

**Draft**

**Planning and Zoning Board**

**Minutes**

**Thursday, April 16, 2015**

**5:30 p.m.**

The Blowing Rock Planning and Zoning Board met on Thursday, April 16, 2015 for their regularly scheduled meeting. Chairman Harwood called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. Members present were David Laughter, Kim Hartley, Jim Steele, Wes Carter, Natalie Bovino, Joe Papa and Genie Starnes. Member Lisa Stripling was absent. Staff members present were Planning Director Kevin Rothrock and Assistant Parks and Recreation Director Erin Kegley.

Chairman Harwood asked if there were any changes to the March 19, 2015 meeting minutes. There were none. *Mr. Steele made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Ms. Starnes. All members were in favor of the motion.*

*Mr. Papa made a motion to accept a request for recusal of Kim Hartley and Wes Carter due to case due to conflicts of interest for the upcoming agenda item. Mr. Laughter seconded. All members were in favor. Not voting – Mr. Carter and Ms. Hartley.*

**CZ 2015-01 Wes Carter and Angela Carter - R-15 to CZ-GB**

Mr. Rothrock gave the staff report, as well as a powerpoint presentation. Wes and Angela Carter are requesting a conditional rezoning of their property from R-15, single-family to CZ-GB, Conditional Zoning - General Business. The 0.22 acre property is located at 114 Skyland View Drive and was formerly the Blowing Rock Church of God. The property is further identified by Watauga County PIN 2817-17-2664-000. Mr. and Ms. Carter are proposing to restrict uses of the building to: 1) single-family home; 2) home occupations; 3) operations designed to attract little customer traffic similar to an office/service use; or 4) sales of household/personal goods by appointment only. Mr. Rothrock also went into a detailed description of the site plans. Mr. Rothrock stated that a neighborhood meeting was held March 26<sup>th</sup>, 2015 at 5:00PM discussing what the future plans for the property would be.

Chairman Harwood asked if the current zoning for the property is R-15 and Mr. Rothrock said yes.

Mr. Laughter asked if Mr. Rothrock could give some examples of home occupation. Mr. Rothrock stated that an accountant is an example of a home occupation, where there are no more than one employee working who is not a resident of the home. Home occupations are allowed Town wide. Commercial activities that are conducted by a person on the same lot, and are not insubstantial, are not as common as residential use. No on premise retail may occur. You can only have one employee, if it creates noise, odor, it cannot be considered a home occupation. Other examples include an art studio, or in-home bakery that does not sell from home, and takes to retail locations.

Mrs. Carter introduced herself to the board. She gave a brief background behind her request. She purchased the property in 2013 and wanted to rent the property, but needed to have the zoning restrictions changed. Mrs. Carter stated that the CZ-GB is the best zoning district, and is the only building in Blowing Rock to go through this process. Mrs. Carter has been working with architect Randy Jones to create an improved site for the property. Seven possible zoning options were presented in a neighborhood meeting in March. The meeting was to inform the community of their plans for the building and gather input. After several conversations with neighbors the proposed use options are; a) single family residence with a possible home occupation, or b) office use with associated sales. Mrs. Carter proposed restrictions for the property. Mrs. Carter then presented the 2014 Comprehensive Plan and highlighted how the policies related to this rezoning request.

Chairman Harwood asked Mrs. Carter if there is a potential tenant. Mrs. Carter stated that it was going to be an office for Mr. Carter, but that has now changed due to employment changes.

Mr. Steele asked if these seven restrictions are being requested by the applicant, and also the results of the public meetings. Mrs. Carter confirmed the restrictions and added that they made sure to incorporate the community and neighbors on this decision because it is a neighborhood. The community wondered why the property is zoned as a residence, when it is a church, and stated that it should now be made into a residence because a church is not allowed to be put on there anymore. Although a proposed use, a residence would not be the best option because of its proximity to traffic.

Ms. Starnes clarified why standard general business zoning was not the best option for this area. Mrs. Carter stated that the General business would not be the best for the property, but they wanted to have some use of the property.

