

Planning and Zoning Board

Minutes

Thursday, February 17, 2011

7:00 p.m.

The Blowing Rock Planning and Zoning Board met on Thursday, February 17, 2011 for their regular scheduled meeting. Chairman Jim West called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Members present were David Laughter, Greg Grana, Brenda Fairbetter, Nelda Miller, Web Alexander, Debbie di Santi and Ray Pickett. Staff members present were Planning Director Kevin Rothrock, Town Engineer Doug Chapman, and Administrative Assistant Tammy Bentley. Member absent was Sue Sweeting.

Mr. Grana made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. di Santi. All members were in favor of the motion.

Items of Business

CUP 2011-01 Six Pence Pub Patio

Mr. Rothrock discussed the staff report with the board. Marand Properties is seeking to remove the Imeson building (formerly Sonny's Restaurant) and construct a patio for 32 outdoor dining seats. Access will be through two new doors in the north side of the Six Pence building and a gate onto the public sidewalk. There will be no cover on the patio, but table umbrellas are expected for shelter. There will be an area enclosed at the rear of the patio for wait staff and storage. Staff noted that the following requirements will need to be addressed as part of the CUP application:

1. Some minor drainage upgrades will be required to improve the drainage in the rear parking area. This includes a possible drop inlet/catch basin and drain pipe, and additional gravel to stabilize parking areas.
2. Overhead utilities placed underground.
3. Dumpster screening improvements may include complete reconstruction of the existing pad and enclosure for garbage and recycling.

Chairman West asked if there were any questions from the staff.

Mr. Alexander asked if there would be lighting installed around the tables. Mr. Grana asked if Marand Properties had agreed to all three requirements in the staff report. Mr. Rothrock indicated that Marand Properties had agreed to all three requirements.

Mr. Rothrock and Mr. Chapman said they had inspected the site earlier in the evening and they both thought the drainage should be channeled toward Main Street and that there should be no change to the gravel drainage existing behind the building.

Chairman West asked if anyone shared the dumpster behind the site. Leila, the manager of Six Pence Pub said that the dumpster is shared with other businesses. Mr. Rothrock clarified that the dumpster is located behind the Six Pence building, not the Sonny's building.

Mr. Grana asked for clarification on the drainage. Mr. Rothrock and Mr. Chapman suggested that the water on the patio and rooftop be directed to the Main Street drain. Mr. Grana asked for clarification on sharing of the dumpster. The dumpster located on the concrete pad behind Watership Downs is shared with Six Pence.

Chairman West asked if there were any questions for the staff. There were no questions for the staff.

Chairman West asked the applicant if they wanted to make a presentation. Chairman West then confirmed that the applicant will stipulate to the 3 requirements from the Planning Board. Mr. Grana asked about installation of additional lighting.

Linda Walker, Agent for Marand Properties, said that there is no additional lighting in the plan. Mr. Grana asked if there will be additional lighting in the plan before 3/15/2011. Mr. Rothrock said that sconce lights for atmosphere will be sufficient and any other lighting required to satisfy the building code.

Mr. Grana asked why the roofline of the proposed building was “two stepped”. Bill Kramer, General Contractor, said the proposed building was designed to match the Six Pence building.

Ms. Miller asked about the timing of the construction. Ms. Walker said they plan to start as soon as approved and hoped to be finished by June.

Mr. Alexander asked if there was any proposed roof. Ms. Walker said yes. Mr. Rothrock said there was a proposed retractable awning, but the applicant removed it from the plan.

Chairman West asked if anyone wanted to speak and indicated that the students present could speak. Annie Whatley asked where the construction activities would be staged, Main Street or behind the building. Mr. Rothrock said it will be in the back. Ms. Whatley said she preferred to keep Main Street clear.

Chairman West asked if anyone else had a question or comment. Chairman West asked Ms. Walker and Mr. Kramer if they wanted to respond to Ms. Whatley. Mr. Kramer said the construction staging would definitely be in the back of the building; that the back was the best place.

Chairman West closed the public comment period.

Chairman West distributed the Finding of Facts that are required by the Town Council so that the Planning Board could address these as well.

Chairman West asked for deliberations or a motion.

Mr. Grana asked if the passages between buildings are there by code or historically. Mr. Rothrock said they were there historically, but that the code requires a 5’ setback.

Mr. Alexander asked if there was any benefit as far as fire and rescue needs to the 5’ setback, since there is access from the back of the building. Mr. Rothrock said not really. Chairman West gave a fast history of the buildings in Blowing Rock and how the 5’ setback came into existence.

Chairman West indicated the board could make an overriding motion.

Mr. Alexander asked what needed to be done to take care of the setback variance. Chairman West said the board should follow the Findings of Fact.

Mr. Alexander motioned to read through and discuss the Findings of Fact. Mr. Grana seconded the motion. All members were in favor of the motion.

