

**Public Hearing Minutes
Spruce Pine Town Council
Tuesday, May 16th, 2023**

A public hearing of the Town Council was held on Tuesday, May 16th, 2023. Present were Mayor Darla Harding and Council Members James Acuff, Rocky Buchanan, Jackie Rensink and Larry McKinney. Staff in attendance included Darlene Butler, Shelley Buchanan, and Libby Phillips. Others attended, including Chad Donnahoo, Chase Thomas, Lori McIntyre, Drew Plettner, and Matthew Ward.

PUBLIC HEARING

Mayor Darla Harding opened a public hearing for the purpose of soliciting and receiving public comment regarding the Comprehensive Land Use Plan for the Town of Spruce Pine.

Drew Plettner with the HCCOG introduced himself and gave an overview of the Land Use Plan. He stated that work on this plan began in August of 2022, a committee of ten people was formed and they held six meetings over the course of seven months, and a public survey was distributed which received 369 responses. He noted that the purpose of the Land Use plan is to guide the Town in their decisions and focus over the next 10-15 years. The plan also gets the Town in compliance with NC General Statute 160D-601. Darlene Butler clarified that the existing Main Street district is not changing. Darlene shared her appreciation of the HCCOG and the Land Use Plan Committee for their hard work on the plan. She is very happy with the document. Council Member Jackie Rensink asked how our plan compares to other towns the size of Spruce Pine. Drew responded that it is very similar to other plans he has worked on. Jackie complimented the efforts of everyone on the plan and noted that the 18 recommendations are not overwhelming and are very doable. Darlene also mentioned that the plan is a fluid document that is created with the intention of having changes and amendments over the years. Jackie Rensink stated she was encouraged to that the Town and County seem to be trying to move in the same direction.

Lori McIntyre asked for clarification on the current ordinance in place concerning mobile homes. She also asked if the delinquent tax threshold could be lowered for homes with lower values so the foreclosure process can begin sooner.

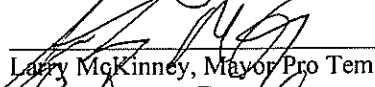
Chase Thomas commented that the state statute on tiny homes would solve most of the tiny home issues the Town faces. He also posed the question if outside investors putting money into vacant buildings in downtown Spruce Pine with no intentions of using or making improvements to them is a problem. Libby Phillips responded that it is a very big problem. Mayor Harding clarified that any new ordinances regarding vacant or dilapidated buildings will affect all property owners and no one will be grandfathered in. Mr. Thomas also asked that there be more thought and discussion on annexation of properties to grow the Town's tax base and boundaries.

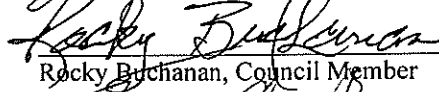
Mayor Harding said she thought it was a good plan and every item within the document is needful. Jackie Rensink asked for further discussion on the downlighting recommendation. She would like to add that downlighting be a goal of existing lighting not just future lighting. She feels very strongly about the importance of the MCC Dark Sky Observatory and Planetarium and wants to preserve our dark sky as much as possible and the Town should do their part. She also mentioned that holiday lighting needs to be included in this effort to reduce light pollution. It was the consensus of the Council to have the HCCOG add this to the recommendation.

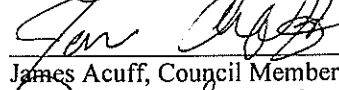
With no further discussion, Jackie Rensink made a motion to adjourn at 5:55 pm. Mayor Harding closed the public hearing.


Shelley Buchanan, Town Clerk


Darla Harding, Mayor


Larry McKinney, Mayor Pro Tem


Rocky Buchanan, Council Member


James Acuff, Council Member


Jackie Rensink, Council Member