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WNCF-033772



## UDO committee eyes new green space zoning district

On Thursday, Feb. 17, the Polk County Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) Advisory Committee met at the Polk County Senior Center for its fifth formal meeting.

The county's consulting planner, Dale Holland, presented items for discussion. One is the potential for a new county zoning district that would reflect the Green Space sector as outlined in the Vision 20/20 Plan. Holland stressed that at the end of the UDO development process, it is likely the current zoning map will be amended, and could represent a hybrid of existing zoning and the future land map from the Vision 20/20 Plan.

Finally, Holland presented for consideration a new residential business definition for the Multiple Use district that would greatly expand allowed uses of an individual's property. This new Class II Residential Business definition is intended to aid in the preservation of individual property rights and support the strong entrepreneurial business objectives of the Vision 20/20 Plan, while not opening the district to unbridled development.

Holland also presented information from an article issued by the UNC's Center for Urban and Regional Studies about the need for affordable, workforce housing in the Asheville Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA). The article reveals that the Asheville MSA has the second least affordable housing market in North Carolina, causing many to live far away from work, and to spend more than 30 percent of their income on housing.

The issue of attainable housing, housing that a nor-

mal working family or senior citizen can afford, was ranked the third highest focus priority for Polk County by the UDO advisory committee.

The committee also continued the discussion about how the UDO can best reflect the advisory committee's top priority, preserving Polk County's prime agricultural lands and agricultural heritage. Committee members said because it is clear that subdivision sprawl has been the single most destructive development pattern to rural character throughout the region and nation, the need to provide a means to reasonably control sprawl is a great challenge in the creation of the UDO.

The UDO planners and committee have agreed to propose a conditional use permit requirement for major subdivisions (more than eight lots) as the primary tool to ensure that developments do not have a negative impact on surrounding residents and the county as a whole. The committee has discussed at length the potential impacts over-development could have on the two northern townships and the Green Creek area.

Of additional concern is the potential for the Town of Lake Lure to extend extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) up to one mile outside of the Lake Lure town limits into Polk County, thus regulating land use in the Sunny View area.

The committee also met on March 22, when it focused on the draft ordinance articles covering Environmental Regulations and Performance Standards. The results of that meeting will be reported soon.

All UDO committee meetings are open to the public.

— article submitted

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