

MINUTES

Town of Blowing Rock

Board of Commissioners

January 11, 2005

The Town of Blowing Rock Board of Commissioners met in regular session Tuesday, January 11, 2005. Present were Mayor J.B. Lawrence, Commissioners Bobby Ball, Keith Tester, Terry Lentz, Rita Wiseman and David Wray. Staff members present were Town Manager Scott Hildebran, Town Attorney Allen Moseley, Public Works Director Johnny Lentz, Police Chief Owen Tolbert, Planning Director Kevin Rothrock, Building Inspector John Warren, Parks & Recreation Director Jamie Saitta, Parks & Recreation Assistant Amy Flieg, Landscape Specialist Perry Davis, Doug Chapman and Mike Norris of McGill Associates, and Town Clerk Sharon Greene.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Lawrence called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Keith Tester to approve the minutes for the meeting held on December 14, 2004 with one correction. Under the Hilron Court Subdivision, CUP #2004-08 Public Hearing, a motion was made by Commissioner Tester to table the request until certain issues could be resolved, *a second from Commissioner Lentz, with unanimous votes from all members* was omitted. With this correction, Commissioner Wiseman seconded the motion, with approval of all members.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. (Ord. #2005-01) Allow Increased Building Heights in CB Overlay District

A Public Hearing to consider an amendment to allow increased building heights in the Central Business Height Overlay District (BHOD) on lots greater than one acre with additional setback standards was opened by Mayor Lawrence.

A study was conducted by the Planning Board and zoning subcommittee after hearing concerns from property owners regarding building height limitations on larger properties in Central Business District located outside the Town Center,

Planning Director Rothrock presented their recommendations to Council. They noted there were five (5) properties over one acre in the Central Business District that have characteristics different from the properties in the Town Center. Four of the five properties have existing lodging facilities, while the other is a vacant seven-acre tract, owned by Mr. & Mrs. Pat Cartwright. Since all five properties are contiguous, the Planning Board recommended that a Building Height Overlay District (BHOD) be established to provide additional building height flexibility. Other properties affected besides the vacant Cartwright property are Azalea Garden Inn, Blowing Rock Inn, Meadowbrook Inn, and the Boxwood Inn.

Considering the possibility of development of the seven-acre tract and redevelopment of the remaining four affected properties, the Planning Board recommended the maximum building height in the overlay district be

increased to 40 feet and up to three stories measured from the primary entrance. When a building is allowed to exceed the standard 35-foot building height in the overlay district, additional setbacks would be required. The street setback would increase from 15 feet to 25 feet, and the side/rear setback would increase from 15 feet to 20 feet. Also in the BHOD, any other building wall not facing the street would have a maximum building height of 50 feet.

In order to clarify the building height standards for the rest of Central Business District, code amendments were proposed as follows:

- A maximum building height of 45 feet was proposed for any other building wall not facing a street. This provides a maximum height when the building lot slopes away from the primary street and prevents buildings from being too massive alongside or rear property line.
- Another ordinance clarification was to limit new building heights in the Central Business from being out of character from those of neighboring buildings. The Planning Board recommended that building heights restricted to no more than 25% above the average existing height of adjacent building within 100 feet. This standard would only be applied as long as the proposed building was guaranteed two stories, measured from the primary entrance.

Commissioner Tester asked that Mr. Rothrock further explain how the code restricts the Cartwright property and the different characteristics of the other four affected properties.

Mr. Rothrock stated the properties are larger than most in the downtown area and they are further away from the Town Center. They have characteristics more like properties in the General Business.

Commissioner Ball and Commissioner Lentz expressed their concerns regarding the village atmosphere and what effects the changes would have.

After a lengthy discussion concerning the proposed changes, it was the consensus of Council to study this issue further.

A motion was made to close the public hearing at 8:00 p.m. by Commissioner Tester. He elaborated further by saying a joint work session needed to be held as quickly as possible between Council and the Planning Board. Commissioner Wray seconded his motion, with all members being in favor.

1. Financing Proposal – Blowing Rock Visitor Center (Res. #2005-01)

Mayor Lawrence opened a Public Hearing at 8:02 p.m. for the purpose of considering and receiving public comments regarding an application to the N.C. Local Government Commission for approval and issuance of up to \$525,000 in installment debt under G.S. 160A-20 to finance the purchase of 7738 Valley Boulevard for a Visitor Center, and consider adopting the appropriate resolution.

After receiving no public comments, a motion to close the public hearing at 8:05 p.m. was made by Commissioner Wiseman, seconded by Commissioner Wray, with all members in favor.

A motion was made by Commissioner Wiseman, seconded by Commissioner Lentz to approve the resolution as presented. All members were in favor.

