

**Town of Smithfield
Planning Board Minutes
Thursday, September 1st, 2022
Town Hall Council Chambers
6:00 PM**

Members Present:

Chairman Mark Lane
Vice-Chairman Debbie Howard
Ashley Spain
Debbie Howard
Brian Stanley
Wiley Narron
Alisa Bizzell

Members Absent:

Doris Wallace

Staff Present:

Mark Helmer, Senior Planner
Julie Edmonds, Administrative Support Specialist

Staff Absent:

Stephen Wensman, Planning Director

CALL TO ORDER

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVAL OF AGENDA Debbie Howard made a motion to approve the agenda; seconded by Ashley Spain. Unanimously approved

APPROVAL OF MINUTES for August 4th, 2022

Debbie Howard made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Alisa Bizzell. Unanimously approved.

NEW BUSINESS

Recognition of Chairman Steve Upton for his 15 years of dedicated service to the citizens of the Town of Smithfield.

ZA-22-02 Town of Smithfield: The applicant is requesting an amendment to Unified Development Ordinances, Section 3.3.3.1, Composition and Vacancies to reduce the Board of Adjustment size from 7 regular members to 5 regular members and to amend Section 3.4.2.2 and section 3.5.4 to allow no more than 3 absences per calendar year for both the Planning Board and Board of Adjustment members. Coates' Cannons NC Local Government Law;

- Planning Board Basics - Staff Presentation

- Decision Types and Site-Specific Approvals - Institute of Government Internet Presentation
- Considerations for Legislative Development Decisions - Staff Presentation

Further Reading in Urban Design;
Sidewalks, A Livability Fact Sheet

Mark Helmer presented ZA-22-02 by explaining the purpose of the requested amendment. He said over the past couple of years, there have been vacancies and absences on Town boards making it difficult to conduct the business of the town. This amendment addresses this issue by:

1. Reducing the required number of Board of Adjustment members, and
2. By creating reasonable and consistent attendance regulations across all boards.

Attendance on Boards. The Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) Article 3 addresses Board authority and regulations including Board meeting attendance. Between the three official boards, Planning Board, Board of Adjustment and Historic Properties Commission, the regulations on attendance differ:

- For Planning Board, **Section 3.3.3. Composition and Vacancies** states, ... “Faithful attendance of the meetings of the Planning Board is considered a prerequisite for the maintenance of membership on the Planning Board. Failure to attend three (3) consecutive meetings shall be deemed adequate reason for termination of membership on the Planning Board by the Town Council.”
- For Board of Adjustments, **Section 3.4.2.2. Membership and Vacancies** lacks any language about Board of Adjustment attendance.
- For Historic Preservation Commission, **Section 3.5.4. Attendance at Meetings** states, “Any member of the commission who misses more than three (3) consecutive regular meetings or more than four (4) meetings in a calendar year shall lose his or her status as a member and shall be replaced or reappointed by the Town Council...”

For all three boards to function regular attendance is critical. At times, attendance has been an issue. Staff also believes there should be a consistency between the boards for meeting attendance and that failure to attend a total of three meetings per calendar year should be deemed adequate reason for termination of membership. The draft ordinance reflects these changes.

Board of Adjustment Composition: The Board of Adjustments is a board that meets infrequently and only when needed to address a zoning interpretation or variance petition. As a result, citizens tend to be less interested in servicing on the board and there are consistently vacancies on the board. To facilitate a full complement of board members when a meeting is

called, staff is suggesting a reduction to the required number of board members from 7 to 5, eliminating 1 in-town and 1 Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) member.

Mark Lane asked how many people could be on the Board of Adjustments now?

Mark Helmer said 7 members and 2 alternates. For a board that only meets several times a year he feels that 5 full time members and 2 alternates is sufficient. The fewer members a board has the less there is needed to make a quorum.

Bryan Stanley asked if the intent was to change absences to a maximum of 3 across the board on all boards?

Mark Helmer said yes, 3 total absences per calendar year.

Bryan Stanley made a motion to recommend approval of zoning text amendment, ZA-22-02 with no more than 3 unexcused absences, finding the amendment consistent with the Town of Smithfield Comprehensive Growth Management Plan and other adopted plans, and that the amendment is reasonable and in the public interest, seconded by Debbie Howard. Unanimously approved.

Mark Helmer showed a video on the history of planning and the functions of planning staff.

Coates' Cannons NC Local Government Law;

- a. Planning Board Basics - Staff Presentation
- b. Decision Types and Site-Specific Approvals - Institute of Government Internet Presentation
- c. Considerations for Legislative Development Decisions – Staff Presentation

OLD BUSINESS: None

Adjournment

Being no further business, Debbie Howard made a motion seconded by Ashley Spain to adjourn the meeting. Unanimously approved.

Respectfully Submitted,



Julie Edmonds
Administrative Support Specialist