



## **Town of Laurel Park Planning Board**

### **Regular Meeting Minutes**

**Date of Meeting: July 8, 2025**

**Chairman Wiehe called the Regular Planning Board Meeting to order at 3:03 PM on July 8, 2025 at Town Hall, 441 White Pine Drive, Laurel Park, NC 28739**

**The following attended in person representing a quorum:**

Chairman Philip Wiehe  
Co-Chair Mary Margaret Licisyn  
Secretary Jeffrey Pieper  
Luke Costlow  
Edward Eaves  
Scott Gregg

**Other Attendees:**

Commissioner Deborah Bridges – Council Representative

**1) Approval of the Agenda**

- a) No modifications to the published Agenda were presented for consideration
- b) Motion to Approve was made by Jeff Pieper, Seconded by Mary Margaret Licisyn
- c) Motion received unanimous approval of the Board

**2) Approval of the Minutes**

- a) Motion to Approve the Minutes of June 10, 2025 meeting was made by by Jeff Pieper, Seconded by Mary Margaret Licisyn
- b) Motion received unanimous approval of the Board

**3) Open Discussion re Upcoming Meetings and Minutes Distribution**

- a) Email to confirm attendance before meetings will be sent by the Town Clerk along with the Agenda notices
- b) This should eliminate meetings being called that have to be cancelled because of a lack of quorum

**4) New Business**

**a) Comprehensive Master Plan Update and Discussion**

- i) Staffing & Role Updates
  - (1) Mary replaces Kaitlin as primary contact at Land of Sky; Kaitlin remains but is not assigned to this account
  - (2) Mary is managing several projects in Western North Carolina, making scheduling difficult
- ii) Steering committee mostly fully appointed
  - (1) Two members (Scott Keels and Avery) have been less active; plan for direct outreach to gauge engagement
- iii) Upcoming Meetings & Agendas
- iv) Next steering committee meeting scheduled for July 24 at 4:30 PM
- v) Focus for the next three months:
  - (1) Mapping development opportunities (land use map, not zoning)
  - (2) Financial stability and planning in the comprehensive plan
  - (3) Addressing large financial challenges (e.g., \$15 million in road repairs)

**b) Funding & Grants Discussion**

- i) Current comp plan claims stable finances, but does not address major upcoming expenses (e.g., Helene disaster recovery)
- ii) Need for strategic planning related to disaster funding and grants
  - (1) CDBG-DR (Community Block Development Grant – Disaster Recovery) discussed as a potential funding source
  - (2) Majority of funds must benefit low/moderate income (LMI), but urgent needs like health/safety also qualify
- iii) HUD and state requirements include environmental and engineering studies, Davis-Bacon, Section 3, and reporting
  - (1) Land of Sky has a compiled list of grant agencies and processes
  - (2) Recognition that applying for grants is a major, time-consuming task
  - (3) Suggestion to recommend council forms a group of experienced (financially savvy) citizens or consultants to pursue funding opportunities
  - (4) *Motion Made by Chair Wiehe, Second by Jeff Pieper*
    - (a) *“Planning board will recommend Tow Council recruit two or more experienced people to investigate and execute alternative funding for disaster recovery”*
    - (b) Motion was passed unanimously
    - (c) Deborah Bridges will bring this Council

**c) Community Engagement & Process**

- i) Importance of clear, broad-based community engagement highlighted

- ii) Suggestion for in-person and online surveys, interactive materials (e.g., pictures/examples), and clear communication
- iii) Steering committee's role is to connect with the community and represent diverse town interests
- iv) Public events to be organized by Land of Sky; next steering committee meeting will address this

**d) Land Use & Development**

- i) Development map to identify both vacant and re-developable properties(e.g., All Commercially Zoned Properties)
- ii) Comp plan to guide direction for future land use, not specific rezoning or tactics
- iii) Discussion about map clarity, zoning categories (e.g., R-20, mixed use), and need for better public materials (large, clear maps)
- iv) Importance of understanding and defining terms (e.g., "accessory dwelling units") before making recommendations

**e) Planning Board Tasks & Future Steps**

- i) List of ongoing planning items: vegetation, accessory dwelling units, home occupation regulations
- ii) Technical Review Committee (TRC) may not have authority for all topics; some items remain planning board responsibilities
- iii) Proposal for board field trip/tour to review sites in person and discuss issues on location
  - (1) Tentative plan for August 12, possibly starting earlier in the day
  - (2) Members to suggest locations and prepare questions in advance
  - (3) Homework for members: Identify key questions and locations for the tour; reflect on aspiration examples from other communities

**f) Communication & Organizational Issues**

- i) General frustration with lack of communication, follow-up, and clarity between council, staff, and planning board
- ii) Slow or unclear decision-making processes, gaps in updates (e.g., staff changes, public works)
- iii) Desire for more regular updates; agreement to circulate weekly updates received by board members

**g) Council & Legislative Updates**

- i) Delays in appointing a new council member; interviews scheduled for Monday
- ii) Discussion of recent state legislation affecting ETJ (Extraterritorial Jurisdiction) and its impact on the town
- iii) Emphasis on need for community consultation and data-driven policy positions
- iv) Recognition of complexities and urgency in legislative advocacy

**5) Adjournment**

- a) Being that there were no additional items on the agenda, Chair Weihe asked for a motion to adjourn at 4:10 PM
- b) The Motion was made by Scott Gregg, seconded by Luke Costlow. Motion received unanimous approval of the Board

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Philip Wiehe, Chair

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Date

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Jeffrey Pieper, Secretary

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Date