



TOWN OF SYLVA BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS REGULAR MEETING

Thursday, March 13, 2025 at 5:30 PM

Board Room, 83 Allen Street Sylva, North Carolina

MINUTES

PRESENT: Jonathan Brown, Commissioner
Blitz Estridge, Commissioner
Mary Gelbaugh, Mayor Pro-Tem
Johnny Phillips, Mayor
Brad Waldrop, Commissioner

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: Robbie Carter (Assistant Police Chief) and Chris Hatton (Police Chief).

VISITORS: Paige LeBlanc, Marti Walker, Joseph Waldrum, David Ginn, Tim Pressley, Paul Heckert and Dwight McMahan.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

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

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

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

PUBLIC COMMENTS: None.

MAYOR'S REPORT: None.

COMMISSIONER'S REPORT: Commissioner Estridge extended his condolences to the family of Commissioner Jon Brown on the death of his mother.

MANAGER'S REPORT: Manager Dowling reported the following:

- The next budget work session will be March 27th after the regular meeting.
- Employment Update: There is a vacancy in Public Works for a maintenance technician.
- There is a vacancy on the Planning Board for the remainder of a term ending December 31, 2026.
- GUTM vendor spaces are full. The festival is Saturday, April 26th from 10:0 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING

ZONING MAP AMENDMENT REQUEST—SYLVA CHURCH OF GOD/HIGHTS, INC: *Commissioner Estridge made a motion to open the public hearing at 5:33 p.m. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.* John Jeleniewski, Senior County Planner, presented the staff report to the zoning map amendment request as follows:

Applicant: Sylva Church of God – Property Owners; Hights, Inc. (purchaser)

Property Location: 130 Sunrise Park, 131 Sunrise Park, Sylva NC 28779; PIN 7641-37-9289 & 7641-47-1241

Current Property Zoning: High Density Residential - HDR

Ordinance Section for which the Text Amendment is requested: Article 3 - Procedures - Section 3.9.B – Zoning and Map Amendments

Description of Request:

The applicant is requesting a map amendment that would designate the subject properties as General Business (GB) District.

Background:

The General Business District (GB) is the largest district within Sylva's commercially zoned jurisdiction. The GB District offers a broad range of permitted (use-by-right) and special uses (SUP) such as lodging, retail/commercial, restaurants, public/civil, accessory dwellings and recreational uses. Property improvements in this district are subject to development standards as set forth in the zoning ordinance including building setbacks, landscaping, architectural standards, sidewalk construction, parking, storm water treatment, etc.

The subject properties are located on both sides of Sunrise Park (road), approximately 720 ft south of Highway 107/Sunrise Park intersection. The total land area for both properties is 0.72 acres with a main church structure, formally the Church of God (west side) and two accessory dwellings. Access to this property is from the public right-of-way of Sunrise Park (S.R. 1355), Ensley Street and Conley Street. This property is adjacent to properties to the northeast that are in the GB District and are not located within the 100-year flood plain. This property is served by Tuckaseegee Water & Sewer Authority for public utilities.

Application Response:

The applicant is requesting that the existing Town of Sylva Zoning Map be amended to designate the subject property (portion of the 0.72 acres after subdivision) to the General Business District.

Staff Findings:

The requested map amendment would not constitute "spot zoning" as the properties to the northeast are zoned GB District. The Town's adopted Land Use Plan for 2040 establishes that this property will be in the future *Civic and Cultural District* and the encouraged land uses for this future district include: Public and private green space; Recreation (passive or active); forested land; buildings, structures and/or commercial uses that support or activate parks and recreation facilities; government/social service facilities, places of worship, and educational facilities. However, if the map amendment request is approved (GB), these properties will be in the future *Community Corridor District* with encouraged land uses for this district being mixed-use buildings, institutional uses, walkable neighborhood commercial (retail, office, personal services), large scale commercial, business centers, community services and civic/educational services. In addition, this requested map amendment will create available property and opportunity in the current GB District that may be needed to serve the community during/after the proposed Highway 107 improvement project.

Paul Heckert, Director of Hights, Inc, addressed the board and gave a description of what Hights, Inc does in the community.

Being no further comment, Commissioner Gelbaugh made a motion to close the public hearing at 5:43 p.m. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

PUBLIC HEARING

ZONING MAP AMENDMENT REQUEST—MISTY & LARMAN TAYLOR: *Commissioner Gelbaugh made a motion to open the public hearing at 5:44 p.m. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.* John Jeleniewski, Senior County Planner, presented the staff report to the zoning map amendment request as follows:

Applicant: Misty and Larman Taylor – Property Owners

Property Location: 28 and 42 Path Finder Lane, Sylva NC 28779; PIN's 7641-66-6143 and 7641-66-7045

Current Property Zoning: High Density Residential - HDR

Ordinance Section for which the Text Amendment is requested: Article 3 - Procedures - Section 3.9.B – Zoning and Map Amendments

Description of Request:

The applicant is requesting a map amendment that would designate the subject properties as General Business (GB) District.

