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New Planning Director Announced

City Manager Ritchie Haynes announced the appointment of Jean Derby as Planning Director for the City of Lincolnton effective immediately. Derby has been a key member of the city's planning department for the past five years serving as the planning assistant with responsibility for downtown business incentive grants management, planning board activities, and zoning permits.

According to Haynes, "Jean has been instrumental in the City of Lincolnton's growth in the last five years. She has been heavily involved in our downtown revitalization and grant programs and has managed the day-to-day operations of the Planning Department for the last several years."

During her tenure, Derby has been actively involved in new business development and expansion projects in Lincolnton including BrickTree Brewing Company, Goodwood Pizzeria, Untapped Territory, The Meating Place, Bloom Market, Burton Farms General Store, City Cellar Wine Bar, All you Knead Massage, and others. She also contributed to the city's development of 110 East Water Street into a new restaurant helping to develop the RFP (Request for Proposals), oversee the buildout with the winning bidders and ultimately the opening of Local Roots & Provisions restaurant in summer 2021.

For the past three years, she has managed the city's Brownfields Grant project awarded by the EPA to identify and mitigate environmental hazards on vacant or under-utilized city properties. The brownfield project directly led to the current redevelopment of the 5 acre abandoned Spanco mill site at 215 Bonview Avenue in downtown Lincolnton, returning it to its textile manufacturing roots.

Derby has developed strong inter-departmental and inter-governmental relationships that inform and improve the work of the planning department. Her work with the City of Lincolnton water/sewer/electric department staff and the Lincoln County building & inspections department has improved communications and efficiencies. She has streamlined code enforcement activities with the county to enhance data collection and better track code violations and achieve

compliance. This teamwork improves the staff review process and enhances customer service for city residents, builders, and developers.

Derby participates in multiple committees related to revitalization and development including the Lincoln County Courthouse Re-Use Committee, the Gaston Cleveland Lincoln Metropolitan Planning Organization, the Lincolnton Steering Committee, and the Carolina Thread Trail Rail Trail Connector project. Derby has participated in the review and update of city ordinances and policies representing the planning department with the mayor and mayor pro-tem.

Prior to her employment with the City of Lincolnton, Derby spent 24 years in the legal profession working for several law firms in Charlotte as an office manager and legal assistant. She believes her legal training has been good preparation for her new career in municipal planning because “following the ordinances and policies requires understanding the details and nuances of legal language and then applying them to many different situations. It is a process, and the ordinances are the law.”

Derby and her husband Jason Payne moved to Lincoln County in 2014 and resides with her family in Vale on the Black Sheep Farmstead where they raise sheep and goats and have a pet donkey. She has 4 children currently attending West Lincoln High School and an adult son who lives in Charlotte. In her spare time, Derby volunteers with the West Lincoln Band Boosters helping to support the Rebel Regiment Marching Band and she and her daughters make Black Sheep Farmstead Goat Soap which has been a popular artisan market item in Lincolnton for several years.

Please join us in congratulating Jean Derby on her promotion to Planning Director for the City of Lincolnton.

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