Planning Board
Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, May 14, 2024 at 6:30 PM
Conover City Hall Council Chambers
101 1st Street E, Conover

A Regular Meeting of the Planning Board was held on Tuesday, May 14, 2024 at 6:30 PM in the Council Chambers of Conover City Hall.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Present:	Chairman David Brown, Planning Board Member Corey Keisler, Planning Board Member Eddie Dwiggins, Planning Board Member James "Zan" Thompson, Planning Board Member Ken Hilderbran, Vice Chairman Mary Reynolds, Planning Board Member Sherman Powell, Planning Board Member D.R. Timmerman Jr.
Absent:	None
Staff:	Planning Director Erik Schlichting and Assistant Planner Heather Stephens.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Item 1. March 12, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes

A motion was duly made by Vice Chairman Reynolds, seconded by Planning Board Member Powell, to approve March 12, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes.

AYES:	Chairman Brown, Vice Chairman Reynolds, Planning Board Member Thompson, Planning Board Member Timmerman Jr., Planning Board Member Keisler, Planning Board Member Hilderbran, Planning Board Member Dwiggins, Planning Board Member Powell
NOES:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

With a unanimous vote of 8-0, the motion to approve the March 12, 2024 Regular Meeting Minutes passed.

Item 2. March 19, 2024 Specialty Meeting Minutes

A motion was duly made by Planning Board Member Hilderbran, seconded by Planning Board Member Powell, to approve March 19, 2024 Specialty Meeting Minutes.

AYES:	Chairman Brown, Vice Chairman Reynolds, Planning Board Member Thompson, Planning Board Member Timmerman Jr., Planning Board Member

	Keisler, Planning Board Member Hilderbran, Planning Board Member Dwiggins, Planning Board Member Powell
NOES:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

With a unanimous vote of 8-0, the motion to approve the March 19, 2024 Specialty Meeting Minutes was approved.

III. OLD BUSINESS

No old business.

IV. HEARING FOR PERSONS HAVING BUSINESS WITH THE BOARD

No one chose to speak at this time. Hearing was closed at 6:31 p.m.

V. NEW BUSINESS

Item 3. CA 24-01: Changes to Appendix A - Zoning (General Regulations, Section 21.2: Definitions of Specific Terms and Words & Establishment of Districts, Section 31.4: Land Use Table)

Mr. Schlichting presented the item. He stated that the change was due to having things not defined in our Land Use Table or robustly defined. There may be other definitions needed in the near future, but these are the ones they were able to get added in time for this meeting. Most of these definitions are based on and linked back to the general statute as when the use is defined there. The definitions added were for assisted living, family care home, medical clinic, nursing home, and urgent care. The land use table was changed to make sure the newly created defined uses fall into the proper district.

Mr. Brown questioned about adding a family care home to the land use table.

Mr. Schlichting responded that a family care home as defined there, is required by the state because you cannot zone them out, and they are allowed in any district that allows residential use. The staff decided that the best thing to do was add the definition and put it onto the use table.

Mrs. Reynolds questioned if the other defined uses were inadvertently left off the chart before.

Mr. Schlichting responded that he does not think they were inadvertly left off, but maybe not defined prior even though the use was allowed. Or there may have been uses that were not thought about previously.

Mr. Hildebran stated from what he read, it aligns it with state codes and statutes.

Mr. Schlichting responded that most are from the general statutes definition, but urgent care was added to define specifically what they are here. Since medical clinic encompassed different things, doctor office, dentist office, urgent care, etc., they were lumped together under the medical clinic definition.

Mrs. Reynolds questioned where was urgent care category would fall on the chart.

Mrs. Schlichting responded that urgent care was included in the medical clinic definition.

Mr. Keisler question if there was a reason Medical Clinic was not an allowed use in the M-1 district.

Mr. Schlichting responded that he was fine with medical clinic being allowed in M-1 like hospitals if the board preferred that.

Mrs. Reynolds commented that some industries may have onsite medical clinic, so it may be a good idea to add it in.

Mr. Schlichting stated he does not have any objection to adding medical clinic into the M-1 district.

Item a. Public Hearing for CA 24-01: Changes to Appendix A - Zoning

Mr. Brown opened the public hearing at 6:38.

No one chose to speak at this time.

Mr. Brown closed the public hearing at 6:39.

The suggested change is to also add Medical Clinic to the M-1 district in the Land Use Table.

