

MINUTES

Town of Blowing Rock

Board of Commissioners and Planning Board

Special Work Session

January 20, 2005

The Town of Blowing Rock Board of Commissioner and Planning Board held a special work session at 5:00 p.m. on Thursday, January 20, 2005. Members present were Mayor J.B. Lawrence, Commissioners Bobby Ball, Rita Wiseman, Terry Lentz, Keith Tester and David Wray. Planning Board members present were Jim West, Albert Yount, Cullie Tarleton, Cobb Milner, Doug Drury, Ron Mace and Jim Steele. Staff attending were Town Manager Scott Hildebran, Planning Director Kevin Rothrock, Planning Department Intern Tyler Jones, Administrative Assistant Sherrie Pitts, and Town Clerk Sharon Greene.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Lawrence welcomed everyone to the work session. Planning Board Chairman Jim West expressed his appreciation to Council for scheduling a meeting between the two boards.

TOPIC OF DISCUSSION

During a Public Hearing held on Tuesday, January 11, 2005 regarding a Building Height Overlay District, Council felt further discussion was needed on this topic.

Prior to the work session, Council, Town Manager Hildebran and Planning Director Kevin Rothrock toured several buildings in town in order to compile visual information for the work session. A slideshow presentation was shown to the Council and Planning Board, which showed the various heights of existing buildings in town.

The following code amendments to Section 16-184.02 were proposed during the public hearing:

(G) Heights for Buildings on Properties within the Central Business District

1. Buildings in the Central Business District shall be no more than two (2) stories, measured from the sidewalk elevation, and the maximum building height shall be limited to 35 feet, as measured from the average elevation of the sidewalk along the primary street. Where an existing wall is located adjacent to a sidewalk, or where a property does not border a primary street on either side, the maximum height shall be measured from the existing grade elevation adjacent to the primary entrance. The maximum wall height of any other building wall shall not exceed 45 feet *. This section supercedes Section 16-185 (B) pertaining to (CB) Central Business.
2. In no case shall a building height be permitted to exceed by more than 25% the average existing height of adjacent buildings, provided that two (2) stories shall be permitted. The average existing height shall be determined by the average height of existing buildings located within 100 feet on either side of the proposed building, on the same side of the street, same block and use district.

Building Height Overlay District (BHOD)

1. Notwithstanding subsections 1 and 2 above, maximum allowable building heights for properties within the Building Height Overlay District (BHOD) shall be 40 feet. Such allowable height shall be determined by the vertical distance measured from the average finished ground elevation that is adjacent

to the primary entrance into said building or structure to the highest point of said building or structure. Buildings located on properties in the BHOD may be permitted to have a third floor as measured from the primary entrance, provided that no height of a building wall facing a street shall exceed 40 feet *, and any other building wall shall not exceed 50 feet *. Any building in the BHOD permitted to exceed 35 feet as specified in subsection 1 above, shall have a street setback of 25 feet and a side/rear setback of 20 feet.

All measured from the average finished grade along the base of the building wall to the highest point of the building

Section 16-139 (C) Building Height Overlay District (BHOD)

The purpose of this overlay district is to provide an area in the Central Business District where buildings could be built to 40 feet in height and up to three (3) stories. In this overlay district a 25-foot street setback and 20-foot side/rear setback is required on buildings that exceed 35 feet and/or two (2) stories. Additional standards on this overlay district are provided in Section 16-184.02 (G)(3). The boundaries of the Building Height Overlay District will be shown on the Official Zoning Map.

After the slide presentation, an open discussion among the two boards was held. Commissioner Wiseman stated she was not in favor of the overlay district. Commissioner Tester as well as Commissioner Lentz, expressed their opinion that no one should be treated differently, and felt allowing an overlay district in the one area would be doing that.

Commissioner Ball questioned if the proposed amendments would be in conjunction with the direction of the Comprehensive Plan. She felt in order to retain the village atmosphere, the height requirement should be 40 feet with greater setbacks.

A maximum of three stories including dormers as the standard allotment for further construction was also discussed.

After further discussion, the following recommendations were given regarding building heights:

- Building setback 50 feet or greater from the sidewalk (existing or proposed) adjacent to a public street, should be measured from the average finished ground elevation adjacent to the primary entrance.
- Establish eave heights
- A maximum of 40 feet height for any wall
- A maximum of 30 feet maximum height with a 15 ft setback
- Reduce height at 1 to 1 ratio if encroaching into the 15 ft. setback
- Use a 5 to 1 ratio for increasing height with setbacks
- Use 25% adjacent height rule, except when building is 50 ft. from the sidewalk

There being no further business for Council to discuss, the work session was adjourned at 7:25 p.m. The regular meeting of the Planning Board resumed at that time.

MAYOR _____

J.B. Lawrence

Attest: _____

Sharon H. Greene, Town Clerk