

**III. OATH OF OFFICE FOR NEW MEMBERS**

- Gayle Sawyer
- Sally Jenkins

**IV. OLD BUSINESS**

- **DISCUSSION OF NEXT STEPS FROM MONTREAT TOMORROW COMPREHENSIVE PLAN**
- **SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES**
  - i. Hillside Development Subcommittee
  - ii. Montreat Sign Ordinance Subcommittee
    - a) Subcommittee Appointments
    - b) Set next meeting date
  - iii. Zoning Ordinance Amendments Research Subcommittee

**V. NEW BUSINESS**

- **ZONING ADMINISTRATOR UPDATES & DISCUSSION**

**VI. NEXT MEETING**

- October 16, 2025, at 10:30 am

**VII. PUBLIC COMMENT**

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

# Planning & Zoning Commission (P&Z)

April 17, 2025, 10:30 a.m.

## Meeting Minutes

### Planning & Zoning Commission Members in Attendance

Eleanor James  
Julie Schell  
Clay Hamilton  
Mike Broussard  
Sally Jenkins

### Town Staff in Attendance

Angie Murphy, Town Clerk  
Savannah Parrish, Town Manager  
Brandon Freeman, Town Attorney

### Members of the Public in Attendance

Approximately 3 people

## Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 10:31 AM by Julie Shell, who welcomed everyone, especially new members and guests. A moment of silence was observed.

## Adoption of Agenda

Julie Shell asked for a motion to adopt the meeting agenda as presented.

*Motion to adopt the meeting agenda as presented was made by Eleanor James and seconded by Sally Jenkins. The motion passed unanimously.*

## Adoption of January 15, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Julie Shell mentioned that she had some adjustments to the January meeting minutes, specifically requesting that her name be spelled "S-C-H-E-L-L" everywhere. No other amendments or edits were proposed.

*Motion to adopt the January meeting minutes as amended was made by Eleanor James and seconded by Clay Hamilton. The motion passed unanimously.*

## Adoption of February 20, 2025, Meeting Minutes

Julie Shell requested two adjustments to the February meeting minutes: 1) To add "other members also provided introductions" between where Allen introduced himself and Brandon, and 2) To substitute the paragraph under the sign ordinance subcommittee with what she had written. No other changes or edits were proposed.

*Motion to adopt the February meeting minutes as amended was made by Eleanor James and seconded by Sally Jenkins. The motion passed unanimously.*

## Swearing In of New Members

Mike Broussard was sworn in as a new member of the Planning and Zoning Commission by Town Clerk Angie Murphy.

## **Organization of Planning and Zoning Commission**

### **Chairperson (current: Vacant)**

Julie Shell volunteered to move from vice chair to chair, citing her experience on the commission for a few years.

*Eleanor James nominated Julie Shell for chairperson, seconded by Clay Hamilton. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **Vice-Chairperson (current: Julie Schell)**

After some discussion about the responsibilities of the vice chair and the relative newness of many commission members, Clay Hamilton volunteered to serve as vice chair.

*Mike Broussard nominated Clay Hamilton for vice chairperson, seconded by Eleanor James. The motion passed unanimously.*

## **Old Business**

### **Subcommittee Updates**

Julie Shell provided an overview of the three subcommittees: Hillside Development, Sign Ordinance, and Zoning Ordinance Amendments. She explained that the Hillside Development and Sign Ordinance subcommittees had been working for several years and were near completion, while the Zoning Ordinance Amendments subcommittee had not yet started its work.

### **Hillside Development Subcommittee**

Julie Shell explained that the Hillside Development Subcommittee needed new members, including a chair and secretary. Eleanor James volunteered to be secretary, and Sally Jenkins volunteered to be a member. Julie Shell offered to act as chair temporarily.

### **Montreat Sign Ordinance Subcommittee**

Julie Shell, who had been on this subcommittee, explained that they were very close to finishing their work. She mentioned that new members would need to review the work done so far and ask any questions they might have. Clay Hamilton volunteered to join this subcommittee.

### **Zoning Ordinance Amendments Research Subcommittee**

Julie Shell explained that this subcommittee had not yet started its work. Clay Hamilton and Eleanor James volunteered to join this subcommittee.

After discussion of all subcommittees, Julie Shell summarized the new appointments:

- Hillside Development Subcommittee: Julie Shell, Eleanor James, Sally Jenkins, and Alan Crawford (existing member)
- Sign Ordinance Subcommittee: Julie Shell (secretary), Clay Hamilton
- Zoning Ordinance Amendments Subcommittee: Alan and Julie Shell (existing members), Clay Hamilton, and Eleanor James

*Motion to approve these subcommittee appointments was made by \_\_\_\_ and seconded by Clay Hamilton. The motion passed unanimously.*

## **New Business**

## **New Business**

### **Board of Commissioners Request – Ordinance Amendment**

Brandon Freeman, the Town Attorney, outlined to the Planning and Zoning Commission the request from the Board of Commissioners to consider allowing variances to the town's stormwater ordinance. He emphasized that currently no procedure for variances exists, which led to a detailed discussion among the commission members on the potential ramifications and benefits of introducing such a process.

