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May 30, 2023

Elizabeth Teague, AICP, Development Services Director
Town of Waynesville
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Re: Joint Planning Board and Town Council Meeting Summary and Next Steps

Dear Elizabeth:

This memo includes a summary of the joint Planning Board and Town Council meeting held on April 28th, 2023. It is divided into four sections:

- *Background*
- *Presentation Summary*
- *Comments and Discussion*
- *Potential Solutions and Next Steps*

BACKGROUND

The Town of Waynesville adopted the Waynesville 2035 Comprehensive Land Use Plan (Comp Plan) in 2020 and has implemented key recommendations in the plan over the past two years. Recently there has been an increase in development activity in some areas and there is concern over potential disconnects between current zoning in some areas of town and recommendations in the Comp Plan. A discussion of the current zoning framework, allowable density, design requirements and approval processes is needed to determine priorities for updates to the zoning ordinance (Land Development Standards) and to implement key recommendations in the Comp Plan. Stewart worked with Town Staff to organize and facilitate a joint meeting with the Planning Board and Town Council to discuss recommendations from the Comp Plan, recent development trends, the existing zoning and regulatory framework and potential revisions needed.

PRESENTATION SUMMARY

Jake Petrosky from Stewart provided a presentation that included a description of the process used to develop the Comp Plan, major discussion topics at the steering committee level, goals and major land use recommendations. Town staff provided an overview of regulatory changes that have been made since the adoption of the Comp Plan in 2020. The Future Land Use map was discussed in detail, including descriptions, unit types and densities recommended for different residential character areas. The Town's zoning framework was also discussed and compared with the Future Land Use recommendations in the Comp Plan. A summary of findings from the comparison is included below:

- ***The Zoning Ordinance (Land Development Standards)*** is the primary implementation mechanism for Comp Plan goals and policies related to the build environment and pattern of new development in the Town.
- ***Many zoning districts are appropriate*** for more urbanized areas of Town and will help facilitate infill and redevelopment that is recommended in the Comp Plan.
- ***The Urban Residential (UR) and Neighborhood Residential (NR) zoning districts may be appropriate for some, more urbanized areas*** in the Med-High Density areas on the Future Land Use Map, however the ***current density allowances in the NR district may not be in-line with the Low-Medium Density residential character area on the Future Land Use Map***. For instance, the NR zoning district which includes parts of Raccoon Creek and Allen's Creek areas, allows for by-right single family and multi-family residential at 10 dwelling units per acre (gross density) with 1/6 acre minimum lot sizes and 16 dwelling units per acre with a Special Use Permit (SUP), whereas the Comp Plan (Future Land Use Map) recommends a gross density of only 3-4 units/acre in some of these areas.



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- *Takeaway: The 1/6 acre minimum lot size is comparable to many of the single family lots in Hazelwood and in other older neighborhoods in Town. These areas are roughly 4-5 dwelling units per acre (gross density). The areas identified as Low to Medium Density on the Future Land Use Map in the Comp Plan were recommended to be 3-4 units/acre (gross density) so the lot size of 1/6 acre is generally consistent if new development provides a good amount of open space (civic space) set asides as part of the subdivision design. **The disconnect between NR zoning and the Low to Medium Density FLU Character area pertains more to the overall allowable density (10 vs 3-4 units/acre).** The upper end of the allowable density in the NR District would only be able to be achieved with multi-family development. The Comp Plan allows for "occasional small-scale attached housing types" in the Residential Low to Medium Density area, but based on overall density recommendations, this was intended to include some attached housing in a planned development with an overall gross density under 4 units/acre.*
- *The Residential Low Density (RL) zoning district allows for 6 units/acre by right and 12 units/acre with a Special Use Permit. Minimum lot sizes are ½ acre, however, multi-family is allowed. The Future Land Use Map recommends some of these areas to be Residential Low to Medium Density (3-4 units/acre) and some to be Residential Conservation. The description in the Comp Plan for Residential Conservation recommends low density residential development that is clustered or of conservation design. Originally this description recommended under 2 units/acre, but it was edits to recommend only "low density" prior to adoption.*
 - *Takeaway: RL Zoning appropriate for some areas (Low-Med Density and Med-High Density areas on the Future Land Use Map). An allowance for 6 du, including townhomes may not be in-line with Residential Conservation on FLU Map, but clustering of 6 units within 1 acre may be appropriate if part of conservation or cottage design with a significant amount of land preservation.*

The presentation also showed precedents for developing in areas with sensitive environmental assets and discussed potential options to amend zoning to be more in-line with Comp Plan recommendations. Slides from this presentation are included in attachment A.

