

PROPOSED AGENDA

Meeting of the Town of Biltmore Forest
Planning Commission

To be held Tuesday, February 1, 2022 at 5:30 p.m.

***MEETING OPEN TO THE PUBLIC
VIA ZOOM***

LOG-IN INSTRUCTIONS ON THE FOLLOWING PAGE

- A. Roll Call for Attendance
 - B. Approval of Minutes from December 21, 2021
 - C. Review Survey Results and Discuss Goals and Strategies
 - D. Adjourn
-

Topic: Town of Biltmore Forest Planning Commission Meeting

Time: Jan 25, 2022 05:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83114058394?pwd=Sm16SnVmTU1MRfVnZUxrbitDa1A5dz09>

Meeting ID: 831 1405 8394

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Planning Commission Meeting Minutes

December 21, 2021

5:30pm

Roll call was taken. Those in attendance are Ms. Paul Zimmerman, Ms. Dawn Grohs, Mr. Michael Flynn (via Zoom), Ms. Toya Hauf (via Zoom), Mr. Jonathan Kanipe, and Mr. Billy Clarke.

The first order of business was regarding the vacant chairperson position. Mr. Paul Zimmerman was nominated as Chair and Ms. Dawn Grohs will continue to be Vice Chair. Mr. Michael Flynn made a motion to nominate Mr. Zimmerman as Chairman, Ms. Grohs seconded the motion. Roll call was taken by Mr. Jonathan Kanipe and unanimously approved.

The comprehensive survey results were discussed by Mr. Zimmerman. Mr. Flynn asked how many homes are in Biltmore Forest. Mr. Kanipe said approximately 675. The population is approximately 1,400. Mr. Zimmerman said he generally feels good about the results. Mr. Clarke asked how long the survey was open. Mr. Zimmerman said it was six weeks, and a typical survey is about one month.

The average rating for all the direct questions was 75. The results were consistent. There were 238 respondents, which is a good sample. The rating was 93 for the police department and the public works department, which is excellent. The lowest rating for being safe to walk was at a 66. The other low was Zoning Ordinance enforcement. Mr. Clarke asked if 75 was an average score in this survey. Mr. Zimmerman said yes. Mr. Zimmerman said if you look at individual scores, historically if you get more than 14percent of the people saying something is fair or poor, it is a bit of a red flag.

The importance ratings were skewed very much either being very important or important. Question 4 on page 3 was an interesting question asking if people would like more or less of something. 56 percent of people said they would like to see more walking trails within existing parks. 64 percent said they would like to see new plantings of hardwood trees, 49 percent said they would like to forbid clear cutting for any reason. The speed humps were interesting. 27 percent of people were saying either negative or positive but the large majority was typically in the middle. Enforcement of zoning ordinances 34percent said they want more and 60 percent said what we currently do is ok.

Mr. Flynn asked what the minimum lot size is. Mr. Clarke said for the R-1 district is one acre. The first Zoning Ordinance was adopted in 1983. There are smaller lot sizes in R-2 and R-3. R-4 and

R-5 allow for commercial usage on Hendersonville Road, which were mostly pre-existing uses. Some people were concerned with losing the stature of the Town compared to Biltmore Park, Biltmore Lake, and The Cliffs. People said they do not like the big houses going up and clear cutting trees. A few people also said they should be allowed to do whatever they want on their property.

Mr. Clarke said most of the comments were sincere. The responses seem useful and consistent. Ms. Hauf said it is an accurate representation of what people are feeling. Mr. Zimmerman said he saw comments about cutting foliage out of the roads so people could see and get out of their driveways. People also want a place to walk whether they are trails or have sidewalks. People are saying they do not feel safe when walking and would be a possible solution for people feeling safe to walk. Another solution would be cutting back brush or having walking trails. Mr. Flynn said he would definitely be more vocal and supportive of walking trails and spaces to walk but cannot participate due to his current condition. Mr. Kanipe said this is something that will be in the comprehensive plan and he would like to see everyone be able to use this. This is a challenge and a need to think about right now.

