

# Town council allows accessory dwellings in more of Wilkesboro

Marty McGee Sep 14, 2018 Updated 21 hrs ago [O](#)

The Wilkesboro Town Council on Monday night agreed to expand where accessory dwelling units (ADUs) are allowed in town.

The council unanimously approved amendments to the zoning code that allow ADUs in all residential areas as a conditional use (subject to town approval) after two citizens—Jefferson Lankford of Wilkesboro and Charles Vaughn of North Wilkesboro—spoke in favor of the changes in a public hearing.

These secondary dwellings on property already with a residence were previously only allowed on property zoned general residential (R-6). The town defines an ADU as a second dwelling that is smaller than the principal dwelling and either attached or unattached to the principal dwelling. Examples include an apartment above a garage, a guest cottage or a wing added to a house.

Andrew Carlton, town planning and community development director, told the council that the new, more well-rounded ADU policy is due to, “most importantly, in my mind, the skyrocketing price of housing in our communities.”

Lankford, a retired judge with the Arizona Court of Appeals, said he worked with the town zoning board and Carlton in recent months on the ADU policy. He told the council that “times are changing, and economic times are hard. I think we’re going to see more inter-generational sharing of housing arrangements because of the price of housing.”

He said that in all of his research of ADUs, “I’ve never found a locality that

adopted an ordinance like this and then said, ‘Oops, we made a big mistake and we’ve got to reverse it.’”

Lankford said Asheville and Hickory are among municipalities that adopted ADU ordinances to expand housing for visitors, people who relocated, newly-hired employees and help extended family live on the same property as their relatives.

Also approved was an amendment stipulating that ADUs only be permitted on parcels owned by the person who owns and lives in the primary residence on the property.

The council eliminated a restriction that said the elevation of an attached or detached accessory dwelling unit couldn’t exceed the elevation of the principal dwelling.

The zoning code already stipulated that no more than one ADU be placed on a single lot, and that the ADU be less than half the size of the main dwelling.

### **Hearing on old jail property**

The council agreed to have a public hearing at the Oct. 1 meeting on the proposed conveyance of the old county jail property immediately behind the museum to a developer for redevelopment.

The council is considering selling the property to the developer, who hasn’t been identified. Earlier discussions indicate that that the developer is a local person and that the property would be developed for residential purposes.

Assistant Town Manager Bob Urness said Thursday that the town is still in contract negotiations with the potential purchaser. Negotiations are going well, he said, and the public hearing for resolution of the sale will probably be in November.

Wilkes County government donated the property to the town and the town

paid to have the jail facility there demolished and the lot cleared off. The jail on the property was closed when the current county jail opened.

## **Revised solid waste ordinance**

The council also approved a revised solid waste ordinance that intern Cody Eller, a student from Wilkes Early College High School attending Western Carolina University, prepared this summer.

The ordinance includes a new goal of reducing the town's solid waste stream going into the county landfill by 40 percent. "This is a good attempt to achieve that objective," said Wilkesboro Mayor Mike Inscore.

The new solid waste ordinance is to be mailed soon to residents as a 14-page color leaflet titled "Town of Wilkesboro Guide to Sanitation."

New fees associated with the solid waste ordinance include:

- tree trimming collection rate if collection takes over an hour: \$35 per hour;
- first solid waste ordinance offense: \$50;
- second solid waste ordinance offense: \$75;
- third solid waste ordinance offense: \$100;
- damaged equipment: commensurate with repairs needed;
- replacement cost of 96-gallon rollout cart: \$200;
- rollout cart cleaning fee: \$50;
- additional bulk collection (pickup truck load): \$50;
- additional bulk collection (tandem truck load): \$200;
- monthly fee increase for an additional trash cart: \$2 per cart.

## **Downtown Christmas decorations**

Council member Nellie Archibald presented an overview of a downtown Christmas decorations project, saying new decorations being purchased will look great. The town's 2018-19 budget includes \$65,000 for the new decorations.

She said the first order for new Christmas decorations should be placed this week with Raleigh-based Mosca Design. It includes artificial trees, lights, ornaments, wreaths, garlands and bows costing just over \$24,000.

A second order is expected to be placed within the next couple of weeks following the custom design of in-stock snowflakes and icicles.

Archibald, Town Planner Christina Walsh and Wilkes Heritage Museum Director Jennifer Furr comprise the committee that worked on the project.

The new decorations are for the museum façade and courtyard, the town-owned Rock Building, police station, Main Street lampposts, Wilkes Communications Pavilion Stage and Carolina West Community Commons.

### **Other matters**

The council also approved:

- having a public hearing on rezoning property at 2418 Congo Road from suburban residential/agricultural (R-20A) to general business (B-2). The rezoning is proposed for commercial use of the lot;
- having a public hearing on rezoning property at 898 Union Street from industrial (M-1) to general residential (R-6), to match the current residential use of the property;
- the appointment of Laura Call to a three-year term on the Wilkesboro Tourism Development Authority Board of Directors. Call, co-owner of Call

Family Distillers of Wilkesboro, will replace Dan Little because he rotated off the board on June 30;

- a 2017 Federal Emergency Management Agency grant of \$49,081 for the Wilkesboro Fire Department. The town will provide a 5 percent match of \$2,454;

- closure of North Bridge Street from 6:30 a.m.-4 p.m. Sept. 26 due to Overmountain Victory Trail Day at the Wilkes Heritage Museum for fourth grade students;

- continued support of the current state-controlled N.C. Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) system, in opposition of efforts to have the ABC system privatized;

- having a celebration service from 4:30-9 p.m. Oct. 18 at the Community Commons, involving Fairplains Baptist, Hinshaw Street Baptist, Grace Kingdom Life, Suncrest Outreach and Liberty Grove Baptist churches.