

Summary of Zoning & Town Code Enforcement 2013

Junked or Abandoned Motor Vehicles – Zoning Ordinance Or Town Code Chapter 11, Article IV

- Effected the removal of two (2) junked or abandoned motor vehicles from private residences and commercial property.

Noxious Growth (grass & weeds) – Town Code Chapter 11, Article II, Section 11-8

- Enforcement procedures enacted on 105 properties (down from 157 in 2012 and 115 in 2011).
- Several of those were repeat offenders who are defined as “chronic violators” by the Town Code.
- All violations were resolved, although civil penalties and cost of abatement are still pending on several.

Accumulation of Scrap Materials or Solid Waste – Town Code Chapter 11, Article II

- Enforcement procedures enacted on 7 properties.
- 5 violations were resolved within the year, while 2 remain in process.

Zoning Ordinance Violations (i.e. construction without a Zoning Permit, sign violations)

- Enforcement procedures enacted on 14 properties, down from 35 in 2012.
- All were resolved within the year.

Sedimentation and Erosion Control Violations (i.e. mud leaving a jobsite, stream buffer violations, etc.)

- Enforcement procedures enacted on 3 properties.
- All were resolved within the year.

Granite Falls Minimum Housing Standards Ordinance Violations

- 1 property was inspected to determine compliance with Minimum Housing Standards and was found to be "dilapidated", which means that the necessary repairs would exceed 50% of the home's value.
- That property was sold to a new owner, with full disclosure of inspection findings, and they have secured the structure, cleaned up the property significantly, removed all asbestos and are currently working towards demolition by the Granite Falls Fire Dept (for training purposes) early in 2014.

Other Violations of the Town Code of Ordinances (i.e. animals/livestock, neglected swimming pools, untagged motor vehicles in street, failure to display house #'s)

- Enforcement procedures enacted on 8 properties.
- All violations were resolved within the year.

Summary of Planning Board & Board of Adjustment Activity - 2013

Planning Board

- Conditional Use Permits
 - None
- 4 Zoning Text Amendments
 - Accessory Structures - Dimensional Standards
 - Indoor Animal Lodging, Boarding & Kennels
 - Accessory Structures - Clarification and Reorganization
 - Board of Adjustment - Updated for Recent Legislation
- 1 Rezoning Petition
 - Dale & Alene Starnes - 37 Pinewood Road
- Subdivision Plat Review/Approvals
 - None

The Town of Granite Falls Planning Board meets on the 4th Tuesday of every month at 5:00pm in the Town Council Chamber at 4 South Main Street.

- Tim Hemphill, Chairman
- Annette Swanson, Vice Chair
- Patrick Barker, ETJ
- Scott Reid, ETJ
- Jearline Ernest
- Greg Johnson
- Michael Norris
- Rita Church, Alternate
- Rob Howard, Alternate

Board of Adjustment

- Conditional Use Permits
 - None
- Variance Requests
 - None
- Appeals of Decision of Zoning Administrator
 - None

The Granite Falls Board of Adjustment meets on the 1st Wednesday of every month at 5:00pm in the Town Council Chamber at 4 South Main Street.

- Wade Yount, Chairman
- Judy Yount, Vice Chair
- Keith Barnwell
- Al Huffman

- Mike Mathewson
- Wylie Moore, ETJ
- Phillip Shows
- David Luke, Alternate
- Alan Hemphill, Alternate

Other Activities During The Year

The primary responsibilities of the Granite Falls Planning Department include current growth management, permitting, code enforcement, staffing two boards and processing Conditional Use Permits, Special Use Permits, Rezoning Petitions, Zoning Text Amendments, Zoning Map Amendments, Variances and Subdivision Plats. The daily routine also includes answering questions about the Town's development ordinances from citizens and professionals (real estate agents, surveyors, architects, engineers, appraisers). This information and guidance is a critical function since it pertains to what is most likely the largest investment a person will make in his/her lifetime, either in their home or their business.

In addition, the Town Planner also functions as an ad hoc Economic Developer by assisting with recruitment of specific businesses and industry that have expressed an interest in our area. This crucial step generally occurs well in advance of the traditional planning functions such as assistance with regulatory processes (at the local, state and federal levels) and site plan development and review.

The Town Planner has been representing the Town in the Regional Hazard Mitigation Planning process that began in 2013. FEMA requires that communities have an approved Hazard Mitigation Plan in place in order to receive State or Federal disaster recovery funding following a natural disaster. The Town is currently covered under the Caldwell County Hazard Mitigation Plan, but the State of North Carolina has been encouraging larger, regional plans that cover multiple counties. The new Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan will cover the four counties of the Unifour (Caldwell, Burke, Catawba, Alexander) and all municipalities located therein.

The Plan identifies our vulnerabilities to natural disasters, our capabilities when dealing with those events and provides a road map for how to mitigate the impacts of those disasters. The "mitigation action items" can include the following:

- Local plans and regulations
- Structure and infrastructure projects
- Natural systems protection
- Education and awareness programs

The planning process should see completion in 2014. The Town Council will be presented with the final plan for approval.

The Planning Department continues to implement the strategies and policies that were established in the Granite Falls Pedestrian Master Plan, which was adopted by the Town

Council in 2011 using grant funding secured by the Planning Department in 2009. The Pedestrian Plan was leveraged during the site plan review process for the new McDonald's to not only secure construction of sidewalk and pedestrian facilities on-site, but also an additional 350+ feet of sidewalk off-site. The off-site sidewalk makes the critical connection between the new restaurant and the Town's existing sidewalk network. The Town is currently working with the NCDOT to complete the connection by adding a 4-way pedestrian crossing at the Pinewood Road & North Highland Avenue intersection. Design work is already underway and construction could begin in 2014.

