

Edneyville Community Plan Advisory Committee
Minutes
April 14, 2009

The Edneyville Community Plan Advisory Committee met on April 14, 2009 at 6:00 PM. Present committee members included Ms. June Barnwell, Ms. Kay Dalton, Ms. Leca Harris, Mr. Harvey Nix III, and Mr. Fred Pittillo. Mr. Gary Griffin, Chair, Ms. Susan Anderson, Ms. Elizabeth Enloe, Mr. Jeff Nix, and Mr. Stacy Rhodes were absent. Planning Staff included Planning Director, Mr. Anthony Starr; Senior Planner, Ms. Autumn Radcliff; and Planners Mr. Matthew Cable and Mr. Parker Sloan.

Mr. Cable began presenting an overview of the Draft Edneyville Community Plan. He provided an overview of the plan development process. He reviewed where the committee was in the process as well. Mr. Cable then proceeded to explain the contents of each of the four sections of the plan.

Mr. Cable spent the remainder of the meeting presenting a review of the recommendations and action strategies contained within Sections 3.1, Natural and Cultural Resources, and 3.2, Agriculture. Mr. Starr explained that the Plan's recommendations and action strategies were collected from the committee, through group and full committee work, over the previous months. He explained that this and the following meeting would give the committee the opportunity to refine the recommendations and action strategies. The committee spent the remainder of the meeting reviewing each recommendation and action strategy of Sections 3.1 and 3.2.

The committee removed a number of recommendations that were duplicative of recommendations made elsewhere in the plan including:

- **Recommendation N-02, Action Strategy I. Promote proper forestry management.**
- **Recommendation N-02, Action Strategy L. Increase cooperation between local government and private conservation networks to protect sensitive lands.**
- **Recommendation A-03, Action Strategy P. Promote community-supported agriculture.**
- **Recommendation A-04, Action Strategy S. Promote the participation of County Schools in community-supported agriculture.**
- **Recommendation A-05, Action Strategy W. Adopt an agricultural economic development plan.**

The committee removed two recommendations because the action was already underway:

- **Recommendation N-01, Action Strategy F. Establish collection locations for household pollutants.**
- **Recommendation A-01, Action Strategy A. Adopt a farmland preservation plan.**

The following recommendations were removed for specific reasons as noted below:

- **Recommendation N-01, Action Strategy E. Develop plans to protect and maintain sources of potable water supply:** Removed because it is not a Planning Area specific concern.
- **Recommendation N-03, Action Strategy N. Conduct further architectural surveys through the State Historic Preservation Office with attention to the Planning Area:** Removed by the Committee because it is not a perceived need.

- **Recommendation A-02, Action Strategy E. Consider requiring agricultural preservation under the conservation subdivision option:** Removed by the Committee because it seems unnecessarily restrictive.
- **Recommendation A-02, Action Strategy H. Consider providing agricultural supplements to local farmers to encourage continued participation in the industry:** Removed by the Committee because of various implications supplements create.
- **Recommendation A-03, Action Strategy K. Establish a permanent farmers' market:** Removed by the Committee because this was not a perceived need given the existing produce stands in the area and the existing farmers' market in Asheville.
- **Recommendation A-03, Action Strategy O. Encourage the establishment of farmer owned agricultural cooperatives:** Removed by the Committee because of past experiences with cooperatives and uncertainty about endorsing these entities.
- **Recommendation A-05, Action Strategy U. Identify an agricultural proponent or facilitator with specified duties:** Removed by the Committee because other individuals in County government were already providing many of these services.
- **Recommendation A-05, Action Strategy V. Develop or support an existing agriculture information center.** Removed by the Committee because this was largely contingent on Recommendation A-05, U which was removed.

The committee also modified existing recommendations. The following are the Section 3.1 recommendations and action strategies as modified by the committee:

Recommendation N-01: Protect Water Quality within Planning Area.

A. Restore impaired 303d waters and support water quality protection and restoration programs. Public and private groups should work together to restore and protect the water quality of Clear Creek, an impaired stream according to the 2006 North Carolina 303(d) list. The County should consider:

1. Applying additional restrictions on floodplain development,
2. Using wetlands and bioretention areas to address non-point source water quality problems, and
3. Educating developers and landowners about on-site stormwater management techniques.

The County should continue to work with the NCDWQ to achieve the recommendations of the Broad Basin and French Broad Basin Water Quality Plans.