Chairman West presented the Findings of Fact that the project of development with the approved deviations:

1. Will not materially endanger the public health or safety;
2. Will not substantially injure the value of adjoining or abutting property;
3. Will be in harmony with the area which it is to be located;
4. Will be in general conformity with the Master Plan or other plan officially adopted by the Board; and
5. Will be substantial conformity with the intent of the regulations contained in this Article.

Chairman West asked for a show of hands after reading each finding. All findings passed unanimously by a show of hands. Chairman West announced that the five items were approved unanimously.

Ms. di Santi motioned to grant the 11" waiver from the 5' setback. Mr. Pickett seconded the motion.

Chairman West said that Mr. Alexander had already made that motion and Mr. Grana had seconded the motion. Ms. di Santi said she thought the motion was for a discussion. Chairman West asked Tammy Bentley her understanding of Mr. Alexander's motion. She indicated that she also thought it was for a discussion.

Chairman West then asked for approval of the 5 items.

Ms. di Santi motioned to approve 11" deviation in the 5' setback. Mr. Pickett seconded the motion. All members were in favor of the motion.

Chairman West asked for a motion for the approval of the CUP.

Mr. Rothrock asked if there were any other conditions to be placed on the permit.

Mr. Alexander asked how the drainage to the street would be accomplished. Mr. Rothrock said there were several different ways possible. Chairman West asked Mr. Chapman if he was reasonably comfortable bringing the water to Main Street. Doug Chapman said the biggest hurdle was to catch the water, but once the water is caught there would be no problem with putting it in the storm drain. Chairman West asked about the depth of the storm drain. Doug Chapman said he doesn't think the depth of the storm drain would be a problem.

Mr. Alexander made a motion to approve the application as presented with staff requirements already noted and capturing and directing the water runoff to Main Street and with the 11" side yard deviation. Mr. Grana seconded the motion. All members were in favor of the motion.

The application will be presented to the Town Council on March 15, 2011.

2011 Council Retreat and Planning Priorities

Mr. Rothrock introduced Item 2, 2011 Council Retreat Planning Priorities and Discussion of Planning Board Long Range Planning Initiatives. This is usually addressed in the January meeting, however, since there was no January meeting, he wanted the outgoing board members' input on things that needed to be worked on.

Mr. Grana asked if the last survey addressed financing and if the new survey will ask how to finance services. Mr. Rothrock said that addressing financing of services would be a good thing to include.

Chairman West encouraged outgoing members to make suggestions for the survey, that the Planning Board would get a chance to review the questionnaire/survey.

Other Business

Mr. Rothrock said that the first run of revisions of the Land Use Ordinance was adopted in January. He also discussed the new GIS site for the town and the Customer Service & Satisfaction Survey being implemented for the Planning and Inspections Department.

Chairman West asked if the Customer Service Survey allowed comments on public hearings/meetings. Mr. Rothrock said this survey is limited to customer service by the Planning and Inspections staff.

Mr. Rothrock also said the growth potential and impact on town services will continue to be monitored as well as the impact of the Highway 321 widening project.

The Board discussed the how the widening will impact the gateways into downtown and if there was any opportunity to change the plans with NCDOT. Mr. Rothrock said the plans could not be changed. The agreement was signed over 5 years ago.

Chairman West asked if there were any other questions regarding the widening project. Mr. Rothrock said NCDOT is now acquiring property, but doesn't know how they will be able to start the project in June.

The Board discussed the addition of several cell phone antennas and how cell phone coverage has improved.

The Board discussed the requirement for more study on Wind Energy. Chairman West and Mr. Grana asked what the general reaction to Wind Energy was at the Town Council retreat. Mr. Rothrock submitted a copy of the ordinance, but doesn't know if Town Council is ready for it.

Mr. Rothrock updated the Board on plans for solar panels to heat the town pool.

Chairman West indicated that he hoped to continue working on the original Comprehensive Plan and asked the Board if there was anything else to add to the plan besides funding and gateways to the action plan for the year. Mr. Alexander asked about the progress of the Streetscape. The Board discussed the Streetscape plan.

Chairman West thanked outgoing board members Sue Sweeting, Nelda Miller and Greg Grana for their service.

Chairman West asked if there were any other items.

Mr. Laughter asked if there was any update on a stop light at the Broyhill store. Mr. Rothrock said there would not be a stop light now, but conduit will be installed for a future light if warranted. Mr. Laughter also asked about the NCDOT signage size. Mr. Rothrock said the signage will be smaller than what NCDOT originally proposed. Chairman West noted that much of the hill at Skyland would be removed and visibility would be greatly improved.

Chairman West asked if there was any other business.

Mr. Rothrock told the Board that the Up on the Hill CUP would be presented at the March 15, 2011 Town Council meeting.

With no further business Mr. Grana made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Ms. di Santi. All members were in favor of the motion.

Adjourn

With no further business the Planning Board adjourned at 8:20 PM.

Chairman West

Tammy Bentley, Administrative Assistant