Ms. Hauf said she is curious on the comments about being safe to walk. Mr. Zimmerman said he would look into this. Mr. Zimmerman said there were many comments on the speeding at Chauncey Circle. Mr. Zimmerman asked if the Chief got a copy of the survey but there were many more speed signs placed throughout Town. Ms. Grohs said speeding is definitely a problem. Mr. Flynn said a Bourne Lane resident commented about the exit at Bourne Lane and the comments about cars going to fast at this entrance. Mr. Kanipe said they will most likely do something and noted there is no four way stop at Busbee and Vanderbilt.

Next, public spaces were discussed. People want them to look nicer and upgrade the equipment. One or two people mentioned dog parks but the bulk of the comments were to clean up the parks and make them look more modern. Mr. Zimmerman put together some tentative conclusions that Biltmore Forest has extremely high satisfaction, and police, public works, and administration received exemplary comments as well.

Mr. Zimmerman said he would like to see hardwoods at the large house at Stuyvesant and Southwood and many people have complained about all the trees being cut down at this location. Ms. Grohs said how do we take this information and make it happen. Mr. Clarke said a public meeting should be offered to gather additional feedback. Mr. Kanipe said results have been released on the website so people can view them. Ms. Grohs said we should put it in a format where the public can

understand. Mr. Clarke suggested at the next public meeting to explain the survey results. Mr. Zimmerman addressed the board and said he would like to see recommendations on how to transform these results of recommendations into ordinances. Consider three primary areas on a more friendly place to walk, maintain and improving tree cover. In the public meeting, they could say these are the results and if anyone has suggestions. Ms. Grohs said some of these issues are going to be difficult to handle and others will be easier. Mr. Clarke said there are some good things in the Town but the Town is doing these things well and needs to make sure we have the resources to do these changes and mention the things people are concerned about.

Mr. Grohs asked what issues have been in the past since she has not lived here long. Mr. Clarke said he has been the Town attorney since 2012 and has said that speeding, trees, and fences have been issues and continue to be issues currently. Mr. Kanipe said all of this information is very relevant and good information to have.

The Board will meet in January and decide a date to hold a public meeting. Mr. Zimmerman thanked everyone for their work to get this done before the holidays. Ms. Grohs said we do have a responsibility to take care of our Town and the Commissioners can decide what can be done. Mr. Clarke said this would be the first step to the comprehensive plan. Ms. Hauf said it seems like we have what we have and what we need to prioritize such as speed, walking, trails, and trees. She would also like to see at the public meeting what else needs to be addressed such as fencing and new home construction. Ms. Hauf encouraged board members to look at other comprehensive plans to compare. Mr. Zimmerman agreed. He also suggested writing down five areas of focus for the next meeting in January and discuss strategies on how to achieve this.

Mr. Zimmerman adjourned the meeting at 6:32 pm.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 25, 2022 at 5:30pm.

Ms. Laura Jacobs, Town Clerk
Town Clerk

Mr. Paul Zimmerman
Chair

TO: Jonathan Kanipe, Town Manager, Board of Commissioners

DATE: 29 December 2021

FROM: Biltmore Forest Planning Commission

SUBJECT: Executive Summary – Fall 2021 Resident Survey

An online and paper survey of Biltmore Forest residents was completed between Oct 30 and Dec 13, 2021 in order to guide the Planning Commission in making recommendations for long term goals to the Board of Commissioners. A total of 238 households responded, which is considered to be an excellent sample of the approximately 650 households in Biltmore Forest.

RESULTS:

1. The weighted Overall Satisfaction Rating was **84**, which is outstanding and in line with results from past research conducted among residents. The rating scale was a standard Excellent, Very Good, Good, Fair and Poor Scale.
2. Residents were asked to rate a series of attributes on the same scale. The weighted results are below:

Attribute (How would you rate Biltmore Forest for being a Town...)	Weighted Average
... that protects mature trees and the tree canopy	74
... where it is safe to walk	66*
... that you are proud to live in	89
... that has a professional/competent Police Force	93
... that has a professional/competent Public Works Dept.	93
... that gives you confidence that Zoning Ordinances are consistently enforced	66*
... where there are plans to guide future development	64*
... where there are appropriate Parks to use and enjoy	76
... that is enjoyable for people of all ages	80
... that has effective speed management	69*
... where there are Social activities	68
... where there are guidelines for buffering between neighbors and high traffic zones	63*
Overall Average Rating for all attributes	75
*...a significant number of residents rated this attribute Fair or Poor	

3. Residents were then asked to answer a hypothetical question about directions the Town could take on a series of possible actions.

