

**McDowell County Planning Board**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**5/23/2016**  
**Minutes**

The McDowell County Planning Board met in regular session on May 23rd, 2016 at 7pm. The meeting was held on the first floor of the McDowell County Administration Building, in the Commissioners Boardroom located at 60 East Court Street, Marion, N.C.

**Members Present:**

Dennis Whitson, Vice Chairman  
Arvin Hicks  
Benny Stamey  
Bob Brendle  
Chris Allison  
Van Boyd  
Jonathan Tipper, Alternate

**Members Absent:**

C.B Edwards, Chairman, Medical Leave  
Sam Dotson  
Tommy Stamey  
Eric Adams, Alternate

**Others Present:**

Bill Dennis  
John Snow

**Staff Present:**

Ronald Harmon, Board Secretary

**Call to Order:**

Vice Chairman Dennis Whitson called the meeting to order and announced that a quorum of members was present. The next item on the agenda was seating of Alternate members. Vice Chairman Whitson seated Jonathan Tipper on the Board.

The next item on the agenda was approval of the agenda. Motion to approve the agenda as presented was made by Bob Brendle, second from Benny Stamey, vote taken motion carried.

The next item on the agenda was approval of the April 28th 2016 meeting minutes. Vice Chairman Whitson asked for a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Motion to approve was made by Benny Stamey, second from Van Boyd, vote taken motion carried.

## **Master Plan Submittal Lake James Vistas**

Bill Dennis was present for the formal submission of the preliminary master plan for Gray Ridge Vistas. Vice Chairman Whitson turned the floor over to Mr. Dennis for presentation of the preliminary master plan. Mr. Dennis explained the development would occur in two phases. Mr. Dennis stated that the project would yield between 143 to 145 lots. He further explained that currently they had a soil scientist on site to layout septic systems for the lots. He stated that greenspace would be kept open for the use of septic systems if needed. He also stated that the final layout of the road would be contingent on septic placements.

He stated that the roads would meet Fire Code standards and that they would meet the density requirement of the Lake James protection ordinance. He also explained that all Lake James setbacks were adhered to and plated on the plan. The Board and Mr. Dennis discussed design aspects of the development.

Mr. Dennis stated that he had spoken with Hankins North Fork Fire Department about the roads and emergency vehicular access. He also stated that the fire department was happy with road access saying it was adequate for emergency vehicular access. Bob Brendle asked if the materials and color of homes would be regulated through covenants and restrictions. Mr. Dennis stated that size of homes would be set forth but he wasn't sure about materials or color tones. He did state that the lots would remain mostly wooded, with clearing only occurring for home sites. Vice Chair Whitson asked where the development stood regarding EPA erosion and sediment control plan. Mr. Dennis stated that he was focused on road profiles and grades and would submit through their expedited permitting process.

With no other questions Vice Chairman Whitson asked for a motion to accept the preliminary master plan as submitted. Benny Stamey made a motion to approve the preliminary master plan as presented for Gray Ridge Vistas, second from Van Boyd, vote taken motion carried unanimously.

## **Shooting Range Update**

Ronald stated that the county and the state had communication and looked at other sites. He stated that it was back to waiting for the state to sort through all the information on the other sites. Jonathan Tipper asked what the holdup had been so far on the shooting range site. Ronald explained that the transition from local, to state, to federal government was the hold up. He explained having to wait for information to trickle down from federal to local.

## **Updates and Communications**

Ronald stated that a possible variance request for setbacks on lot 99 The Arbor might come before the Board in the future. Ronald explained that Vice Chair Whitson had more knowledge of the situation and asked him to update the Board. Vice Chair Whitson stated that a gentleman had a contract to purchase lot 99 in The Arbor. He explained that the individual submitted a house plan for the lot that would require a variance to accommodate the particular placement of the house on the site. He further stated that the Arbor Architecture Review Board told the individual that they had never granted a variance of that type and that he would first need to seek a variance from the Planning Board. Vice Chair Whitson explained that lot 99 was triangle shaped and he wanted to put the house as far forward in the front as possible. He further stated that the lot had a “zig zag diamond inset” in the front of the lot. Arvin Hicks asked what a variance would entail. Vice Chair Whitson stated that a variance would allow the house to encroach on the 50 foot buffer to accommodate for the inset on the lot. Ronald stated that this item could possibly be on the June agenda.

The next item Ronald discussed was a conversation he had with John Herron owner lot 32 in Sunset Point. Ronald explained that Mr. Herron was asking about a possible variance for widening the lake access path on his lot. The possible request would be to allow for a wider path to allow for motorized vehicular access to the boat dock on his lot. Mr. Herron had explained that he was on dialysis and no longer able to walk to his boat dock. Ronald explained that he wasn't sure if Mr. Herron would pursue the request once they had conversations regarding what information must be submitted for a variance request.

Vice Chairman Whitson stated that Mr. Herron would need two variance requests, one for the width of the footpath and one for use of a motorized vehicle within 75 feet of the water unless it is in conjunction with a shoreline stabilization project.

Ronald stated that the Jakes Branch major subdivision that the board viewed preliminarily in January, could be on the agenda for approval at the June meeting.

With no further business Benny Stamey made a motion to adjourn, second from Bob Brendle, vote taken motion carried.