



Spruce Pine Planning Board

SPECIAL CALLED

Town Hall

11050 S. Highway 226

Spruce Pine, NC 29777

Thursday, June 11, 2026

3:00 PM



AGENDA

I. CALL TORDER – Ken Borders

- A. Roll Call (establishment of a quorum)
- B. Notification and Posting of the Agenda
- C. Pledge of Allegiance
- D. Invocation

II. ACTION ITEMS

- A. Zoning Text Amendment: Discussion and consider recommending to Town Council, a zoning text amendment to the Official Zoning Ordinance of the Town of Spruce Pine by amending the ordinance to include: Article VIII. Appearance Standards Section 801. – Building Design.
- B. Zoning Text Amendment: Discussion and consider recommending to Town Council, a zoning text amendment to the Official Zoning Ordinance of the Town of Spruce Pine by amending the ordinance to include: Article VIII. Appearance Standard Section 802. – Landscaping.

III. ADJOURNMENT



Spruce Pine Planning Board
Town Hall
11050 S. Highway 226
Spruce Pine, NC 29777



STAFF REPORT

To: Spruce Pine Planning Board
From: Town Manager
Date: 06/11/2026
Subject: Zoning Text Amendment to the Official Zoning Ordinance of the Town of Spruce Pine

Planning Board Members:

Over the past 12 months, members of the Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, two Council liaisons, staff and the High Country Council of Governments, "Zoning Committee", have held monthly meetings to actively review and amend the Towns adopted Zoning Ordinances.

Attached within the packet are Appearance Standards Sections 801 & 802 of Article VIII; (Building Design Standards and Landscaping Standards) for review. The request is to discuss and consider making a formal recommendation to the Spruce Pine Town Council, that these Zoning Ordinance sections be amended into the Official Zoning Ordinance of the Town of Spruce Pine.

Should the Planning Board bring forward a recommendation, Spruce Pine Town Council will hold a Public Hearing July 13, 2026 at a regular scheduled Council meeting, at Spruce Pine Town Hall.

Respectfully,

Daniel Stines

Article VIII – Appearance Standards

Section 801. Building Design

Section 801.1 Applicability

All building design standards listed herein shall apply to all buildings and structures in all zoning districts within the Spruce Pine Town limits except for those subject to regulation under the NC residential code.

Adopted:

Legal Reference: N.C.G.S. § 160D-702

Section 801.2 Building Orientation

Buildings shall be oriented so that the main entrance shall face a primary public street or a public open space such as a square, plaza, courtyard, or sidewalk. Buildings on sites that adjoin two or more streets shall address all adjacent streets using doors, windows, or other architectural elements as identified in the section below.

Adopted:

Legal Reference: N.C.G.S. § 160D-702

Section 801.3 Facades

- 1) All facades which adjoin or are visible from any public street must adhere to the articulation and transparency requirements laid out below. “Visibility from a public street” shall mean that greater than half of a façade is visible from any public street. Exceptions to this rule will be made in the C-1 district, where back alleys that are technically public streets will not require façade articulation.
- 2) Building Articulation - Continuous flat facades are prohibited. In order to prevent such facades, the following design elements shall be observed:
 - a. Developments shall make use of building articulation elements to emphasize strategic breaks in large expanses of building surfaces. Such elements may include colonnades, awnings, balconies, bay windows, covered entries or porticos, pilasters, or any other type of feature not listed which is deemed by the Zoning Administrator to meet the intent of this ordinance.
 - b. Articulation elements must be distributed evenly throughout the building façade, and two or more elements must be utilized.

3) Transparency Requirements

- a. At least 50% of a building's ground floor front façade between 2' and 10' above grade shall be transparent, meaning that it must consist of clear glass windows or doors.
- b. At least 30% of a building's upper floors' facades must also be transparent.