A motion was duly made by Planning Board Member Thompson, seconded by Vice Chairman Reynolds, to approve the amendment to Appendix A: Zoning with the above change, as it is reasonable and in the general interest to update and provide clarifications to city regulations and policies. This change is consistent with the Strategic Plan that states that the city should "Update & Streamline City Regulations and Policies".

AYES:	Chairman Brown, Vice Chairman Reynolds, Planning Board Member Thompson, Planning Board Member Timmerman Jr., Planning Board Member Keisler, Planning Board Member Hilderbran, Planning Board Member Dwiggins, Planning Board Member Powell
NOES:	None

ABSTAIN:	None

With a unanimous vote of 8-0, the motion to approve the amendments to Appendix A: Zoning with the above changes passed.

Item 4. Southern Conover Small Area Plan (SAP) Draft

Mr. Schlichting presented the Southern Conover Small Area Plan. He stated that it is similar to the Land Development Plan (LDP), but it only works for the area defined within the plan itself, but with similar goals. The LDP is due to be updated in 2030 and is used as a guiding document for development in the city, and this plan will adopt a change to the future land use map. This small area plan began in 2019, due to Bolick Historic District being designated a National Historic Place in 1990, based on the historical significance of the industrial uses of the Bolick Buggy Works and coinciding residential areas. The planning department was asked to look at this due to the further enhancement of the historic area and Conover not having a historic preservation committee due to the limited amount of historical area the city has right now.

He stated that the small area plan expanded the area involved from the original historical area due to geographic sense. It lengthened it to the southern boundary with Newton, established neighborhoods along Conover Blvd as a natural boundary, the cemetery, and the railroad as another natural boundary. There was enough older development present to be considered when coming up with this historically-based small area plan. He presented a map showing the ages of the development of the properties in this area, which were into the early 1900s. The WPCOG was asked to help create this small area plan. Most of it is focused on residential and mixed-use development. Details for each focus area are provided in the document where the WPCOG saw possible development or redevelopment in the area.

He stated that this document does not change anyone's zoning or directly affect the properties right now. This document is for the future if someone comes to them with any sort development plan contained in this area. We will use the document to look at it and see how the development matches up to this document and what is being established for each of these focus areas. Mr. Schlichting showed an example that was contained in focus area 4 of a proposed redevelopment plan for a factory. The factory is still in use, so it will not change anything now and it is only for redevelopment in the future. Similar to be used like when Broyhill was closed and the city bought it to redevelop it. This is a guiding document for a developer. The housing information in the SAP came from the new WPCOG's Housing Manual. It discusses keeping architectural features that are present in the neighborhood including building design, keeping houses closest to the street, smaller lots than what the current zoning allows like the lots along there that were developed in the 20's and 30's in focus area 2. The proximity to downtown would make these areas more attractive for more housing and mixed-use. This would have the potential set up for walking to work or to services.

Mr. Brown questioned if this plan was in line with the LDP or if there were any contradictions.

Mr. Schlichting responded that there are and that would be the second part. The adoption of this plan would mean staff will have to consult this document, just as the LDP, but for this small area that is defined. Only action besides adopting the plan is asking to change the future LDP map that was updated in 2022 to reflect the changes from previous rezonings and to match this SAP. This would update the future land use map to match the change that was approved. This area was unchanged from 2003 to 2022 in the LDP Update besides adding the commercial node. He explained the changes suggest to the LDP Future Land Use Map along with sliding the commercial node east to encourage mixed-use and infill development within that suggested area.

Mr. Keisler questioned about the business on the corner of 321 and 70, if this change was implemented, would the business have to cease if it changed hands.

Mr. Schlichting responded that no, this SAP is just a guideline for future requests of development or zoning. It is not changing the zoning and uses won't change unless a developer comes up with a plan.

Mrs. Reynolds questioned what happens if a developer comes to the city and wants to build on a lot that is no longer listed as residential on LDP anymore.

Mr. Schlichting responded that single-family residential, we cannot restrict them as they are allowed by the zoning. This could be used possibly on multi-family and make it fit the neighborhood and look similar.

Mrs. Reynolds questioned about the language on the overlay district contained within the plan. She questioned about economic incentives provided by this plan.

Mr. Schlichting responded that this plan serves as an overlay district. Overlay districts are used sometimes to have much more specific and guidelines than this one has. We do not have any overlay districts currently in Conover, Catawba County has several overlay districts. He stated that this plan is the vision for the area and there are not any economic incentives in it.

Mr. Brown questioned if the SAP proposed is a much more specific guideline in consideration than what we have now.