Blowing Rock Visitor Center

Resolution #2005-01

Attached as Exhibit A

To complete the approval process, staff solicited proposals from local financial institutions for the \$525,000 financing of the project in December. The following responses were received:

- Wachovia 4.35%
- BBT 3.89%
- RBC Centura 3.79%
- First Citizens No Bid
- High Country Bank No Bid

Staff recommends that Council adopt the attached resolution stating its findings that an installment contract is a necessary and expedient method for the proposed purchase of 7738 Valley Boulevard and authorizing an application, and all related filings, to the Local Government Commission for approval of the proposed financing.

In addition, it is recommended that the financing be awarded to low bidder – RBC Centura, subject to approval by the Local Government Commission and adoption of the attached proposal from RBC-Centura.

Commissioner Wiseman made a motion to approve the financing proposal as presented, to RBC Centura based on staff recommendations, with a second from Commissioner Wray. The motion was unanimously approved.

RBC Centura Finance Proposal

Attached as Exhibit B

3. USDA Rural Development Loan – Emergency Services Building (Res. 2005-02)

Mayor Lawrence opened a Public Hearing to receive comments from citizens regarding an application for financing the construction of an Emergency Services building (fire & rescue) on property located at 8001 Valley Boulevard. The town is considering a low-interest loan application to the USDA for the construction of an approximately 18,675 square foot Emergency Services building.

After receiving no comments from the public, a motion to close the public hearing at 8:10 p.m. was made by Commissioner Wray, seconded by Commissioner Ball, with unanimous approval from all members.

Staff recommended that Council formally authorize the filing of a formal USDA Community Facilities Loan application, including all related documents such as: submittal of the formal notification to the Clearinghouse authorization to complete the architectural and legal services contracts for the project; and authorization to complete various financing initiatives with the NC Local Government Commission in accordance with general statutes and existing financial requirements – for a low interest loan up to \$2,200,000.00.

To conform with USDA regulations and policy, the original AIA Contract executed with Scott Garner Architect would need to be amended by Council to include AIA Document B141-1997 Guide 27, Attachment 1. The contract amendment requirements will increase administrative costs and make reimbursable expenses a part of the base contract, resulting in architectural fees of 8%.

Commissioner Tester made a motion to approve Resolution 2005-02 to authorize an application for a loan with the USDA and the applicable architectural contracts and amendments with Scott Garner Architect (subject to USDA loan approval). Commissioner Lentz seconded the motion all members were in favor.

Resolution 2005-02 &

AIA Amendments

Attached as Exhibit C

NEW BUSINESS

1. Parks and Recreation Master Plan (Res. 2005-03)

The Town contracted with McGill Associates to develop a Comprehensive Blowing Rock Parks and Recreation Master Plan to help guide the future of parks and recreation in Blowing Rock. (The Plan replaces an earlier study, prepared and adopted in December, 1977.)

This plan has evolved as a result of two community meetings, public comments received via a property owner survey, a series of meetings with staff and the Council P&R subcommittee, a Council work session and a formal public hearing held last month. The plan identifies existing and future park and recreation needs, recommends specific projects that could address these needs, and identifies policies and financing options to assist with implementation of projects. This plan also includes recreation plan maps to assist with decision-making for future needs.

Highlights of the plan include additional and expanded community recreation areas and parks, open space and trails. In addition, there are recommendations concerning improved park connectivity, accessibility and signage, additional picnic shelters, Robbins Pool improvements, future conversion of the Emergency Services Building to a Recreation Center, possible acquisition of the American Legion Building, a US 321 Bypass mini-park, centralized landscaping, and increased partnerships with other public and private entities. Also, the Plan recognizes the surrounding parkland assets, which are operated by the United States Government and other organizations, where some level of recreation is accommodated.

Mike Norris of McGill Associates presented to Council the final consensus and a change update summary on the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Town Manager Hildebran commended Parks & Recreation Director Jamie Saitta on the hard work she had put into the Master Plan.

Commissioner Lentz made a motion to adopt Resolution 2005-03 as presented, seconded by Commissioner Ball. All members were in unanimous approval.

Resolution 2005-03

Attached as Exhibit D

2. Budget Amendments

A motion was made by Commissioner Wiseman to approve the requested budget amendments, seconded by Commissioner Tester, with approval of all members.

FY 2004-05 Budget Amendments

Attached as Exhibit E

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Commissioner Wiseman commented on an item in the Planning & Zoning minutes for their meeting held in December regarding the town parking study. She stated a parking study was done several years ago and should be implemented. It was the consensus of all members of Council that an implementation committee should be formed.

Mayor Lawrence voiced his regrets to Recreation Director Jamie Saitta on her departure in January. Council commended Mrs. Saitta on a job well done during her tenure with the town.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business for discussion, Mayor Lawrence adjourned the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

MAYOR _____

J.B. Lawrence

ATTEST _____

Sharon H. Greene, Town Clerk