Minutes of the Town of Huntersville Planning Board

The Town of Huntersville Planning Board met at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 25, 2025.

Call to Order/Roll Call
Chairman Sny called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.
Present: J. Sny, C. Boyd, J. Henson, L. Hallman, G. Baber, M. Pollard, T. Loomis & J. Wright
Absent: S. Hensley

Approval of Minutes
Item 2A. Consider approval of the February 25, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes
Motion: M. Pollard made a Motion to Approve the February 25, 2025, minutes. J. Henson seconded the motion.
Vote: The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Public Comments:
Bob Baer, Huntersville, NC – General Comment
Patti Gentile, Huntersville, NC – General Comment

Action Items
Item 4A: Consider a recommendation on Petition #R24-13, a request by Mission Properties, LLC to rezone +/- 19.08 acres located at the intersection of Stumptown Road and Statesville Road from Neighborhood Residential to Highway Commercial-Conditional District.
B. Richards, Planning Director entered his staff report into the record, a copy of which is attached hereto as Exhibit A and incorporated herein by reference. Staff reviewed the proposed rezoning application and stated that staff is recommending approval of the rezoning application.

C. Boyd asked what the timeline is of the Statesville Road improvements. Staff stated that to the best of their knowledge they have three remaining parcels to complete acquisition on, this is one of the three. Final designs are being completed, and it could occur in the next year or be later, all of that is up to NCDOT. The improvements will span from the intersection on Highway 21 at Goodwill up to the Cornelius line.

M. Pollard asked staff to review how transportation projects are funded and prioritized in the state of North Carolina. Staff confirmed that NCDOT manages the majority of the roads, and it is congestion-based management. The worse the road is the higher up you are on the NCDOT list of projects to complete.

J. Henson asked for clarification on the connectivity. Staff confirmed that a new north-south connector road parallel to Highway 21 would become available on Maruti Avenue with this project.

C. Boyd asked about the proposed building height and 4-story in conjunction with the adjacent developments. Staff confirmed that the land elevation falling away from Highway 21 to I-77 supports this modification.

G. Baber asked staff if they were comfortable with the 100% attached request. Staff confirmed that the specific location, increased architectural design, and the attainable housing units being offered have made staff comfortable with the 100% attached request.

C. Boyd asked if CMS has proposed any new schools close to this development. Staff confirmed that the school funding model is not for anticipated schools and growth, it occurs based on existing students in classrooms warranting the growth. CMS does own land on Stumptown Road for a future elementary school and middle school. The middle school is on the CIP and will be considered on the docket. CMS also owns a parcel near Grand Oak elementary school for a future high school.

T. Loomis asked if apartments over the commercial space would be a good solution. Staff stated that it could be looked at but that parking would be a challenge to ensure that residents could have reasonable parking through the day when the businesses are open and the scale does not support adding a parking deck.

S. Irvin, Cornelius for the applicant added that this location would be directly connected to the Huntersville Vine greenway trail and CATS Park and Ride via Maruti avenue allowing future residents to walk/bike to grocery stores, downtown, and take public transportation.

Jason McArthur with Mission Properties commented on the road improvements that are coming via NCDOT, the Maruti road connection will be amenitized, a highlight on the approach to meet the second-story requirement for the commercial space, the 4-story building would be 42 feet tall, 60% of the proposed units are studio and 1-bedroom units which are not typically rented by families.

C. Boyd asked what the timeline would be for development. The applicant responded it would likely be 2028 for the residential to come onboard, and a year or two later for the commercial to come on board, which will be built to lease.

L. Hallman asked what the likelihood is that all of the retail space could become medical office. The applicant responded they would not want that as it would not be an amenity to their residents. They would like retail services that their residents would like to visit.

Motion: J. Wright made a motion, "in considering the proposed rezoning amendment R24-13, Mission Stumptown Road from Neighborhood Residential to Highway Commercial Conditional District, the Planning Board can support the proposed plan if the following staff recommendations are implemented. Revise the commercial portion of the plan to commit to a minimum 2, 2-story commercial or mixed use building, that being commercially reasonable; revise the current multi-family architectural design to add at a minimum the ordinance standards with a goal of going over or beyond; any TIA comments are resolved; any remaining staff comments are addressed; a modification to allow 100% attached residential; a modification to allow 4-story height to be described in feet; modification to allow 20-feet of disturbance with a replanting plan in the I-77 buffer is recommended for approval; modification to allow side yard parking for apartment buildings as depicted in the rezoning plans; modification to allow for block length increase of Block A up to 740 feet is recommended for approval; and providing attainable housing which is 16 units with 80-100% AMI for 15 years. (Huntersville 2040 Plan) LU 8.2 to be addressed also as staff comments encourage the achievement of higher design standards. It is reasonable and in the public interest to approve this rezoning if the recommended revisions are made as it would then be consistent with future land use implementation policies, LU2.1, LU6.2, T-3, and T 3.1. T. Loomis seconded the motion.

