



Town of Sedalia

Planning Board Meeting / Town Hall

October 19, 2023 / 7:00 PM

Minutes

Call to Order: Meeting was called to order at 7:00 pm by Planning Board Vice-Chair Marian Jeffries.

Prayer and Meditation: Time was allotted for a moment of silence.

Pledge of Allegiance: Time was allotted for Pledge of Allegiance.

Roll Call: Members present included Marian Jeffries (Vice-Chair), Robert Jones, Rory Richmond, and Jay Riehle (alternate). Jay Riehle was seated on the board for the meeting.

Absent: Alfred Walker, and Brenda Walker.

A. MOTION to approve the agenda was made by Planning Board member Richmond and seconded by Planning Board member Jones. Motion carried.

B. MOTION to approve the minutes from the September 19th meeting was made by Planning Board alternate member Riehle and seconded by Planning Board member Richmond. Motion carried.

C. Guests/Reports/Discussions:

I. Nuisance Ordinance Focus Area (Intent, Precedent, and Transition)

Vice-Chair Jeffries stated the draft nuisance vegetation ordinance needs additional review and revision by the Planning Board. It was decided the ordinance should address an owner's intent for the property, precedent in how the land has been managed previously, and transition of the property from one owner to another. It was noted if a property owner wants a 3-foot-tall wildflower meadow then it should be allowed (intent) or if a property owner purchases a farm, and wants it to revert to forested lands then it should be allowed (precedent and transition to another owner).

Vice-Chair Jeffries reviewed the current draft of the nuisance vegetation ordinance that includes a buffer area for unimproved real property that is adjacent to improved real property. She noted that within the buffer area, vegetation must be maintained at a height of 1½ feet or less; however, the width of the buffer area must be determined. Planning Board alternate member Riehle asked if the current nuisance vegetation ordinance focuses on the lot or parcel, and if the draft refers to the entire lot or parcel, or only the buffer. Planning Board member Jones asked what the standard setback is, and that 10-feet may be sufficient for a buffer area. He added each section of the ordinance should be specific.

It was asked if the term vegetation applies to trees, shrubs, or bushes. So, if an undeveloped property is currently forested will trees and shrubs need to be cut to maintain a buffer area of vegetation 1½ feet or less. Councilman Sharpe, who was attending the meeting, noted a lot of trees would need to be removed to maintain a buffer. He added a buffer area may be needed for safety. NCDOT maintains a buffer area or right-of-way along roads for safety. However, if the property owner must maintain an additional buffer area that may be a burden. Planning Board alternate member Riehle noted there are properties that are behind on taxes or handled by a property owner's heirs, and it is unlikely that these property owners would maintain a buffer area. He added the ordinance needs to consider intent, whether it is visible from the street, or if it is unsightly, and should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis. The ordinance should focus on safety and whether vegetation is obnoxious or offensive.

Planning Board member Richmond commented the ordinance should be simple. The Town can keep records on how each situation is handled and can be consistent moving forward. If it is written for every situation, then it gets complicated and hard to enforce. He added there is a difference between an owner not taking care of their yard and an owner developing a wooded lot. He added the ordinance should not be like the rules of a Homeowner's Association. Councilman Sharpe commented the more rigorous the enforcement of the ordinance, the more it could cost the town.

There was discussion regarding whether to set a buffer width, but no final decision was made on a buffer width. It was decided that maintaining the road right-of-way should be sufficient and no additional buffer is needed. Also, the town could consider encouraging property owners to manage a 10-to-15-foot buffer area between their undeveloped property and adjacent developed properties. Planning Board alternate member Riehle commented the ordinance needs to be carefully worded, and it should address vegetation that is unsafe or detrimental. If a violation of the ordinance is observed, then the code enforcement officer could find out the intent of the property owner prior to issuing a citation.

Vice-Chair Jeffries also expressed concern about vegetation, weeds, and trash and its potential to interfere with water flow and increase flooding at the bridge on Sedalia Road. There has been no maintenance at the bridge since it was constructed. It is unclear whether the property owner must maintain this area or the county.

Vice-Chair Jeffries summarized the ordinance should address owner's intent, precedent, and transition. For the road, NCDOT maintenance of the right-of-way should be sufficient. The code enforcement officer should contact the property owner prior to writing a nuisance violation and can work with the property owner and provide resources to help with maintenance.

II. Review and Discuss Draft Sedalia Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance

Vice-Chair Jeffries stated the Planning Board has been asked to review the draft Sedalia Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance. The Planning Board decided on the following:

- Include the definitions for "Area of Shallow Flooding", "Area of Future Conditions Flood Hazard", "Flood Boundary and Floodway Map (FBFM)", "Flood Hazard Boundary Map (FHBM)", and "Non-Conversion Agreement".

- Include the optional text for “Tiny Homes/Houses” under the definition for “Recreational Vehicle (RV)”.
- The definition for “Reference Level” was discussed, but no decision on the definition was made.
- Four (4) feet was recommended for freeboard and elevation for the definition “Regulatory Flood Protection Elevation”.
- Include the strongly recommended text (#3) under the definition “Substantial Damage”.

The Planning Board will continue their review of the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance at future meetings.

D. Citizens Comment

*Robert Jones, 6508 Rolling Acres Drive, noted that on Dansby Drive, in the area that was recently graveled and, on the right, when traveling from Blue Lantern Road, there is a tractor-trailer that is backed up off the road. There may be a house coming there as well.

E. Announcements

All regular scheduled meetings are held at the Sedalia Town Hall and begin at 7:00 pm.

- The next Town Council Agenda meeting will be held on October 30th.
- The next Town Council meeting will be held on November 6th.
- The next Planning Board meeting will be held on November 16th.

Meeting adjourned.

Marian Jeffries, Vice-Chair

Date