

## Planning and Zoning Board

### Minutes

Thursday, May 20, 2021

5:30 p.m.

The Blowing Rock Planning and Zoning Board met on Thursday, May 20, 2021 for their regularly scheduled meeting in person and via Zoom. Chairman Gherini called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. Members present were Harrison Herbst, Pete Page, Bill McCarter, Joe Papa, Sam Hess, Mike Page and Sam Glover. Staff members present were Planning Director Kevin Rothrock, Planning and Zoning Support Specialist Tammy Bentley and Town Engineer Doug Chapman.

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

Chairman Gherini asked if there were any changes to the March 2021 minutes. *Mr. Papa made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Herbst. All members were in favor of the motion.*

#### 1. Special Use Permit 2021 – 02 Viking Properties Coffee Shop

Mr. Rothrock gave the staff report and Powerpoint presentation. Viking Properties is requesting a Special Use Permit to construct a drive-thru coffee shop on the former Cambria car lot property at 7855 Valley Blvd. The property is zoned GB, General Business and is located in the WS-IV water supply watershed. The property is further identified by Watauga County PIN 2817-17-3703-000.

The proposed site is a redevelopment of the former Cambria car lot, moped shop, and psychic palm reader. The small building will be removed, and a new 432 square foot building will be constructed for drive through and walk-up service. Employees will be the only ones in the building as it is designed for coffee service, equipment and storage only.

The applicant is providing eight (8) parking spaces with one being ADA accessible. Only 4 spaces are required. For the drive through, five (5) spaces in the queue line are required by Code and 6 are provided around the building.

Storm water detention is required due to the increased impervious area of just over 1000 square feet. However, the site has so many underground utilities and other obstacles, it would be impractical to construct an underground detention area for such a small increase. The Applicant is requesting a waiver of the storm water detention requirements otherwise required by the Land Use Code.

Access to the property will be through two existing driveways – one on Hwy 321 and one on Sunset. These driveways will allow for two-way traffic. Access to Maple Road will be eliminated. A small landscape wall will be installed with a landscape buffer to surround the east side of the property.

The building will be one level but will have a second level façade above the front service area. The design includes lap siding, Eldorado stone, and a gray metal roof.

The Applicant requests waiver of the storm water detention requirement due to the small increase in impervious area of 1001 sq feet.

Chairman Gherini asked if the existing catch basin can handle increased storm water. Mr. Rothrock said he would defer to Mr. Warren, the project engineer.

Mr. Hess asked about signage. Mr. Rothrock advised that is handled administratively. Mr. Hess asked about trash. Mr. Rothrock said a dumpster would not be required, that the business would not generate much trash. Mr. Rothrock said rollout cans can be used if needed.

Mr. Patrick Warren, Engineer for the project, said the existing catch basin will accommodate the additional runoff. Mr. Warren said there will be a trash receptacle at the walk-up window and a rollout bin. Mr. Warren said they would appreciate relief on the stormwater as there is so much going on underground on the site and there is no room for anything else.

Mr. Papa asked about ingress and egress onto 321. Mr. Warren said this has been submitted to NCDOT and is under review. Mr. Papa asked if they have a plan 'b'. Mr. Warren said not at this time. Mr. Hess asked about exiting onto Sunset. Mr. Warren said this is under review with NCDOT.

Mr. Glover asked if eliminating the walk-up would allow for more greenspace. Mr. Warren said this will not increase the greenspace.

Mr. Hess asked if traffic on 321 could be as congested as Come Back Shack in Boone and if there are any plans for a double drive-through. Mr. Warren said the site is too tight for a double drive-through. Mr. Warren added that they will have online ordering via an app.

Gaye, a neighbor who lives on White Pine, said she is concerned with the traffic pattern and greenspace. She added that Sunset is dangerous with curves and elevation. She asked about a tree plan for the site. Mr. Warren said the existing Hemlocks alongside My Mountain Home will be removed and replaced with a new Hemlock buffer.

Mr. Bill Dixon, Architect, advised that the second story will be used for cup and lid storage and accessed by a ship ladder.

