

Draft

Planning and Zoning Board

Minutes

Thursday, April 21, 2016

5:30 p.m.

The Blowing Rock Planning and Zoning Board met on Thursday, April 21, 2016 for their regularly scheduled meeting. Chairman Harwood called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. Members present were Kim Hartley, Genie Starnes, Joe Papa, Wes Carter, Mike Page and George Ellis. Members Natalie Bovino and Lisa Stripling were absent. Staff members present were Planning Director Kevin Rothrock and Planning & Zoning Support Specialist Tammy Bentley.

Chairman Harwood asked if there were changes to the agenda. *Mr. Ellis made a motion to accept the agenda as presented, seconded by Ms. Starnes.* **All members were in favor of the motion.**

Chairman Harwood asked if there were any changes to the March 17, 2016 meeting minutes. There were none. *Mr. Papa made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Mr. Ellis.* **All members were in favor of the motion.**

CZ 2016-01 Storie's Carpet Conditional Rezoning from R – 15 to CB

Mr. Rothrock gave the staff report and Power Point presentation. Nelson Storie is requesting a conditional rezoning of his property at 1516 Main Street. The property is currently zoned R – 15, but has been a floor covering business since 1967. Mr. Storie is requesting to restrict the use of the property to low-volume traffic generating businesses, including large appliance stores, furniture sales, and /or retail floor covering store with normal business operating hours from 7:00 am until 7:00 pm only. In addition Mr. Storie proposes that no deliveries will block the street, the sign will not exceed 20 square feet, the antennae behind the building and any dead/dying trees on the property will be removed, and any dumpster will be enclosed.

Mr. Rothrock added that Staff is recommending construction of an ADA compliant ramp for the front door access and that the gutter drains be adjusted as needed for functionality.

Chairman Harwood asked Mr. Rothrock if the antennae included the tower on which it is mounted. Mr. Rothrock confirmed.

Mr. Page asked Mr. Rothrock if the existing use is grandfathered for a period of time. Mr. Rothrock said that if the business is vacated for 180 days that the grandfathered, non-conforming use would be lost.

Mr. Papa asked if the current use is limited to carpet and not appliances. Mr. Rothrock confirmed.

Mr. Carter asked if the current use is included in the Central Business zoning district. Mr. Rothrock said the closest use is low-volume traffic retail business. Mr. Rothrock added that a permit would be required to change the use to any other retail use or to office use. Mr. Carter asked if the code is that detailed. Mr. Rothrock confirmed and added that expanding outside the building footprint or expanding the use are detailed in the code. Mr. Rothrock added that we must be very conservative with what is allowed. Mr. Carter said that he thought any low-volume retail use would be allowed. Mr. Rothrock said that is not his interpretation of the code.

Mr. Page asked if the property must be converted to a residence due to the R – 15 zoning. Mr. Rothrock replied that the business can remain unless it is vacated for 180 days at which point the property would revert to the R – 15 zoning.

Ms. Starnes asked what is on the top floor. Mr. Rothrock replied it is a combination of showroom and storage.

Mr. Carter asked if a survey or plan would be required for the ramp. Mr. Rothrock said a building permit would be required and that any dumpster location must also be approved. Mr. Rothrock added that there is a propane tank located behind the fence on the right side of the building. Mr. Carter asked when a site plan would be required. Mr. Rothrock said that a survey has been provided and the only change is the ramp and a dumpster, if needed. He said these would be handled administratively.

The Board discussed the adequacy of the current parking situation and the need for any additional parking. Mr. Rothrock indicated that the current parking seems adequate for low-volume traffic.

Ms. Starnes, referring to the letters received from nearby residents, asked how dangerous the curve is and how many accidents there have been there. Mr. Rothrock said he had a letter from the Blowing Rock Police Department stating that there had been no accidents reported at that location since 2001.

Ms. Chelsea Garrett, attorney for the applicant, addressed the Board. Ms. Garrett said that she understands that the conditional rezoning process is new for Blowing Rock and that this is a unique situation due to the continued retail use of the property. Ms. Garrett said that until conditional rezoning became available, Mr. Storie had no avenue to ask for relief.

Ms. Garrett introduced Mr. Benny Anderson with Great State Bank to the Board. Mr. Anderson said that due to the non-conformity that it would be impossible to get title insurance on the property and that would preclude getting a loan on the property.

Ms. Garrett said that she understands the neighbor's concerns and thinks that the restrictions proposed by the applicant will help minimize any concerns. She added that

any neighbor that has bought property in the last 70 years, purchased knowing the business is there. Ms. Garrett said that the current use is low-volume traffic and the code contemplates that this use will generate less customer traffic. Ms. Garrett added that this process benefits the Stories and the Town as it gives the Town the opportunity to impose additional items such as the ramp, drainage and removal of the tower. She added that the Stories have been and will continue to be good neighbors.

Mr. Ellis asked if the applicant would be willing to change the delivery time to later than 7:00 am. Mr. Storie said that they don't receive deliveries earlier than mid-morning and that the store doesn't open until 8:00 am and he doesn't have a problem with delaying the delivery time. Mr. Rothrock asked if this was for deliveries only and did not include business operation hours. Mr. Ellis confirmed.

The Board discussed the business operating hours and asked Mr. Storie if would agree to have the business operating hours begin at 8:00 am. Mr. Storie agreed.

