

**GRANITE FALLS
PLANNING
DEPARTMENT**

**Annual
Report
2015**

ZONING PERMITS ISSUED IN 2015

Total Cost of Construction for all permits:

Town Limits and ETJ

- 2013 - \$7,475,591 116 Total Permits
- 2014 - \$7,335,979 113 Total Permits
- **2015 - \$7,270,900 102 Total Permits**
 - Town Limits - 80 permits - \$4,680,161
 - ETJ – 22 permits - \$2,590,739

Zoning Permits Issued (In-Town)

1 of 2

	2013 # of Permits in Town Limits & Cost of Construction	2014 # of Permits in Town Limits & Cost of Construction	2015 # of Permits in Town Limits & Cost of Construction
New Single Family Residential Construction	2 \$775,000	4 \$1,557,000	10 \$4,100,000
Residential Additions	9 \$298,300	4 \$43,100	3 \$135,850
Residential Remodels	1 \$10,000	0 \$0	2 \$12,400
Residential Accessory	28 \$171,045	18 \$157,304	16 \$63,370
Manufactured Homes	0 \$0	0 \$0	1 \$69,704
Multi-Family Construction	0 \$0	0 \$0	0 \$0

Zoning Permits Issued (In-Town)

2 of 2

	2013 # of Permits in Town Limits & Cost of Construction	2014 # of Permits in Town Limits & Cost of Construction	2015 # of Permits in Town Limits & Cost of Construction
New Commercial Construction	0 \$0	1 \$1,600,000	0 \$0
Commercial Additions	7 \$1,218,900	2 \$332,000	2 \$71,500
Commercial Accessory	2 \$47,856	1 \$4,200	1 \$3,300
Commercial Remodel	3 \$435,000	12 \$261,700	4 \$131,000
Industrial New & Additions	0 \$0	5 \$1,022,800	0 \$0
Signs	27 \$67,150	24 \$37,050	33 \$93,037
Public	0 \$0	0 \$0	0 \$0
Other (demolition, driveway permit, home occupations etc.)	4 \$0	14 \$0	8 \$0
Total	83 \$3,023,251	85 \$5,015,154	80 \$4,680,161

Zoning Permits Issued (ETJ)

1 of 2

	2013 # of Permits in ETJ & Cost of Construction	2014 # of Permits in ETJ & Cost of Construction	2015 # of Permits in ETJ & Cost of Construction
New Single Family Residential Construction	10 \$4,361,000	7 \$2,045,000	7 \$2,382,000
Residential Additions	2 \$20,000	5 \$205,225	2 \$57,500
Residential Remodels	0 \$0	2 \$52,000	0 \$0
Residential Accessory	7 \$37,740	7 \$37,740	5 \$56,000
Manufactured Homes	0 \$0	1 \$0	2 \$88,689
Multi-Family Construction	0 \$0	0 \$0	0 \$0

Zoning Permits Issued (ETJ)

2 of 2

	2013 # of Permits in ETJ & Cost of Construction	2014 # of Permits in ETJ & Cost of Construction	2015 # of Permits in ETJ & Cost of Construction
New Commercial Construction	0 \$0	0 \$0	0 \$0
Commercial Additions, Accessory & Remodel	1 \$30,000	0 \$0	0 \$0
Industrial New & Additions	0 \$0	0 \$0	0 \$0
Signs	8 \$3,600	8 \$12,400	5 \$6,550
Public	0 \$0	0 \$0	0 \$0
Other (demolition, driveway permit, home occupations etc.)	5 \$0	2 \$0	1 \$0
Total	33 \$4,452,340	28 \$2,320,825	22 \$2,590,739

SUMMARY OF ZONING & TOWN CODE ENFORCEMENT

Junked or Abandoned Motor Vehicles

– Zoning Ordinance Or Town Code Chapter 11, Article IV

- Effected the removal of 6 junked or abandoned motor vehicles from private residences and commercial property.
- Down from 10 in 2014.



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

- Enforcement procedures enacted on 96 properties (down from 103 in 2014, 105 in 2013 and 157 in 2012).
- 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.

SUMMARY OF ZONING & TOWN CODE ENFORCEMENT

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

- Enforcement procedures enacted on 9 properties, down from 12 in 2014.
- 6 violations were resolved within the year, while 3 remain in process.



