

Planning and Zoning Board

Minutes

Thursday, October 18, 2007

7:00 p.m.

The Blowing Rock Planning and Zoning Board met on Thursday, October 18, 2007 for their regular scheduled meeting. Chairman West called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Members present were Ron Mace, Ada Webster, Nelda Miller, Albert Yount, Sue Sweeting, Web Alexander and Jim Steele. Staff members present were Planning Director Kevin Rothrock, Town Manager Scott Hildebran, Town Engineer Doug Chapman, Intern Adam Spillman and Administrative Assistant Sherrie Pitts.

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

Items of Business

CUP # 2006-09 Pssghetti's Parking Lot

Mr. Rothrock gave the staff report to the board in reference to conditional use permit #2006-09. Blowing Rock Renovators is requesting a major amendment conditional use permit to add a 14-space parking lot at Pssghetti's Restaurant. The parking lot will be constructed on the hillside above the rear parking area. The subject property is located at 7179 Valley Blvd. and is zoned GB, General Business, and R-10S, Single-family. The property is in the WS-IV-PA water supply watershed.

The restaurant currently has a 25-space parking lot that serves the business. A parking lot expansion of 25 spaces was approved in June of 2006. That project was not constructed and plans were since revised. The proposed parking lot expansion involves less disturbance than the plan approved last year. A majority of the lot is severely sloped. The restaurant utilizes valet parking attendants to serve the customers. The restaurant

will continue to utilize valet parking for the parking lot expansion. The proposed parking lot access drive will cause two (2) existing spaces to be eliminated. After construction, the parking for the restaurant will total 37 spaces.

Storm water detention is required for the project for the addition in impervious surfaces. Storm water detention is proposed under the parking area and driveway. Additional detailed review will be required on the proposed detention system prior to issuance of permits. The Town Engineer will approve final storm water designs.

The landscape plan shows trees in and around the parking lot being planted to satisfy the parking lot shading requirements. Staff recommends a shade tree of maple or oak varieties instead of the poplar trees specified for planting.

The site plan indicates no need of retaining walls to construct the parking lot. However, after a detailed review it appears that a small retaining wall will be needed in the northeast corner of the lot to keep the grading within the boundaries of the General Business zoning on the property. The engineer has been consulted on this and is prepared to make modifications to the plan.

Ms. Sweeting asked the percent of grade of the new lot. Mr. Rothrock commented that it would be a better question for the engineer, but he thought it was between five and seven percent.

Mr. Yount had a question of the Town Engineer about storm water and if he was signing off on it. Mr. Chapman commented that it could be put in. It will be challenging to catch all the water. It has to be done.

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

Mr. Kelly Winkler, of Chipman Engineers representing applicant, commented about the project and advised the grade was seven percent. The retaining wall was about eight feet.

Chairman West inquired about the tree change request. Mr. Winkler commented that that would be no problem to change the tree types.

Chairman West asked about a time frame to start the project. Mr. Winkler stated that they had to get erosion control approval from the county, but hopefully could start at the beginning of the year.

With no other questions of the Applicant the floor was closed.

The floor was opened to the public and closed with no comment.

Mr. Steele made a motion to approve with staff recommended changes. Ms. Sweeting seconded the motion. All members were in favor of the motion.

CUP # 2007-06 La Montagne

Mr. Rothrock gave the staff report to the board in reference to conditional use permit #2007-06. Mr. Frank Perrone of Remcon Associates is requesting a conditional use permit to construct a mixed-use building on the corner of Hwy 221 and Morningside Drive. The site is the former location of Cheeseburgers in Paradise restaurant. The mixed-use development includes 8-units of retail space on the lower level with 4 town home units on the upper level. A parking structure to support the project parking needs is planned behind the building and will enter and exit onto Rainey Street. The subject property is zoned CB and is located at 120 Yonahlossee Road (Hwy 221).

The lower level of the proposed building will be approximately 10,000 square feet of office or retail space. The upper level will contain four 3-bedroom town homes. The project will be built on 0.897 acres comprised of three lots combined into one parcel. The site is bordered on the south by Hwy 221, on the west by Morningside Drive, and on the north by Rainey Street. Off-street parking will be provided in a parking facility behind the building. A five-foot public sidewalk will be constructed around the street sides of the property.

The proposed building meets the setback and height requirements in the Land Use Code.

The proposed project requires a Special Intensity Allocation, which allows up to 70% of the site to be impervious. Storm water detention will be provided for the entire site in an underground detention system that will be connected to the nearest public storm water pipe system.

The project requires 61 parking spaces. The applicant will provide 60 off-street parking spaces in the two-level parking structure behind the building. The applicant will make a payment to the parking fund for the additional required space. A loading zone will be added in front of the building along Hwy 221.

One-way access to the underground parking will be from Morningside Drive on the southwest corner of the site. Vehicles will leave the lower level onto Rainey Street and will be directed to a left-turn only toward Morningside Drive. The upper level of the deck provides access to the townhouse units and will have ingress and egress on Rainey Street. This exit driveway will also be directed to Morningside Drive with a left-turn only scenario to avoid sending additional traffic eastbound on Rainey Street. The applicant will be required to upgrade Rainey Street to meet the minimum width along the property length. They also will be required to upgrade the pavement width of Morningside Drive and drainage on the east side of the street. The applicant will be required to provide adequate site distance clearances.

The area between the building and the public sidewalk will be planted with shade trees and ornamental trees with a mix of shrubbery. The street yards along Morningside Drive and Rainey Street will be heavily landscaped. Landscaping will also be provided in the upper parking deck. The 20" maple tree and 10" cherry tree on the southeast corner of the site next to Speckled Trout will be retained. The 14" maple along Hwy 221 near the existing stone steps will also be saved. The hemlock hedge along Rainey Street is shown on the plans to be saved, but it will be lost due to sidewalk and street improvements. A 14" black walnut tree on the corner of Morningside Drive and Rainey Street could be saved instead.