Chairman Harwood asked if there are plans to stripe the parking lot. Ms. Garrett said that had not been discussed. Mr. Storie said that in 49 years parking had not been a problem at the building.

Mr. Carter said that some neighbor letters referred to the sale of large appliances and furniture. Mr. Storie said that in the 1980s he sold appliances, wallpaper, vacuum cleaners and had a carpet cleaning business and parking was never a problem.

The Board discussed the square footage of the building and how the square footage is allocated. Mr. Storie said that there is 1800 square feet of storage on each level and that much storage is needed to warehouse floor coverings. Mr. Carter asked if Mr. Storie would agree to add the storage area to the conditions. Ms. Garrett said she did not think they should agree to that as it would limit the marketability of the property.

Chairman Harwood opened the meeting to public comment.

Mrs. Helen Tellekamp Scholfield told the Board that in 1927 Joe White's cabinet shop was in that building. She said that her family home on Chestnut Circle overlooked the property and there have never been any problems since she had lived there, beginning in her childhood.

Ms. Alice Roess of Blowing Rock asked if the parking area would be resurfaced, adding that it really needed to be addressed.

With no further public comment *Mr. Ellis made a motion to close the public comment, seconded by Ms. Starnes. **All members were in favor of the motion.***

Mr. Carter asked Mr. Rothrock the definition of low-volume traffic. Mr. Rothrock read the definition from the Land Use Code. Mr. Carter asked if the code referenced the number of customers for these type businesses. Mr. Papa said that was not an issue. Mr. Rothrock agreed.

Chairman Harwood asked Mr. Storie if he had considered re-surfacing the parking area. He said yes, depending on what happens; that they are getting an estimate on striping and sealing the parking area.

The Board discussed the location of any mechanical units on the property and the screening requirement for same. Mr. Rothrock said any new mechanical units would have to be screened.

Mr. Ellis made a motion to approve and forward the request to Town Council with the amended operating hours of 8:00am until 7:00pm, seconded by Ms. Hartley.

The Board discussed the motion. Mr. Papa asked about improving the parking area. Mr. Ellis said that is not included in his motion. Mr. Papa said he would like to add that to the motion. Mr. Papa asked who makes the parking lot determination. Mr. Carter asked if the Town ever asks that parking lots be maintained or upgraded. Mr. Rothrock said not customarily, but we do make sure that striping the spaces meets code as much as possible. Ms. Hartley said this could be expensive. Ms. Starnes said that requesting the lot be repaved was asking too much.

Mr. Carter asked that the motion be clear that no deliveries are allowed before 8:00 am. Chairman Harwood suggested that the motion include no deliveries or normal business hours before 8:00 am.

*Mr. Ellis amended his motion to approve and forward the request to Town Council with these added conditions; delivery and normal business hours will be between 8:00 am and 7:00 pm and the parking area will be sealed and striped within 90 days of approval of the request. **All members were in favor of the motion.***

CUP 2016-01 First Baptist Church of Blowing Rock

Mr. Rothrock gave the staff report and Power Point presentation. The First Baptist Church, located at 350 Sunset Drive, is requesting a conditional use permit to construct a porte cochere on the east side of the building. The property is zoned CB, Central Business.

Chairman Harwood asked if the columns on the main entrance are new. Mr. Rothrock said they aren't really columns; that they are currently brick. Chairman Harwood said they are pilasters.

Ms. Starnes commented that the rendering looks lovely.

Chairman Harwood asked about any impact to the parking. Mr. Rothrock said that he did not calculate the parking; that 3 spaces will be lost, but 2 handicap spaces will be added. Mr. Rothrock said the parking is based on the number of pews, Sunday school attendance and auxiliary uses. Mr. Papa noted that the church has a tremendous amount of parking.

Mr. Josh Cash, contractor and church member spoke for the church.

Chairman Harwood asked what about the construction time frame. Mr. Cash said 60 days once final approval is granted. Chairman Harwood asked Mr. Cash why they need the porte cochere. Mr. Cash said that this is a drop-off point and they need protection from the elements.

Ms. Hartley asked why they are using a metal roof. Mr. Cash said that matching the existing roof and matching it well is a concern.

Pastor Rusty Gunther told the Board that much of the parking is far away from the entrance door and that this would allow them to enhance the existing structure and provided covered access. He added that they hate the roof they now have. Ms. Hartley asked if they are changing some of the existing roof to metal. Mr. Cash said just on the existing entrance that will be connected to the porte cochere.

Chairman Harwood asked if the signage is changing. Pastor Gunther said eventually, but they will request that later.

Chairman Harwood opened the public comment period. There was no public comment.

*Ms. Starnes made a motion to approve the request as presented and forward the request to Town Council, seconded by Ms. Hartley. **All members were in favor of the motion.***

Other Business

Chairman Harwood said that Mr. Papa had asked to be moved to the zoning sub-committee. He asked Ms. Starnes and Ms. Hartley if they would serve on the planning sub-committee. Both agreed. *Chairman Harwood made a motion to approve the sub-committee assignments, seconded by Mr. Page. **All members were in favor of the motion.***

*With no further business, Ms. Hartley made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Papa. **All members were in favor of the motion.***

Chairman Harwood adjourned the meeting at 6:55 pm.

Chairman David Harwood

Tammy Bentley
Planning & Zoning Support Specialist