

## Planning and Zoning Board

### Minutes

Thursday, December 17, 2020

5:30 p.m.

The Blowing Rock Planning and Zoning Board met on Thursday, December 17, 2020 for their regularly scheduled meeting via Zoom. Chairman Gherini called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. Members present were Harrison Herbst, Wes Carter, Mike Page, Pete Page, Bill McCarter, Joe Papa, Kim Hartley and Sam Glover. Staff members present were Planning Director Kevin Rothrock and Planning and Zoning Support Specialist Tammy Bentley.

Chairman Gherini asked if there were any changes to the agenda. *Mr. Mike Page made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Pete Page. All members were in favor of the motion.*

Chairman Gherini asked if there were any changes to the November 19, 2020 minutes. *Mr. Herbst made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. McCarter. All members were in favor of the motion.*

#### 1. CUP 2010-03 Amendment – Foggy Rock Restaurant

Mr. Rothrock presented the staff report and Powerpoint Presentation. Foggy Rock Restaurant is requesting an amendment to their conditional use permit to provide up to 40 outdoor dining seats on the south side of the building. The arcade that was approved by Town Council in July 2020 will not be built and the basement will remain as storage. The gravel parking lot on the side and rear of the property will be paved with 43 parking spaces when complete. The property is located at 8180 Valley Blvd. The property is zoned GB, General Business. The subject property is in the WS-IV-PA water supply watershed. The property is further identified by Watauga County PIN 2817-05-9999-000.

The outdoor dining will be expanded on the front left of the building with a new covered porch area, and a seating area in front of the porch.

The required parking for the restaurant and proposed 40 outdoor seats is 40 parking spaces. The restaurant has 33 existing paved spaces and several gravel overflow parking spaces. Foggy Rock is proposing to formalize up to 14 gravel spaces and pave them for a total of 43 parking spaces on the property. Some of the existing spaces in the upper lot will be removed and converted to landscaping.

A 16-foot opaque buffer is proposed along the rear of the lower parking area along the King's Ransom subdivision. In addition, a planted buffer will be added along the stream culvert headwall where the stream opens up behind the building. Mr. Rothrock noted that the arcade that was approved in July 2020 will not be built. The downstairs of the restaurant will remain storage and equipment areas.

Mr. Preston Spencer with 444 Construction, project contractor, said they were working with Alan Crees with Municipal Engineering on the site prep documents. Mr. Spencer asked Mr. Burt Myers, co-owner of Foggy Rock, to speak to the Board.

Mr. Myers said they have lived in Blowing Rock for 40 years and love the community and are blessed to be here. Mr. Myers said that they rethought the game room to meet customer demand. Mr. Myers said they also want more curb appeal up top and more parking on the lower level.

Mr. Spencer said that Burt and Yvonne wanted to make the entry warmer and more welcoming as opposed to just going from a parking lot into the restaurant. Mr. Spencer said their list also coincided with the comprehensive plan in protecting the character of the neighborhood and added that the current renovations add to the "Blowing Rock feel". Mr. Spencer noted that the planned addition of the upper parking landscaping buffer will enhance that parking area and allow better ingress and egress with directional arrows to help with the overall flow of all the vehicular traffic.

Mr. Spencer noted that the rendering of the added seating incorporates a retaining wall to make the slope useable making the addition of the outdoor arbor and fireplace possible.

Mr. Myers said they sought out 444 because they do beautiful work and are local.

Mr. Mike Page noted the rendering does not show the stairs from the upper to lower parking area and asked how these areas would be accessed. Mr. Spencer said very few customers used the stairs, that eliminating them helps to designate the entrance. Mr. Rothrock advised that the stairs do not meet the building code as currently built. Mr. Mike Page noted that customers must walk up the slope.

Mr. Mike Page asked Mr. Rothrock if there is an issue with the amount of glass on the front of the building. Mr. Rothrock asked from the Land Use Code standpoint. Mr. Page confirmed. Mr. Rothrock said the minimum is 30%. Mr. Spencer advised the rendering is not accurate and there are more windows than shown. Mr. Rothrock said there is not an issue with the amount of windows.

Mr. McCarter asked the number of seats allowed after the renovation. Mr. Rothrock said the formula is based on the number of indoor square footage and outdoor seats and outlined the formula. Mr. Rothrock said 40 spaces are required and they are providing 43. Mr. McCarter noted there is adequate parking.

Chairman Gherini asked Mr. Myers if the entrance will remain and asked if there is any way to provide room so patrons waiting to be seated aren't so cramped. Mr. Myers said the staff won't need to be around the doors allowing for more space.

