

**DRAFT**  
**Smithfield Planning Board Minutes**  
**Thursday, April 2, 2015**  
**6:00 P.M., Town Hall, Council Room**

**Members Present:**

Chairman Eddie Foy  
Vice-Chairman Stephen Upton  
Daniel Sanders  
Jack Matthews  
Ashley Spain  
Michael Johnson

**Members Absent:**

Teresa Daughtry  
Mark Lane  
Gerald Joyner

**Staff Present:**

Mark Helmer, Senior Planner  
Veronica Hardaway, Administrative Support Specialist

**Staff Absent:**

**CALL TO ORDER**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM MARCH 5, 2015.**

Jack Matthews made a motion, seconded by Stephen Upton to approve the minutes as written. Unanimous.

The Planning Board reviewed Article 17; Landscaping and Buffer Strips.

**Section 17-1: Objective**

The governing body and advisory boards of the Town of Smithfield recognize the importance of the contribution made to the community by the abundance of trees and vegetation. In fact, the present character of Smithfield is dependent largely upon the existing trees and plantings in both publicly and privately owned properties. It is this vegetation that gives the town an aesthetic appeal that contributes to its growth and economic prosperity. The street trees, most having existing for over 50 years, are symbols of Smithfield's pride in its natural heritage. As economic growth occurs, the removal of this valued vegetation sometimes results, contributing to a depletion of a most valuable resource. The town feels it is necessary to both conserve and restore those valuable assets and declares the objective of this Ordinance to be as follows:

- (A) To encourage the conservation of existing trees and vegetation, when practicable;
- (B) To provide visual and spatial buffering between adjoining and competing uses;
- (C) To enhance the beautification of the town;
- (D) To enhance property values and protect public and private investment;

- (E) To preserve the identity and environment of the town;
- (F) To provide a habitat for living things that might not otherwise occur in an urban environment;
- (G) To ensure that planting areas are distributed within developing sites in a manner which will provide shade, buffer noise, and filter glare.

**Section 17-2: Landscaping**

(A) General Regulations

- (1) Whenever the landscaping requirements of this Ordinance are applicable, no site shall be cleared or graded for the purpose of pending construction until a landscape plan has been submitted and approved by the town.
- (2) Landscape plans shall be completed by a person who has knowledge and experience in the field of landscaping, such as a landscape architect, landscape designer, site planner, or other design professional. Plans may be submitted by horticulturalists or nurserymen when all the plan requirements of this section are met. Landscape plans shall be drawn to scale no less than one inch equals 50 feet.
- (3) Landscape plans shall be submitted to the Planning and Inspections Department and shall be reviewed by the Planning Department in conjunction with the Town of Smithfield Appearance Commission. Plans shall be approved by the Planning Department and Appearance Commission for uses by right. They shall review and forward recommendations to the appropriate approval authority for conditional use permit application.
- (4) Additions or expansions to sites as they existed at the time of the adoption of this Section, which singularly or collectively exceed 25% of the gross floor area or lot existing at the time this Ordinance becomes applicable, shall meet all the requirements of this Section for both the existing facility and proposed addition/expansions.
- (5) The Code Enforcement Official shall not issue a permanent certificate of occupancy or certificate of compliance for an approved site plan or part thereof until all applicable requirements of this Section have been satisfied. A temporary certificate of occupancy may be issued for a period not to exceed 90 days, if the Planning Director determines there are extenuating circumstances that would affect the seeding or planting of the site.
- (6) The owners and their agents shall be responsible for protecting and maintaining all landscape materials in accordance with the landscape plan approved by the town.

(7) Exception to the proposed use of canopy trees may be applied to plantings proposed in the vicinity of power lines. The Planning Department, in conjunction with the Appearance Commission, may suggest a suitable substitution in such case.

(8) The following general standards shall be used in the process of designing all landscaping plans:

(a) Selection of Plant Materials. All plant materials and their spacing requirements, which are to be planted to meet the opacity and height requirements of this section shall be approved by the Planning Department.

