

Planning and Zoning Board Minutes

Thursday, June 21, 2007

7:00 p.m.

The Blowing Rock Planning and Zoning Board met on Thursday, June 21, 2007 for their regular scheduled meeting. Chairman West called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Members present Ada Webster, Nelda Miller, Albert Yount, Sue Sweeting, Web Alexander and Jim Steele. Ron Mace was absent. Staff members present were Planning Director Kevin Rothrock, Town Engineer Andy Lovingood and Administrative Assistant Sherrie Pitts.

Mr. Steele made a motion to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Mr. Yount. All members were in favor of the motion.

Items of Business

CUP # 2007-02 Sprint/Nextel Antennas

Mr. Rothrock gave the staff report to the board in reference to CUP # 2007-02. Telecom Site Management Inc. is requesting a conditional use permit to locate three Sprint/Nextel commercial telecommunications system antennas on the roof of Blowing Rock Hospital. The subject property is zoned HMC, Hospital Medical Complex and is located at 366 Chestnut Dr. The antennas will be placed on the roof of the hospital and will be hidden by 7-foot high false chimney panels. The equipment building will be built on the back of the hospital and will match the existing hospital brick.

Mr. Yount asked what false brick was. Mr. Rothrock advised that it was panels that simulate brick.

Mr. Rothrock commented on the photo board brought in by the applicant, and that it showed using wooden fencing as cover to hide the equipment housing.

The board discussed the housing for the equipment and if fencing or brick would be more appropriate.

With no other questions of staff the floor was opened to the applicant.

Mr. David Emory, with Chase Real Estate Services, works with Sprint & Nextel and town planning offices to coordinate work and sites. Mr. Emory advised that Nextel would not be represented on this site. In regard to the privacy fence Sprint as standard practice uses cabinets to house the equipment and uses a privacy fence to shield them. To fit the character of the town he would recommend a brick wall to hide the equipment. Mr. Emory said that in regard to the radio frequencies he can provide FCC documentation to address that issue and the frequency that Sprint uses is totally different and would not interfere with devices belonging to area residents.

With no other questions of applicant the floor was opened to the public.

Martha Thompson, resident, asked what keeps the antennas from acting like lightning rods. She also wanted to know if competing phone services would be allowed to put towers on the roof. Ms. Thompson asked if Sprint would have easements with the hospital.

Mr. Emory commented that the antennas are grounded to prevent damage and he believed the hospital building should be well grounded as well. In reference to other phone providers they would have to present their own case and come before the Town. Mr. Emory advised they did pay for easements with the hospital.

With no other questions the public comment period was closed.

Mr. Alexander made a motion to accept plans as submitted with conditions:

- 1. All four sides be enclosed on roof chimneys with satisfactory appearance of each tower.*
- 2. All four sides be bricked on the equipment building.*

Mr. Steele seconded the motion.

Ms. Sweeting asked to amend the motion to include that frequencies do not interfere with the hospital systems.

Mr. Yount stated that he would like to see the material proposed for the brick façade on the chimney, but allow staff and the Town Manager to review the sample and forward the CUP on to Town Council if approved. He also would like to hear what the Town Engineer's thoughts were on the towers.

Town Engineer Andy Lovingood commented that the FCC does regulate the output and their application is extensive.

All members voted in favor of the motion.

Other Business

Tree and Landscape Ordinance review

Chairman West advised the board that two months prior to this meeting the Planning Board had approved and passed the draft ordinance to Town Council. Prior to going to Council new information was presented and it is the board's decision to consider additional information. Mr. Alexander stated that it was fine on his part to revisit the ordinance. Mr. Yount commented that he also was willing to reconsider the ordinance.

Mr. Yount made a motion to reconsider the Tree and Landscape ordinance. In favor of the motion Ms. Webster, Ms. Miller, Mr. Yount, Chairman West, Mr. Alexander and Mr. Steele. Ms. Sweeting was opposed to the motion. **Motion passed.**

Mr. Rothrock gave the staff report to the board in reference to the Tree and Landscape Ordinance revisions. Prior to presenting the landscape ordinance to Town Council for review and consideration the planning office received a few additional suggestions and requested input from the Planning Board.

There was discussion on the new information that had been received and the draft ordinance.

Mr. Yount made a motion to add the definitions to the draft Tree and Landscape ordinance. Ms. Webster seconded the motion. **All members were in favor of the motion with no further action or changes.**

Mr. Yount asked if Mr. Rothrock could speak about 120 Yonahlossee Rd. Mr. Rothrock commented that Town Council had ordered a demolition of the former Cheeseburger's restaurant building. This will proceed as soon as three bids are received for demolition.

With no other question or comments

Mr. Steele made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Yount seconded the motion. All members were in favor.

Adjourn

With no further business the Planning Board adjourned at 8:56 PM.

Jim West, Chairman

Sherrie Pitts, Administrative Assistant