Rating	I'd like MORE of this %	Current Level is Adequate %	I'd like LESS of this %
Walking Trails within existing Parks	56	41	3
Enforcement of Zoning Ordinances	34	59	6
Speed Humps	21	53	26
Upgrading Park Activity Structures for Children	40	56	4
Enforcement of Speeding	31	66	2
New Planting of Hardwood Trees (Oak, Maple, Walnut, etc) along Roads	64	34	2
Forbidding Clear Cutting for any reason	49	44	7

4. Voluntary Comments were asked as the second question. These comments helped to clarify WHY residents gave the ratings that they did. A brief sampling of comments in key areas are given below:
 - a. **TREES:** “The beauty of the Forest make me sigh ‘ahh’ every time I enter the Town”; “Don’t let people cut down dozens of tree at once”; “Too many trees are disappearing”; We should encourage new homeowners to invest in slow growing long lived trees and native plants”; “We used to be a forest. That is disappearing quickly”; Our beautiful hardwood trees are dying from ivy growing on them”; “...allowing more clearing and bigger square footage...makes us no different than many other communities”
 - b. **WALKING:** “If you’re not going to cut back foliage to make driving and walking safer, stop saying you will!”; “It would be nice to have a walking path in Town”; “There have been times I have been almost pushed off the road or hit by cars AND cyclists”; “I wish there were sidewalks”; “...encroachment of vegetation along the roadside makes certain shoulders impossible”; “Roads need to be safer for autos, bicyclists and pedestrians by clearing side easements...this is a dangerous situation at present for which the Town is liable”.
 - c. **SPEED:** “I feel there are people who drive too quickly on Eastwood and I have been almost hit...”; “Why was digital speed monitor taken down at Chauncey Circle and Niagara?...you sure as hell can afford to leave it there permanently!”; Some residents and golf course users drive too fast and aggressively”; “Speeding needs attention”, “I continue to see idiots towing their horse trailers driving at 40mph on their way to the equestrian center”.
 - d. **PARKS/PUBLIC SPACES:** “Much of the public areas of BF look tired...and unkept. A concerted effort is needed to get us back to the preeminent neighborhood of Asheville”; “Need to invest in Parks and in saving the Hemlocks”; “We should have updated playgrounds, nicer parks and landscaping, benches, and a town sign!”; “I would like to see more Park improvements at some point”; “I wish the parks were cleaned up regularly”; “We need a dog park”; “The parks are shabby and many of the residents don’t keep their yards groomed – giving the Town an unkept look”.

CONCLUSIONS:

1. Biltmore Forest has maintained an extremely high satisfaction rating and many residents state that they are proud to live here.
2. Police and Public Works both received an exemplary rating, with strong positive comments from residents for the Police, Public Works, and Administration for their friendliness and efforts.
3. The areas of Walking Safety, Speed Management, Buffering Guidelines, Consistent Enforcement of Zoning Ordinances, and Plans to Guide Future Development were all rated significantly lower than the average.
4. Voluntary Comments on **Walking** tended to focus on desire for walking trails and clearing hazardous right of way plantings.
5. Voluntary Comments on **Speed** were not specific other than the need to control it better
6. Whereas the rating for **Protecting the Tree Canopy** was average, there were a significant number of comments about the need to replace trees, prevent clear cutting, and manage ivy invasion. This appears to be a case where people LIKE the forest (hence the higher rating) but don’t want to lose it (negative voluntary comments)
7. Similarly, whereas the rating of the **Parks** was average, there were again significant comments about them looking shabby and needing updating. I believe the rationale is similar to the Trees rating.

Submitted 29 Dec 2021 for the Planning Commission: Toya Hauf, Dawn Grohs, Michael Flynn, Ken Hornowski, and Karen Cragolin.



Paul Zimmerman
Planning Commission Chair