Vote: The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

J. Wright commented that this is a good plan for this location with the connections, the road improvements, the density of housing with the attainable units, the possibility of a resident being able to walk/bike and use public transportation from this location is a beautiful idea.

T. Loomis commented that the benefits of this development at this location and the greenway and public transportation with the accessibility make sense. The schools and road improvements are already in the works and this is a really smart plan that fills in good gaps at the right location.

L. Hallman commented that he agrees, this piece of property is difficult for just about everything else, it seems like this is a well thought out plan and he values the commercial space that is proposed and the road addition is a good fit.

J. Sny agreed that this is a well thought out plan that is a really good fit for this parcel. He thinks this may be due to recent ordinance changes and he encourages the Town Board to identify a strategy to consider what is already approved and unbuilt in their decision making process.

Motion: J. Henson requested to be recused due to a conflict of interest.

C. Boyd made a motion to recuse J. Henson for Item 4B. M. Pollard seconded the motion.
Vote: The motion passed unanimously (7-0) with J. Henson abstaining.

Item 4B: Consider a recommendation on Petition #R24-15, a request by Station South LLC, to rezone +/- 21.29 acres located on Old Statesville Road from Corporate Business - Conditional District to Transit Oriented Development-Residential-Conditional District for a mixed-use development.

B. Richards, Planning Director entered his staff report into the record, a copy of which is attached hereto as Exhibit B and incorporated herein by reference. Staff reviewed the proposed rezoning application and stated that staff is recommending approval of the rezoning application.

J. Wright asked how the entrance to this property would work with the railroad crossing. Staff reviewed the new at-grade railroad crossing that will be added at a signalized intersection at Coach Street and the removal of Mayes Road/Caldwell Crossing.

M. Pollard asked if it has been determined where the CATS rail stop would likely be. Staff identified on the map the likely location if there is a future rail stop.

T. Loomis asked if this has always been the intended use and development of this area. Staff confirmed that it is in keeping with what has always been intended for this mixed use node.

C. Boyd asked if there will be fees for the proposed parking deck and if there will be any aesthetic requirements to the parking deck. Staff stated that a parking deck for a rail stop will likely be a private-public partnership and the specifics of funding, fees, and aesthetics would be discussed at the time of actual development.

J. Sny asked how TOD zoning is proposed with no approved rail coming. Staff stated that we have adopted plans and this is an identified stop. It is not funded and that is why there is an A/B scenario being proposed based on the outcome of the proposed rail.

The Board inquired as to the timing of the potential Seagle Street extension and any potential widening of Highway 115 north of Highway 73. Staff reviewed the potential development that could occur and that the Engineering department are scoring Highway 115 for future widening, it is not currently funded.

The applicant, M. Cox of Peak Development presented their proposal.

J. Sny asked if the applicant would consider either option A or option B versus both or wait until the results of the rail proposal are completed this Fall. Staff stated that the request is for approval of both with the results of the rail proposal being the determining factor on which option is developed. The applicant stated that it would create a real challenge with investors to have it in a space of unknown versus being able to show an approved rezoning. Approval of this project helps with sharing the expense of running the utilities across both projects.

J. Sny asked what the phasing would be if the rail is passed, and if the rail tax is passed but development is delayed. The applicant stated that the stand-alone commercial could be developed, then the residential, and then the parking deck once the specifications and agreement are finalized with CATS. Staff stated that CATS has communicated that once the tax passes the plans go to the 30% completed phase and then begin bigger/larger discussions where it becomes difficult to give timeframes or estimates.

M. Pollard asked what will happen if the state pushes the development of the rail out 2-3 or more years and the parking lot is no longer there? Staff stated that then there have to be conversations with developments to obtain suitable land to develop a rail stop.

