



TOWN OF SYLVA BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, April 9, 2026, at 5:30 PM
Board Room, 83 Allen Street Sylva, North Carolina

MINUTES

PRESENT: Blitz Estridge, Commissioner
Perry Matthews, Commissioner
Samuel McGuire, Commissioner
Johnny Phillips, Mayor
Joseph Waldrum, Commissioner
Brad Waldrop, Mayor Pro Tem

Paige Dowling, Town Manager
Amanda Murajda, Town Clerk
Eric Ridenour, Town Attorney

ABSENT:

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Phillips called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

STAFF PRESENT: None.

VISITORS: None.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner McGuire made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Waldrum made a motion to approve the consent agenda. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

MAYOR'S REPORT:

Mayor Phillips reported attending the ceremony recognizing the new public restrooms and congratulated all involved in receiving the award and recognition for the Town.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT:

Commissioners congratulated staff and others involved in the restroom project and award recognition. Commissioner McGuire reminded the public about the upcoming "Cleaning Up the Mountains" cleanup event and encouraged volunteer participation. Volunteers are to meet at Monteith Park at 9:00 a.m., and supplies including gloves and trash bags will be provided. Commissioner Estridge reported that the Sylva Support Stop Box area had been cleaned, painted, and appeared well maintained. The commissioner also recognized Community Table for serving many local residents in need. Commissioner Matthews announced that the SADC Solar Art Walk would be held that evening and encouraged residents to support local artists and businesses.

MANAGER'S REPORT: Manager Dowling reported the following:

- Commissioners McGuire and Estridge volunteered to attend the homelessness roundtable April 16th.
- Draft budget materials will be emailed on April 17th and printed copies will be available prior to the budget work session on April 23rd following the regular 9:00 a.m. meeting.
- Chief Hatton's retirement is April 30 from 2-4:00 p.m. in the atrium of the Historic Courthouse.
- Aimee Sumner will be sworn in as Police Chief May 1 at 3:00 p.m. at the top of the Courthouse steps.

- Greening Up the Mountains is April 25th from 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m. All 170 vendor spaces are full.
- Staff received the report regarding options for the Fisher Creek Dam and are reviewing it for future budget discussions.
- Engineering work on Scotts Creek continues, and weekly FEMA meetings have resumed. Funding obligations may not occur until mid-August.
- The RTP trail was completed late last week. The trail ended up being longer than expected and has two small bridges. Trail B was not feasible due to the rocky terrain. The Duke Energy Foundation grant has \$628.01 remaining that can be used for trail maintenance. Now we will begin the grant closeouts for both grants and start on the PARTF request for proposals.
- The Poteet Park restroom is still on schedule to be completed in the next couple of weeks.

PUBLIC HEARING

ZONING MAP AMENDMENT—CONDITIONAL DISTRICT—MODIFICATION (COOP Properties):

Commissioner Estridge made a motion to open the hearing at 5:37 p.m. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

Senior Planner and Zoning Administrator John Jeleniewski presented the application for modification of a previously approved conditional district zoning request originally approved in 2023. The applicant, Solstice Partners LLC on behalf of COOP Properties LLC, requested approval to modify the existing approval for a multifamily residential development located on Savannah Drive (PIN 7631-66-1393).

Key details included:

- Increase from 48 units to 60 units
- Change from two-story to three-story buildings
- Total of 126 bedrooms
- Amenities include:
 - Community center with laundry and computer center
 - Playground
 - Picnic shelter and grills
 - Sidewalk improvements

Jeleniewski explained that the project remains subject to future technical review, including parking, landscaping, stormwater, lighting, and architectural compliance. The Planning Board unanimously recommended approval.

Public Comment:

Property owner Fred Schutt, whose residence borders the property, spoke regarding concerns about grading, lighting, retaining walls, and privacy impacts. Planning staff addressed those concerns and explained that landscaping buffers and lighting standards would apply. Tammy Stern, representing Solstice Partners, stated the project would help address the local housing shortage and indicated the project has a strong opportunity for state funding consideration this year.

Board Discussion:

Commissioners discussed parking requirements, open space, workforce housing definitions, and the competitive state funding process for affordable and workforce housing developments. Planning staff stated that the final site plan would be required to comply fully with Town parking and development standards before permits could be issued.

Being no further comment, Commissioner Waldrum made a motion to close the hearing at 6:07 p.m. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

NEW BUSINESS:

ZONING MAP AMENDMENT—CONDITIONAL DISTRICT—MODIFICATION (COOP Properties):

Commissioner Waldrum made a motion to approve the application request. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

The Board reviewed and read the Statement of Consistency pursuant to N.C.G.S. 160D regarding the conditional zoning district amendment for parcel PIN 7631-66-1393. The statement found the request consistent with the Town of Sylva 2040 Land Use Plan, particularly regarding housing diversity, workforce housing opportunities, and walkability and urban neighborhood development. *Commissioner Waldrum made a motion to approve the statement of consistency. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

Regular Board Meeting April 9, 2026

PLANNING BOARD APPOINTMENT: The Board considered the appointment of Rob Barnes to fill an unexpired term on the Planning Board ending June 30, 2026. *Commissioner McGuire made a motion to appoint Rob Barnes to the Planning Board. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

ADJOURNMENT: *Commissioner Waldrop made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:12 p.m. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

Johnny Phillips
Mayor

Amanda W. Murajda
Town Clerk