

Planning and Zoning Board

Minutes

Thursday, February 20, 2020

5:30 p.m.

The Blowing Rock Planning and Zoning Board met on Thursday, February 20, 2020 for their regularly scheduled meeting. The meeting was held at the American Legion Building at 333 Wallingford Street. Vice-Chairman Carter called the meeting to order at 5:35 pm. Members present were Joe Papa, Sam Glover, Pete Gherini, Mike Page, and Harrison Herbst. Staff members present were Planning Director Kevin Rothrock and Planning and Zoning Support Specialist Tammy Bentley.

Vice-Chairman Carter asked if there were any changes to the minutes. *Mr. Gherini made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Page. All members were in favor of the motion.*

Vice-Chairman Carter asked if there were any changes to the agenda. *Mr. Page made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Herbst. All members were in favor of the motion.*

1. 2020 – 01 Rankin Road Subdivision

John Winkler is requesting a conditional use permit for a 6-lot single-family subdivision and a new public street. The 4.63-acre subject property fronts Rankin Road and abuts the Blowing Rock Golf Course. The property is zoned R-15, Single-family. The subject property is in the WS-IV-PA water supply watershed. The property is further identified by Watauga County PIN 2817-35-0786-000. The subject property is wooded and slopes down from Rankin Road, is within the water supply watershed. The residential density for that area is two dwelling units per acre and no lot less than 15,000 square feet. Each lot meets the minimum size requirement and the overall density is compliant with the watershed standards. Lot 6 is designed to remain greater than 1 acre and currently has a single-family home with an accessory dwelling unit.

A new subdivision street is proposed to serve 5 of the 6 lots. The new road as shown has a total length of approximately 575 feet to the center of the cul-de-sac. The road will be built to Town standards with a maximum grade of 15%, 18 feet of pavement, and 24-inch curb and gutter. The total width of the street from face of curb to face of curb is 21 feet. The applicant intends to offer the road for public dedication upon completion and the Town will be responsible for street maintenance and snow removal.

Storm water detention is required due to the increased impervious areas being generated by the proposed road. The storm water drainage system will be designed to accept runoff from the proposed roadway and convey it through a detention system before releasing to a natural drainage path and the creek below the property. As shown on the preliminary plan, it appears that the storm water design will meet the Land Use Code standards.

The proposed subdivision requires street trees be planted or retained an average of every 30 feet on each side of the street. Exceptions for new tree plantings can be made where existing healthy shade trees are located within 50 feet of the road centerline.

A 6-inch water line with two (2) hydrants along the new street is proposed. An additional hydrant is to be located along Rankin Road on the north side of lot 6 (existing house).

The proposed sewer will be a gravity sewer system and will connect to the gravity sewer main that runs along the stream at the bottom of the property. Staff and the Town Engineer will approve water and sewer systems to meet the Town Code.

Vice-Chairman Carter asked if this request met all Town regulations and codes. Mr. Rothrock said all but one item and advised that the frontage of lot #2 is about 10 feet shy of the required 100 feet. Mr. Papa commented that the project can't start until the 100-foot setback is met. Mr. Rothrock confirmed. Mr. Rothrock advised that he thinks the setback can be met and added that the basic concept will not change from the preliminary plats. Mr. Rothrock further advised once all infrastructure is complete, the final plat will be approved by staff and recorded. Mr. Rothrock told the Board that the road would not be dedicated to the Town until all lots were sold.

*Mr. Herbst made a motion to open the meeting to public comment, seconded by Mr. Page. **All members were in favor of the motion.***

Mr. Gherini noted that he and Mr. Page had walked the property and that it is very wooded and asked Mr. Winkler how many trees would be removed. Mr. Winkler advised that the only trees to be removed would be for the road construction. Mr. Rothrock said the tree survey identified the trees within the grading limits. He further advised that the entire site will not be graded, that just the road will be graded. Mr. Rothrock said that each lot will be graded as they are sold and homes built on them.

Mr. Gherini asked about fire hydrants on the site. Mr. Rothrock and Mr. Jason Gaston, Engineer for the project, noted the fire hydrant locations on the site plan. Mr. Rothrock said that the Fire Department had requested that one hydrant be moved.

