

**Town of Waynesville Planning Board**

**2023 Railroad Corridor Study Subcommittee**

**Municipal Building Conference Room, 16 S. Main St. Waynesville, NC 28786**

**January 23, 2023, 11:30 am- 12:00 pm**

**MEETING NOTES**

**Members**

**Present:** Danny Wingate, Stuart Bass, Don McGowan, Elizabeth Teague, Olga Grooman, and Susan Teas Smith (by phone)

**Absent:** Michael Blackburn, Travis Crisp

**Notes**

- The members met to discuss the scope of the subcommittee's work, specific goals, and timeframe for delivering results. The members specified their expectations and concerns:

**Danny Wingate** wants to understand what is the real railroad right-of-way, see more consistent lease agreements between the railroad and property owners, and seek clarity what exactly can be done within the right-of-way. He pointed out that many properties along the railroad are in the floodplain, especially in Hazelwood.

**Stuart Bass** wants to seek clarity on what is allowed along the railway corridor for future planning. He will look into Clyde's experiences with the railroad.

**Don McGowan** has been working with the Town and Haywood County on affordable housing initiatives. He sees this opportunity along the railroad corridor. He gave an example that in Orlando, FL, the properties along the rail tracks are considered valuable for affordable housing and economic development. Don also sees a lot of municipal opportunities along the corridor, such as parks.

**Susan Teas Smith** explained that in urban areas, such as Chicago, there is a lot of development along the railway. She is interested to engage with the local railroad leadership and understand legal easements and scope of what we can do for development and redevelopment of these areas.

**Olga Grooman** wants to see smart growth along the corridor and communicate with the Blue Ridge Southern leadership team to seek more clarity and engage them to the extent they would like. She wants to see additional permitted uses along the railroad, such as mixed-use buildings, storage units, multi-family.

**Elizabeth Teague** wants to see more allowed uses along the corridor so that zoning does not stand in the way of redevelopment and revitalization of these areas. She wants to keep Waynesville a vibrant community and create areas along the railway where residential and industrial can coexist without threatening each other.

- The group identified the desired outcomes for the subcommittee's work:
  - Determine what parts adjacent to the railroad can be developed
  - Affordable housing
  - New overlay zoning district
  - Clean up along the corridor
  - Identify development opportunities
  - Municipal opportunities: parking lots, parks, greenways
  - Find out more whether there will be passenger trains in the future
- The group decided to phase the study, with Frog Level being the 1<sup>st</sup> phase, and Hazelwood potentially the 2<sup>nd</sup> phase. This is based on the maps that have been done for the previous research.
- The subcommittee plans to complete its work and deliver the results by the end of May 2023.
- Next meeting date was scheduled for Tuesday, February 7, 2023, at 11:30 am. The group will go on a van tour along the railroad corridor and identify opportunities. Lunch will be provided after that.

**Adjourn**