Adopted:

Legal Reference: N.C.G.S. § 160D-702

Section 801.4 Exterior Materials and Colors

1) Allowable Exterior Building Materials and Colors

- a. In the C-1 district, it is recognized that the historic nature of buildings and their appearance require exceptional care with regard to future development and renovation. In this district, all facades must be constructed entirely of brick and stone, excluding areas which are fulfilling transparency requirements laid out in section 801.3.
- b. In all other districts, and for all other areas of a building in the C-1 district not composed of brick or stone, exterior materials must consist of one or more of the following:
 - i. Brick, Stone, or Wood
 1. Wood may be used as an exterior building material in all districts, excluding those properties which coincide with the Town's Primary Fire Limit Ordinance.
 - ii. Architectural concrete masonry blocks (split-face or ground face)
 - iii. Architectural concrete containing a pattern or finish
 - iv. Board and batten or standing seam metal wall panels
 - v. Stucco
 - vi. Wood grain vinyl siding
 - vii. Synthetic or composite materials that duplicate and cannot be visually distinguished from any of the above.

- c. Façade colors shall be low reflectance, and shall consist of subtle, neutral, or earth-tone colors.
- 2) Disallowed Exterior Materials and Colors
- a. The following materials shall not be utilized on the exterior of buildings:
 - i. Mirrorized glass
 - ii. Polished chrome
 - iii. Corrugated metal
 - iv. Vinyl siding without a wood grain appearance
 - v. Unfinished architectural concrete masonry block
 - vi. Unfinished architectural concrete
 - b. High intensity colors, metallic colors, and fluorescent colors. Building trim and accent areas may feature brighter colors, provided that the width of any trim does not exceed four feet.

Adopted:

Legal Reference: N.C.G.S. § 160D-702

Section 801.5 Disallowed Architectural Styles and Elements

- 1) In addition to the prohibited materials and colors listed in Section 801.4, the following broader architectural elements are prohibited:
 - a. False entrances
 - b. Visible false fronts
 - c. Faux windows
 - d. Franchise Architecture in the C-1 District (“Franchise Architecture” means standardized building design, layout, and exterior appearance that is trademarked, consistent, and instantly recognizable across all locations and brands.”)

Section 801.6 Roofs

- 1) Allowable Roof Materials:
 - a. Asphalt shingles
 - b. Clay or Concrete tile
 - c. Wooden shakes
 - d. Standing seam metal
 - e. Any manufactured materials which give the appearance of and cannot be visually distinguished from the preceding materials.

2) Flat Roofs

- a. Walls shall not appear to terminate at flat roofs.
- b. Flat roofs shall be concealed from view by using pitched roof features, parapets, or a mixture thereof.

Adopted:

Legal Reference: N.C.G.S. § 160D-702

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Article VIII – Appearance Standards

Section 802. - Landscaping

Section 802.1 - Applicability

All landscaping requirements listed herein shall apply to all new developments requiring a zoning permit in the Town of Spruce Pine, except for those where the principal structure is subject to regulation under the NC residential code.

Exceptions for these requirements may be made by the Zoning Administrator in the C-1 district, where lack of space will be prohibitive to achieving the requirements and intents of this section.

Adopted:

Legal Reference: N.C.G.S. § 160D-702

Section 802.2 – Landscaping Irrigation and Maintenance Requirements

1) Irrigation

- a. All required landscaping areas shall be irrigated.
- b. An irrigation plan shall be submitted for review, in addition to and separate from the landscaping plan. Irrigation plans shall show the location, size, and type of sprinkler heads and shall specify whether the system is automatic or manual.
- c. Irrigation systems shall minimize spray onto any pedestrian or vehicular access or abutting property.
- d. Water preservation should be considered in the design of all irrigation systems.

2) Maintenance

- a. All planting shall be maintained in an attractive and healthy condition. Maintenance shall include, but not be limited to: watering, mulching, fertilizing, mowing, weeding, pest management, pruning and trimming, and removal of dead plant material.
- b. Dead or diseased plantings shall be removed. Replacement plantings shall be provided for any dead, diseased, or removed vegetation when such replacement plantings are necessary to meet the standards of this ordinance or maintain the screening objective of the landscaping material.
- c. Landscape structural features such as walls, fences, berms, or water features shall be maintained in a structurally safe and attractive condition.