Zoning Ordinance Violations (i.e. construction without a Zoning Permit, sign violations, maintenance of required landscaping/buffers)

- Enforcement procedures enacted on 12 properties, down from 19 in 2014.
- 8 violations were resolved within the year, while 4 remain in process.

SUMMARY OF ZONING & TOWN CODE ENFORCEMENT

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

- 1 violation for sediment in the street from a jobsite.
- Resolved within the year.

Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance Permits/Violations

- 1 Floodplain Development Permit was issued in 2015.
- There were no Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance violations in 2015.



Photo Courtesy Mark Jackson, Caldwell Journal

SUMMARY OF ZONING & TOWN CODE ENFORCEMENT

Granite Falls Minimum Housing Standards Ordinance Violations

- There were no Minimum Housing Standards violations in 2015.



Other Violations of the Town Code of Ordinances (i.e. animals/livestock, neglected swimming pools, right-of-way encroachment, failure to display house #'s, etc.)

- Enforcement procedures enacted on 3 properties, there were 3 violations in 2014 as well.
- 2 violations were resolved within the year, while 1 remains in process.

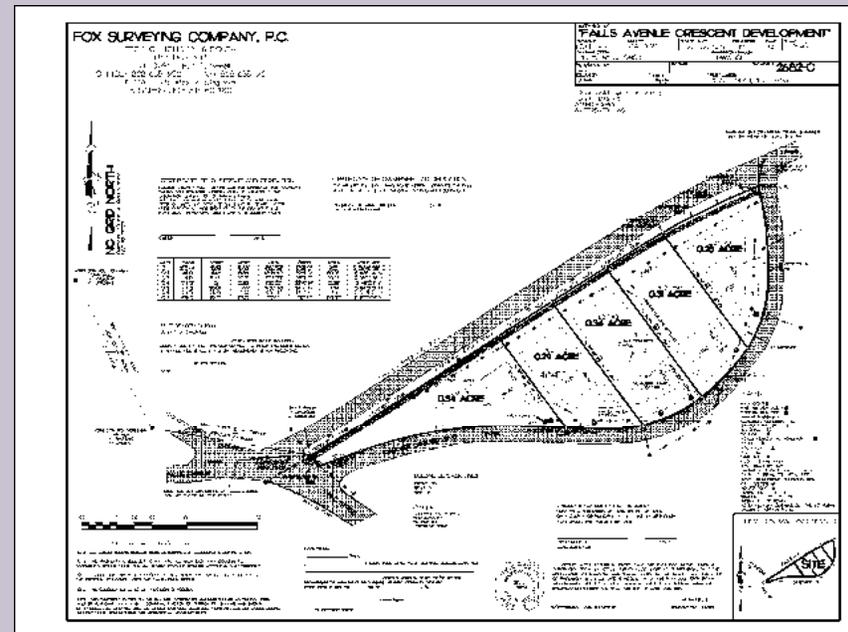
SUMMARY OF ZONING & TOWN CODE ENFORCEMENT

Subdivision Plat Reviews - For Subdivisions Requiring Only Administrative Approval

- 6 Subdivision Plats Reviewed

Minor/Major Subdivision Plat Review - Subdivisions Requiring Approval From Planning Board and/or Town Council

- 1 Minor Subdivision Plat Reviewed



SUMMARY OF ZONING & TOWN CODE ENFORCEMENT

Small Town Main Street - Facade Improvement Incentive Program

- Administered 1 project - replacement of damaged storefront glass

Letters of Zoning Consistency/Compliance (typically requested by banks, attorneys, regulatory agencies, etc.)

- Prepared 3 Zoning Consistency/Compliance Letters



PLANNING BOARD ACTIVITY 2015

■ 5 Conditional Use Permits

- Manufactured Home in R-20A District - Taurus Place (ETJ)
- Manufactured Home in R-20A District - Fredrick Place (ETJ)
- Wine Shop/Wine Bar in Central Business District
- Manufactured Home in R-20A District - South Main Street (ETJ)
- Amendment to Wine Shop/Wine Bar in Central Business District