Mr. Herbst asked about the health of the creek behind the restaurant and how blacktop surfaces will impact the creek. Mr. Rothrock said the arcade approval required the paving of the lower spaces. Mr. Rothrock advised that gravel and paving have a comparable impervious value once the gravel compacts and this gravel has been there for many years. Mr. Rothrock said there won't be much change.

Mr. Alan Crees with Municipal Engineering said the green area shown is now hard packed and that gravel will be removed, and the area reclaimed. Mr. Rothrock said the gravel area, with cars as shown on the plan, is not required to be paved, that this is overflow and

employee parking. Chairman Gherini asked how customers will know where to park when they enter the parking lot. Mr. Rothrock said all parking is customer parking adding that he expects Mr. Myers will manage the gravel spaces not counted in the total.

Mr. Carter asked if there is enough space to navigate the new parking area. Mr. Rothrock confirmed. Chairman Gherini asked how firetrucks will access the property. Mr. Rothrock presumed from the south entrance. Mr. Crees said there is enough room to reach all points around the building.

Mr. Carter asked, if in creating one-way traffic, they are expecting to use part of the front as a drive-through. Mr. Myers said there will not be a drive-through. Mr. Spencer said it is one-way now but is not designated.

Ms. Hartley asked if customers must walk up the grade and not use the steps. Mr. Rothrock said the steps do not meet the building code and will be removed. Mr. Carter asked if the steps are being removed. Mr. Rothrock confirmed, adding that the deck will be constructed over the steps.

Mr. Rothrock advised the Board that he had not received any emails or calls adding that the public notice was mailed on December 7<sup>th</sup>.

*Chairman Gherini made a motion to open Public Comment, seconded by Mr. Carter. Mr. Rothrock advised there was no public, that he did not get a request for the link to access this meeting.*

*Mr. McCarter made a motion to recommend to Town Council as presented, seconded by Mr. Pete Page. **All members were in favor of the motion.***

### **1. 321 Visioning – Valley Blvd Study Implementation Strategies**

Mr. Rothrock said the consensus from the October subcommittee meeting was to add an introduction and work on implementation strategies. Mr. Rothrock said at some point they will need to break away and be specific as to the parts of the code being amended. He added that this must be broken down into smaller bites for the Town Council and the public hearing. Mr. Rothrock noted the following from the document:

- Specific actions to be finalized at this time include:
  3. Limits to Exterior Building Materials – Attachment A
  4. Reduce Maximum Building Height – Attachment B
  5. Reduce the Required Front Setbacks – Attachment B
  2. Remove Permission for Subjective Modifications – Attachment D

Mr. Rothrock advised that other information will come in as these items are worked through. He said that these can possibly be taken to the Town Council at the retreat. Mr. Rothrock said they also need to work on how to handle getting the information to the public and property owners and how to incorporate the information from Mosaic Civic Design.

Chairman Gherini asked Mr. Rothrock if he had contacted Benchmark to see if other communities are doing this. Mr. Rothrock said he had not yet contacted them.

Chairman Gherini asked Mr. McCarter if he had any experience using a points system. Mr. McCarter advised he had not. The Board discussed how a point system could be devised and implemented.

The Board discussed each item in detail. The Board agreed that they do not want to be too restrictive and want to reserve the ability to review projects along Valley Boulevard on a case-by-case basis when necessary.

*Mr. Gherini made a motion to move forward with Attachments A, B and D, seconded by Mr. Herbst. **All members were in favor of the motion.***

### **Other Business**

Chairman Gherini for an update. Mr. Rothrock advised that John Winkler has applied for a CUP for a subdivision fronting Green Hill Road on lots owned by the Country Club. Mr. Rothrock advised that this will be presented to the Board at the January 2021 meeting. Chairman Gherini asked if Mr. Winkler is moving forward with the subdivision off Rankin Road. Mr. Rothrock advised he is not. Chairman Gherini asked what becomes of the CUP. Mr. Rothrock said it is valid for two years, after which it expires.

Mr. McCarter advised the Board that he has spent a lot of time revising the Land use Code to comply with NCGS 160-D and hopes to review it next week.

Chairman Gherini asked the status of Rainey Lodge. Mr. Rothrock advised that he is waiting for the bond letter of credit.

Mr. Rothrock advised the Board that the Bass Lake sidewalk project was awarded to Country Boy Landscaping and they have subbed that to Greene Construction.

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

Chairman Gherini adjourned the meeting at 6:43 p.m.

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Chairman Gherini

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Tammy Bentley  
Planning & Zoning Support Specialist