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

Mr. Herbst said he is concerned with traffic. Mr. Hess said he is concerned with the access onto Sunset and asked if that could be moved further up. Mr. Warren said the grade precludes moving it too far up. Mr. Warren said the Maple Road access would address this, but it was removed due to the neighbor's concerns. Mr. Rothrock asked how far it could be moved. Mr. Warren said maybe 20 feet, but it will be steep.

The Board discussed the traffic on 321 and access onto Sunset. Mr. Herbst suggested waiting until NCDOT approves the plan and Mr. Warren has the site plan showing the Sunset access moved. Mr. Rothrock said the Board can stipulate the NCDOT response as a condition.

Mr. Herbst made a motion to approve with hearing from NCDOT and getting the revised plans. The Board discussed the motion.

*Mr. Mike Page made a motion to approve as presented with the proviso that the Sunset entrance be moved as far east as possible and that no new stormwater detention be required, that the existing can be used. Mr. Glover seconded the motion. **All members were in favor of the motion.***

## **2. Special Use Permit 2021 – 03 Heather Ridge Estates**

K. West, LLC is requesting a Special Use Permit for a 9-lot single-family subdivision on the corner of Heather Ridge Lane and Green Hill Rd. The 5.1-acre subject property is zoned R-15 single-family and is partially in the WS-IV water supply watershed. The property is further identified by Watauga PIN 2817-67-9106-000. No new roads are proposed for the subdivision as each lot will have direct access to a public street.

The subject property is a 5-acre wooded tract between Green Hill Road and Heather Ridge Lane. Approximately 0.50 acre of the property is in the water supply watershed with the remainder outside of the watershed. Each proposed lot meets the minimum size requirement of 15,000 sq feet and minimum lot width of 100 feet.

Five (5) lots front Green Hill Road, three (3) lots front Heather Ridge Lane, and one lot is located on the corner of both streets. To minimize driveway access cuts onto Green Hill Road, staff recommends combining driveways on lots 6 and 7, and lots 4 and 5. Staff also recommends access for lots 1 and 3 be provided/shared from Heather Ridge Lane.

The setback shown on lot # 1 should be 30 feet on one street and 20 feet on the other. The potential owner will have the option of determining which is the primary street. No access is allowed to the lower gravel section of Heather Ridge Lane. This section of road is outside of Town limits and is private.

Storm water detention is not required on this project as no new streets or roads are being proposed. The proposed sewer will be a low-pressure sewer system along Green Hill Road to capture sewer from lot 7 and pump up to the manhole on Heather Ridge Lane. An extension to the existing 2-inch pressure sewer line is proposed along the lower, downhill section of Heather Ridge to account for lots 8 and 9. All sewer line improvements will be installed at the developer's expense. Staff and the Town Engineer will approve water and sewer systems to meet the Town Code.

Mr. Rothrock said Eric and Earl Ford are concerned with construction traffic on the private portion of Heather Ridge Lane and they want help in maintaining the road.

Mr. Chuck Phillips said he has been a licensed NC General Contractor since 1986 and that his partner has been coming to Blowing Rock for many years and they are very sensitive to the area. Mr. Glover asked if they plan to build spec houses. Mr. Phillips confirmed.

Mr. Phillips said they want to preserve as many mature trees as possible and keep the natural buffer. Mr. Phillips said they agree with limiting access onto Green Hill Road by having shared driveways for lots four and five, and lots six and seven. Chairman Gherini asked if they could make that work. Mr. Phillips confirmed. Chairman Gherini asked about fire department access. Mr. Phillips advised there are hydrants on Green Hill Road and Heather Ridge Lane.

Ms. Mary Hill of 140 Heather Ridge Lane said it is upsetting to see this and it looks like it will be cheap. Ms. Hill asked who owns the Miller lot. Mr. Rothrock said that property is not part of this. Ms. Hill asked the price of homes and cutting all the trees. Mr. Phillips said the houses will be in the \$800,000 to \$900,000 range and they do not plan to cut all the trees.

