

Planning and Zoning Board

Minutes

Thursday, April 23, 2020

5:30 p.m.

The Blowing Rock Planning and Zoning Board met on Thursday, April 23, 2020 for their regularly scheduled meeting via a Webex virtual meeting platform. Vice-Chairman Carter called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. Members present were Kim Hartley, Sam Glover, Pete Gherini, Mike Page, and Harrison Herbst. Member Joe Papa was absent. 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 agenda. *Ms. Hartley made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Gherini. All members were in favor of the motion.*

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

New members Pete Page and Bill McCarter were sworn to the Board.

Vice-Chairman Carter asked if there were any nominations for Chairman. Mr. Page nominated Mr. Gherini. *Mr. Page moved to elect Mr. Gherini by acclimation. All members were in favor of the motion.*

Vice-Chairman Carter asked if there were any nominations for Vice-Chair. *Mr. Page nominated Mr. Carter, seconded by Mr. Gherini. All members were in favor of the motion.*

Chairman Gherini turned the meeting over to Mr. Rothrock.

1. 2018 – 01 The Speckled Trout

Mr. Rothrock gave the staff report. The Speckled Trout, LLC is requesting an amendment to their conditional use permit to renovate and expand the covered deck and outdoor seating area. The property, located at 922 Main Street at the intersection of Hwy 221, is zoned CB, Central Business and in the WS-IV-PA water supply watershed. The property is further identified by Watauga County PIN 2807-98-2723-000.

Speckled Trout made significant improvements to the building and property during the past few years, including the addition of an antique wine cask to frame the entrance door. The wine cask was approved through the issuance of a conditional use permit in January 2019.

The new restaurant owners also purchased the adjoining parking lot to help offset the loss of parking in front of the building.

The restaurant owners would like to expand the front deck 44 inches from its current location and construct a roof over the deck in place of the existing fabric awning. The proposed location would encroach roughly 3 feet into the 15-foot setback. The 15-foot setback is measured from the back of the proposed sidewalk along Main Street and Hwy 221, scheduled to be constructed within the next several months.

The restaurant is limited to 40 outdoor seats and no additional outdoor seating is proposed, however, some seats will be relocated to the proposed expanded deck.

Chairman Gherini asked if there were questions for staff. Mr. Page asked if the permissive variance for the setback is allowed as a matter of course. Mr. Rothrock confirmed. Mr. Page asked if it is necessary that the Planning Board and Town Council vote on this. Mr. Rothrock said yes. Mr. Page noted that parts of the roof are not a 6/12 pitch and asked if the Board needed to approve that. Mr. Rothrock suggested that the Board stipulate the roof pitch not be less than what is proposed up to a 6/12 pitch. Mr. Page said he is ok with this.

Mr. Page asked if the stools are included in the 40 outdoor seats. Mr. Rothrock said that they are included and may need to be removed to keep the number of outdoor seats at 40. Ms. Emily Brinker, co-applicant, said they will remove the stools.

Chairman Gherini asked if there were any other questions or comments. Ms. Brinker said that they would like to make the roof steeper if possible. Mr. Page said he is not objecting to the roof pitch as shown. Ms. Hartley asked if the new roof material will match the existing roof material. Ms. Brinker confirmed.

Chairman Gherini asked for a motion to close the public comment. *Mr. Herbst made a motion to close the public comment, seconded by Mr. McCarter. All members were in favor of the motion.*

Mr. Page made a motion to approve as presented with the proviso that the roof line not be a lesser pitch than that shown on the preliminary drawings, seconded by Mr. Herbst. All members were in favor of the motion.

Other Business

Chairman Gherini noted before the stay-at-home order the Board was discussing the Ad Hoc 321/Benchmark recommendations and Mr. Rothrock had asked the Planning Board members for their input. Chairman Gherini added that he thinks the Planning Board owes the Town Council a recommendation. Mr. Rothrock said he will send the study back to the Board and ask that they use 'reply all' to relate recommendations.

Chairman Gherini asked if this will require a sub-committee. Mr. Rothrock said to work with all Board members to hear initial thoughts, then send to the Council. Chairman Gherini asked for a timeframe. Mr. Rothrock said to allow a week to ten days to get feedback from Planning Board.

Chairman Gherini asked if any new projects are in the pipeline. Mr. Rothrock said nothing new. Mr. Rothrock advised the Board that the grading had begun on the Blue Ridge Hotel project and that the Moody parking lot has been paved, but the landscaping must be

installed. Mr. Rothrock advised that 1150 Main Street is moving along well; that the front building should be complete by July. Mr. Rothrock also advised that Chestnut at Blowing Rock, the project on Chestnut Drive at the old hospital site, is nearing completion on the site work and they are working to complete the shell of all the buildings.

Ms. Erica Brinker, co-applicant for The Speckled Trout, said they would like to push this request through to Town Council as soon as possible so they can complete the project during the shutdown. Mr. Rothrock advised that it would go before Town Council on 5/12/2020. Ms. Brinker asked if they need anything else from them. Mr. Rothrock said he would contact them directly.

Chairman Gherini asked if there will be a meeting in May. Mr. Rothrock said he was not sure, but if there is a meeting we can use this Webex format.

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

Chairman Gherini adjourned the meeting at 5:55 p.m.

Chairman Gherini

Tammy Bentley
Planning & Zoning Support Specialist