The discussion covered several critical points:

- **Need for Variances:** The commission talked about the need for flexibility in dealing with unforeseen circumstances, especially in light of the recent Hurricane Helene, which may have changed geographical and stormwater patterns in the town. This highlighted the importance of balance between maintaining current stormwater management integrity and allowing for necessary flexibility.
- **Precedents in Nearby Jurisdictions:** It was noted that all municipalities in Buncombe County, apart from Biltmore Forest, currently allow variances to their stormwater regulations. This suggests a regional standard that Montreat could consider aligning with.
- **Role of the Board of Adjustment:** The responsibility for granting variances would rest with the Board of Adjustment, which acts in a quasi-judicial capacity. Members discussed the robust criteria the board would need to evaluate, including considerations of public safety and welfare, and the provision to impose conditions necessary to protect the community.
- **Consistency with Comprehensive Plan:** A key point of discussion was the necessity of recommending an amendment in alignment with the town's comprehensive plan. The comprehensive plan's emphasis on stormwater management was highlighted, supporting the need to double-check if the proposed changes align with the plan's guidance.

After extensive evaluation of these factors, the commission concluded that the amendment should be recommended for approval to allow the variance procedure in the stormwater regulations. They acknowledged the structured decision-making process that would underlie granting any variances, driven by objective criteria.

*Motion: To recommend approval of the ordinance amendment to allow variances to the stormwater regulations. The motion was made by Eleanor James and seconded by Mike Broussard. The motion passed unanimously.*

Following the decision to recommend the amendment, the commission proceeded to discuss its consistency with the comprehensive plan.

*Motion: To confirm that the recommended amendment is consistent with the town's comprehensive plan. The motion was made by Eleanor James and seconded by Mike Broussard. The motion passed with one abstention which was Sally Jenkins.*

Finally, the recommendation to approve the text amendment was ratified.

*Motion: To ratify the recommendation to approve the text amendment. The motion was made by Eleanor James and seconded by Mike Broussard. The motion passed unanimously.*

### **Zoning Administrator Updates & Discussion**

This item was skipped due to the absence of the Zoning Administrator.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting was announced for July 17, 2025, at 10:30 am.

### **Public Comment**

There were no public comments.

### **Adjournment**

*Motion to adjourn was made by Clay Hamilton and seconded by Eleanor James. The motion passed unanimously.*

The meeting was adjourned at 11:59 a.m.

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Julie Schell, Chair

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Angie Murphy, Town Clerk

## Environment


**1** The Town of Montreat should develop regulations to encourage fire safety indoors and outdoors. These regulations should be customized to fit the needs of the community, weighing carefully the impact on public safety and natural areas as well as the likely responsibilities placed on property owners as such regulations are passed.




**2** The Tree Board should collaborate with existing stakeholders and their representatives (the MRA wilderness committee, Montreat Cottagers, Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy) to identify and recommend to Town Council strategies for protection of our forests and for its health and resiliency, and to propose funding required for such strategies.




**3** Create a local erosion and sediment control ordinance for grading permits and requirements for projects that currently are not covered by Buncombe County's Erosion and Sediment Control Ordinances.




**4** Explore the adoption of additional stream protection ordinances.



**5** Institute periodic review (i.e., every five years) by the Tree Board of the *Recommended Species List* (Montreat Zoning Ordinance, Appendix A) to ensure riparian species (those that are native to creeksides) are included.




**6** Explore conservation easements as an avenue for land protection.




**7** Implement the stormwater management plan as required and approved by Small MS4 NPDES Permit.



**8** Inventory the Town's current stormwater infrastructure and identify opportunities for system improvements and expansions.



**9** Create a voluntary stormwater control measure and flood risk mitigation program with established goals that includes educational opportunities and outreach efforts.



**10** Investigate implementing viewshed protection regulations in Montreat.



**11** Examine the existing Hillside Development Ordinance and ensure that it is enforceable, practical, and sufficient for its purpose, with consideration to the responsibility placed on those building on property in Montreat.



**12** Support and implement the goals and recommendations for the Town of Montreat in the Buncombe and Madison County Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan.



## Development

1

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



2

Investigate implementing a maximum lot coverage standard in the Montreat Zoning Ordinance to cap the percentage of a lot that can be developed.



3

In cooperation with the Town, Montreat College, the Mountain Retreat Association, and local organizations, work to update and implement a wayfinding plan including educational signage.



4

Preserve, protect, and enhance the character of Montreat by evaluating and improving existing allowable uses, densities, and dimensional regulations in each Zoning District.



5

Investigate development regulations per Zoning District for short-term rentals with consideration for existing short-term rentals and potential funding sources.



6

Support current and new activities with local, regional, and state partners to educate the public about the value of historic properties and landmarks.



## Transportation

1

Calm traffic and lower speeds by partnering with regional transportation agencies to conduct a study of feasible options. This may include, but is not limited to, investigating posting advanced warning signs near the Montreat Gate, seasonal speed tables, or additional stop signs.



2

Periodically examine the availability and demand for parking in the Town of Montreat. Develop strategies as needed to address parking issues. Special consideration to seasonal parking needs should be included.



3

Investigate developing a freight plan in partnership with local and regional partners. This plan may include, but is not limited to, designated truck routes, drop/off/delivery zones, and a permit system for overweight vehicles to be charged a fee.



4

Update and implement the Town's Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Greenways Master Plan.



5

Support private-public partnership opportunities to fund and support trail maintenance.



## **SUBCOMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS AS OF APRIL 2025**

### HILLSIDE DEVELOPMENT SUBCOMMITTEE (MIN. 3)

Chair = vacant

1. Eleanor James (Secretary)
2. Allen Crawford
3. Julie Schell
4. Sally Jenkins

### SIGN ORDINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE (MIN. 3)

1. Vacant (Chair)
2. Julie Schell (Secretary)
3. Clay Hamilton

### ZONING ORDINANCE SUBCOMMITTEE (MIN. 3 + BOC MEMBER)

Chair & Secretary = vacant

1. Julie Schell
2. Allen Crawford
3. Clay Hamilton
4. Eleanor James
5. Mason Blake, BOC Member