

Planning and Zoning Board

Minutes

Monday, November 15, 2021

5:30 p.m.

The Blowing Rock Planning and Zoning Board met on Monday, November 15, 2021, for their regularly scheduled meeting. Members present were Chairman Pete Gherini, Mike Page, Pete Page, Bill McCarter, Joe Papa, and Harrison Herbst. Members Sam Hess and Sam Glover were absent. 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. Herbst 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 minutes. *Mr. Papa made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Mike Page. All members were in favor of the motion.*

1. CZ 2021 – 02 Lucrum 7, LLC – Hotel on Pine and Laurel

Steve Heatherington is requesting a conditional rezoning of the former Stone Pillar bed and breakfast (demolished) and Snips (demolished) property from Central Business to Conditional Zoning – Central Business (CZ-CB). The 0.337-acre property is located between Pine Street and Laurel Lane. The Applicant is proposing the construction of a 14-room hotel. The property is further identified by Watauga County PINs 2807-87-8611-000, and 2807-87-7474-000.

The proposed hotel will have parking access on the ground level with one way traffic, entering from Pine Street and exiting to Laurel Lane. There will be two floors above the garage. The first floor will have 8 units with 16 bedrooms and second floor of hotel rooms will have 6 units with 6 rooms.

The applicable street setback for Town Center is 15 feet and is measured from the back of the existing/proposed sidewalk along each street. The proposed buildings meet the required street setbacks from both Pine and Laurel.

The side setback is 5 feet and the proposed buildings meet the side setbacks.

The maximum building height is 30 feet from the finished sidewalk elevations to the standard 15-foot setback. Beyond the 15-foot setback, the allowable building height increases incrementally for every 5 feet of additional setback to a maximum of 40 feet. The proposed building height for both ends of the hotel nearest the streets is 30 feet. Beyond 65 feet from the back of the sidewalk, the building height increases to 40 feet as allowed in the Land Use Code. Land Use Code Section 16-12.6.5.4 says that the entire structure must be located beyond the 50-foot setback to utilize the additional building height. This would mean the

entire building could only be 30 feet high based on the 15-foot setback. The Applicant is asking as a condition to apply the intent of the ordinance by allowing the additional building height of 40 feet with the increased setback on that part of the building.

The building materials include a board and batten siding, lap siding, stone veneer, architectural roof shingles and architectural stone veneer. Some metal roofing accents are planned for some shed dormers and eave overhangs.

Access to the site will be through Pine Street, one-way through the site and exiting to Laurel Lane. The proposed project requires 22 parking spaces, and 23 angled spaces are provided.

The storm water runoff from the site will be conveyed to an onsite detention system and released to Pine Street.

Sewer will be connected to Pine Street.

All electrical service will be provided underground.

Garbage collection will be through roll-out containers in an enclosure located on the east side of the property adjacent to Pine Street.

All of the trees on site will be removed as many are in poor condition or are within the building or parking area footprint. There is a significant buffer along Laurel Lane since the Town owns an area 20 feet from the back of the existing sidewalk. The Applicant is proposing to remove the large white pines on the Town property and replace with other trees. The large white pines are overgrown, in poor condition, pose a safety risk, or are already dead.

Applicant Proposed Conditions

1. Be allowed to increase the building height to 40 feet for that portion of the building more than 65 feet from the back of the sidewalk.

WAIVERS REQUESTED

For this project to be approved, the following waivers must be granted as conditions of approval:

1. Building height to be allowed up to 40 feet for that portion of the building greater than 65 feet from the back of the sidewalk.

Chairman Gherini asked the Board if they had any questions for Mr. Rothrock. The Board discussed the requested waiver. Mr. Rothrock said the stepped height makes the structure less imposing. Mr. Papa asked the height difference in this building and 1150 Main Street. Mr. Rothrock said 5 to 6 feet higher, adding that the grade of 1150 Main Street is higher.

Mr. Heatherington introduced project architect Mr. Bill Dixon and engineer Mr. Mike Trew, who were also part of the 1150 Main project. Mr. Heatherington thanked the Board for their time and for this process. Mr. Heatherington said he appreciated the comments from the public and Board during the neighborhood meeting. Mr. Heatherington said that he is requesting additional height to meet the Town's image and to give the building a grand

feel and not be monotone. Mr. Heatherington told the Board that the numbers must work and the second floor allows for additional rooms. He said they are meeting as many aspects of the code as possible adding the site dictates the parking and density and added that the water line along Pine Street is being improved at their cost. Mr. Mike Page asked about parking for staff. Mr. Heatherington said that use and access will be through a digital code and will not require on site staff adding that these are suited are opposed to a hotel room.

Chairman Gherini asked about the trees along Laurel Lane. Mr. Heatherington advised that about 20 feet was not their property but belonged to the Town. Mr. Heatherington said they are removing and replacing the dead trees at their expense. Mr. Dixon said 4 large white pines will be removed and replaced. Mr. Heatherington said he would work with Mr. Rothrock on the replacement trees. Mr. Rothrock said the landscaping will help soften the building.

Mr. Tim Gupton of 235 Meadow Lane said this really comes down to agreeing or not with the requested height waiver. Mr. Gupton asked how the height compares with 1150 Main and the size of the new trees. Mr. Heatherington said this building is 6 feet higher than 1150 Main, but the grade of 1150 Main is 10 feet higher. Mr. Rothrock said the replacement trees will have a 3-inch caliper. Mr. Trew said the trees that will be removed are standing dead pine trees and that the removal will benefit both the applicant and Town.

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

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

Other Business

Chairman Gherini advised that he had been elected to the Town Council and had submitted his Planning Board resignation to Town Manager Shane Fox effective December 1st. Chairman Gherini thanked Mr. Rothrock, Ms. Bentley and his fellow Board members for the opportunity and journey. Chairman Gherini encourages anyone to apply to serve on the Planning Board.

Mr. Mike Page thanked Chairman Gherini and wished him the best of luck.

*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 6:00 p.m.

Chairman Gherini

Tammy Bentley
Planning & Zoning Support Specialist