

MINUTES
Town of Blowing Rock
Board of Commissioners
Special Meeting-June 17, 2010

The Town of Blowing Rock Board of Commissioners held a joint meeting with the Planning Board on Thursday, June 17, 2010. Present were Mayor J.B. Lawrence, Commissioners Albert Yount, Phillip Pickett, Tommy Klutz, Doug Matheson, and Jim Steele.

Planning Board members in attendance were Chairperson Jim West, Ray Pickett, Greg Grana, David Laughter, Web Alexander, Nelda Miller, Brenda Fairbetter, and Debbie diSanti. Absent: Sue Sweeting.

Others attending were Town Manager Scott Hildebran, Planning Director Kevin Rothrock, and Town Clerk Sharon Greene.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Lawrence called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. He and Mr. West thanked everyone for attending the work session.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Comprehensive Plan Survey

Planning Director Rothrock gave a brief update regarding the Comprehensive Plan Survey scheduled for the fall of 2010. He advised it was time once again to send a survey similar to the one that was sent in 2000 to all property owners in Blowing Rock to receive public input.

He advised it was important to see if the views of town property owners had changed in the last 10 years. The survey would help staff with guidelines in which to work by according to what property owners felt was most important for the community.

Mr. West mentioned that approximately 50% of the respondents in the 2000 survey were year-round residents. He suggested that Council and Planning Board members talk to residents about the upcoming survey and encourage everyone to return their completed surveys to the town.

2. Hwy 321 Widening Update

Mr. Rothrock also gave an update regarding the Hwy 321 Widening Project. He advised the final stage of the project through Blowing Rock was scheduled to commence in March 2011 and NCDOT was in the process of acquiring easements. He stated according to the Memorandum of Understanding, Council would have a follow-up meeting in October. Commissioner Matheson expressed his concern regarding the upkeep of properties purchased by the State for the widening project. Mr. West asked if this phase of the project could begin in Blowing Rock instead of at the bottom of the

mountain. Mr. Rothrock advised if stipulations were placed on the front end of the contract to direct timing of the project, the bid costs would increase. Mr. West also asked if bike lanes were planned. Mr. Rothrock said bike lanes were not included in the widening plans. Mr. Hildebran commented that he would speak with Representative Cullie Tarleton regarding the concerns mentioned.

3. Downtown Parking – Discussion of Proposed Changes to Central Business Parking Ratios

Mr. Rothrock commented that during a special meeting held on June 7th, parking ratios in the Central Business district were discussed. At that time, Council was given a draft of proposed changes that would help provide relief from the current parking requirements. He stated that most of the use codes were combined to group similar use categories together. Also, as proposed changes from one use category to another generally did not require additional parking with the exception of restaurants. In the case of a use change to a restaurant with more than 10 indoor and/or outdoor seats, half of the net parking spaces would be required. For all other changes in use, no additional parking would be required.

Planning Board Chairperson Jim West suggested some grammatical changes be made to the summary paragraph to make it clearer.

Planning Board member Debbie diSanti expressed her desire for parking meters to be installed in order for tourists to pay for parking which would be a good alternative source of income for the town.

Mr. Rothrock stated the HyettPalma report did not recommend that the Town install meters to charge for parking. He also stated that people did not have to come to Blowing Rock. They came because they wanted to and by not having parking meters this added to the unique character of the area. Town Manager Hildebran also mentioned there were only 40 days each year when Blowing Rock had a parking problem.

Mr. Hildebran stated that current businesses were grandfathered in unless there was a use change to a restaurant, then there were three choices regarding parking; satellite parking, on-site parking or paying into the parking fund (\$15,000 per space). Mr. Rothrock advised the cost to install spaces on a surface lot was approximately \$18,000 and spaces on a parking deck were \$25,000. Mr. Hildebran stated the town currently had 550 public parking spaces which included the spaces at Davant Field, Robbins Pool, Broyhill Park, etc. Also, there were additional private spaces such as churches, banks, etc. The BRAHM parking deck would add another 56 spaces to the total.

Mayor Lawrence commended Town Staff regarding the proposed changes to the parking requirements. Both Council and the Planning Board agreed that additional text changes were needed before a public hearing was held.

4. Town Center District – Discussion of Establishment of Town Center District

Mr. Rothrock advised a Town Center District was recommended in the Town's Comprehensive Plan as well as the Hyett/Palma Retail Strategy. The area proposed as the Town Center District would be on Main Street between Hill Street and Chestnut Street. He also stated the proposed setback requirements for the Town Center were different on the east and west sides of the street.

Commissioner Klutz wished for no setback requirements on Main Street and did not want to see any changes on Main Street. Planning Board member Web Alexander advised the setbacks would protect Main Street not change it.

Mr. West commented the reasoning for defining a Town Center District was to preserve the area and allow different standards in areas other than the Town Center District.

Commissioner Steele suggested the pros and cons of having a Town Center District be discussed. Several reasons for the Town Center District were; preservation, differentiate between Town Center and Central Business, different standards from the rest of Central Business, (such as building heights, setbacks, etc.), taxing options, different services, etc. The reasons for not having a Town Center were; that area not being treated the same as other areas, higher taxes (if established), and possibly more restrictions. Council and the Planning Board agreed to pursue the establishment of a Town Center District.

5. Wind Energy Discussion

Mr. Rothrock advised that approximately two years ago, Council had agreed to prohibit wind energy devices in the Town limits, but had left some room for changes as technology evolved regarding this issue. He asked if Council/Planning Board would like to revisit the issue or leave it as it is currently. Commissioner Klutz stated he wanted the Town Code to remain as it currently was. Council urged the Planning Board to study and review wind energy issues.

ADJOURN

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

MAYOR _____
J.B. Lawrence

ATTEST _____
Sharon Greene, Town Clerk

MINUTES
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Planning Board-June 17, 2010

The Town of Blowing Rock Planning Board held their regular meeting on June 17, 2010 following a joint meeting with the Town of Blowing Rock Board of Commissioners. Present were Chairperson Jim West, Web Alexander, David Laughter, Nelda Miller, Brenda Fairbetter, Debbie diSanti, Ray Pickett and Greg Grana. Absent: Sue Sweeting. Others attending were Town Manager Scott Hildebran, Planning Director Kevin Rothrock, and Town Clerk Sharon Greene.

CALL TO ORDER

Mr. West called the meeting to order at 8:38 p.m. and thanked everyone for their participation in the joint meeting held prior.

A motion was made by Member Debbie diSanti, seconded by Member Nelda Miller to approve the minutes as written for the meeting held on May 20, 2010. Unanimously approved.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, a motion was made by Member Debbie diSanti, seconded by Member Ray Pickett to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

Jim West, Chairperson

Sharon Greene, Town Clerk