Mr. Schlichting responded that is correct. This would be more specific, such as if any rezoning is proposed in this area, they would include this plan in the consideration. This would require any new development to examine this plan. It is not a binding document, but a guiding document.

Mr. Dwiggins and Mr. Brown questioned if all of this area was in Conover because in past discussions over the years, there was talk about a joint plan with Newton.

Mr. Schlichting responded that the previous planning director had discussed that but nothing ever came of it. He is unsure of how exactly this was started other than focusing on the Bolick

family's importance to this area.

Mrs. Reynolds questioned about the difference between National Historic Register and Historical District.

Mr. Schlichting responded that the National Historic Register is a federal recommendation for that area. If someone wants to do a restoration, they can get tax credits to restore these buildings to a historic place to his understanding. There is a specific process for that. The city is not involved in it, and the city does not have a historic district.

Item b. Public Hearing for Southern Conover Small Area Plan

Mr. Brown opened the public hearing at 7:00 p.m.

Andy Kanipe, located at 726 3rd Ave NE, chose to speak. He stated that he has five properties in this area and said he has someone interested in the property every week. He was concerned about a future road that would be in the backyard of some of his properties for future redevelopment. He is concerned about wanting to fix his property, but he needs help. He wants everything to be as nice as it can be.

Mr. Brown closed the public hearing at 7:03 p.m.

Mr. Schlichting stated again that this would not change any zoning, and suggested possible roads by WPCOG in the plan are just suggestions about future redevelopment and do not have to be completed that way.

Mr. Keisler questioned for clarification if the point of SAP is to give developers or investors an idea of the vision of the area. The idea is to give some blueprints or inspiration for the area to help clean it up eventually.

Mr. Schlichting stated that this could be presented as this is the style of development as to what could go into the neighborhood and provide choices if someone does want to build something new.

Mrs. Reynolds stated that this is similar to what other cities have used. This is how one pocket area ignites the development for the rest of the area. It is a small process and not all overnight.

A motion was duly made by Planning Board Member Keisler, seconded by Vice Chairman Reynolds, to approve their recommendation for the adoption of the Southern Conover Small Area Plan and the recommendation of the Land Development Plan Concept Development Map update.

AYES:	Chairman Brown, Vice Chairman Reynolds, Planning Board Member Thompson, Planning Board Member Timmerman Jr., Planning Board

	Member Keisler, Planning Board Member Hilderbran, Planning Board Member Dwiggins, Planning Board Member Powell
NOES:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

With a unanimous vote of 8-0, the motion to approve the recommendation of the Southern Conover Small Area Plan approval and the update to the Land Development Plan Concept Development Map passed.

Item 5. Nomination of Planning Board Chairman

Mr. Schlichting presented the item. He stated that City Council appoints the Chairman, but the Planning Board makes the recommendation to the Council on whom the Chairman could be.

Mr. Thompson made his announcement about his leaving the Planning Board due to him moving away from Conover soon.

Mrs. Reynolds nominated Mr. Brown to be Planning Board Chairman.

A motion was duly made by Vice Chairman Reynolds, seconded by Planning Board Member Hilderbran, to approve the Nomination of David Brown as the Planning Board Chairman.

AYES:	Chairman Brown, Vice Chairman Reynolds, Planning Board Member Thompson, Planning Board Member Timmerman Jr., Planning Board Member Keisler, Planning Board Member Hilderbran, Planning Board Member Dwiggins, Planning Board Member Powell
NOES:	None
ABSTAIN:	None

With a unanimous vote of 8-0, the motion to approve of the Nomination of David Brown as the Planning Board Chairman passed.

VI. INFORMATIONAL ITEMS

Item 6. March 2024 Permit Report

Mr. Schlichting presented the March 2024 Permit Report.

Item 7. April 2024 Permit Report

Mr. Schlichting presented the April 2024 Permit Report.

Mr. Hilderbran questioned if the city had seen any issues with DR Horton in Cline Village as they are facing some issues of collapsing roofs and failing septic systems in South Carolina, according to the news.

Mr. Schlichting stated that he had not heard anything at that time and that all the drainage is working the way it was intended, but it may change once people start changing their drainage patterns in their yards.

Mrs. Reynolds questioned who the consultant was that was chosen to help us with the UDO.

Mr. Schlichting responded that the company is WithersRavenal that will be helping us with the UDO creation.

VII. ADJOURNMENT

Next Planning Board Meeting is June 11, 2024.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 07:23 PM.

_____ _____

David Brown, Planning Board Chairman Erik Schlichting, Planning Director