The building materials use a combination of cultured stone, hardi-board shingles, with stucco on the east side wall facing Speckled Trout. The roof will have architectural shingles with copper roofing accents.

Mr. Rothrock spoke about discussions of relocating the dumpster site and changes to the sidewalk and plantings in the same area.

Ms. Sweeting had questions about the entry into the parking facility. Mr. Rothrock explained the locations of ingress and egress.

Mr. Steele had questions about residents parking in the street on Rainey Street. Mr. Rothrock said that there was an offset on the street that accommodated vehicles but he would have to check the Town Code.

Mr. Mace commented on the building size and asked about a streetscape rendering or model to help visualize the size and visual impact the building would create. Mr. Rothrock, using the plans presented, explained the height from the sidewalk and stated that it was the same height as the Kiker building on Morris St.

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

Mr. Larry Greene, architect for the project, advised Mr. Perrone had planned to be at the meeting but he had been hospitalized with a heart attack. Mr. Greene responded to the storm water comments and stated that he did not have calculations at this time. The Department of Transportation is supposed to have someone come out next week to check the drains at Hwy 221 and Main St. In regard to Rainey St. the road can be widened and would help with the residents' parking. Mr. Greene commented that a street perspective has not been done, but it is possible that one could be created.

Mr. Yount commented on the present traffic and the traffic that would be created with the new development. Mr. Greene responded that he was aware of the traffic congestion and that they do plan to have DOT look at that problem and make recommendations.

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

Ms. Betty Grant, resident of Rainey St, had concerns about the traffic. She also requested to keep the two parking spaces on Rainey St. in front of her house.

Mr. Bill Giles, resident of Morningside Dr, commented that the residential units would actually be condos. Town homes allow one to own the land beneath the structures. Mr. Giles stated that he would like to see a street perspective. He asked how far the building would be from Morningside Dr. He also commented on the traffic that would be generated onto Morningside Dr. and then onto Hwy 221.

Mr. Rothrock stated that the building would be 15 feet from the street right-of-way off Morningside Dr.

Mr. Harry Turner, resident of Rainey St, voiced that his main concern was the dumpster, but he believed the problem may be resolved. Mr. Turner said that he had concerns about the fast traffic, narrow road, the sharp curve and hazards this creates.

Ms. Regina Pelsmaker, resident of Wallingford St, commented that her house faced Hwy 221 and the project size concerns her along with the storm water runoff and the added traffic.

Ms. June Turner, resident Rainey St, mentioned that her family had lived in the area for many years and have always parked in the street. There is nowhere else for them to park.

Mr. Terry Lentz, property owner Rainey St, commented that parking has been on the street for at least 30 years. He is concerned about traffic and delivery trucks not being able to make the turns in and out of the property.

With no other questions or comments the floor was closed to public comment and opened for applicant rebuttal.

Mr. Greene explained the lower level ingress is on the major street and the egress is on the smaller street. Minimum ingress is nine feet, egress is slightly larger at nine and a half feet. An emergency vehicle nine and a half feet tall could not enter the lower level.

Mr. Rothrock spoke about the building elevations and the visual relation to the roads.

Chairman West made a motion to reopen public comment. All members voted in favor of reopening public comment.

Mr. Giles commented on the building height of a prior structure and that the height had been below the hedges and how he could not see the roof of the house at that time.

Ms. Janice Hurland, resident of Chetola, commented that condos have an association. The residential area of this project would be apartments.

Mr. Mark Crumpler, resident of Morningside Dr, was concerned about the impact of the project to the somewhat historic neighborhood. He also had comments about traffic and the speed that comes with it.

With no other questions or comments the floor was closed to public comment.

Ms. Sweeting talked about some of the issues stated and how it does happen when business districts back up to residential districts. She stated that she would like to see the traffic ingress and egress moved to Hwy 221.

Mr. Yount commented that there is a loading zone on the site plan on Hwy 221 at the front of the building. He was interested in how large it would be.

Mr. Steele discussed the plans and commented that Mr. Greene plans to meet with DOT on storm water issues and hoped they could discuss traffic management issues as well.

Mr. Mace stated that he would like to see a streetscape showing the project and surrounding buildings to help visualize the mass and the impact to the area the structure would have.

Chairman West said that there are ordinances on the books to address entering into streets. Requesting a traffic study is also a possibility.

Ms. Webster commented that storm water retention plans need to be addressed also.

*Mr. Steele made a motion to table the project for more information on a) traffic impact on all three streets, b) storm water retention – runoff, c) provide an approximate 100 foot streetscape rendering/elevations, d) address the parking concerns on Rainey Street and possible vehicle access from Hwy 221 to help minimize impact on Rainey St. Mr. Mace seconded the motion. **All members were in favor of the motion.***

Other Business

The zoning subcommittee has presented several code clarification recommendations to staff. If any board members have any other questions or comments on code book changes or repairs that may have been found make sure Mr. Rothrock or a committee member receives the information.

In subcommittee discussions on the proposed draft ordinance for Ransom Street it was decided not to recommend any changes. The Town Code addresses trucks blocking streets. There is a \$25.00 fine for blocking streets. The subcommittee did recommend possibly progressively increasing the fine for repeating violations. The Town Code was amended in August of 2006 to designate "no thru trucks" streets with Ransom St. from Sunset Dr. to Valley Blvd. being on the list.

With no other business, questions or comments.

*Ms. Sweeting made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Mace seconded the motion. **All members were in favor.***

Adjourn

With no further business the Planning Board adjourned at 9:00 PM.

Jim West, Chairman

Sherrie Pitts, Administrative Assistant