

Planning and Zoning Board

Minutes

Thursday, January 15, 2004

The Blowing Rock Planning and Zoning Board met on Thursday, January 16, 2004. Chairperson Greene called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Members present were Ron Oberle, Albert Yount, George Snyder, Jim West, Paul Peterson, Ron Mace, Cobb Milner, and Dennis Quinn. Staff members present were Kevin Rothrock, Planning Director, Sonya Long, and Sherrie Pitts, Administrative Assistants.

Mr. Oberle made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted, seconded by Mr. Quinn. All were in favor of the motion.

Comprehensive Plan

The committee agreed to go page by page to review the Comprehensive Plan. The changes from the last meeting were underlined.

On page 1, second paragraph, the Board recommended to change "has been evolving" to "was evolving". In the third paragraph, first sentence, change "To maintain the mountain resort character unique to Blowing Rock" to "In order to maintain the unique character of Blowing Rock..." On page 4, first paragraph, add the effective date after the total of permanent residents. On page 7, 1.B.8., change "lots sizes" to lot size.

The Board discussed not naming specific groups in the Comprehensive Plan. With that, page 17, 1.F.1., they recommended changing "Blowing Rock Historical Society" to "interested groups" and delete "collaborate with the Blowing Rock Art and History Museum." In 1.F.4., the sentence should read "Promote the display and storage of historically-significant items." and delete the rest of the sentence. On page 20, change "any areas" to "other areas" and on page 21, change 1.H.4. to 1.H.3. Mr. Rothrock recommended adding "except in the best interest of the Town" to page 25, 3.B.7., as a recommendation from the Parks and Recreation Director. The Board decided to leave this section as written.

Action Plan

Mr. West stated in the other plan, there were other organizations mentioned. Mr. Rothrock stated that organizations could possibly be added later, that way no one would be left out at this time. The board also discussed having all plans, in one Action Plan, not by years. Mr. Peterson suggested updating the Action Plan as some of the items are completed and adding the items not completed to the next Action Plan.

In Action Plan 0-2 Years, there were no changes made.

The Board recommended changing 2-5 Year Action Plan to 3-5 Year Action Plan. The Board recommended to move the following statements from the 2-5 year plan to the 0-2 year plan: 1.C.5, 1.E.6, 1.F.4., 3.A.4, 5.A.2., 6.3., 6.8., 6.10, and changing line item 1.F.4 to read, "Promote the display and storage of historically-significant items."

In Action Plan 5-10 Years, no changes were made.

Family Definition - Residential Occupancy Controls

Ms. Greene stated over 9,000 ASU students live off campus. The Town of Boone sent a letter to parents talking about buying houses in particular districts and short-term rentals not being allowed. A lot of parents are buying property in the area for their students. Chairperson Greene encouraged the Board to do something with this ordinance now before it becomes a much larger problem.

Mr. Oberle had the impression that the Town Council felt like the Planning Board had drafted this ordinance for "owner-occupied" houses.

Mr. Horne stated the language in the draft ordinance would prohibit any group's compliance with the ordinance. Other ordinances would take care of some of the noise and parking problems associated with rental occupancy.

Mr. West suggested that the other ordinances such as noise and parking be addressed before this ordinance is considered.

Mr. Horne pointed out that the Town increased the Occupancy Tax and created the TDA Board, which, in his opinion, will create more short-term rentals. There is a conflict between the Town advertising as a tourist destination and then have ordinances like this one affect tourists when they are here. Mr. Horne asked that the ordinance be very specific so that it can be enforced.

Chairperson Greene stated that she thought the problem is not with the rental companies but with the homeowners that rent houses without the rental companies. She also suggested that a committee be formed to study this further.

Mr. Oberle recommended that when the owner is occupying the house this ordinance should not apply. Mr. Yount and Chairperson Greene did not agree with that recommendation. Mr. Peterson agreed with Mr. Oberle and said that in those cases other ordinances could be enforced.

Mr. Yount advised "rental control" is now on mortgage contracts, which should have an impact on buying houses in the R-15 zoning district.

Chairperson Greene would like to see two or three Board members work with Mr. Rothrock on this ordinance and bring it back to the Board. Mr. West, Mr. Yount and Mr. Milner agreed to serve on that committee.

Cluster Subdivisions

Chairperson Greene reported that the Cluster Subdivision committee met in December and had suggested some minor changes to the draft ordinance. Most of the discussion was on open space, Section 16 - 196 (A). The committee was split on whether five or ten percent open space should be required.

Mr. Rothrock explained Section 196, Subsection "D". He said that a smaller subdivision would be exempt from the required open space.

Mr. Oberle asked "What benefit is "D" to the Town? Why keep it in the ordinance?"

Mr. West stated that "D" is really a totally separate issue from Cluster Subdivisions. "Usable open space" should be defined in both cluster subdivisions and open space.

The Board recommended duplicating Subsection "D" in Section 16-196 placing and naming it as Subsection "F" in Section 16-186.

Mr. Yount made a motion to remove cluster subdivisions from the ordinance. Motion did not receive a second, and therefore died. There was no further discussion on cluster subdivisions.

Adjourn

With no further business, the Planning Board adjourned at 9:20 P.M.

Susie Greene, Chair Sherrie Pitts, Administrative Assistant