Background:

The General Business District (GB) is the largest district within Sylva's commercially zoned jurisdiction. The GB District offers a broad range of permitted (use-by-right) and special uses (SUP) such as lodging, retail/commercial, restaurants,

public/civil and recreational uses. Property improvements in this district are subject to development standards as set forth in the zoning ordinance including building setbacks, landscaping, architectural standards, sidewalk construction, parking, storm water treatment, etc.

The subject properties are located on the south side of Pathfinder Lane and approximately 100 ft east of the Walter Ashe Road/Path Finder Lane intersection. These properties total 0.70 acres in land area with one existing residential dwelling and a vacant property. Access to these properties is from the public right-of-way of Walter Ashe Road (S.R. 1352) and the private access of Path Finder Lane. These properties are adjacent to properties to the east and north that are in the GB District and are not located within the 100-year flood plain. These properties are or can be served by Tuckaseigee Water & Sewer Authority for public utilities.

Application Response:

The applicant is requesting that the existing Town of Sylva Zoning Map be amended to designate these two properties (0.70 acres total) to the General Business District.

Staff Findings:

The requested map amendment would not constitute “spot zoning” as the properties to the east and north are zoned GB District.

The Town’s adopted Land Use Plan for 2040 establishes that these properties will be in the future *Urban Neighborhood District*. The encouraged land uses for this future district include primarily residential: small lot single family, townhome residential, two-, three- or four-family units, and multifamily; civic and educational uses that support community residents, live-work units, small scale in-home businesses and small scale public open space (e.g. active pocket parks, passive open space, greenways). However, if the map amendment request is approved, these properties will be in the future *Community Corridors District* with encouraged land uses for this district being mixed-use buildings, institutional uses, walkable neighborhood commercial (retail, office, personal services), large scale commercial, business centers, community services and civic/educational services. In addition, this requested map amendment will create available property and opportunity in the GB District that may be needed to serve the community during/after the proposed Highway 107 improvement project.

Being no comment, Commissioner Waldrop made a motion to close the hearing at 5:52 p.m. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.

NEW BUSINESS:

ZONING MAP AMENDMENT REQUEST—SYLVA CHURCH OF GOD/HIGHTS, INC.: *Commissioner Brown made a motion to approve the request. The motion carried with a unanimous vote. Commissioner Waldrop read the statement of consistency and motioned for approval. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

ZONING MAP AMENDMENT REQUEST—MISTY & LARMAN TAYLOR: *Commissioner Gelbaugh made a motion to approve the request. The motion carried with a unanimous vote. Commissioner Waldrop read the statement of consistency and motioned for approval. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

RESOLUTION OF INTENT TO CLOSE A PORTION OF AN UNNAMED STREET OFF OF WALTER ASHE ROAD: Dowdy Bradley, who owns the house behind the former Soul Infusion property and the manufactured home park, would like to close the unopened portion of the unnamed street off of Walter Ashe Road that goes in front of his house, behind UPS, and to the corner of the Enmark station. This portion of the street is reserved on paper, but the actual section of the street does not exist. UPS made this request to the Board April 12, 2018, and the Town Board denied it. Neighbors were opposed to the request at the time. Property owners that were initially against the closure have now sold their property or it has been taken by NCDOT. This resolution of intent directs the Town to advertise, notify property owners, and schedule a public hearing May 8, 2025, to vote on the street closure. *Commissioner Gelbaugh made a motion to approve the resolution of intent. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

SPECIAL EVENT REQUEST—PRIVATE WEDDING ALCOHOL SERVICE AT BRIDGE PARK: This is a special event permit application for a wedding at Bridge Park October 18, 2025. Lazy Hiker will provide alcohol. The Board will need to approve this event to allow alcohol to be consumed at Bridge Park for a special event. *Commissioner Waldrop made a motion to approve the request. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

APPLICATIONS FOR BOARD SEAT VACANCY: The Town received four applications to consider for the board vacancy. Commissioners will vote by ballot on March 27, 2025. The candidate chosen must win with a simple majority. The candidate selected will need to be prepared to attend the budget work session March 27, 2025, following the regular meeting. The appointed member will be sworn in April 10, 2025, at 5:30 p.m. The applicants were as follows:

- Taylor Armstrong
- Nathan Clapsadle
- Tom Howard
- Joseph Waldrum

ADJOURNMENT: *Commissioner Waldrop made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:04 p.m. The motion carried with a unanimous vote.*

Johnny Phillips
Mayor

Amanda W. Murajda
Town Clerk