

Planning and Zoning Board

Minutes

Thursday, October 20, 2022

5:30 p.m.

The Blowing Rock Planning and Zoning Board met on Thursday, October 20th, 2022, for their regularly scheduled meeting. Members present were Tom Barrett, Pete Page, Chairman Bill McCarter, Catherine Perry, Chris Squires and Harrison Herbst. Staff members present were Director Keven Rothrock, Brian Johnson and Taylor Miller.

Chairman Bill McCarter called the meeting to order at 5:29 p.m.

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

Chairman McCarter asked if there was a motion to approve the August 18th, 2022, minutes. *Member Harrison made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Member Barrett. All members were in favor of the motion.*

1. Review and consideration of draft ordinance to remove Short-Term Rental permitting.

Director Kevin Rothrock updated the Planning Board on why we are amending the Short-term Rental Ordinance. The town used to require a registration process for Short-term Rentals but with the outcome of the Court of Appeals decision from the Wilmington case, we can no longer require that. In the new draft that was created, we can require a zoning permit application that represents a change in use for the property. If the draft is approved, there will also be a list of frequently asked questions added to the town website in regard to Short-term Rentals for anyone wanting to find out more information. The draft also points out fire alarm, smoke detector and carbon monoxide detector requirements that are still in place for Short-term Rentals. When an applicant applies for a change in use permit for a STR, these requirements will be checked by our Zoning Enforcement Officer when they conduct an inspection of the STR property.

Director Rothrock asked if there were any comments or concerns from the planning board or the crowd. There was no comment.

There was a motion made by Planning board to send the drafted ordinance and FAQ's to town council for approval. *There was also a motion to adopt the ordinance and FAQ's by Catherine Perry, seconded by Harrison Herbst. All in favor.*

2. Downtown Development Standards

Director Rothrock discussed that downtown development and standards was discussed with Planning Board previously. There needs to be a plan for how we want Main Street and Downtown to look. Density, building heights, and East vs. West Main Street are all things that need to be discussed and we need to establish some requirements and standards. He presented the idea of a subcommittee for this topic. There was a subcommittee with the previous planning board and they came up with some ideas for downtown but unfortunately, the public was not really involved with any of the discussions or ideas. Mr. Rothrock pointed out that this time around needs to include the public.

Mr. Tom Barrett acknowledged that the uniqueness and quaintness of Main Street definitely needs to be maintained and with new requirements and rules, we can attempt to achieve this over time.

Mr. Tim Gupton took the stand to discuss the future of Main Street. He acknowledged that Blowing Rock is unique in a lot of ways. West Main Street is one of the biggest areas of concern. One of the main examples is 1150 Main Street where the old house was torn down and a new building was put in its place with retail below and living space above. This project was approved based off of the current code which allowed this change. There was a lawn and green space before it was torn down and now that area in front of that building is mostly sidewalk. He mentioned that there are 5 properties on Main Street at risk to be developed which could completely change the atmosphere of Main Street. Those 5 properties are Town Tavern, Rumble Church, Martin House, Funky Tulip, and The Last Straw. We want to try and maintain and preserve these properties and their green spaces. We want to preserve the setbacks that are in places and maybe create a larger setback because 15 feet is not enough.

In order to include the public more heavily in these decisions we need to provide public notices, update the comprehensive plan and think of this as a vision process.

For the subcommittee we had four volunteers that included Catherine Perry, Tom Barrett, Chairman Bill McCarter and Pete Page.

Meeting adjourned at 6:04 pm.

Chair McCarter adjourned the meeting at 6:04 pm.

Chair Bill McCarter

Taylor Miller
Planning & Zoning Support Specialist