■ 1 Planned Development

- Amendment to PD #1-2014 - Rivercrest Medical Campus

■ 7 Zoning Text Amendments

- Signs - Increased Maximum Size for Signs at Churches
- Manufactured Homes - Reduced Required Roof Pitch
- Planned Developments - Reduced Minimum Lot Sizes
- Wine Shop/Wine Bar - Added as Conditional Use in Central Business District
- Wall Signs in Central Business District - Modified Height Restrictions
- Accessory Structures - Amended Dimensional Standards
- Restaurants/Drinking Establishments - Modified/Added Definitions and Regulations to Comply with State Law

■ 1 Zoning Map Amendment (Rezoning Petition)

- Lower Cedar Valley Road (ETJ) R-20A to R-MH

■ Subdivision Plat Review/Approvals

- Minor Subdivision - Caldwell Habitat for Humanity - Falls Ave

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
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BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT ACTIVITY 2015

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■ 1 Planned Development

- Amendment to PD #1-2014 - Rivercrest Medical Campus

■ 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
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Town of Granite Falls Annual Building and Zoning Report 2015 – Town Limits

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Summary of Planning Board & Board of Adjustment Activity - 2015

Planning Board

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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, Floodplain Development 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.

Economic Development

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.

In 2015 a specific project was proposed for a site that could not support the requested density due to the limitations of the Water Supply Watershed Protection Ordinance. In the Critical Area of a WS-IV Watershed, overall impervious surface area (to include building footprints, parking areas and driveways) cannot exceed 24%. This was especially disappointing considering the project involved roughly a 1 million dollar investment and the creation of 15-20 new jobs. Following several meetings with the business owner and extensive research into recently enacted legislation, we developed a plan of action to make the project work while maintaining the integrity of the drinking water source protections of the ordinance.

In addition to their purchase of the vacant, subject property on Highway 321, the business owners also purchased additional vacant property (unsold, bank owned lots with difficult topography in the Greens subdivision) that also lies within the Critical Area of the Ws-IV Watershed. These properties are allowed to function as a density swap with the subject property receiving "credit" for the allowable density of the other lots. The primary stipulation of this arrangement is that the additional lots can never be developed and are proposed to be donated to the Town.

The Town Planner also worked on with Caldwell UNC HealthCare and their development to process an Amendment to the Planned Development for the Rivercrest Medical Campus. Following staff level review, the proposed amendment was reviewed by the Planning Board and approved by the Board of Adjustment.

Pedestrian Planning

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 has been 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 complete and the Town is in the process of securing right-of-way for construction. Construction on the project is expected to begin in 2016.

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 approved two eligible projects for the fee-in-lieu option to date. Those funds will be spent on improving pedestrian facilities in the Town Limits.

Transportation Planning

The long-awaited 321/Grace Chapel Connector Road (NCDOT project # U-5204) was officially opened for business in early 2015. The project had experienced major delays due to weather, surveying/engineering complications and unexpected earth moving demands. This road serves as a vital link between the heavy residential demographic of Northlakes, Grace Chapel and Dudley Shoals and the commercial area around the Shoppes At Rivercrest. The completed roadway also improves the marketability of the property owned jointly by the Town and Caldwell County, which is being marketed to various job creators.

Town Staff began working in 2015 with the NCDOT on the realignment of the Duke Street intersection with South Main Street. The State has a relatively new ranking system for determining prioritization of projects and Town Staff submitted several potential projects for scoring and evaluation. The Duke Street project scored well and actually scored better than most projects in the entire Greater Hickory MPO Area. This project is now in the survey and design stage and will be moving fairly quickly in 2016.

Boards & Committees

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

Small Town Main Street

The Planning Department continued to administer the Small Town Main Street Facade Improvement Incentive Program. This program has successfully encouraged 12 separate projects on 9 buildings over the past 5 years. Staff administered one project for a replacement of damaged street level storefront glass. 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.

There are several requirements for maintaining designation as a Small Town Main Street community. The Town Planner attended required regional meetings of Main Street Managers in Hickory and West Jefferson in 2015. The Planner also attended the North Carolina Main Street Conference, which was held in Morganton. The Planner is also responsible for compiling and submitting an annual statistics and tracking report for our downtown district.

Certifications

Town Planner Greg Wilson received the requisite training to maintain his status as a Certified Zoning Official (CZO) from the North Carolina Association of Zoning Officials. With the complexity of the job and the ever-changing legislative landscape, the training received in pursuit of this certification is vital.