

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2025 at 4:00PM

The meeting was called to order at 4pm.

Chairman Anthony Saponaro called the meeting to order for the Planning Commission. In attendance were Ms. Angela Newnam (via Zoom), and Dr. Ken Hornowski were present. Mr. Jonathan Kanipe, Mr. Tony Williams, and Mr. Billy Clarke, Town Attorney, were also present. Ms, Diane Fourton was not present.

Chairman Saponaro adjourned the meeting at 5:03pm.

The Planning Commission discussed adjusting the impervious surface definition in the ordinance and proposed a framework for regulating accessory buildings based on lot size. They also explored the interpretation of land ownership and parceling, the number of accessory structures allowed on different acreage lots, and the potential size of additional structures on a 3-acre lot. Lastly, they discussed the need for proactive measures to address tree-related issues, the potential for the town to become a Tree City, USA, and the need to review and clarify the tree ordinance.

The next steps are as follows:

- Mr. Kanipe to research and provide information on the cost and sourcing of tree saplings, working with Eco Foresters if possible.
- Ms. Newnam will draft an article for the town newsletter about tree loss, replanting efforts, and guidelines for residents.
- Town staff will continue efforts on private property debris removal and follow up with property owners who have not yet addressed debris.
- The Planning Commission will review and potentially revise the accessory building ordinance based on the discussed framework.

- Town staff to explore becoming a Tree City USA, including forming a tree committee and planning an Arbor Day celebration.
- Mr. Kanipe will schedule a meeting with interested Planning Commission members to review and clarify the tree ordinance, particularly distinguishing between commercial and residential applications.
- The Planning Commission will prepare recommendations for the March meeting on accessory buildings and tree replanting efforts.
- Town staff to investigate creating a registry and plaque program for significant trees in town.
- Mr. Kanipe will monitor the State's efforts in remapping flood zones and assess potential impacts on town ordinances.

Impervious Surface Definition Adjustment

Chairman Saponaro discussion about adjusting the impervious surface definition in the ordinance. The proposal was to amend the ordinance to consider wooden decks with small air space as pervious, rather than impervious. Ms. Newnam expressed concerns about this change, arguing that it could lead to unlimited decking and potentially disrupt the natural flow of water. She suggested adding a maximum size limit to the definition. The board agreed to further discuss this issue and possibly present a survey to the next planning commission to gauge the impact of such a change.

Accessory Building Regulation Proposal

Chairman Saponaro proposed a framework for regulating accessory buildings based on lot size. He suggested that for lots up to half an acre, only one accessory building should be allowed, with a maximum size of 25% of the main building's size or up to 1,000 square feet. For lots up to 2 acres, two buildings could be allowed, with the first being up to 25% of the main building's size and the second being up to 15%. For lots over 2 acres, three buildings could be allowed, with the first being up to 25%, the second up to 15%, and the third up to 10%. All lots over 5 acres could have as many accessory buildings as they have, but none could exceed 75% of the main building's size. The board was asked to discuss and potentially vote on this proposal by the next meeting.

Land Ownership and Parceling Discussion

Ms. Newnam and the board discussed the interpretation of land ownership and parceling. They clarified that each parcel, regardless of its size, is considered as one lot owned by a property owner.

Ms. Newnam suggested splitting the categories of land sizes based on the percentages she had calculated, with less than half an acre as one category, half an acre to one as another, and one to two acres as a third. The board agreed to consider this suggestion.

Accessory Structures Based on Acreage

The Board discussed the number of accessory structures allowed on different acreage lots. They agreed that up to one acre, one accessory structure is allowed, up to two acres, two structures, up to three acres, three structures, and up to five acres, five structures. They also considered the possibility of capping the number of structures at a certain percentage of the main building for lots over five acres. Ms. Newnam suggested that special cases might require individual consideration. The board decided to bring their other members into the discussion and to review the proposed metrics for the size of the accessory structures.

Structures on 3-Acre Lots Discussed

The board discussed the potential size of additional structures on a 3-acre lot. They agreed that a second structure could be around 1,800 square feet, which seemed reasonable. They also considered the implications of a 1.5-acre lot, suggesting that a second structure could be around 1,400 square feet. They concluded that these sizes were reasonable and would still comply with the ordinance. The discussion also touched on the maximum roof coverage for a main building, which was agreed to be 25% of the total roof coverage. The possibility of increasing the minimum size of accessory buildings from 750 to 1,000 square feet was also discussed, with Ms. Newnam suggesting that they could simply go off the numbers without a specific minimum.

Revising Property Combinations and Ordinances

The board discussed the need to revise a chart related to property combinations and the implications of this on their ordinances. They also considered the potential for combining lots and the impact of this on accessory buildings and residences. Town suggested looking into the subdivision ordinance

and the possibility of combining parcels for tax purposes. They also discussed the importance of fire prevention and the need for replanting after tree removal. Ms. Newnam proposed the idea of a heritage tree registry to encourage tree preservation. The board agreed to further explore these issues and consider potential solutions.

Addressing Tree-Related Public Health Concerns

Chairman Saponaro discussed the need for proactive measures to address tree-related issues, particularly in the context of a catastrophic hurricane or act of God. He suggested that the town could adopt an ordinance to require property owners to clean up dead trees, which could be considered a threat to public health and safety. Mr. Kanipe mentioned that 67 people had applied for private property debris removal, indicating a potential solution to the issue. Ms. Newnam suggested enhancing the definition of a nuisance in the existing ordinance to better address the problem. The board agreed to wait until the situation was more settled before making further decisions. Ms. Newnam proposed publicizing the issue in the town newsletter to encourage property owners to take responsibility for cleaning up their properties.

Wildfire Debris Cleanup and Challenges

The board discussed the efforts being made to clean up debris left by wildfires and the challenges faced with Duke Energy. Mr. Kanipe mentioned the potential use of hazard mitigation funding from the State through FEMA for defensible properties. The conversation also touched on the progress made in clearing debris on public and private properties. Ms. Newnam expressed concerns about leaning trees and their potential impact, which Mr. Kanipe addressed by mentioning the removal of over 450 trees from the right of way or private property that were impacting the right of way. The possibility of providing a summary of the scale of tree loss was also discussed.

Reforestation Cleanup and Sapling Sourcing

The board discussed the ongoing cleanup efforts and the replanting of trees in the area. They considered the cost and sourcing of saplings, with a focus on finding a balance between quantity and quality. The idea of providing guidelines for planting trees in different conditions, such as shady areas, was also discussed. The board also considered partnering with Eco Foresters for specific

feedback and ideas on reforestation. Ms. Newnam suggested creating an article with information on native plants and trees, along with guidelines for different budgets. The board agreed to continue working on the cleanup and replanting efforts, with a focus on finding a solution that works for everyone.

Tree City USA and Ordinance Review

The board discussed the potential for the town to become a Tree City, USA, which would involve having ordinances about trees, an advisory committee, spending \$2 per capita annually on the tree program, and celebrating Arbor Day. They also discussed the need to inventory important trees and the possibility of using funds for tree plaques. The board also touched on the need to review and clarify the tree ordinance, with a suggestion to budget time to walk through it line by line. Lastly, they discussed the need to update flood maps and the potential for flooding in certain areas.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:03pm.