

granted for office use in the residential zoning R-15. Special Use Districts were retired in 2019 in North Carolina, thus a legacy designation was formed. Matt Duchan stated the developer is open to different development options. Staff recommends approval of the request and call for a Public Hearing on June 17, 2025.

Matt Duchan read the Consistency Statement for the record.

Consistency Statement:

All decisions of the Planning Board and City Council should be based on consistency of the proposal with the comprehensive plan and any other officially adopted plan that is applicable. The comprehensive plan's future land use map identifies this parcel as "existing medium density residential" in yellow, flanked by "existing non-residential" and "existing high residential density" zones to the south and west and "existing medium residential density" to the north and east. Staff finds the proposed rezoning to be consistent with the goals and policy concepts of the Comprehensive Plan, as this would establish and reinforce the presence of either non-residential, lower intensity uses or residential uses should the applicant decide to pursue that route.

Applicant Marty Waters at 3335 Wilkesboro Blvd., Lenoir NC approached the board. He has been a business owner for many years in Lenoir and stated this will be an investment property. He is open to different development ideas such as office lease or apartments/studio. The tree buffer in the back of the property will remain and be maintained. Mr. Waters answered questions from the board.

Board Member Case made a motion to approve the rezoning request for 824 Lower Creek Drive NE and the consistency statement as presented by staff and call for a Public Hearing for City Council to consider the request on June 17, 2025. Board Member Careccia seconded the motion, which was voted upon and passed unanimously.

2. SUP 1-25 345 Finley Ave NW

Applicant: Jeff Church (Public Utilities Director)

Owners: City of Lenoir

Location: 345 Finley Ave NW

The applicant is requesting a Special Use Permit to install an updated water tank with improved fire flow and drinking water pressures at the subject property.

Recommended Action: Approval of the request, and call for a public hearing at City Council on June 17, 2025.

Board Member Baker recused himself from the case due to being employed with McGill Associates.

Planning Director Hannah Williams presented the Special Use Permit case for 345 Finley Ave NW, owned by the City of Lenoir. Jeff Church, City of Lenoir Public Utilities Director is requesting to install an updated water tower to serve nearby residents. The new water tower needs

a SUP because this is considered an expansion of a public service utility in a residential district. The property is zoned R-6/S-2 (high-density residential and North Main Street Overlay).

Hannah Williams read the Findings of Fact and Conditions for the record.

Findings of Fact and Staff Recommended Conditions:

1. The proposed special use will comply with all height, yard, lot and area requirements and other regulations of the district in which it is located unless otherwise specified. *The project proposed by the applicant will comply with all requirements of the R-6/S-2 overlay district.*
2. All driveways will be designed with respect to such matters as proper ingress and egress for automobiles in order to minimize traffic congestion and increase pedestrian safety and conveniences. *The applicant will utilize the existing private driveway onto the site.*
3. Off-street parking and loading areas will be provided in compliance with the Zoning Ordinance. *There will be no off-street parking or loading areas necessary.*
4. The establishment of the special use will not hinder the normal and orderly development and improvement of surrounding property for uses already permitted in the district. *The use will provide improved water pressure for residential, business, and emergency purposes including fire flow and drinking water pressures.*
5. Any required screening and landscaping will be designed or planted with full consideration of the effectiveness of individual plant types, dimensions, and characteristics in minimizing the noise, glare, visual impacts and other economic effects on adjoining properties. *Landscaping elements are already established on this existing utilities site, but any newly required plantings will be installed by the applicant upon review of planning staff.*
6. Any permitted signs and proposed exterior lighting will be designed to reduce glare and to mitigate any adverse effects of sign size and height; so as to make the signs aesthetically pleasing and compatible with adjoining properties. *If exterior lighting is needed, it will be designed to reduce glare and mitigate adverse effects. Signage will conform to the Lenoir Sign Ordinance.*
7. The exterior architectural appearance and functional plan of any proposed building or structure will not vary greatly from any buildings or structures already construction or in the course of construction in the immediate vicinity or from the character of the applicable district, so as to cause a substantial depreciation in the property values of the immediate vicinity. *There is an additional elevated water storage tower located adjacent to the existing ground storage tower and new pumphouse will be built.*
8. The type, size, hours of operations, location of the use upon the site, and intensity of the proposed special use will not be harmful or annoying to surrounding properties. *The new water tower will not be harmful or annoying to surrounding properties and will only be accessed during normal business hours or in emergency situations as with the existing water tank.*

Staff recommends approval of the requested Special Use Permit for the proposed church, with the following conditions:

1. *Any new lighting for the water tower use shall be fully cut-off and shielded so as to eliminate and minimize light spill-over onto adjacent residential properties.*
2. *Valid permits and inspections must be obtained for this use, including and any other federal, state, or local regulation that applies.*
3. *The applicant must obtain zoning from the Lenoir Planning Department within two years of the issuance of the SUP. All proposed changes must adhere to Sec. 819 (S-2 North Main Street*

Overlay District) of the Lenoir Zoning Ordinance.

Consistency with the Comprehensive Plan

All decisions of the Planning Board and City Council should be based on consistency of the proposal with the comprehensive plan and any other officially adopted plan that is applicable. The comprehensive plan lays out policy goals regarding its Public Services, and Public Utilities is one of several public services the City of Lenoir provides. The comprehensive plan acknowledges and encourages utility infrastructure improvements as necessary “depending on the nature of that growth and development.” This project falls in line with necessary improvements to infrastructure in conjunction with Lenoir’s growth and change.

City of Lenoir Public Utilities Director, Jeff Church approached the board. He stated water pressure is based on gravity and altitude. The current tank is close to the same altitude as some existing residents, which makes the water pressure weak. We are not removing the existing tank, it will be used to fill the new tank.

Joel Whitford with McGill Associates at 1240 19th Street Lane NW, Hickory NC approached the board. There will be a pump station that uses the water in the existing tank to pump into the new tank. There will also be a new pressure zone, this will impact approximately 500 customers.

Board Member Terry asked what the tower will look like.

City of Lenoir Public Utilities Director Church stated the color would complement the existing tank, any lettering would be the City of Lenoir Utilities with the water drop logo.

Board Member Careccia asked the overall time of construction for this project.

Joel Whitford replied about 18 months overall.

Board Member Bryant made a motion to approve the Special Use Permit for 345 Finley Ave NW and the findings of fact and staff recommendations with conditions as presented by staff and call for a Public Hearing for City Council to consider the request on June 17, 2025. Board Member Careccia seconded the motion, which was voted upon and passed unanimously.

OTHER BUSINESS

1. Voting of officers
 - Nominations for Chair and Vice-Chair were made at the May Planning Board meeting.
 - Board Member Careccia made a motion to elect Lucy McCarl as Chair and Kyle Case as Vice-Chair. Board Member Parson seconded the motion, which was voted upon and passed unanimously.
2. Staff provided an updated list of issued zoning permits to the board, as general information.

ADJOURNMENT:

Having no other matters to bring before the Board, Chairperson McCarl adjourned the Planning Board meeting at 6:10 p.m.

Lucy McCarl
Chairperson

Hannah Williams
Planning Director