Motion: L. Hallman made a motion, "in consideration the proposed rezoning petition, R24-15, Station South, the Planning Board recommends denial based on the proposal being inconsistent with policies LU5.1, LU8.3, LU11.1, LU12.3 of the Huntersville 2040 plan. It is not reasonable and in the public interest to approve the rezoning because there is no assurance the funding for the proposed commuter train will materialize. Without an alternate transportation option this area will not have adequate transportation infrastructure to accommodate the density proposed nor would the plan fit the scope and character of the existing neighborhoods. J. Wright seconded the motion.

L. Hallman commented that if the rail tax passes it is still not clear that the rail will actually come. The proposed price tag will still require federal grants and they seem focused on cutting costs. It does not seem definitive enough to risk this type of project. Without a redline that node would not be there and if the redline does not come this will be too intense for the area.

J. Wright commented that it's not a bad idea but it seems to be coming too soon to make sense so that everything doesn't just dump to 115. It seems like it would be better if there was another access.

M. Pollard commented that it is a true live, work, play development and is a one-shot deal as proposed because it will only work as a TOD development and economic center for Huntersville. For him the question is, is this what the Town wants to see in the 10-15 years at this location and is there enough certainty about what is coming to support this.

T. Loomis commented that for her it makes sense and it makes sense at this location.

G. Baber asked the applicant if all of the proposed development is for rent. The applicant responded that all of the townhomes are for sale and the apartments are for rent.

C. Boyd asked if there is a reason why grocery is not proposed within this location. The applicant commented that he has a friend who is a developer and has a contract on the parcel adjacent and to the south of this development. He has traction on a grocery store anchor at this location.

J. Sny commented that if you look at this corridor over time and the amount of development that is there or not there and you look at the worse case scenario of no future rail, can you still make the case for this development in this area.

M. Pollard commented on concerns of locations for rail stops and access to parking.

C. Boyd asked if the at-grade crossing at Coach is happening related to the project to the north and does not hinge on this project. Staff confirmed that is correct.

G. Baber commented that higher density adjacent to Highway 73 makes sense in his opinion.

Vote: The motion failed (3-4) with C. Boyd, T. Loomis, G. Baber, and J. Sny opposed.

Motion: C. Boyd made a motion, "in consideration the proposed rezoning petition, R24-15, Station South, the Planning Board recommends approval as the proposal is consistent with the Huntersville 2040 plan, policies LU1.2, 5.1, 6.1, 7.1, 8.1, 8.3, T1.2, T1.3 and furthermore meets the intent of TOD(R) zoning district by providing a rich mix of services and housing in a pedestrian village format. Conditions for approval include modifications request to blocks two and five as seen on RZ3 street tree request along Seagle Street in addition with tree grates or wells, approval of side yard parking as shown on the rezoning plan with appropriate screening, FAR of buildings with office and restaurant uses is requested to be possibly lower than what is required ratio as set forth in 3.2.1 13A, a relief from article 3.2.3 1.3.E.5. It is reasonable and in the public interest to rezone the 21.29 acres described herein as it is consistent with the envisioned use and development pattern set forth in the 2040 Community Plan. G. Baber seconded the motion.

The Board had continued discussion relative to the A/B options proposed and the potential of any delays of the rail and the effect on availability to have sufficient parking.

Vote: The motion passed (4-3) with J. Wright, M. Pollard, and L. Hallman opposed.

Motion: C. Boyd made a motion to reseat J. Henson. J. Wright seconded the motion.

Vote: The motion passed unanimously (7-0) with J. Henson abstaining.

Item 4C: Consider a recommendation on Petition #R24-16, a request by Cottage Properties of Lake Norman, LLC to rezone +/- 8.77 acres located at 15533, 15513, and 15501 NC Highway 73 from General Residential to Neighborhood Residential Conditional District to develop a single-family residential development.
B. Richards, Planning Director stated that the applicant requested a deferral in writing for their item to be heard at the April 29, 2025, meeting.

Motion: L. Hallman made a motion to defer Item 4C to April 29, 2025, at the applicants request. T. Loomis seconded the motion.

Vote: The motion passed (8-0).

Item 5A: Other Business
The Board discussed availability of dates for an upcoming special meeting to hear the Mobility Plan. A straw poll was taken and Wednesday, April 9, 2025 at 6:30 p.m. appears to the date with the greatest number of Board members available.

Adjourn
Motion: J. Wright made a Motion to Adjourn. G. Baber seconded the motion.
Vote: The motion passed unanimously (8-0).

Approved this 29 day of APRIL 2025.

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Chairman or Vice Chairman

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Board Secretary