

Town of Blowing Rock

Planning Board

Agenda

Thursday, August 18th, 2022

5:30 pm

Call to Order

Approval of Agenda

Approval of Minutes

Business

1. Solar Panels on Commercial Building Roofs

Other Business

Adjournment

DRAFT

Planning and Zoning Board

Minutes

Thursday, July 21st 2022

5:30 p.m.

The Blowing Rock Planning and Zoning Board met on Thursday, July 21st, 2022, for their regularly scheduled meeting. Members present were Chairman Bill McCarter, Catherine Perry, Joe Papa, Tom Barrett, Pete Page, Chris Squires, and Harrison Herbst. Members absent were Sam Glover and Sam Hess. Staff members present were Planning Director Kevin Rothrock, Zoning Officer Brian Johnson and Taylor Miller.

Chairman McCarter called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm.

Chairman McCarter asked if there was a motion to approve the previous months minutes. Member Harrison Herbst made a motion to approve minutes from June 16th, 2022. Seconded by Member Tom Barrett. **All in favor.**

1. Conditional Re-zoning Request from Blowing Rock Brewery

Mr. Rothrock presented the staff report. The property where the brew house is planned to go is located at the corner of Edmisten Rd and Highway 321. The property is located in the ETJ. It is zoned general business but not located within the town limits. The building will be a production facility as well as a draft house where they will serve beer.

There are some limitations to manufacturing use within town. There should not be any smoke emitting from the business, no disruptive noise, no vibrations, and no general odors beyond the property. They are also not allowed to exceed 200 gallons of water per employee in the business. The proposed building is encroaching on the required 16-foot setback on the back side of the building. They are only encroaching by two to three feet. Mr. Rothrock advised he does not think they will have a problem fixing that encroachment.

Proposed building materials and architectural design will consist of metal standing seam roof, heavy timber posts and beams, composite paneling, and composite wood-siding as well as stone. They are also proposing to maximize solar energy and include as many solar panels as they can on the entirety of the roof. They are also requesting to use a 3 and 12 pitch on the roof as opposed to 6 and 12 which is what the town requires.

There will be an entrance and exit off of Highway 321 as well as an additional exit that let guests exit on Edmisten Rd. In regard to parking, they need one parking space per two employees and based on the size of the draft house, they would need to provide about 18 spaces. They are proposing 33.

They have proposed an acceptable retention plan for water on the property. They can also hook up to water and sewer. To receive town services, they need to be annexed into the town. They also included a dumpster enclosure for garbage collection.

There is a requirement that up to 20% minimum of parking has to have shading for which they will need to provide plans for later to prove that they meet those criteria. They also requested that they do not have to provide landscaping between the building and the parking. They are also asking to waive the requirement for sidewalks in front of the building until there are sidewalks in other areas there.

Mr. Jeff Walker took the podium to explain that he is the co-founder and president of Blowing Rock Brewery. He explained their history as well as the proposed project and ideas for the property.

The projects architect, Devon took the stand to explain the reasoning behind the layout of the property and the functionality of why they chose what they did. He explained the entrance and both exit options and how it amplifies the flow of traffic through the property for guests and frequent deliveries. He acknowledged that they have not gone through permitting with DOT yet for the entrance and exits.

Adrienne is the engineer for the project and explained different aspects of the building and why they chose what they did. He explained the landscaping as well as the lay out the of building itself. They want to honor the look and feel of Blowing Rock by including multiple different materials that represent the area – stone, wood, metal and a water feature as well.

Mr. Walker took the stand again to explain a bit more about the tasting room and the ideas behind it. He also went through the Comprehensive Plan Alignment for the town and how their idea and proposed project will meet different aspects of that comprehensive plan.

The floor was opened to public comment.

Yvonne Ziel took the stand. Advised she liked the plan but proposed the “exit” be an “in” only. She disclosed that she is a licensed traffic engineer and believe that with the “exit” being on Edmisten, there could be some traffic and back-up problems. Changing it to an “in” only would be much better for flow of traffic.

The main concern for the property seemed to be the “exit” only on to Edmisten and how it might affect traffic in that area.

Chairman McCarter asked for motion to move the subject of the Blowing Rock Brewery and Draffhouse to Town Council for review. Member Glover made a motion, seconded by Member Herbst. **All in favor.**

2. Short-term Rental and Code Enforcement

Mr. Rothrock acknowledged that he presented the proposed short-term rental notice last week to Town Council and it has been sent back to the planning board for review.

Mr. E.B. Springs took the stand to share ideas, as well as concerns, for the short-term rental ordinance and believes there should be changes made to the proposed ordinance. He provided a document to Mr. Rothrock, Zoning Officer Brian Johnson and all of the planning board members with his suggestions to the ordinance. He believes the ordinance should be clearer and more specific in regard to North Carolina law and state statutes. He also mentioned the Blowing Rock Police Department and the role they would play in enforcement.

Mrs. Janey Sellers took the stand and expressed some concerns for the short-term rental ordinance as well. Her biggest concern was without the permitting for short-term rentals, we end up with stale information for who to contact when there are issues with the property. She mentioned that there needs to be clearer information in regard to short-term rentals on the town website.

Mr. Rothrock advised he is currently working on a Frequently Asked Questions section for the website but needs a finalized ordinance before he can post that information to the website. Chairman McCarter also pointed out that there is now a short-term rental overlay on our towns GIS mapping system which can help verify exactly where short-term rentals are allowed within the town limits.

Member Tom Barrett said that Town Council wanted us to take a deeper look into short-term rentals and code enforcement. He advised that he thinks we need to spend some more time evaluating the ordinance in order to do the council justice in regard to what they asked of the planning board. Member Tom Barrett and Mr. Rothrock both agreed that this process does not need to be rushed.

Chairman McCarter asked if there were any volunteers for a subcommittee. Member Tom Barrett advised he would be interested. Member Catherine Perry volunteered. Chairman McCarter and Member Harrison Herbst also volunteered.

Mr. Rothrock advised he would let the subcommittee for short-term rentals know when he has set a meeting time for them to discuss the topic.

Chairman Bill McCarter adjourned the meeting at 7:20 p.m. **All in favor.**

Chairman Bill McCarter

Taylor Miller
Planning & Zoning Support Specialist

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chairman Bill McCarter and Members of the Planning Board

FROM: Kevin Rothrock, Planning Director

SUBJECT: Solar Panels on Commercial Building Roofs

DATE: August 11, 2022

The Town's commercial design standards regulate the color and style of roofing materials and regulate the size of solar panels. Council can approve any size solar panels but the Zoning Administrator is limited to approvals of solar panels at 20% of the roof plane size. The Town Council has asked that the Planning Board review the current ordinance and determine if the standards should be modified for flexibility.

The current ordinance text is attached below. Additionally, representatives of 444 Construction will be in attendance at the meeting to share some new perspectives on solar energy and trends in solar panels installation.

16-21.5.3. Solar panels shall compliment the roof shape, materials, and colors and shall be designed to limit glare and reflectivity. Solar panels that are visible from streets or adjacent properties are subject to review and approval through a zoning permit or special use permit. The administrator may approve solar panels that are less than 10% of the contiguous roof plane area on which they are proposed for installation, or less than 20% of the contiguous roof plane area where the solar panel and roof deck are parallel. All other solar panel sizes shall be approved through a special use permit process.