

Minutes of the Town of Huntersville Planning Board

The Town of Huntersville Planning Board met at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, August 26, 2025.

Call to Order/Roll Call

Vice-Chairman Henson called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm.

Present: J. Henson, S. Hensley, J. Wright, C. Boyd, L. Hallman, P. Tokpah, M. Horsman, and M. Pollard

Absent: T. Loomis

Approval of Minutes

Item 2A: Consider approval of July 22, 2025, regular meeting minutes.

Motion: L. Hallman made a Motion to Approve July 22, 2025, minutes. C. Boyd seconded the motion.

Vote: The motion passed (7-0-1) with M. Pollard abstaining due to absence.

Public Comments:

No public comments

Disclosure: J. Wright made a disclosure that her company has been hired many times by Burkert USA unrelated to the proposed amendment and that it would not affect her ability to be impartial in their application. There were no objections.

Action Items

Item 4A: Consider a recommendation for Petition #TA25-09, a request by Burkert USA Corporation to amend Article 9.54 of the Huntersville Zoning Ordinance.

N. Farber, Senior Planner 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 text amendment and stated that staff recommends approval.

The Board asked if staff considered going less than 80 feet for the buffer. Staff responded that the proposed distance meets the applicants needs and staff is not opposed to it, they are open to a proposed adjustment if the Board has one.

The Board asked how the proposed height of 14 feet was determined and if there is any concern relative to the size of the solar panel ratio to the square footage of the building. The consultant hired by the applicant, Trevor Davis, stated that they worked with the manufacturer and designers to determine the height and then they increased the number by a couple of feet to ensure it covered their needs. Staff stated that the buffer and parking screening would still apply, if the proposed solar facility is for the use of the building then it would be permitted, if the proposed solar facility was to sell back then it would be considered a major solar facility and it would require a special use permit.

The Board asked if a parking lot like the existing Walmart would be allowed to do something like this. Staff responded that it would only be permitted if they implemented an 80 foot buffer and the entire parking lot was visually screened from the road.

The Board asked if this includes battery storage of the energy and any other impervious surfaces such as driveways. Staff responded it does not include either of those options.

Motion: C. Boyd made a motion to recommend approval of TA25-09, a request by Burkert USA Corporation to amend Article 9.54, as it is consistent with policies EOS 9.1 of the 2040 Huntersville Community Plan. It is reasonable and in the public interest to amend the zoning ordinance because it allows for the expanded opportunities for non-residential properties to install environmentally friendly solar panels and this allows future businesses to use creative solutions to fit more solar panels on their properties. The Planning Board believes that adequate language has been provided to ensure the solar energy facilities and not a nuisance to nearby properties. M. Pollard seconded the motion.

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

Item 4B: Consider a recommendation on Petition #TA25-04, a request by the Huntersville Planning Department to amend Article 7.4 of the Huntersville Zoning Ordinance.

J. James, Principal Planner 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 text amendment and stated that staff is recommending approval of the amendment.

The Board thanked Staff for investigating the small lot and asked if they thought the proposed amendment would work with a 5-acre lot and if the arborist flexibility allowed in other types of development under the 2-acres. Staff responded that they reviewed the medium size lots and from their experience there are some projects that are very close to what is being proposed and the arborist flexibility for those sizes of lots could be proposed by the Planning Board.

The Board had additional discussions regarding possible flexibility and options. Staff reviewed the current procedures, research conducted, common scenarios, and option of the Planning Board to propose additional options in their motion.

The Board commented on the importance of property rights and balance of the value of saving trees and what the likelihood would be of a conditional rezoning occurring strictly for tree mitigation. Staff stated that they have never had that before and they don't have a way to determine the likelihood but they believe this is a reasonable starting point based on plans that have been reviewed.

Motion: L. Hallman made a motion to approve TA25-04, a request by Huntersville Planning Department to amend Article 7.4 of the Huntersville Zoning Ordinance based on consistency with policies EOS-3, EOS-3.1, EOS-4, and the Big Idea Tree Canopy outlined on page 24 of the Huntersville 2040 Community Plan. The amendment is reasonable and in the public interest because it supports the growth of mature tree canopy which will provide significant environmental, stormwater, air quality, economic and community benefits for the Town of Huntersville. M. Pollard seconded the motion.

L. Hallman commented that he supported it last time and believes the flexibility with the smaller lot is a good addition, overall it is a good start and there will be room for improvement as additional ideas come up with conditional rezoning providing a good variability.

M. Pollard commented that there is a good environmental and economic value with lots with mature trees offering a higher value.

P. Topkah commented that he did not support it last time but will support it with the flexibility that has been added.

M. Horsman commented that he is on the fence due to the 50% mitigation cap on commercial and if that increases conditional rezonings.

The Board had additional discussion regarding the concerns expressed and the value of this as a starting point.

Vote: The motion passed (6-2) with J. Henson and S. Hensley opposed.

Adjourn

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

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

Approved this 23 day of SEPTEMBER 2025.



Chairman or Vice Chairman



Board Secretary

