

Meeting Minutes  
City Of Hendersonville  
Planning Board, Lighting/Dark Sky Ordinance Committee

Monday, May 10, 2021

The fourth meeting of the City's Planning Board, Lighting/Dark Sky Ordinance Committee, was convened at approximately 3:03 pm. by Chairman Neil Brown. Those in attendance physically were City Planners Matt Manley and Tyler Morrow, City Planning Board Chair Jim Robertson, and Community Planning Director Lew Holloway. Virtual attendees were Planning Board member Tamara Peacock, City Historic Preservation Commission member Ralph Hammond-Green, and City resident Ken Fitch.

The meeting Agenda was approved as submitted. Minutes of the April 26 meeting were approved after being corrected to reflect that Mr. Hammond-Green did not attend the meeting.

Mr. Brown started by commenting on the number of recent conversations City personnel had with various lighting ordinance experts recently, including a professor from Appalachian State University, several individuals instrumental in crafting local ordinances, and a lighting expert from GECurrent. All are more than willing to lend as much help as we desire. An important part of the input was to position any resulting ordinance as a Lighting ordinance. This properly puts the focus on health and environment, and does not unnecessarily focus on the potentially-contentious dark sky appellation.

In addition, this Committee has come to the point where several major issues need to be debated and agreed upon before any useful draft ordinance can be crafted. That is the focus of today's remaining time.

Mr. Morrow then began laying out some of the pending issues which City staff has been investigating:

**Lighting Zones** - these are easier to define and integrate than land use criteria.

LZ0 - no ambient lighting allowed. Restrictions to **consider**:

- - nothing within 50 feet of a blue line stream
- - also nothing allowed above X feet in elevation. Nothing in the City is above 2600 feet, whereas a 2300 foot restriction would include parts of Stony, Long John, and Mountains. In response to a question, it was noted that the recently-disapproved facility on Signal Hill Rd. is at 2,217 feet.
- nothing within the floodplain. This would have a significant impact, as major floodplain areas (ex. Greenville/Spartanburg intersection environs) are already heavily developed. It is not realistic to expect or mandate that these businesses change their lighting fixtures.
- There is currently a no-build buffer of 30' along blueline streams. Perhaps this could be augmented with an LZ0 zone of 50', for a total buffer of 80'.
- How to sunset/grandfather areas that are currently developed

GIS is working on updated maps reflecting each of these options. Mr. Hammond-Green said we also need to make sure that all lighting in already-developed areas is fully shielded.

LZ1 - Traditional neighborhood zoning, with low ambient lighting districts. Currently, this

would encompass about 50% of the City's area, primarily around the outer perimeters.

LZ2 - Mixed use areas, and transition zones between neighborhoods and commercial districts

LZ3 - heavily commercial districts, such as 4 Seasons, Greenville and Spartanburg Hwys., etc.

LZ4 - very rarely used anywhere. This might be typified by the Las Vegas strip or Times Square. The odds of ever seeing such a zone here are zero.

Various maps were shown to depict each of the options above. On the maps, it was assumed that the LZs would follow Zoning except for waterway buffers. The same maps were forwarded to participants by City staff after the meeting.

The Committee needs to decide how to handle:

- medical facilities of PID and MIC classification, such as Fleming St.
- Entry corridors to the City
- Historic districts, and whether we follow national or local designations.

Mr. Fitch recommended that the presentation to Council on May 26 include photos of current development examples in each proposed LZ.

Mr. Morrow reminded the Committee that it also needs to address:

- streetlights
- exceptions to the light ordinance
- automatic switching requirements
- curfews (for lighting intensity)
- definition of multi-family dwellings (PB currently reviews at 9 or more units)

We returned to the MLO for the following comments:

- the Prescriptive Method can be achieved via the Parking Spaces or Hardscape routes, as a function of the LZ. This incorporates Tables A and B in the MLO, with any offsite impact being addressed by BUG in Table C.
- the Performance Method is for more complex projects, with offsite impact being addressed via BUG in Table A.
- BUG is only used to address offsite impact of lighting
- the MLO Users' Guide, p. 20, shows what standard each type of residential lighting needs to meet

It is obvious that much more discussion is needed to be properly prepared for the Council presentation, so City staff committed to arranging another virtual meeting of the Committee for next week.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:57 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Neil Brown