

Planning and Zoning Committee Meeting
Tuesday, June 25, 2024, at 1 PM
Sky Valley City Hall – 3608 Highway 246
Sky Valley, Georgia

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairman Dan McAfee, Tony Allred, Don Germano, David Spears, Jim Phelps, Code Enforcer Jim Pyburn, Ex Officio Member

STAFF PRESENT: City Manager Streetman, Communications Specialist Van Camp, Code Enforcer Pyburn

1. **Call to Order** Chairman McAfee called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM.
2. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**
May 28, 2024 -- David Spears made a motion to approve the minutes as written, seconded by Don Germano, unanimously approved.
3. **ADOPTION OF AGENDA:** Don Germano made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Tony Allred, unanimously approved.

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

4. **Tree Cutting Ordinance:**

Jim Phelps opened the discussion by reviewing the edits and changes he made to the current tree ordinance. One edit included changing the wording from City Marshal to Building Inspector. The term "specimen tree" was discussed. Don Germano suggested that the committee refers to neighboring counties for wording or definition. Tony and Jim Pyburn shared that a specimen tree is a focal point/large tree. The committee also discussed the amount of insurance the contractor should carry be at least one million dollars.

Jim Pyburn commented that the landowner where the trees are being cut needs to be the one that applies for the permit. Written permission will not be enough to grant a permit. The application must have the signature of the land/homeowner. He went on to state that if multiple landowners are involved, that all shall apply for separate permits. One permit for each lot where trees are being cut/topped/trimmed/removed.

Prohibition: Jim Phelps said that he would like to see the updated ordinance read that only 25% of trees can be removed for the lifetime of the property. The committee agreed, but also stated that it would be very hard to track. Jim Pyburn added that the city is required to retain permits for ten years. Don Germano suggested adding the word "original" in front of 25 percent in the first line of Sec 12-193. The committee also discussed having a landscape architect or arborist involved in the tree removal process of all new construction.

Mitigation: The committee discussed having fines for violations. Replanting was also discussed after trees have been removed. The sizes and numbers will be determined in the updated ordinance.

Don Germano added that he would like to see verbiage, like added by Hall County, to protect trees by prohibiting damage done by chemicals,

Chairman McAfee asked Jim Phelps to incorporate the changes that were discussed and share the updated version with the committee members, so they can review before the next meeting.

5. Solar Panel Installations

Chairman McAfee discussed prohibiting clearing trees for the purpose of solar panel or satellite dish construction. No ground mounted solar arrays will be permitted in Sky Valley.

6. Unconventional Building Materials and/or Methods

Mayor Steil and City Manager Streetman will be attending a county meeting on Friday, June 28, 2024. They will talk with other county officials regarding unconventional building materials and/or methods.

7. 2024 Comprehensive Plan

The zoning maps need to be compatible with the character maps in the new comp plan. These zones will be updated before the completion of the Rabun County Comprehensive Plan in October. Jason said that he will reach out to Faith Bryan at GMRC to begin working on zoning overlays to get the maps updated and consistent.

Don Germano asked Mayor Steil for updates on the future development and sewer plans for the city. She shared that there are development and investment groups working on plans. Mayor Steil also added that in order to take advantage of the sewer grants that have been allotted, the plan must move forward quickly.

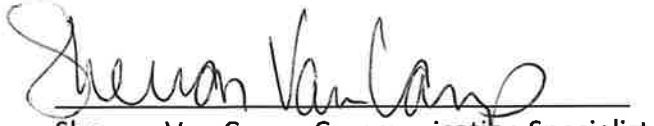
The next meeting will take place on Thursday, July 23, 2024, at 1:00 PM at Sky Valley City Hall and via Zoom.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the committee, Tony made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Don, unanimously approved.

The meeting adjourned at 2:40 PM.

Respectfully submitted:


Sherron Van Camp, Communication Specialist