(b) Provision for Other Uses. Up to 15% of the area to be landscaped may be covered with surfaces specifically intended to afford intensive use and enjoyment by employees or the public (such as walking paths, bench and table pads, etc.)

(c) It is encouraged that stormwater management systems be integrated into the landscaping plan.

(B) Landscaping Plan. Landscaping plans shall be submitted before or at the time of application for a building permit for all development projects. These plans shall contain the following information.

(1) Date of plan preparation.

(2) Project name and description of land use.

(3) Project owner and mailing address.

(4) A map at a scale of 1" = 100' or less showing:

(a) North Arrow

(b) Scale

(c) Approximate locations and species of all existing hardwood trees at least 8" DBH, all conifer trees at least 12" DBH, and all dogwoods and American Hollies at least 4" DBH. The canopy drip line of those trees shall be delineated. If groves of protected trees exist that will not be removed or disturbed, it is permitted to label the grove as such on the map, stating the approximate number of protected trees and species mix, without specifying data on each individual tree.

(d) Note on plan stating that prior to any clearing, grading, or construction activity, tree protection fencing will be installed around protected trees or

groves of trees. And no construction workers, tools, materials, or vehicles are permitted within the tree protection fencing.

(e) Locations, dimensions and square footages of required buffer strips and parking lot landscaping.

(f) Details of required landscaping showing species, dimensions, and spacing of planted materials and the use and protections of existing vegetation.

(g) All existing and proposed utilities and if applicable, their associated easements.

(h) Location and square footage of structures and parking lots.

(i) Adjacent zoning districts.

(j) Approximate locations of all trees greater than 8" DBH within required buffers and of all areas of natural vegetation to be used as part of the buffer.

(k) Setbacks of all structures and specifications and shielding of certain uses, as required.

(C) Landscape Requirements

(1) Any site requiring a landscape plan shall provide a total landscaped area of not less than 20% of the gross acreage of the site or more if required by other sections of this Ordinance.

(2) Minimum height and caliper at planting for the following planting categories shall be as follows:

Canopy Tree	10 feet in height; 2 inches in caliper at ½ foot above grade
Understory Tree	6 feet in height; 1-1/2 inches in caliper at ½ foot above grade
Shrubs	Minimum 15 to 18 inches (3-gallon container); N/A

(3) Credit may be given for existing trees located between the proposed principle building and the street right-of-way. The retention of viable natural vegetation is encouraged when practicable. No credit shall be given for any tree which is unhealthy. Credit shall be given on a "tree per tree basis" or "one to one ratio". A protected ground area corresponding to half the circumference of the spread of the tree as measured radially from the trunk outward shall be provided around trees to be retained for credit.

(4) Notwithstanding the provisions of this Section, nothing shall be planted adjacent to an approved driveway and street connection which would impede vision between a

height of 2-1/2 and 10 feet in a triangular area formed by a diagonal line between a point on the driveway perimeter and the curb line or pavement edge of the street, 25 feet from where they intersect.

(5) The following site areas are required to be addressed in accordance with the provisions of this Section for all commercial, office and institutional, industrial, multi-family, and townhouse developments proposed in any of the following districts: O/I, B-2, B-3, LI, and HI districts. Within the B-1 (Central Business District) only the requirements for vehicular surface areas shall apply; however, supplemental landscaping is encouraged.

- (a) Street yard.
- (b) Vehicular Surface Areas.
- (c) Transitional yards (side and rear).
- (d) Loading/utility areas/outdoor storage.

(6) Street Yards

- (a) A street yard shall be provided with a minimum depth of 50% of the required front or corner side yard as measured perpendicular to the street right-of-way, provided that no street yard in excess of 15 feet in depth shall be required.
- (b) Planting requirements. One understory tree per every 50 linear feet of road frontage; 20 shrubs per 100 linear feet of road frontage.

