PLANNING BOARD
MINUTES
August 17, 2015

Members Present	*Members Absent*	*Staff Present*
Robert Smith	Crystal Clark	Elinor Hiltz, Planner
Nick Colson	Todd Setzer	Catherine Renbarger, City Manager
Jeff Barkley		Johnny Wear, Interim Planner
Rupert Little		
Gene Monday		
Larry Pannell		

Chairman Robert Smith opened with prayer.

Call Meeting to Order & Approval of May 18, 2015 PB Minutes

Mr. Smith called meeting to order at 7:03 pm and tended to first item on agenda – approval of May 18th meeting minutes. Rupert Little moved to approve the May minutes, Jeff Barkley seconded, and the group unanimously agreed to approve the minutes.

Introduction of New Planner Elinor Hiltz

Johnny Wear, Interim City Planner, introduced the new Western Piedmont Council of Governments contract planner, Elinor Hiltz.

Zoning Ordinance Amendment: Attached garages in front of houses

Johnny Wear explained that there is a regulation in Claremont against snub nose houses (houses with garages that protrude in the front). The North Carolina Senate recently passed a bill overturning Claremont's rule against snub nose houses. Senate Bill 25 could affect a couple other different areas of the ordinance as well, like the rule that side yard garage materials must match the home. Johnny Wear suggested tabling the amendment to review the whole ordinance for compliance. Meanwhile, any snub nose garage that exists should be allowed because the law came into effect in June 2015. Nick Colson spoke in favor of tabling the amendment and the Board agreed.
Action: Tabled

Zoning Ordinance Amendment: Parking allowed in front of business lots

Under Claremont's current ordinance cars can park in rear but not in front of businesses. Chairman Robert Smith says the intention when the code was written was to make

Claremont a walkable community. New businesses often turn their buildings to face the side and rear parking lots because they want entrances facing the parking lots. Rupert Little stated that he sees no problem with parking in front of businesses that front the street. The Board agreed. Gene Munday suggested inserting the provision that "no more than two rows of parking or fifty percent of the total required parking" can be in the front yard, and this provision would apply to 3 building types: Shopfront, Highway Business, and Civic. Jeff Barkley moved to accept the text amendment as written except to add "d" to shopfront , civic, and highway business buildings. Larry Pannell seconded the motion. The vote to approve was unanimous.
Action: Recommended Approval

Zoning Ordinance Amendment: Car sales in front of business lots

In Claremont's code cars for sale cannot be displayed in the front (or side yard abutting a street). Johnny Wear recommends a text amendment that allows car sales in the front (or side yard). The Board debated inserting similar language as letter "d" above, that no more than 50 percent of the total parking could be in the front yard, but decided not to do it. A car dealership is coming to Claremont soon-off Oxford St. The Board was concerned about car dealerships selling junk cars, so Mr. Wear suggested "vehicles for sale must be in operating condition". Jeff Barkley asked in which zoning districts car lots are allowed. Mr. Wear answered car sales are allowed only in the Highway Business District. Nick moved to adopt the text amendment as written except to add that "vehicles for sale must be in operating condition". Rupert Little seconded. The vote to approve was unanimous.
Action: Recommended Approval

Zoning Ordinance Amendment: Temporary health care structures

Johnny Wear explained that the state legislature recently mandated that temporary health care structures be allowed as accessory uses in all residential districts. In Claremont the units must meet the same setbacks as houses in the R-1 district. Gene Munday moved to accept the text amendment as written, especially because the City must amend its ordinance to follow state law. Nick Colson seconded. The vote was unanimous.
Action: Recommended Approval

Subdivision Ordinance Amendment: Vacating platted lots

A citizen's attorney has petitioned the Planning Board to change the subdivision ordinance so that a lot can be vacated without requiring the signatures of all other owners in the subdivision. Chairman Smith defended the way the ordinance is currently written, saying that if someone vacates a piece of plat it changes the whole make up of the subdivision and potentially affects all owners. Valdese has an ordinance just like Claremont's. Nick Colson moved to leave the ordinance the way it is written. Larry Pannell seconded. The Board unanimously voted not to amend the ordinance.
Action: Recommended Denial

Minimum Housing Code Amendment: Nonresidential standards

Johnny Wear recommended using a nonresidential minimum housing code for dilapidated industrial buildings if Claremont has many of them, but a nuisance code for

dilapidated residential accessory buildings. The nuisance code allows a building to be torn down quicker than the minimum housing code. The Planning Board did not remember how this amendment was initiated. Nick Colson said there was a complaint about a house's dilapidated accessory building but the owner already tore it down. Robert Smith suggested tabling this item. Jeff Barkley directed the Planner to research changing the nuisance ordinance so that it applies to accessory buildings. There was consensus to table this amendment.
Action: Tabled

Planning Board Contact List Update

The Planning Board made corrections to the contact list.

Other Business

Catherine Renbarger announced that Catawba County Commissioners would consider a rezoning for a solar farm at Rock Barn Equestrian Center that same night-August 17th.

Jeff Barkley directed Elinor Hiltz and Catherine Renbarger to look into getting "No Thru Traffic" signs on Anderson St.

Adjourn

Larry Pannell motioned to adjourn, Jeff Barkley seconded, and the group unanimously approved. Meeting was adjourned at 7:56

Larry Pannell, Vice-Chairman

Elinor Hiltz, Planner