

**DRAFT**

**Planning and Zoning Board**

**Minutes**

**Thursday, June 16<sup>th</sup> 2022**

**5:30 p.m.**

The Blowing Rock Planning and Zoning Board met on Thursday, June 16th, 2022, for their regularly scheduled meeting. Members present were Chairman Bill McCarter, Catherine Perry, Sam Glover, Tom Barrett, Pete Page, Chris Squires, and Harrison Herbst. Members absent were Joe Papa and Sam Hess. Staff members present were Planning Director Kevin Rothrock, Zoning Officer Brian Johnson and Taylor Miller.

Chairman Bill McCarter called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

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

Chairman McCarter asked if there was a motion to approve the May 19th, 2022, minutes. *Mr. Chris Squires made a motion to approve the minutes as amended, seconded by Mr. Pete Page. **All members were in favor of the motion.***

**1. Outdoor Dining/Parking – Proposed Ordinance**

Mr. Rothrock thanked the subcommittee for all their work in regard to drafting the new ordinance and explained the changes that were made to the existing ordinance in attempt to create more flexibility for restaurants while still maintaining some guidelines.

There was a definition for outdoor dining added to the ordinance. The biggest revision stated that one parking space is required for every 250 square feet of outdoor dining area. The ordinance also states that restaurants can explore their options to increase outdoor seating through a permitting process. It is clearly stated that the outdoor dining baseline is not determined by the circumstances of the Covid-19 pandemic when regulations were suspended. The proposed ordinance also addresses tents used to cover or enclose outdoor dining areas.

There was some discussion on how to determine exact square footage of outdoor dining and how it is defined for establishments. Mr. Rothrock advised that it is simply based off the area that will be devoted to outdoor seating/tables for dining.

Mr. Tom Barrett acknowledged that even on our busiest weekends in town, people still manage to show up and find parking spaces. It was discussed whether or not placing restrictions at all on the restaurants would be detrimental for the local establishments rather than be helpful.

Member Sam Glover also brought up the Roger Brooks study that was done on the town and whether or not that has been considered. Mr. Rothrock advised that the Roger Brooks study supported outdoor dining/seating – much like we all do – but also brought the parking issue to attention which led the subcommittee to realize that they can't just turn all the regulations loose and let outdoor seating run wild. There needs to be some sort of restriction to try and help/improve the parking problem.

Member Chris Squires, who is on the subcommittee for outdoor dining/parking, advised that we need to be looking at everything from a “big picture” perspective as opposed to looking at restaurants and their parking by themselves. Removing all regulations for parking for restaurants would be detrimental to the overall parking problem in town.

Mr. Rothrock concluded that he thinks this proposed ordinance will allow for more wiggle room for the local restaurants than what is existing in the current ordinance.

Chairman McCarter asked if there was a motion to send a draft to Town Council. *Member Chris Quires made a motion and Member Pete Page seconded.*

**Five members were in favor and two members opposed.**

## **2. Short-term Rentals**

Mr. Rothrock explained that short-term rentals were something we discussed back in April after the state of North Carolina did away with permitting for short-term rentals.

He advised that we are trying to still require some form of a short-term rental permit. Especially if a building use is changed from commercial or a single-family residential home to short-term rental because we would need to know that.

Statue will not allow us to charge a fee but we can issue a zoning permit and then do an inspection to make sure everything is up to code for the short-term rental.

Mr. Barrett mentioned that short-term rentals are a hot topic right now and a big area of concern for residents of Blowing Rock. He also mentioned that as a home-owner who would want to use their home/property for a short-term rental, the information for what is allowed and what is not allowed is not very easily accessible to the general public. Mr. Barrett asked that we have some information more readily available to everyone knows what is being permitted and what is not, including where short-term rentals are allowed or not allowed.

Mr. Rothrock advised that Town Council had discussed adding information to the website regarding short-term rentals including a map of where they are allowed and a “frequently asked questions” portion for the public to access.

Chairman McCarter asked if there was a motion to present the new ordinance to town council. Member Catherine Perry made the motion, seconded by Member Sam Glover.

**All members in favor of the motion.**

Chairman Bill McCarter adjourned the meeting at 6:17 p.m.

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Chairman Bill McCarter

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Taylor Miller  
Planning & Zoning Support Specialist