PLANNING BOARD MINUTES

DATE: July 21, 2026
Town of Fletcher
300 Old Cane Creek Road
Fletcher, NC 28732

Type of Meeting: PUBLIC MEETING

Chairman Bowser called a regular meeting of the Planning Board to order at 6:00 PM

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:

Lee Bowser (Chairman/ District 2)
Robyn Mondin (At Large/ District 1)
Doug Ferguson (District 4)
Jacob Compher (At Large/ District 3)
Leslie Cuevas (District 3)
Mike Franklin (District 1)
Julia Fogel (At Large/ District 3)
Bryan Gilbert (ETJ)

Public Input: No one from the public spoke at this time.

AGENDA ITEM:	PRESENTED BY:	ACTION TAKEN:
Approval of Minutes from June 16, 2026 meeting	Chairman Bowser	Approval of the minutes, as transcribed
Hearing of Cases		
Special Use Permit for Focus Plus Academy (26-11-SUP)	Tyler Morrow, Planning and Zoning Director; Jill Paterson, Co-Founder and School Director	Recommendation to Town Council to approve the Special Use Permit
Other Business		
Staff Updates	Tyler Morrow, Planning and Zoning Director	None

STAFF PRESENT: Tyler Morrow, Planning and Zoning Director

An audio file of the meeting is available, upon request, for a fee.

Approval of Planning Board minutes: corrections-additions-deletions

Chairman Bowser asked for a motion to approve the minutes.

It was so moved by **Mike Franklin;** seconded by **Bryan Gilbert**. There was no further discussion. The motion carries, all in favor.

AGENDA ITEM 1

Special Use Permit for Focus Plus Academy (26-11-SUP)

Chairman Bowser stated the rules of procedure for a quasi-judicial hearing. He then swore in all persons who would be giving testimony.

Mr. Tyler Morrow entered his staff report into the public record. He said the applicant is seeking a Special Use permit for Focus Plus Academy. The location will be in the existing Fletcher United Methodist Church building located at 50 Library Rd. The property is zoned C-1, general commercial.

Mr. Morrow continued. The applicant proposes to operate Focus Plus Academy within two existing classrooms at a small middle school / high school level, with a maximum enrollment of 25 students. No exterior changes to the building, parking or site is proposed with this project.

The property and surrounding commercial corridor is zoned C-1. Residential zoning is located farther from US-25 along Poteat Street. The site is also part of the established civic area that includes the church, Fletcher Library, and Kate's Park. Schools are allowed as a special use in C-1, so this does not require a rezoning.

Mr. Morrow presented images of the existing entrance on the west side of the building that'll be utilized by the proposed school and the parking area that will be utilized by teachers, parents, and visitors. He presented the image of the existing park located adjacent to the church property providing a nearby recreational and open space amenity to this public institutional use. He showed the image of the existing signalized intersection that will serve as the primary access for vehicles entering and exiting the site.

Mr. Morrow said the school will occupy approximately 700 square feet of existing classroom space with occasional use of the chapel.

- No additions, grading, new impervious surfaces or infrastructure improvements are

proposed.

- Student drop off and pick up will use a separate circulation pattern from the preschool with staggered schedules to minimize conflicts.
- Fifteen (15) parking spaces are allocated to the school- exceeding the minimum required parking. A traffic impact analysis is not required because this project is only expected to generate approximately 60 daily trips.
- School hours will be Monday through Friday from 8:15 to 3:45 with early dismissal on Fridays at 1:45.

Mr. Morrow said the proposal supports the Town's land use plan by expanding local education opportunities while making efficient use of an existing Community facility. Although the property is within the Town Center Business designation, Heart of Fletcher design review is not required because there are no exterior improvements, additions, or substantial renovations occurring. He said he'd be happy to answer any questions that the board may have, and the applicant will also be giving a presentation.

Ms. Jill Paterson and **Mr. Steve Paterson,** the co-founders of Focus Plus Academy presented to the Planning board. **Focus Plus Academy** will be designed to help students who struggle in traditional classrooms. They are bright, capable students who may be dealing with ADHD, executive functioning challenges, autism, or multiple things. In the classroom they struggle with self-starting and with organization. These students need extra support and to be given the skills that they're missing.

Ms. Paterson continued. She said the school will have a low student to staff ratio of 5:1. It will launch in August with grades six to nine, but the plan is to grow to middle through high school, grades 6 through 12 in the future. The school has been approved to accept North Carolina sponsored scholarship funds. The Opportunity Scholarship is on a financial need basis. And the ESA Plus scholarship is for disability. A lot of these students can apply for one or both of these scholarships. The scholarships pay for tuition and other things related to attending private schools. Because of these funds the school is going to be accessible to more families who might not be able to afford tuition without it.

Ms. Paterson said the school plans to be compatible and have a low impact on the community. At maximum there will be up to 25 students and six staff at this location. At start up in August, they will have three to five students; with anticipated growth to ten students the first year.

- The school is going to be utilizing approximately 700 square feet of space inside the church.

- Health and Fire safety inspections are complete.
- Pick up and drop-off times for the school will be staggered with the preschool's schedule to reduce congestion.
- Focus Plus Academy's 15 allotted parking spaces will be in the rear of the church, while the preschool's are in a separate location in front
- No new infrastructure will be created for ingress and egress
- No adverse effect to nearby residents, employees, public welfare, surrounding properties, or public improvements.
- Provides a needed community resource with a small-scale operating plan that's compatible with the property and surrounding area.

Chairman Bowser asked the board if they have any questions.

Mr. Mike Franklin questioned if Kate's Park is open to the public or does the Town reserve it.

Mr. Morrow said as a public park it is open to anyone, but it may be reserved for events.

Mr. Franklin said he wanted to clarify whether Focus School could use it without having to make reservations.

Ms. Paterson said they don't plan to use it regularly for PE. If the park is available It might be a nice day to go there and have a book study.

Mr. Doug Ferguson asked what the intent is for expansion of additional high school grades in the future.

Ms. Paterson said if they outgrow the space then they would cap off their enrollment at that point and start a waiting list until they obtain more space in another location.

Mr. Franklin asked if they plan to add elementary grades.

Ms. Paterson said there will be no elementary students.

Chairman Bowser asked the board if they have any other questions for the parties or witnesses present. They had none.

Chairman Bowser asked for a motion for or against the Special Use permit.

Ms. Robyn Mondin made a motion for approval.

Ms. Leslie Cuevas seconded the motion.

There was no further discussion. The motion carries, unanimously.

Staff updates and other business
Mr. Morrow discussed an upcoming training session, open for the planning board members, to be held at the WCU campus in Biltmore Park. He has sent the members an email regarding this training. He said once he has a head count of those who will attend he will register.

There was no public input.

Chairman Bowser adjourned the meeting at 6:24 PM.

Next meeting: September 15, 2026

Read, approved and adopted this _____ day of _____, 2026

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_____ _____

Planning Director Chairman