- d. Where pedestrian or bicycle paths are located within or adjacent to a landscaped area, the landscaped area shall be maintained to provide for safe use of pedestrian facilities.
- 3) Failure to Maintain
- a. Any failure to meet the requirements above will be deemed as a violation of this ordinance. The owner shall be notified in writing by the Town's Zoning Administrator of any areas which are not being properly maintained, and the owner shall, within 30 days of receipt of the notice, restore the landscaped area to a satisfactory condition, meeting the requirements of this ordinance.

Adopted:

Legal Reference: N.C.G.S. § 160D-702

Section 802.3 - Landscaping Plan Required

- 1) A detailed landscaping plan (see graphic on the following page) shall be submitted with an application for any use subject to the provisions of this section. The landscaping plan shall be reviewed and approved by the Town of Spruce Pine during the design review process.
- 2) The landscaping plan shall be submitted separately and in addition to all other site plan requirements and shall include the following:
 - a. Existing and proposed landscaping, including but not limited to,
 - i. The location, species, and height of new trees and shrubbery;
 - ii. The location and dimensions of planting areas;
 - iii. The dimensions of the entire parking or paved area;
 - iv. The location and height of fences or walls;
 - v. Scale bar or representative fraction
 - b. The number, location, species, and size of existing trees between the principal building and the public street right-of-way which are to be maintained and preserved; the size is to be measured by taking the circumference of the tree at approximately four and one-half feet above the grade.
 - c. The location and description of any barriers intended to be used to protect existing vegetation from damage both during and after construction.

Adopted:

Legal Reference: N.C.G.S. § 160D-702

Section 802.4 – Preservation of Existing Vegetation

- 1) Preservation of existing, healthy vegetation in the landscaping plan is highly encouraged. For every existing, healthy shade tree that is preserved in the landscaping plan, a tree credit shall be applied. Existing trees meeting this

criteria shall count for 1.5 times the number of new trees enumerated the landscaping plan. Shade trees shall be defined as any tree with a caliper of 1.5 or greater.

- 2) Tree credits shall apply only to street and parking lot yards, and shall not detract from the requirements of buffer yards, where complete visual separation of adjoining uses is desired.

Adopted:

Legal Reference: N.C.G.S. § 160D-702

Section 802.5 - Required Yards

1) Buffer Yards

Buffer Yards are intended to provide a transitional area between uses which differ in development intensity and density. Buffer yards should be densely planted so as to provide complete visual separation between uses.

There shall be three different classes of buffers yards, which vary in their requirements based on the uses they are intended to separate. These shall be known as Class A, Class B, and Class C buffer yards. All classes of buffer yards are required to use a mixture of evergreen and deciduous trees as well as shrubs, in order to provide for a more natural setting and to increase plant diversity to avoid plants becoming diseased or perishing.

a. Class A Buffer Yards

- i. Class A buffer yards are required for any development within the R-3 High Density Residential zoning district which abuts either the R-1 or the R-2 district.
- ii. Class A buffer yards shall be at least 15 feet in width, and shall utilize a mixture of evergreen and deciduous trees, as well as shrubs, which will provide complete visual separation within three years of planting.
- iii. Trees in class A buffer yards shall consist of a mixture of canopy trees (25+ feet at maturity) and understory trees (10-25 feet at maturity).
- iv. Class A buffer yards may also utilize a combination of trees and a six-foot fence, constructed of either masonry or metallic material.

b. Class B Buffer Yards

- i. Class B buffer yards are required where any non-industrial, non-residential use abuts a residential use or residential zoning district.