B. Implement riparian buffer incentives. The County should consider requiring vegetated buffers of significant width for new developments. The County may also consider offering significant incentives (including density bonuses) where new developments voluntarily provide undisturbed stream buffers of significant width.

C. Identify and incorporate stormwater management standards and requirements. The County should consider:

1. Requiring low impact development (LID) techniques or offering incentives for voluntary use thereof;
2. Tailoring regulations for stormwater management based on percent slope;
3. Establishing specific principles and practices for managing Stormwater runoff associated with open uses of land; and
4. Requiring stormwater management plans for new developments and uses of land at a scale determined to be appropriate by the County.

- D. Adopt an open space plan.** The Comprehensive Plan sets forth a Future Land Use Map that should be the starting point for developing an open space plan. The plan should identify areas preferred be left as open space and encourage voluntary protection of those lands. To encourage voluntary protection the County should:
1. Establish a fiscally sustainable land conservation fund and purchasing this property through fee simple or bargain sale acquisition,
 2. Encourage dedicating identified lands to conservation agencies or the County, and
 3. Seek development agreements for new developments on lands identified by the plan.

Recommendation N-02: Protect Land Quality within Planning Area.

- E. Consider requiring conservation subdivisions.** The County should consider only permitting conservation subdivisions within the Planning Area. At minimum, the County should consider requiring any development containing lands with designated steep slopes develop as a conservation subdivision.
- F. Promote ecotourism.** Ecotourism focuses on the natural environment as a means of attracting tourists. The Planning Area's designated National Heritage Areas and proposed open space plan (Recommendation N-01, Action Strategy D) will allow for ecotourism promotion.
- G. Limit cutting on ridges and slopes.** The County should discourage cutting on ridges and slopes to prevent destabilization and preserve the scenic natural beauty of these lands. The County should consider limiting cutting on lots containing ridges and slopes by applying building envelope regulations. Any limits to cutting on ridges and slopes should provide allowances for cutting associated with proper forestry management.
- H. Minimize steep slope development.** The County should minimize development on designated steep slopes. In addition to restricting density on an overall tract, the County should consider requiring these lands remain undeveloped.

Recommendation N-03: Protect Historic and Cultural Sites/Resources within Planning Area.

- I. Update and maintain a local inventory of historic sites.** A number of the Planning Area's historical and cultural resources are identified in Appendix 3. Certainly, more of these resources exist in the Planning Area. The County, together with public and private entities (including the Henderson County Historic Resources Commission, Henderson County Cemetery Advisory Committee, Henderson County Historical and Genealogical Society and the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office), should compile a local register of historic places. The Cemetery Advisory Committee and local surveyors should work together to identify additional cemeteries/gravesites found when surveying. Where possible, national historic site designation should be sought to protect sites.
- J. Create incentives/opportunities for preservation of historic and cultural sites.** Incentives and opportunities should be made available to owners of historic and cultural sites willing to participate in preservation efforts. The County should support preservation efforts by: helping secure public or private funding, identifying incentives for the protection of properties and structures, educating property/structure owners about these incentives, and encouraging, whenever possible, the use of these historic and cultural sites for educational purposes.

The following are the Section 3.2 recommendations and action strategies as modified by the committee:

Recommendation A-01: Reduce farmland loss.

- A. Establish a farmland protection fund.** The County should establish a farmland protection fund dedicated to protecting agricultural land in the County (including its municipalities). The fund should be used to acquire farmland and easements from property owners on a voluntary basis. This fund should be supported by donations/grants from Federal, State, County, municipal, non-profit, and private sources. The County should consider the following alternative funding sources:
1. Supporting a statewide document stamp tax (on documents recorded at county courthouses) whose revenues would be directed into the fund,
 2. Levying a hotel/motel tax on hotel/motel patrons or, alternatively developing a hotel-motel patron donation program, whose revenues would be directed into the fund, and
 3. Using available State programs targeted at conservation easement acquisition (including the Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund, Clean Water Management Trust Fund, and Tobacco Trust Fund, among others) to be directed into the fund.
- B. Establish and support a local land link program.** Land link programs function to match retiring farmers without heirs to beginning farmers without land. Beginning farmers often lack financial resources to farm because they cannot afford to purchase farmland. A land link program would identify farmland available for lease-to-own or identify farmers willing to turn farmland over to a beginning farmer in order to avoid capital gains tax.
- C. Consider supporting an estate tax waiver for agricultural lands intended to remain in agriculture.** The County should support any necessary changes in State law to permit this waiver.