COMMENTS AND DISCUSSION:

A discussion was facilitated to determine overall vision for developing areas in Town and potential next steps.

Summary of Comments

- *Support for evaluating existing districts and processes*
- *Need to analyze zoning density and lot size allowances—how do zoning allowances compare to peer communities*
- *Potentially cap "by-right" density and keep density allowed via Special Use Permit (SUP) higher*
 - *Some concern expressed about an over-reliance on SUPs as it is not the best process to get public feedback and dialog between boards and developers.*
- *Use conservation subdivision option as an incentive, allow for administrative approval if development meets design criteria*
- *Do not currently have a true residential conditional zoning district, but this could also be an option*
- *Perhaps only allow multi-family units in conservation style subdivisions.*
- *We should encourage cluster standards in new development in certain areas.*
- *Overlay idea proposed that could require conservation design for certain types / sizes of development in a defined area.*
- *Could split off portions of NR and RL zoning, where is existing density working, where is it too much? Could be put into a new district.*
- *All new development will lead to complaints, but board members know the Town needs to grow in order to address needs and not raise taxes.*
- *Infill is supportive of the goals of the Town and can help keep taxes low.*
- *Half-acre lots in RL zoning district is very low density, could allow for smaller lot sizes there. Conservation option allows smaller lots and setbacks.*
- *Neighborhood meetings should be encouraged if there is a zoning change / overlay in a certain area to discuss reasons and options.*



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- *Infrastructure subsidies need to be looked at. Currently Town does not provide water/sewer incentives, but electric incentives are provided to encourage connection to the cooperative.*
- *Need to know how much developable land we have and implications of zoning densities or changes.*
- *Suggestions for a working group to discuss zoning issues at greater depth (Jon, Anthony, Susan and Ginger suggested as members)*
- *Other Issues Parking Lot: A number of issues were discussed that do not have a direct correlation with zoning or land use recommendations.*
 - *Concern about height limits and architectural design in some areas*
 - *Concern about gated communities*
 - *Infrastructure needed to support growth, i.e. parking downtown to support tourism*
 - *Affordable housing – is there a way to encourage this through incentives, fees?*

NEXT STEPS

Based on the outcome of the discussion it was recommended that a working group be convened to analyze and discuss existing zoning and potential amendments. Staff will coordinate with the working group to discuss the following topics:

- *Outcome of Joint Planning Board and Town Council meeting*
- *Existing zoning framework and overall goals for developing areas of Town*
- *Comparison of zoning to peer communities*
- *Build out analysis*
 - *Calculate available land and potential new housing based on current zoning or changes to zoning.*
- *Potential options for zoning adjustments related to density, building types, subdivision design*
 - *Do Nothing Option*
 - *Density changes*
 - *Lower allowable density to existing districts (NR and/or RL)*
 - *By-right density vs SUP density thresholds*
 - *New District*
 - *Create and apply to Low-Med Density areas on FLU map, max density of 2-4 DUA, could incorporate site design standards or incentives*
 - *Evaluate need for conditional zoning district/process for residential uses*
 - *Multi-family Allowances*
 - *Could allow only with conservation design in NR/RL Districts*
 - *Civic / Open space requirements*
 - *Increase open space requirements in NR and RL*
 - *Adjust balance between passive open space and active recreation space, less active space could be required in more undeveloped areas*
 - *Revisit minimum density for civic space requirements (currently <2 units/acre is exempt)*
 - *Cluster/Conservation Design standards*
 - *Adjust existing structure/standards*
 - *Require in certain areas via overlay or increase incentives*