Based on a Zoning Text Amendment approved in 2012, new commercial, industrial, institutional and multi-family projects are now required to provide pedestrian facilities. They are also presented with an option to pay a "fee-in-lieu" amount equal to cost of required facilities should the Town determine that the installation of facilities would not be practical, safe or beneficial to the Town. Those dollars would then be used for pedestrian projects elsewhere in the Town Limits. The Pedestrian Master Plan includes a detailed prioritization list of potential projects that could receive funding. The Town has just approved its first project that is eligible for the fee-in-lieu option. Those funds will be spent on improving pedestrian facilities in the Town Limits.

The 321/Grace Chapel Connector Road (project # U-5204) experienced major delays in 2013 due to weather and unexpected earth moving demands. However, the project should see completion in early-mid 2014. The Planning Department worked to secure right-of-way, temporary construction easements and permanent drainage easements for the project and continues to play a role in location of utilities, acquisition and disposition of waste dirt and protection of adjacent property owner interests. This road will be a vital link between the heavy residential demographic of Northlakes, Grace Chapel & Dudley Shoals and the commercial area around the Shoppes At Rivercrest. Additionally, it will reduce traffic congestion on Highway 321, which is already operating near maximum capacity near the bridge over Lake Hickory.

The Granite Falls Town Planner represents the Town on several local and regional boards and committees including the Western Piedmont Water Resources Committee, Regional Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee and the Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Organization - Technical Coordinating Committee.

The Planning Department continued to administer the Small Town Main Street Facade Improvement Incentive Program. This program has successfully encouraged 11 separate projects on nine buildings over the past 4 years. Staff is currently working on another project for a new awning and paint scheme. If approved, the work should be completed in early 2014. Each project is reviewed for consistency with historical design standards and the eligible reimbursement is distributed once the work is complete and payment has been made for all materials and labor. The Town has received numerous compliments on this program and the results it has produced. Ultimately, as more buildings are restored to historical accuracy the Town increases its chances of receiving designation as a National Historic District, which would mean significant tax credits and grant opportunities for building owners within the district.

Town of Granite Falls Annual Building and Zoning Report 2013 – Town Limits

	2011 # of Permits in Town Limits & Cost of Construction	2012 # of Permits in Town Limits & Cost of Construction	2013 # of Permits in Town Limits & Cost of Construction
New Single Family Residential Construction	5 \$890,000	6 \$1,619,000	2 \$775,000
Residential Additions	3 \$141,000	4 \$59,300	9 \$298,300
Residential Remodels	0 \$0	1 \$15,000	1 \$10,000
Residential Accessory	16 \$82,190	23 \$58,380	28 \$171,045
Manufactured Homes	0 \$0	0 \$0	0 \$0
Multi-Family Construction	1 \$150,000	0 \$0	0 \$0
New Commercial Construction	0 \$0	3 \$2,950,995	0 \$0
Commercial Additions	3 \$32,550	1 \$295,000	7 \$1,218,900
Commercial Accessory	3 \$9,800	2 \$16,500	2 \$47,856
Commercial Remodel	1 \$100	2 \$20,100	3 \$435,000
Industrial New & Additions	2 \$200,100	3 \$667,000	0 \$0
Signs	26 \$71,050	26 \$21,950	27 \$67,150
Public	1 \$5,000	0 \$0	0 \$0
Other (demolition, reconnect, home occupations etc.)	13 \$0	13 \$0	4 \$0
Total	74 \$1,581,790	84 \$5,723,225	83 \$3,023,251

Total Cost of Construction for all permits: Town Limits and ETJ

2011 - \$5,572,971	97 Total Permits	
2012 - \$7,361,625	107 Total Permits	
2013 - \$7,475,591	116 Total Permits	Town Limits - 83 permits - \$3,023,251
		ETJ – 33 permits - \$4,452,340

Town of Granite Falls Annual Building and Zoning Report 2013 - ETJ

	2011 # of Permits in ETJ & Cost of Construction	2012 # of Permits in ETJ & Cost of Construction	2013 # of Permits in ETJ & Cost of Construction
New Single Family Residential Construction	4 \$1,633,000	5 \$1,500,000	10 \$4,361,000
Residential Additions	1 \$6,500	2 \$80,000	2 20,000
Residential Remodels	0 \$0	1 \$400	0 \$0
Residential Accessory	6 \$45,800	5 \$9,700	7 \$37,740
Manufactured Homes	1 \$63,000	0 \$0	0 \$0
Multi-Family Construction	0 \$0	0 \$0	0 \$0
New Commercial Construction	1 \$50,000	1 \$16,000	0 \$0
Commercial Additions, Accessory & Remodel	0 \$0	1 \$10,000	1 \$30,000
Industrial New & Additions	0 \$0	0 \$0	0 \$0
Signs	7 \$10,000	7 \$22,300	8 \$3,600
Public	1 \$2,182,881	0 \$0	0 \$0
Other (demolition, driveway permit, home occupations etc.)	2 \$0	1 \$0	5 \$0
Total	23 \$3,991,181	23 \$1,638,400	33 \$4,452,340

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2012 - \$7,361,625	107 Total Permits	
2013 - \$7,475,591	116 Total Permits	Town Limits - 83 permits - \$3,023,251
		ETJ - 33 permits - \$4,452,340