

Planning and Zoning Board

Minutes

Thursday, March 17, 2022

5:30 p.m.

The Blowing Rock Planning and Zoning Board met on Thursday, March 17, 2022, for their regularly scheduled meeting. Members present were Pete Page, Bill McCarter, Joe Papa, Sam Glover, Chris Squires, and Catherine Perry. Members absent were Harrison Herbst and Sam Hess. Staff members present were Planning Director Kevin Rothrock, and Zoning Officer Brian Johnson.

Board Member Bill McCarter called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

New Planning Board members Catherine Perry, Chris Squires, Sam Glover, and Tom Barrett were sworn in by Town Clerk Hilari Hubner. Sam Glover was also sworn as a re-appointed member

Member McCarter asked if there was a motion to approve the agenda. *Member Pete Page made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Member Catherine Perry. All members were in favor of the motion.*

Chairman McCarter asked if there was a motion to approve the February 24, 2022, minutes. *Member Page made a motion to approve the minutes as amended, seconded by Mr. Catherine Perry. All members were in favor of the motion.*

Member McCarter opened the floor for nominations for the Chair. Member Page nominated Member Bill McCarter for Chair. With no other nominations, Member Page made a motion to approve Member McCarter as Chair, seconded by Member Joe Papa. **All members were in favor of the motion.**

Member McCarter opened the floor for nominations for the Planning Commission Vice-Chair. Member Papa nominated current Vice-Chair Harrison Herbst to remain Vice-Chair. With no other nominations, Member Page made a motion to approve Member Harrison as Vice-Chair, seconded by Member Papa. **All members were in favor of the motion.**

1. Overview of Planning Board roles and responsibilities

Mr. Kevin Rothrock provided a presentation to give the Planning Board members a brief overview and orientation of their responsibilities. The Planning Board will deal with very important issues such as land-use decisions, individual projects, long-range planning, and the Comprehensive Plan in the coming year, and provides recommendations in an advisory capacity to the Town Council. Mr. Rothrock provided an overview of the Land Use Ordinance and the Town's Zoning Map.

2. Discussion on Outdoor Dining/Downtown Parking

Mr. Rothrock provided a memo (attached) summarizing outdoor dining and how it has been affected in the past two years. Mr. Rothrock explained how the town relaxed outdoor dining requirements and suspended enforcement during the COVID-19 pandemic and how it fluctuated up and down during that time. Mr. Rothrock explained how the Land Use Ordinance places restrictions on the number of outdoor dining seats and is tied directly to the availability of off-street parking.

Mr. Rothrock further explained that the Town Council wanted to take a comprehensive review of outdoor dining and parking and find the best approach moving forward. Member Papa stated that he thinks things should go back to pre-pandemic requirements.

Member Page asked if applicants have the option to pay into the parking fund and Mr. Rothrock replied yes. Member Page stated that paying into the fund still does not provide a parking space for a project. Mr. Rothrock explained the purpose of the parking fund.

Member Catherine Perry stated that some restaurants have their own parking and asked how many restaurants are affected by this. Member Perry asked how the parking numbers were established. Mr. Rothrock explained prior to 2010 the Land Use Ordinance had established parking requirements based on the square footage of the building and its use. Town Council decided at that time parking should be reduced in the Downtown area.

Member Chris Squires asked if the concern is just outdoor seating, parking, or the need for an overall approach to be discussed. Mr. Rothrock replied it is a comprehensive discussion.

Member Glover left the meeting at 6:34 pm.

The board selected Pete Page, Chris Squire, Catherine Perry, and Joe Papa to serve on a subcommittee to further discuss and bring back recommendations to the Planning Commission members.

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

Chair McCarter adjourned the meeting at 6:38 p.m.

Chair Bill McCarter

Brian Johnson
Zoning Officer