Ms. Cecilia Grasinger of 216 Rankin Road asked how the subdivision will be developed. Mr. Winkler said that he may build one spec house, but that the other lots will be sold. Mr. Winkler added that they are in the process of remodeling the main home and they plan to live there. Ms. Grasinger said this is good and said she would share this with her neighbors. Ms. Grasinger asked about the maintenance of Rankin Road. Mr. Rothrock said that the rest of the 2014 bond paving should be completed soon. Mr. Rothrock added that if this project proceeds and the road built that the Town will maintain the new road.

Ms. Grasinger asked how the water runoff into the creek will affect the people downstream. Mr. Rothrock advised the runoff created by the road construction will be detained and slowly released at a prescribed rate per Town code.

Vice-Chairman Carter thanked Ms. Grasinger for her comments.

Vice-Chairman Carter asked Mr. Gaston if the floodplain is shown on the site plan. Mr. Gaston advised the property is not in a floodplain. Vice-Chairman Carter asked if the homes would be in a floodway or floodplain. Mr. Rothrock said no.

Mr. Marshall Sealey, as representative of the Blowing Rock Civic Association, asked if the creek is a wet-weather creek. Mr. Rothrock advised it is a perennial creek. Mr. Page, who lives nearby, said that in dry weather the creek has a small flow, adding that he has never seen the creek flooded.

Mr. Glover asked if the road cut being so close to the property line is a concern. Mr. Rothrock advised there is no setback for a road.

Mr. Sealey asked if the process is that Mr. Winkler gets the road permit, then individuals buy lots and get their own building permits. Mr. Rothrock confirmed that this is the process.

Mr. Winkler said he may build one spec house on one of the lots. Mr. Winkler added the lots are so expensive that it may take three years to sell them. Mr. Winkler said the lot that has been sold was in the mid \$300,000s and that this would be an exclusive neighborhood.

Mr. David Trahan stated that he lives in the general area and asked if there will be deed restrictions and what the building limitations will be. Mr. Winkler said they are thinking of forming an Architectural Review Board. Mr. Trahan asked if there will be square footage and finish requirements. Mr. Winkler said that would be regulated. Mr. Rothrock said this will be privately regulated.

*Mr. Page made a motion to close the meeting to public comment, seconded by Mr. Gherini. **All members were in favor of the motion.***

Mr. Page, in referencing the letters that had been received said that he has some sympathy for the neighbors, and he understands that they like to have the status quo. Mr. Page asked Mr. Rothrock to display the aerial image and noted that Yadkin and Woodbine both have several homes. Mr. Page added he does not think the area will be overbuilt.

Mr. Gherini said he is happy to hear about a proposed Architectural Review Board and that the Winklers will be living there.

*Mr. Page made a motion to approve as presented with the proviso that Mr. Rothrock will oversee that the subdivision conforms with the Town Land Use Code, seconded by Mr. Herbst. **All members were in favor of the motion.***

Other Business

Mr. Gherini asked for an update on Inn on Cornish and noted it appears to be nearing completion. Vice-Chairman Carter asked when it will open. Mr. Winkler advised that the cabinets are holding up completion. Mr. Page asked about the caps on the railings. Mr. Winkler advised they were installed yesterday.

Mr. Rothrock advised the Board that the Town Council approved the Bass Lake sidewalk project last week, adding construction would commence at Speckled Trout. Mr. Rothrock also advised that there was a meeting on the Middle Fork Greenway yesterday, and the project was approved for an EFLAC, Eastern Federal Lands Access Program, grant. Mr. Rothrock said the federal grant process is time consuming. Mr. Rothrock advised there will be a public hearing in May with public comment, then after that the detailed design work will commence.

Mr. Winkler asked about funding for Memorial Park. Mr. Glover advised the Council had approved the funding and hope to have it completed by July 4th.

Mr. Glover asked about the progress on Valley Boulevard/Highway 321. Mr. Rothrock said he had comments from Mr. Gherini and encouraged the other Board members to submit their comments.

Mr. Rothrock reminded the Board that there is lots of work to be done to comply with the changes to NCGS 160D Land Use Code updates.

*Having no further business Mr. Papa made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mr. Glover. **All members were in favor of the motion.***

Vice-Chairman Carter adjourned the meeting at 6:11 p.m.

Vice-Chairman Wes Carter

Tammy Bentley
Planning & Zoning Support Specialist