

Planning and Zoning Board

Minutes

Thursday, May 15 2008

7:00 p.m.

The Blowing Rock Planning and Zoning Board met on Thursday, May 15, 2008 for their regular scheduled meeting. Chairman West called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Members present were Debbie di Santi, Ada Webster, Greg Grana, Nelda Miller, Sue Sweeting, Web Alexander and Jim Steele. Staff members present were Planning Director Kevin Rothrock, Town Manager Scott Hildebran, Town Engineer Chris Brown and Administrative Assistant Sherrie Pitts.

Ms. Sweeting motioned to approve minutes. Mr. Grana asked for amendments to pg 4 in regard to comments on the manhole and boundary and on pg 5 requested to add "construction" to density. Sherrie Pitts added the time was incorrect on adjournment it should be 9:57 pm

Ms Sweeting agreed to the changes. Ms. di Santi seconded the motion. All members were in favor of the motion.

Items of Business

CUP 2008-03 RPG Realty LLC

RPG Realty, LLC is requesting a conditional use permit to construct a two story mixed-use building on a vacant parcel just south of Days Inn on the corner of Ransom Street and Valley Blvd. The proposed 3,656 sq ft building will consist of a restaurant and retail/office space. The subject property is zoned GB, General Business and is located in the WS-IV-PA watersheds.

Two-way access will be constructed on Valley Blvd. and Ransom Street. A turn control island will be constructed to prevent left turns from the property onto Valley Blvd. when the 321 widening project is completed.

A sidewalk with a "turn-down" curb will be constructed along Ransom Street prior to C.O. A five-foot wide public sidewalk along the full length of Valley Blvd. right-of-way will be required to be coordinated with NCDOT and built prior to C.O. or during the 321-widening project. A bond will be required from the applicant to guarantee completion of the sidewalk.

Lower level building access will be from the parking lot (north) side. Upper level access will be from the south side of the building by an ADA accessible sidewalk.

The dumpster screening will match the building materials and landscaping will be installed to enhance the appearance. The proposed building requires 25 parking spaces. Twenty-five (25) spaces will be provided including a van-accessible handicap space.

To accommodate the storm water detention, the applicant is proposing underground storage along with two rain garden areas on the south side of the building that will help provide water quality benefits. Landscaping along Valley Blvd. and Ransom Street will be a semi-opaque screen with large shade trees and shrubbery. The parking lot will also be shaded with large trees.

Ms Sweeting asked if they were asking for a special intensity allocation of 70%. Mr. Dixon advised it was 48%. There was some board discussion on special intensity allocation information.

Mr. Steele had questions about water runoff from impervious areas. Mr. Rothrock commented that he would let the project engineer talk about the storm water.

Mr. Grana wanted to know what the minimum size of the large trees would be. Mr. Rothrock stated three-inch caliper was minimum size required for new trees.

Chairman West had questions about the deck, and if the shop was retail instead of restaurant, could it be used for display of merchandise. He asked if the use of prefab, segmented coolers on the deck had been discussed in the initial CUP application.

With no other questions of staff the floor was opened to the applicant.

Bill Dixon, of Appalachian Architecture, commented in reference to the prefab coolers discussed. He said all coolers would be inside only. The patio and upper deck is to be used for walking into and out of the building only. No outdoor seating will be on the deck.

Chairman West asked about the metal roof being copper. Mr. Dixon stated that the owner is in agreement with copper accents.

Ms. Sweeting wanted to know where the loading zone was to be located. Mr. Dixon advised it would be totally contained on the property.

Ms. Sweeting was concerned about the access onto the project site from Ransom Street. Mr. Dixon commented that DOT had suggested an exit there. Mr. Rothrock stated that when the widening of 321 is finished a left hand turn would not be possible without exiting onto Ransom Street to make the left onto 321.

Ms Sweeting commented that she was concerned about the location of the dumpsters to homes on Ransom Street.

Michael Trew, Municipal Engineering, spoke about the storm water runoff. He explained the drain and catch basin areas. He commented that he believed people would see significantly less runoff than the vacant lot has at this time.

Mr. Rothrock mentioned that DOT would have a set of plans for 321 widening that are 50% complete here within the next couple of weeks available for viewing.

With no other questions of the applicants the floor was open to the public.

Mr. David Huckabee, resident, spoke about the concern of a restaurant. He said currently the trash and noise from other restaurants in the area was extreme. He and his family regularly pick up large amounts of trash and containers that blow from the current restaurants. His other concern is if the sandwich shop leaves what would prevent a restaurant/bar from coming in.

Chairman West commented that restaurants/bars are an allowable use in the zoning district. He said staff could probably better explain requirements, in order to serve alcohol, but ABC permits would be required.

Mr. Hildebran, Town Manager, stated that it could be a condition of the CUP to prohibit that use.

Mr. Rothrock discussed the different categories of restaurant/ bar uses that are in the Land Use Code book.

Chairman West commented that if a condition was established and approved by the applicant and is passed by Town Council the only way to change that condition would be the process of amending the CUP.

Dana Williams, resident, stated he was concerned with the no left turn that will be created when Valley Blvd is widened. It will create a lot more traffic on Ransom Street. He also expressed concern about trash from surrounding businesses.

Mr. Alexander asked about the dumpster location and other options.

Mr. Trew spoke about the dumpster screening and said they were also planting around the exterior of the screen.

Mr. Rothrock explained that the dumpster screen would be eight feet high where most other screens are only six feet.

Mr. Grana asked about the trees buffering the dumpster screen. Mr. Trew explained the plantings and sizes. He also commented on the reason for a two-story building was to make it more visually appealing. The parking will be behind and below the building so it would be somewhat less visible.

Ms. Sweeting made a motion to approve the project with the conditions:

- 1- alcohol sales and consumption is prohibited*
- 2- no drive thru window*
- 3- no outside dining*
- 4- external lighting points downward*
- 5- opaque landscape screen from the north west corner of the parking lot half way up the property line along Days Inn property with a pedestrian path to Days Inn*
- 6- Accept 48% special intensity allocation*

Mr. Alexander seconded the motion. All members voted in favor of the motion.

Historic Property Overlay District

Mr. Rothrock reported in discussing the Historic Overlay District with Michael Egan. Instead of an overlay district it would be more appropriate to amend the non-conforming section of the Land Use Code.

Mr. Alexander asked if this would only affect Green Park Inn, Gideon Ridge and The Blowing Rock. Mr. Rothrock affirmed this.

Chairman West explained in summary the subcommittee meeting discussion leading to a code change.

With no other questions or comments the floor was open to public comment and closed with no questions.

Mr. Alexander motioned to move forward as submitted. Ms. di Santi seconded the motion. All members were in favor of the motion.

Chairman West advised the board that Mr. Alexander is unable to sit on the zoning subcommittee at this time. He asked the members for a volunteer to take the seat. Mr. Grana volunteered for the position.

Mr. Rothrock gave a brief discussion on the Land Use Code restructuring. He advised he was getting good feed back.

Adjourn

Mr. Grana made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Miller seconded the motion. All members were in favor of the motion.

With no further business the Planning Board adjourned at 8:28 PM.

Jim West, Chairman

Sherrie Pitts, Administrative Assistant