

March 2025 Public Hearing Meeting Minutes

The Town Council of the Town of Unionville held a public hearing for comments on Text Amendment #24-01, Section 315 of the Land Use Ordinance on Monday, March 17, 2025, at 7:15 p.m. in Town Hall, 1102 Unionville Church Road, Monroe, NC. Mayor Baucom and all the Commissioners were present. Town Attorney Ken Helms was also present.

Mayor Baucom welcomed all and called the hearing to order at 7:15 p.m.

Mayor Randy Baucom opened the public comments portion of the meeting regarding Text Amendment #24-01, Section 315. He noted that nobody had signed up to speak, but Land Use Administrator Sonya Gaddy had prepared a PowerPoint presentation.

Sonya Gaddy began her presentation by explaining the purpose of the text change, which was to bring the town's ordinance more closely in line with Union County's tree ordinance. She noted that Section 314 a7 and b of the current ordinance already addressed trees, recognizing their importance to the health, safety, and welfare of all persons.

Gaddy then outlined the current verbiage in Section 315, which encourages the retention and protection of trees and discourages excavation, subsurface disturbance, or placement of impervious surfaces within the drip line of trees 18 inches in diameter or more.

She provided background on the proposed text amendment, mentioning that the Union County urban forester had encouraged the change during his annual visit in August 2024. Gaddy emphasized that the amendment would only apply to major subdivisions and commercial development processes, not affecting minor subdivisions or single-home construction.

Gaddy informed the council that the planning board had discussed the amendment three times since August 2024. After addressing questions and concerns, the planning board unanimously voted to recommend approval of the text amendment at their February 2025 meeting. She added that staff also recommended approval.

The Land Use Administrator then highlighted key changes in the proposed amendment:

- Renaming Section 315 to "Retention and Protection of Foliage during Major Subdivisions and Commercial Development."
- Requiring preservation and protection of foliage outside the buildable area of a parcel for major subdivisions or commercial developments.
- Defining areas outside the buildable area as zoning district setbacks, open spaces, stormwater management areas, street rights-of-way, and easements.
- Allowing exceptions for streets, roadways, driveways, utility infrastructure, sidewalks, paths, and greenways.
- Requiring applicants to provide an inventory of trees with a diameter at breast height (DBH) of 12 inches or greater with development plans.
- Implementing a mitigation requirement for removed trees, with replacement at 125% of existing DBH.
- Allowing waivers for areas not suitable for healthy tree growth or for diseased, dying, or invasive species.
- Requiring replacement foliage to be installed prior to receiving a certificate of compliance.

- Changing the protected drip line area to apply to trees 12 inches or larger in diameter, instead of the current 18 inches.

Mayor Baucom sought clarification that the new rules would apply to setback areas and not buildable areas, which Gaddy confirmed. She also noted that the town's ordinance would differ slightly from the county's by specifying its application only to major subdivisions and commercial developments.

In response to a question about the definition of a major subdivision, Gaddy clarified that it applies to developments with more than 5 lots, while minor subdivisions are those with up to 5 lots.

With no further questions from the council and no public comments, Mayor Baucom closed the public hearing, stating that the matter would be taken up during the regular meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Melody Braswell
Deputy Clerk

Note: These minutes were drafted with the assistance of Clerk Minutes by HeyGov. All content was reviewed and approved by the Deputy Clerk prior to submission.