Recommendation A-02: Promote development regulations sensitive to agriculture.

- D. Consider requiring that subdivision applicants adjacent to voluntary agricultural districts obtain or review information regarding farming practices.** This requirement may increase dialogue and cooperation between farmers and developers. This information gathered should be conveyed to subsequent landowners to increase their understanding of the potential impacts of ownership adjacent to a farm.
- E. Encourage the County to adopt a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Program.** This program allows a farmer in a “sending area” to sell development rights to a developer who uses them in a “receiving area”. The sending and receiving areas are designated by the County. For example, a developer in a receiving area may purchase the number of lots a farmer in a sending area could develop under applicable zoning. In this way a farmer is compensated for his ability to develop without having to develop the farmland itself. The County should support any necessary changes in State law to permit this program.

Recommendation A-03: Expand and diversify agricultural markets.

- F. Create an agritourism plan and increase the promotion of agritourism in the Planning Area.** Agritourism focuses on agriculture as a way to attract tourists. Agritourism includes, but is not limited to, seasonal agricultural events (festivals, petting zoos, community fairs), self-guided tours (farm tours, barn tours), and “u-pick” farms.

The County Travel and Tourism Department should:

1. Increase its promotion of agriculture/agritourism, and
2. Devote a significant portion of its funding to this promotion.

The County should encourage farmers participating in agritourism to participate in NCDOT's agritourism signage program. This program allows for the advertisement of agritourism farms (as defined by NCGS and that meet North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (NCDA and CS) requirements) along interstates and other roads provided the farm falls within 15 road miles of the exit/interchange.

G. Establish an agricultural directional signage program. The County should seek NCDOT approval for the establishment of an agricultural directional signage program. This program would provide additional signage opportunities beyond those available through NCDOT for agritourism signage (See Recommendation A-03, Action Strategy F). Permitted signs should:

1. Promote local agriculture only;
2. Include information only on the farm name(s), product(s) direction(s), and distance(s);
3. Be installed in the right-of-way provided NCDOT approval of the program; and
4. Be installed at the farmer's expense.

The County may consider requiring program participants also participants in the voluntary agricultural district program.

H. Establish a local tailgate market or markets. The County should support the establishment of a tailgate market in the Planning Area provided Planning Area farmers are interested.

I. Promote local food campaigns. Local food campaigns promote local food products through restaurants, local grocery and other stores, and farmers markets.

J. Establish or support the establishment of an agricultural heritage museum in the Planning Area.

K. Promote crop diversification. The County should work with local farmers to identify and educate them on high value crops (organic produce, lesser-known varieties of vegetables, lettuce, herbs, flowers, and game animals).

L. Support existing or proposed agricultural research operation centers. The County should support the expansion of the existing Mountain Horticultural Crops Research and Extension Center and encourage the development of additional research operation. Studying additional crops is recommended.

Recommendation A-04: Link local farms to schools.

M. Encourage agriculture/horticulture curriculums and programs in local schools. The County should promote programs that build relationships between local farms and schools. The County and School Board should:

1. Maintain or expand agriculture/horticulture curriculums in middle and high schools;
2. Maintain or increase support for organizations like Future Farmers of America (FFA) and FFA's Career Development Events or Supervised Agricultural Experience Programs;
3. Work with the Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP) and other organizations to encourage farm to school programs;
4. Structure curriculums to permit farm internships for academic credit;
5. Expand nutritional education and school garden programs;
6. Increase agricultural field trips,
7. Require schools serve local food; and

N. Support educational opportunities. Blue Ridge Community College should create programs/classes/training sessions for farmers. Program/class/training session topics may

include, among others, business planning, tax law, local law, computer skills training. These programs should be properly advertised.

Recommendation A-05: Expand agricultural enterprises' access to economic development and promotion programs and support services.

Based on Committee comments on Sections 3.1 and 3.2, Mr. Starr suggested that Staff simplify the language in the remaining Sections' recommendations to be considered at the next meeting. The committee agreed.

The committee considered the March 10, 2009 meeting minutes. Ms. Harris made a motion to approve the minutes, Ms. Barnwell seconded the motion and the committee approved the minutes unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned.

Gary Griffin, Chairman