Mr. Wayne Smith of 338 Heather Ridge Lane said he has spent \$15,000 in mitigating stormwater runoff on his property, and he is concerned about more runoff. Mr. Smith said the current area is overgrown, not maintained and that development would move the water to Green Hill Road and his low-lying lot. Mr. Smith asked that the developer's construction group not use the private section of Heather Ridge Lane. Chairman Gherini asked if other people have drainage issues. Mr. Smith confirmed and stated that water off Green Hill Road runs on the private section of Heather Ridge Lane.

Mr. Patricia Aiken of 256 Heather Ridge Lane said that all the existing lots are lower and that water from lots eight and nine could flow onto her property. Ms. Aiken added that it is hard to know how the topography will change without having the final site plan. Mr. Rothrock advised that if a street were built, detention would be required for the street portion, but not for the houses.

Mr. Ric Parsons of 1577 Green Hill Road said there needs to be a holistic approach to the traffic issues on Green Hill Road. Mr. Parsons said that density increases without regard to future speeding which is everyone's problem. Mr. Parsons said that Mr. Phillips should be advocating for a resolution for the speeding as it will impact the owners in this development. Mr. Parsons said he hoped the Board members had time to look at his presentation and that the traffic study needs to include this development.

Mr. Smith reiterated the drainage issue on Green Hill Road onto Heather Ridge Lane and asked to be included in the meeting with Mr. Phillips and Mr. Warren.

Dr. Adam Hill of 1663 Green Hill Road reiterated what has been said, that stormwater is an issue. Dr. Hill said the house next to his has sandbags in their drive to divert the runoff. Dr. Hill said he has lot pets on Green Hill Road and was very worried about his children due to the speeding. Dr. Hill said Green Hill Road has poor visibility and is very narrow with significant gullies on both sides.

Mr. Margaret Lawrence, current owner of the subject property, said they considered their options and wanted a developer who would develop the entire property and not just sell lots.

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

The Board discussed the issues surfaced by the public. Mr. Herbst said the speeding needs to be addressed but it is not the developer's problem. Mr. Rothrock said that the Planning Board does not have authority to effect traffic control measure such as stop signs and

speed humps. Mr. Rothrock advised the Planning Board's advisory capacity is very valuable to the community.

Mr. Doug Chapman, Town Engineer, said that stormwater is not typically addressed on single family residential. Mr. Chapman said it is very hard to diffuse water flow to minimize runoff concentration. Mr. Chapman said that stormwater in Blowing Rock will always be an issue, that one house will increase runoff.

Mr. McCarter made a motion to approve as presented with these conditions:

1. Limiting driveway access with a 10-foot non-access easement to Green Hill Road along lots one and three, and shared driveways on lots four and five, and on lots six and seven,
2. The developer shall endeavor to minimize the concentration of stormwater on each lot,
3. Encourage the developer to meet with neighbors to address stormwater concerns.

Mr. Herbst seconded the motion. **All members were in favor of the motion.**

### **Other Business**

Chairman Gherini said he spoke with Mr. Rothrock, and they agreed that a subcommittee should be formed to address residential density in the Central Business zoning district. Chairman Gherini suggested that Mr. Glover, Mr. Hess, Mr. McCarter, and himself comprise the committee.

Mr. Hess made a motion to approve the subcommittee, seconded by Mr. Mike Page. **All members were favor of the motion.**

Mr. Rothrock advised that the Town Council wants the Planning Board to research how to limit deliveries where trucks stop in the middle of Town streets. Chairman Gherini asked if a subcommittee should be formed, then asked if it could be part of the residential density in Central Business subcommittee. Mr. Rothrock said that was fine. The Board agreed to have the same subcommittee look at deliveries.

Chairman Gherini asked for an update on prohibited uses on Highway 321. Mr. Rothrock said that some uses, such as arcades, tattooists and palmists were listed in the study. Mr. Rothrock said he does not have any language for the Board. Mr. Rothrock said that he will get back to the Board on this.

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

Chairman Gherini adjourned the meeting at 7:52 p.m.

---

Chairman Gherini

---

Tammy Bentley  
Planning & Zoning Support Specialist