Mrs. Carter stated that the proposal is based on what the community feels is best, because the main goal is for the community to be involved throughout this whole process and for no one to be uninformed.

Chairman Harwood asked if this would be a single tenant office or multiple occupancy property. Mrs. Carter stated that this will most likely be a single tenant but with the issue of parking and size of property, there could be two, but ideally they would like it be a single tenant. It is a limited space, so two occupants will be too difficult.

Ms. Starnes asked if Mrs. Carter has a future tenant in mind. Mrs. Carter stated that yes, Sherrie Furman, owner of Take Heart off Main St., would like to use this property as storage and an office for herself.

Ms. Furman stated that if she were allowed to rent this property, she would use the basement for storage, and also as a floral shop, and create an office for Take Heart to be able to create online services, and also for marketing purposes. No retail transactions will be done from this building. Ms. Furman stated that there are no employees in mind, but does not want to commit to saying no completely to employees, because there is a possibility for a sales marketer.

Chairman Harwood opened up the floor to public comment. There being no speakers from the floor, *Mr. Steele made a motion to close public hearing, seconded by Ms. Bovino. All members were in favor.*

## **Discussion**

Mr. Papa did see a couple of letters from the public, and he stated that the letters seem to have no issue on what Mr. and Mrs. Carter want to do with the property.

Ms. Starnes asked if any of the board members have any issue with the current situation. Mr. Harwood stated that he did receive emails, and letters, asking if this could be daycare, but the traffic would be an issue. This is a different business

model, and has it been operating in the capacity that it has before, which would make it difficult to make this property a daycare.

Chairman Harwood asked if there was anything mentioned about signage. Mrs. Carter stated that there is an existing sign but would like to have a sign that would be in compliance with the Town ordinance, and also what will fit the property. Ms. Starnes asked if the sign that is there now is smaller than what the Town allows. Mr. Rothrock stated yes. Ms. Starnes stated that she believes the sign should be smaller than what the town allows. Ms. Starnes asked Ms. Furman if her business needed a big sign. Ms. Furman stated that she may not even want a sign at all. Mr. Laughter stated that he thinks the sign should be restricted to what it is now.

Mr. Steele asked if anybody has any negative thoughts or concerns about this proposal.

Ms. Bovino stated that her only concern is property value of surrounding properties. Will this change make property value better or worse? Mr. Steele mentioned there is nothing worse than an empty house; this property will create a plus in the economic factor if zoned as a general business. Mr. Steele said this is a way to create more revenue and a better property value. Property value will be on the plus because it will be renovated. Mr. Steele also mentioned that he was pleased to see the list of how it will relate to the comprehensive plan, and gave a detailed solution to each goal from the plan. Mr. Steele said he has no negative thoughts on this property.

Ms. Bovino stated that she completely agrees. She mentioned that she hopes that all surrounding property owners will be informed on how this property will be a positive for the community.

Ms. Starnes stated that the presentation and explanation was great and getting the community involved shows such passion and positivity for this community.

*Mr. Laughter made a motion to accept the proposal as written, but have a restriction on the sign to 24 square feet, Mr. Papa seconded. **All members were in favor.***

Chairman Harwood asked if there was any old or new business to discuss. Mr. Rothrock shared that Council passed the sign amendment for the area along Hwy 321 over 35 mph, and they passed the ordinance to allow expansion of the primary residence where an accessory apartment is located.

Mr. Laughter stated at the last meeting Kipp Turner with Maymead informed Council about the new wall that was placed in the middle of North Main Street, but did not clarify the plans for the new access/exit point off Main St. from 321. Mr. Laughter asked how many lanes will be added. Mr. Rothrock stated that a designated right turn lane will be coming into town from Boone, two left lanes to Boone, one right turn toward Food Lion, and one will be a combined straight lane to West View Drive and left turn lane to Boone.

*Mr. Laughter made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Ms. Bovino seconded. All members were in favor.*

Chairman Harwood adjourned the meeting at 6:30 pm.

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Chairman David Harwood

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Erin Kegley, Administrative Assistant