(7) Vehicular Surface Areas

- (a) Vehicular surface areas used for parking and circulation, or commercial display or storage of motor vehicles which are located within 50 feet of a street right-of-way must have a planting screen consisting of shrubs a minimum of 18 inches to 24 inches in height when installed with a minimum expected mature height of 36 inches. Shrubs shall be planted with gaps no greater than five feet. Forty percent of the shrubs may be deciduous. When practicable, plans to meet this requirement may be formulated in conjunction with the requirement of subsection (6)(b) above.
- (b) All vehicular surface areas containing more than four spaces shall be landscaped in accordance with the following minimum standards:
  - (i) At least nine percent of the gross paved areas of a parking facility shall be landscaped and located in the interior. For purposes of this

section, interior shall mean the area within the parking facility curb or pavement and extensions that create a common geometric shape such as a square, rectangle or triangle.

(ii) Trees and shrubbery planted pursuant to this section shall include at least one tree a minimum of eight feet in height and six shrubs at least 18 inches in height at planting.

(iii) In support of the above, the following standards shall apply to interior plantings:

- All plantings shall be evenly distributed throughout the parking facility so that no parking stall shall be located farther than 50 feet from the trunk of the tree.
- All interior plantings shall be curbed or otherwise physically protected.
- Consecutive parking spaces shall incorporate landscape peninsulas no more than 15 spaces apart and at least the ends of all parking rows. Peninsulas shall contain at least 100 square feet in area and at least eight feet in width, measured from back of curb/barrier.

(iv) For parking facilities containing 5 to 24 spaces or stalls, a perimeter landscape strip may be provided in lieu of interior landscaping, subject to the following requirements:

- The minimum width of such strip shall be five feet.
- For every 50 linear feet or fraction thereof the perimeter landscape strip shall contain one canopy tree of at least five feet in height, and a continuous row (at least six) of evergreen shrubs at least 18 inches in height.
- Where a perimeter landscape strip overlays a street yard or buffer yard required elsewhere in this section, the more stringent requirements shall apply.

All perimeter landscaping strips shall be planted with a combination of live vegetation, groundcover, grass, trees, and/or shrubs. Vegetation planted pursuant to this section shall be maintained to ensure continued growth.

(v) Where more than 200 parking spaces are required by Code for development, planting areas may be interspersed throughout the site so that no parking stall shall be located farther than 75 feet from the trunk of a shade tree in a planting area with two or more trees, provided a minimum planting area of 400 square feet or more is provided.

(vi) The Planning Board may waive all or part of the requirements of this section for any facility which is limited to periodic or intermittent use for vehicular parking, such as parking lots for churches or recreational facilities, provided the facility is completely covered by grass or otherwise presents a landscaped effect.

(vii) The Planning Board may waive the requirements of this section for temporary parking lots when determined that a waiver is necessary to relieve hardship and will not violate the purposes of this section. Any such waiver shall not exceed one year.

(c) Each planting area provided in accordance with this Section may be counted as one parking space when computing the number of spaces required by this Ordinance, provided that the number of parking spaces required by this Ordinance shall not be reduced in excess of 10%.

(d) Additional or expanded vehicular surface areas shall meet 100% of the requirement of this Section.

(e) With the exception of subsection (a), the provisions of this Section shall not apply to vehicular surface areas used for authorized commercial vehicular display, provided all other requirements of this Section are met or exceeded.

Mr. Foy asked how is it determined when staff can approve a conditional use permit or when the Council has to approve.

Mr. Helmer stated as long as the use is a permitted use and the use has no conditions, it can be approved by staff. We can only require what is stated in the UDO. Anything that emits smoke, dust, or has storage etc. would require a conditional use permit. If a use is not found in the UDO, it is not a permitted use and cannot be given a permit. The only way a non-permitted use can be considered is if it goes straight to the Town Council and they make a decision if the UDO can be amended.

Mr. Helmer reviewed subdivisions and the types of subdivisions (minor, major, exempt)

**Old Business:**

No report.

**New Business:**

No report.

Stephen Upton made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ashley Spain. Unanimous.

Submitted this 2nd day of April, 2015.

Veronica Hardaway  
Administrative Support Specialist  
Planning Department