

**Draft**

**Planning and Zoning Board**

**Minutes**

**Thursday, July 16, 2015**

**5:30 p.m.**

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

Chairman Harwood asked if there were any changes to the May 21, 2015 meeting minutes. There were none. *Mr. Steele made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Ms. Stripling.* **All members were in favor of the motion.**

Chairman Harwood explained to the Board the difference in a conditional rezoning and a conditional use permit in regards to ex-parte communications. He gave any Board member the opportunity to recuse himself or herself if necessary due to ex-parte communications. No member asked to be recused.

**CUP 2015-02 Blowing Rock Clinic and Urgent Care**

Mr. Rothrock gave the staff report and Powerpoint presentation. Blowing Rock MOB, LLC is requesting a conditional use permit to convert the former Blowing Rock Renovators building to a medical clinic/urgent care facility. The 0.62 acre subject property will combine 8439 Valley Boulevard and the adjacent lot to the south. The properties are zoned GB, General Business and are located in the WS-IV-PA water supply watershed and are further identified by Watauga County PINs 2817-14-1291-000 and 2817-14-1075-000.

The site design meets all applicable setbacks. The proposed use and building square footage will require 25 parking spaces. The applicant is proposing 26 parking spaces including 1 ADA van-accessible space. The 5 existing spaces on the north side of the building will be restricted to employee parking. The applicant is requesting a waiver of the 8 foot buffer required by code on the north side of the building. Using the existing 5 parking spaces for employee parking leaves no space for additional landscaping. The applicant is proposing a narrow strip of landscaping

between the parking lot and building with small bushes to maximize vehicle turning area.

Chairman Harwood asked if there were any questions for the staff. Mr. Steele asked if there is currently a buffer on the north side of the property on the Subway site. Mr. Rothrock confirmed. Mr. Rothrock also confirmed for Mr. Steele that that waivers for landscape buffers have been granted in the past. Mr. Papa asked how Subway felt about the buffer. Mr. Rothrock responded that we have not heard from Subway.

Chairman Harwood opened the meeting to public comment.

Mr. Thorn Baccich, with Blowing Rock MOB, LLC, told the Board that he grew up in Charlotte and was excited about having a project in Blowing Rock. He added that he is also excited to take a property that is an eyesore and improve it.

Chairman Harwood asked if NCDOT had installed the driveway cuts. Mr. Baccich confirmed. Chairman Harwood asked what the exterior materials would be. Mr. Baccich said that some of the existing materials would remain and that they would add shakes and replace the windows and doors.

Chairman Harwood asked if the parking on the north side of the building would be designated as employee parking. Mr. Baccich confirmed. Mr. Steele asked if the door and stoop on the north side of the building would be removed. Mr. Baccich said that both will be removed unless it is a building code issue.

Mr. Laughter asked if there are 6 parking spaces on the north side. Mr. Rothrock said there are 5 spaces. Mr. Laughter asked how many people would be employed. Mr. Baccich said 5 or 6.

Mr. Steele asked if the fire department had reviewed the site plan for ingress in the parking lot. Mr. Rothrock said no, but that the site plan meets minimum code requirements. Mr. Rothrock said that large firetrucks would probably park on Highway 321 to fight a fire.

Mr. Carter asked if the access would be an entrance and exit only set-up. Mr. Rothrock said that NCDOT would have to issue the driveway permit and that we would rely on their recommendation. Mr. Papa noted that NCDOT has a 36' standard driveway radius. Mr. Baccich said that the smallest radius is 30'. Dan Shabeldeen, engineer for the project, said that NCDOT made the cuts with a 30' radius. Mr. Carter asked who will install the sidewalk along Highway 321. Mr. Rothrock said that NCDOT will install the sidewalk.

Chairman Harwood asked about the placement of the trash receptacles and HVAC units. Mr. Baccich said that roll-out containers would be used and these would be stored on the back south corner of the site. Chairman Harwood asked if

the containers would be screened. Mr. Rothrock confirmed. Mr. Baccich said that the HVAC units are on the back of the building now and would remain on the back of the renovated building. Mr. Carter asked if there are special considerations for medical waste. Mr. Bacchich confirmed and said that this waste is handled outside regular trash collection under federal and state regulations.

*Ms. Starnes made a motion to close the meeting to public comment, seconded by Ms. Bovino. **All members were in favor of the motion***

Chairman Harwood asked about routing storm water run-off. Mr. Shabeldeen said that the site would be graded to direct the water from the upper right to the lower left side of the site. Mr. Rothrock said that during the construction permitting process we will make sure that all regulations are met and that the system collects run-off properly.

Mr. Laughter asked how employees would exit the north parking spaces. Mr. Rothrock said they would have to back out to the front of the building.

The Board discussed the lighting for the project and whether it would affect the nearby residential homes. Mr. Rothrock said that the lighting will be included in the final construction drawings and will conform to code which limits lighting to one foot candle at the property line. He also said that BREMCO will install the lighting.

Chairman Harwood asked Mr. Rothrock to explain the egress for the employee parking. Mr. Rothrock said that it will be tight and that the applicant is utilizing these existing spaces to meet the parking requirements. He added that the applicant had changed the angle of these spaces to facilitate egress. Mr. Shabeldeen added that these spaces would not have a high turn-over rate and that he expected most spaces would be occupied for the entire day.

Ms. Stripling asked what the hours of operation would be. Mr. Baccich said from 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. and from 10:00 a.m. to 6 p.m. on weekends.

Chairman Harwood noted that he thought this is a nice project and that it accomplishes some of the comprehensive plan goals by utilizing empty properties. Ms. Bovino said she thought this is a nice project, too.

Mr. Steele suggested the Board consider the consequences if the Board approves the request with the landscape buffer waiver. He added that the request is not a serious issue now but could be if either this property or the Subway property changed ownership. Mr. Steele also wondered if any precedent was being set for future development along Highway 321. Mr. Carter suggested that we get the adjacent property owner's approval of the landscape waiver. Mr. Rothrock said that we can't do that; that they had an opportunity to attend this public meeting. Mr. Rothrock added that the code allows flexibility because not every project can

meet every code requirement. He added that flexibility need not be used for every project; that each project stands on its own merits.

*Mr. Laughter made a motion to send to Town Council as presented. Seconded by Ms. Bovino. All members were in favor of the motion.*

### **Middle Fork Greenway Presentation**

Ms. Ann Browning, Executive Director of the Middle Fork Greenway Association, updated the Board on the progress of the Greenway. She recognized task force members Bill Hall and Lance Campbell and advisors Keith Tester and Jim Steele. Ms. Browning told the Board that she “came out of retirement” for the opportunity to assist with this remarkable project that will anchor Boone and Blowing Rock’s populations along Highway 321.

Ms. Browning told the Board that the Greenway will connect to the Blue Ridge Parkway and the Mountains to the Sea Trail. The Greenway will access great destinations including Shoppes on the Parkway, Chestnut Ridge and three existing pocket parks. She added that this is a great project which was borne out of a grass roots initiative. The High Country Conservancy and Blue Ridge Pathways are partnering with 3 local governments in this vision to connect the entire High Country. Ms. Browning told the Board that the Blowing Rock section was the next to “get the trail on the ground.” She added that she is grateful for the Town’s help with the project.

The Board concurred that this is a wonderful project and commended Ms. Browning on her hard work and that of Mr. Hall.

Ms. Browning thanked the Board for their time.

With no other business, *Mr. Laughter made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Starnes. All members were in favor of the motion.*

Chairman Harwood adjourned the meeting at 7:00 pm.

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Chairman David Harwood

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Tammy Bentley, Administrative Assistant