

**REGULAR BOARD MEETING**  
Town of Sylva Board of Commissioners  
January 7, 2016

The Town of Sylva Board of Commissioners held a regular meeting on January 7, 2016 at 5:30 p.m. in the Board Room of Municipal Hall, 83 Allen Street, Sylva, N.C.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Mayor Lynda Sossamon and Commissioners, Barbara Hamilton, Harold Hensley, Mary Gelbaugh, Greg McPherson, and David Nestler.

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None.

**STAFF PRESENT:** Paige Dowling (Town Manager), Amanda Murajda (Town Clerk), John Jeleniewski (Code Compliance Officer) and Eric Ridenour (Town Attorney).

**VISITORS PRESENT:** Sheryl Rudd, Tyler Wadras, Tanner Hall, Curt Collins, Steve Baxley, Larry Nestler.

**CALLED TO ORDER:** Mayor Sossamon called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** *Commissioner Gelbaugh made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion carries with a unanimous vote.*

**APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:** *Commissioner Hensley made a motion to approve the consent agenda. The motion carries with a unanimous vote.*

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** None.

**MAYOR'S REPORT:** Mayor Sossamon thanked Dan Schaeffer and the Public Works Department for leaving the snowflake lights and greenery up for the month of January.

**COMMISSIONER'S REPORT:** Commissioner Hamilton noted that traffic in town has picked up and encouraged shopping local. Commissioner McPherson heard from several residents that shopping local during the holidays was a priority. Commissioner Nestler noted that he had been out of town and he would be forming a committee to address pollution issues affecting Scotts Creek. Commissioner Gelbaugh encouraged positivity for 2016.

**MANAGER'S REPORT:** Manager Dowling noted that she would be submitting an application for funding for wayfinding implementation to the ARC. The grant would allow the Town to implement the wayfinding plan that a committee completed several years ago. The Public Works Department has hired Winton Alvarez to fill their most recent vacancy. Manager Dowling will be submitting the Main Street Program Assessment for 2015 by Friday to the Commerce Department. Amy Garza will plan and coordinate the Greening Up The Mountains Festival for 2016. The GUTM festival planning committee meeting is Tuesday, January 12<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 a.m.

**PLANNING BOARD REPORT:** The Planning Board did not meet in December. Their regular schedule will resume in January 2016.

**PUBLIC HEARING: Ordinance 38-102(2)b—Hanging Signs**

Mayor Sossamon opened the public hearing at 5:40 p.m. Manager Dowling explained that during the course of review of zoning ordinances, it was revealed that there was a discrepancy in the B2/B3 zoning district versus the B-1 zoning district related to the size of hanging signs. A new business in town installed a sign that almost touched the light pole on the sidewalk and this raised further questions. Suggestions for the ordinance from the Planning Board stemmed from the width of sidewalks, location of light poles and the width of a sign bracket.

Commissioner Gelbaugh stated that in her opinion, the suggested revisions reduce the number of signs a business can have. Dowling answered that it did not reduce the number of signs rather it limited the number of hanging signs.

Sheryl Rudd, a business owner in town, stated that Mill Street is different than Main Street in regards to the size of a sign needed for traffic to see. She stated that her business had contemplated purchasing a new sign that would be bigger for better presence though their sign bracket kept them from doing so because of replacement cost. She does not agree with reducing the size of the hanging sign allowed. Businesses need larger signs for visibility. She also stated that businesses should be allowed to have 2 hanging signs, one above an awning for vehicle traffic and one below for pedestrian traffic. Rudd also mentioned that there are currently no way-finding signs in town.

Tyler Wadras, a town merchant and sign designer, distributed a chart to board members on the average sign visibility according to speed and distance. He noted that when you reduce the size of signs above an awning from 16 feet to 6 feet you have an average of 62.50% reduction in visibility. Wadras showed the board an actual sign cut to current ordinance requirements and one cut to the proposed changes. Commissioner Nestler asked if anyone had ever measured signs in town and if so how many would not comply with the proposed changes. Commissioner Gelbaugh asked Mr. Wadras if he had any recommendations. Wadras responded that he would like to see the measurements remain close to what they currently are.

Commissioner McPherson asked what would happen if someone did not use quality material. Nestler responded by asking if merchants could be required to submit a design for their sign before constructing it. John Jeleniewski responded to the commissioners by stating that the Town cannot regulate sign content only location and size. Commissioner Gelbaugh asked Mr. Wadras to attend the Planning Board meeting on January 28<sup>th</sup>.

Kurt Collins spoke in support of leaving the sign ordinance the way it is. He does not like the proposed changes.

Jeleniewski spoke to the board on behalf of the permitting requirements his department must handle when the Board adopts an ordinance. Currently the ordinance is very clear in what is allowed. He noted that if the Town was going to specify sign brackets then the ordinance would need to include engineering specs. He also noted that there is no permit requirement or fee for advertising in windows.

Mayor Sossamon thanked everyone for their suggestions and closed the hearing at 6:30 p.m.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**ORDINANCE 38-102(2)B-Hanging Signs:** Commissioner Hensley suggested that the ordinance be returned to the Planning Board for further review. McPherson suggested 6 square feet under an awning and leave the 16 square feet allowance above an awning. *Commissioner Gelbaugh made a motion to table the approval of the ordinance and return it to the Planning Board for further review. The motion carries with a unanimous vote.*

**APPOINTMENT TO THE RURAL PLANNING ORGANIZATION:** Former Mayor Maurice Moody has been the representative to the RPO. The mayor normally serves on this board. *Commissioner Nestler made a motion for Mayor Lynda Sossamon to serve on the RPO for the Town of Sylva. The motion carries with a unanimous vote.*

**BUDGET CALENDAR:** *Commissioner Gelbaugh made a motion to approve the proposed budget calendar for 2016. The motion carries with a unanimous vote.*

**RESCHEDULE FEBRUARY 18<sup>TH</sup> MEETING:** *Commissioner Hensley made a motion to table this item until the February 4<sup>th</sup> meeting. The motion carries with a unanimous vote.*

**RETREAT DISCUSSION:** Manager Dowling noted that Sarah Thompson had agreed to facilitate the Board Retreat meeting. *Commissioner Hamilton mad a motion for the Board Retreat to be held on Saturday, February 27, 2016 at 9:00 a.m. with a location to be determined. The motion carries with a unanimous vote.*

**ADJOURNMENT:** *Commissioner Hensley made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:56 p.m. The motion carries with a unanimous vote.*

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Lynda Sossamon  
Mayor

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Amanda W. Murajda  
Town Clerk