

TA 17-01 Nature Preserve Parking Areas

PART 1: DESCRIPTION

TA17-01 is a request by Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation to modify the parking standards in Article 6 of the Huntersville Zoning Ordinance. The purpose of the amendment is to allow gravel parking for publicly owned nature preserves.

PART 2: BACKGROUND

Mecklenburg County Parks and Recreation is proposing to renovate the historical Hollybend House at 3701 Neck Road on a county owned nature preserve. The building will be used as a small event space and meeting facility. The Zoning Ordinance allows the use of the facility as a “park” use similar to that of the Rural Hill facility which lies just east of the Hollybend House. Please see the photos below:



In discussion with county staff on permitting the change of use of the house, staff referenced the requirement in the current ordinance that all non-residential parking lots must be paved with asphalt, concrete, or brick pavers (Article 6). In order to keep a more rural and historic feel to the property, the county prefers to use crushed gravel as a paving material. Therefore the application submitted would amend the current ordinance to add an exemption to Article 6 of the Zoning Ordinance to allow publically owned nature preserves or animal refuges to establish gravel drives and parking lots so long as they do not exceed 20,000 sqft in size.

The Land Development Ordinances Advisory Board (LDOAB) considered the text amendment at their March 2, 2017 meeting and unanimously recommended its approval.

PART 3: RELEVANT SECTIONS OF THE HUNTERSVILLE 2030 COMMUNITY PLAN AND APPLICABLE LONG RANGE PLANS

The following are examples of relevant plans and polices from the 2030 Huntersville Community Plan that may be incorporated into the Board’s statement of consistency for approval or denial of the request.

- Policy E-1: Preservation and Environment – Support the preservation and enhancement of the natural environment, along with its scenic and cultural assets.

PART 4: STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Generally, gravel paving for driveways and parking lots can be difficult to maintain and cause safety issues (wheel spinning/slipping) for drivers entering well-traveled streets. However, NCDOT requires that concrete or asphalt aprons for gravel driveways be installed at the roadway intersection to mitigate those safety concerns along state roads.

Other nearby towns such as Mooresville and Davidson require that parking areas mandated by the zoning ordinance be paved with asphalt and concrete (No allowance for gravel is made). Cornelius allows pea gravel as a paving material if the parking area is less than 11 spaces. Concord allows gravel parking if approved by the Zoning Ordinance Administrator. Please find a summary of these requirements attached in your agenda package.

Considering the fact that asphalt aprons are generally required at driveway intersections to remove the safety concern, and the fact that the proposed text is limited to small lots in very rural settings, staff supports the application.

PART 5: PUBLIC HEARING

The Public Hearing was held on May 1, 2017. No one from the public spoke on the application. Discussion from the Town Board included the allowance of pea-gravel to encourage a more walk-able surface, and inquiring about a gravel parking area at the end of Stephen's Road. The Planning Board discussion included questions about the wildlife refuge where the Hollybend house is, along with the potential noise nuisances that could be caused by an event facility there.

In response to the input obtained at the public hearing, staff and the applicant have amended the proposed language to include the mention of pea-gravel and wildlife refuges to clarify the intent.

PART 6: PLANNING BOARD RECOMMENDATION

The Planning Board reviewed the application on May 23, 2017. After discussion, the Board recommended to approve the amended application by a 7-1 vote. The Board recommended that the language remove the word "new" in regard to the parking areas. Staff has removed it as recommended in the drafted ordinance.

PART 7: ATTACHMENTS AND ENCLOSURES

Attachment A: Text Amendment Application

Attachment B: Proposed Ordinance from Staff

Attachment C: Nearby Town Ordinance Requirements

PART 8: STATEMENT OF CONSISTENCY – TA17-01

Planning Department	Planning Board	Board of Commissioners
<p>APPROVAL: In considering the proposed amendment TA 17-01, to amend Article 6: <i>Off Street Parking Design</i> of the Zoning Ordinance, the Planning Staff finds it consistent with Policy E-1 of the 2030 Community Plan and recommends approval.</p> <p>It is reasonable and in the public interest to amend the Zoning Ordinance because the allowance of gravel as a parking material will be limited to small rural settings only and will maintain the natural setting of nature preserves.</p>	<p>APPROVAL: In considering the proposed amendment TA 17-01, to amend Article 6: <i>Off Street Parking Design</i> of the Zoning Ordinance, the Planning Board recommends approval based on the amendment being consistent with the Huntersville 2030 Community Plan and the rural feel of the area.</p> <p>It is reasonable and in the public interest to amend the Zoning Ordinance because it is in keeping with the visual appearance of nature preserves and wildlife refuges.</p>	<p>APPROVAL: In considering the proposed amendment TA 17-01, to amend Article 6: <i>Off Street Parking Design</i> of the Zoning Ordinance, the Town Board recommends approval based on the amendment being consistent with <u>(insert applicable plan reference)</u></p> <p>It is reasonable and in the public interest to amend the Zoning Ordinance because...(Explain)</p>
<p>DENIAL: N/A</p>	<p>DENIAL: N/A</p>	<p>DENIAL: In considering the proposed amendment TA 17-01, to amend Article 6: <i>Off Street Parking Design</i> of the Zoning Ordinance, the Town Board recommends denial based on the amendment being <u>(consistent OR inconsistent)</u> with <u>(insert applicable plan reference)</u>.</p> <p>It is not reasonable and in the public interest to amend the Zoning Ordinance because....(Explain)</p>