- ii. Class B buffer yards shall be at least 25 feet in width, and shall utilize a mixture of evergreen and deciduous trees, as well as shrubs, which will provide complete visual separation within three years of planting.
 - iii. Trees in class A buffer yards shall consist of a mixture of canopy trees (25+ feet at maturity) and understory trees (10-25 feet at maturity).
 - iv. Class A buffer yards may also utilize a combination of trees and a six-foot fence, constructed of either masonry or metallic material.
- c. Class C Buffer Yards
- I. Class C buffer yards are required where any industrial use abuts any other use or district.
 - II. Class buffer yards shall be at least 100 feet in width, and shall utilize a mixture of evergreen and deciduous trees, as well as shrubs, which will provide complete visual separation within three years of planting.
 - III. Trees in class C buffer yards shall consist of a mixture of canopy trees (25+ feet at maturity) and understory trees (10-25 feet at maturity).
 - IV. In addition to deciduous trees and shrubs, class C buffer yards must provide either a contiguous, linear row of evergreen trees, or an eight-foot fence, constructed of either masonry or metallic material.
- d. No such buffer shall extend nearer to a street right-of-way line than the established building line of the adjoining residential lot.

2) Street yards

A planting yard, comprised of a strip of land containing landscaping materials, shall be located along and parallel to any adjacent public street, or streets. The street yard shall be located on private property and not within the street right-of-way. Street yards may have a varying minimum width as specified in this section; however, no tree planted more than 35 feet from the edge of the right-of-way shall count as a street tree.

- a. The minimum width of a street yard shall not be less than 7 feet, and the average width shall be at least 10 feet.
- b. For street yards, one (1) canopy tree (25+ feet at maturity) is required for every 50 linear feet of street frontage of the lot, minus the width of driveways and access points.

- c. Understory trees (10-25 feet at maturity) may be used in place of canopy trees at the rate of one every 30 feet. The use of understory trees in place of canopy trees may be required where overhead utilities exist as an obstruction to growth or otherwise pose a hazard.
- d. Trees do not need to be spaced evenly. Trees may be clustered with a minimum spacing of 15 feet and a maximum spacing of 75 feet.
- e. No area of the street yard may be exposed soil. Street yards shall be covered with vegetation. The only area that may not remain vegetated is a six-foot radius surrounding the trunk of any tree, provided that this non-vegetated area is mulched.
- f. Vegetation within the street yard shall consist of shrubbery, herbaceous species/ground cover, or a mulched planting bed with river rock.

3) Parking Lot Yards

A parking lot yard is a planting yard comprised of a landscaped planting area to be located within or adjacent to the parking area. Such landscaped areas may include but not be limited to landscaped islands and inside medians. This section shall only apply to parking lots with six (6) or more parking spaces.

The purpose of parking lot yards is to provide attractive views from roads and adjacent properties, prevent large, uninterrupted masses of pavement, reduce glare, and improve air quality. Specific requirements for parking lot yards are as follows:

- a. Parking lots shall provide a minimum 10% net area of landscaping in the interior and exterior of parking lots.
- b. Landscaped planting areas are to be located within or adjacent to the parking area as landscaped islands, at the end of parking bays, inside medians, or between rows of cars.
- c. No more than ten spaces shall be located in one continuous row. Parking bays of ten spaces or less shall be broken up with landscaped islands or medians to avoid long monotonous rows of parking.
- d. There shall be one canopy tree (25+ feet at maturity) within 60 feet of every parking space.
- e. There shall be one shrub for every 300 square feet of total parking area. Shrubs shall be 18 inches tall at planting and reach a minimum height of 30 inches within three years.
- f. All trees and shrubs are to be planted within a landscaped planting area not less than 200 square feet in area.

- g. Trees and shrubs shall be planted within 20 feet of the parking lot area to count as landscaping for parking lot yards.

Adopted:

Legal Reference: N.C.G.S. § 160D-702

Section 802.6 – Required Sight Distance at Intersections

1. A sight triangle 10 feet by 70 feet for the turn in each direction shall be maintained at all intersections of driveways/streets with adjacent streets. No plantings, fence, building, wall, or other structure or objects shall be placed or maintained in the sight triangle if such object materially obstructs vision between 2.5 feet and 10 feet above the upper face of the nearest curb, or of the street centerline if no curb exists.
2. Exceptions for certain objects within sight distance areas may apply, where certain objects do not significantly obstruct the visibility of drivers. Drivers may be able to see over, under, or around some objects within sight distance areas. Objects that may be exempt include fire hydrants, utility poles, and traffic control devices, which are located to minimize visual obstruction. Other objects 12 inches in diameter and smaller, such as sign posts, may be allowed within sight distance areas if located individually or in a combination so as not to substantially restrict the driver's view.
3. **Removal of Obstructions**
The Zoning Administrator shall remove sight distance obstructions located within the right-of-way of town-maintained streets. The Zoning Administrator will notify the state department of transportation of sight distance obstructions located within the right-of-way of state-maintained roadways. The Zoning Administrator shall provide written notification to the property owner(s) on which a sight distance obstruction exists on private property. The property owner shall be responsible for the prompt removal of the obstruction on their property and shall be solely liable for any and all consequences resulting from their negligence and/or failure to remove the obstruction.

Adopted:

Legal Reference: N.C.G.S. § 160D-702

Section 802.7 – Plant Material and Invasive Species

- 1) All landscaping used to meet the requirements of this ordinance shall utilize plant materials that are compatible with the natural environment of the Southern Appalachia region. Native plant species are strongly encouraged to promote ecological function, reduce maintenance, and preserve the visual character of the community. A list of plant species native to North Carolina can be found on the North Carolina Native Plant

Society's website. A list of species native to the mountain region can be found on the North Carolina Wildlife Federation website, and the website for Cooperative Extension in Henderson County.

- 2) The 2023 invasive plant species list from the North Carolina Native Plant Society, located in Appendix A of this ordinance, shall serve as the Town's no-plant list. No species from this list shall be used to meet the landscaping requirements of this ordinance. Any future updates to this list shall be incorporated into this ordinance.

Adopted:

Legal Reference: N.C.G.S. § 160D-702

Section 802.8 – Screening Required

- 1) Any permitted outdoor storage, waste containers, and utility structures shall be screened from view in the form of a wall, fence, or shrubbery. Screening of these elements shall be opaque and shall exceed the height of the storage or equipment by a minimum of six inches. Screening shall not interfere with the operation of utility equipment.
 - a. Dumpsters and other waste collection containers shall not be located in the front yard of any structure or within any required buffer yard. Gates must be provided for dumpster and waste collection enclosures.
 - b. Any fencing used to fulfill the requirements of this section shall be supplemented with landscaping. Chain link fences used to fulfill the requirements of this section shall be coated and include plastic inserts. Such chain link fencing shall either be black or green in color.
 - c. Ground mounted mechanical equipment shall be located in the rear or side yard and screened in accordance with the requirements of this section.
- 2) Service areas, including but not limited to loading docks and service entrances, shall be located to the side or rear of any principal building. Where such areas are visible from any public street or adjacent property, they shall be screened from view in accordance with the landscaping requirements of Class A buffer yards, found in section 802.4.
 - a. Screening yards for service areas shall be located as close to the nearest property line as practicable, while still providing space for the ingress and egress of vehicles to the service area.

Adopted:

Legal Reference: N.C.G.S. § 160D-702

Section 802.9 – Pedestrian Facilities Required

1. Sidewalks Required with Zoning Permit

Wherever a development requiring a zoning permit abuts any public street, the developer shall be required to construct sidewalks, curbs, and gutters along the entire length of the road frontage on all sides of the property which border said streets, excluding driveways and other access points.

2. Sidewalk Construction Standards

All sidewalks must meet the following minimum construction standards:

- a. Sidewalks must be constructed of concrete and have a minimum thickness of 4 inches.
- b. Sidewalks must have a minimum width of 5 feet.
- c. Sidewalks must contain control joints at regular 5-foot intervals along their length.

3. Requirements for Section Cutting or Other Sidewalk Disturbance

Wherever any activity, such as utility access, necessitates the temporary disturbance or removal of an existing section of public sidewalk, such activities shall restore the disturbed section to be in compliance with the sidewalk construction standards specified above. Sidewalk restoration must be completed at the expense of the entity which performed the disturbance activity, and must be completed within 48 hours of completion of the disturbance activity.

Adopted:

Legal Reference: N.C.G.S. § 160D-702