

Draft

Planning and Zoning Board

Minutes

Thursday, June 15, 2017

5:30 p.m.

The Blowing Rock Planning and Zoning Board met on Thursday, June 15, 2017 for their regularly scheduled meeting. Chairman Harwood called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. Members present were Joe Papa, Lisa Stripling, Kim Hartley, Mike Page, Genie Starnes and George Ellis. Members absent were Natalie Bovino, and Wes Carter. Staff members present were Town Manager Ed Evans, Planning Director Kevin Rothrock and Planning & Zoning Support Specialist Tammy Bentley.

Chairman Harwood asked if there were any changes to the agenda. There were none. *Ms. Starnes made a motion to accept the agenda order, seconded by Mr. Page.* **All members were in favor of the motion.**

Chairman Harwood asked if there were any changes to the April 20, 2017 meeting minutes. There were none. *Mr. Ellis made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Ms. Hartley.* **All members were in favor of the motion.**

1. Changes to BRAAC language in Land Use Ordinance

Mr. Rothrock gave the staff report. Recently the BRAAC membership reviewed the language in the Land Use Code and made some suggestions on wording changes to be consistent with current board functions and practices.

Ms. Starnes asked if 'civic organization' in Section 16-3.6.3 should be changed to 'commission' for consistency. Chairman Harwood noted that the sentence would stand without 'civic organization'.

Mr. Page made a motion to approve as presented, seconded by Chairman Harwood. **All members were in favor of the motion.**

2. Appointed Term Member Limits

Mr. Rothrock gave the staff report. At the January Town Council retreat, the Council asked for an ordinance amendment to be considered that would place possible term limits for appointed boards to two terms of three years each. If there are not enough volunteers for citizen boards in a particular year, members currently serving could be asked to continue to serve. Council suggested that the ordinance amendment be effective in March 2018 as new board appointments are made.

The Board discussed if term limits are needed, as the Town Council can currently limit terms by not reappointing board members.

Mr. Ellis asked if the Planning Board needed to find someone to replace Ms. Bovino. Mr. Rothrock confirmed. Ms. Bentley stated she thought Ms. Bovino was interested in remaining on the Board and could attend meetings once her Thursday night classes concluded. Mr. Rothrock added that it was difficult to find someone in the ETJ to serve.

Ms. Hartley asked if any other board terms were being limited. Mr. Rothrock said the BOA and BRAAC boards were affected, but that the ABC Board may also be affected.

Mr. Page asked for Mr. Evans thoughts on term limits. Mr. Evans said he thinks limits are appropriate, including the Board of Adjustment. He added that BRAAC is a different type of board. Ms. Starnes noted that the BRAAC board is struggling to get members to serve.

Mr. Evans said that the Board of Adjustment doesn't meet regularly and that the Planning Board would be most affected by term limits. Mr. Evans added that term limits allow the Town Council to consider others wanting to serve, but can't because there are never any openings. Mr. Evans noted that 'may' gives the Town Council flexibility.

*Mr. Ellis made a motion to approve as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Papa. **All members were in favor of the motion.***

Other Business

Mr. Hubble asked why the Sunset Drive Streetscape project did not come before the Planning Board.

Mr. Ellis said that he thought the study was commissioned by the Town Council, but that the Planning Board would be involved at implementation.

Chairman Harwood noted that the Planning Board's role is defined in the Town Code, but he had not looked at it recently.

Mr. Hubble said that if the Town Council asks for the Board's input when they need it, then that is ok, but bypassing the Board would impact the Board's integrity and responsibility.

Chairman Harwood said that the Planning Board could be beneficial to the process and the Board would be happy to assist in the process.

Mr. Rothrock read the Town Code defining the Planning Board's duties. Chairman Harwood said the Planning Board could draft a letter to Town Council offering to participate in a more structured manner.

Ms. Starnes asked if any members had gotten questions about the project. Mr. Ellis said he had. Ms. Starnes said she had also received questions.

Mr. Ellis said he thinks it will come before the Board. Chairman Harwood said that timing is key and that it is hard to undo 'made' decisions.

Mr. Evans said that he thinks a letter is entirely appropriate and that the Town Council is not intentionally circumventing the Planning Board.

Mr. Rothrock noted that the Comprehensive Plan addresses Sunset Drive and that the Town Council assumed it as their project. He added that he thinks this is a good time for the Board to indicate their willingness to assist the Council.

Mr. Page said that having the Planning Board involved will give the public another opportunity to be heard.

Chairman Harwood said he would draft the letter stating that, while not required the Board would welcome the opportunity to assist the Town Council in any such matters. Chairman Harwood asked if any members objected. None objected. Mr. Ellis asked Chairman Harwood to include that the public seeks comments from the Planning Board.

*Mr. Hubble made a motion to send a letter to Town Council, seconded by Chairman Harwood. **All members were in favor of the motion.***

Mr. Rothrock told the Board that Mr. Rob Pressley, applicant for the Morningside Townhomes project, had withdrawn his request. Mr. Rothrock said that he expects a similar request to come before the Board and the applicant will be the property owner.

Chairman Harwood asked if there was any Planning Board housekeeping needed since the application has been withdrawn. Mr. Hubble asked that the minutes reflect the application withdrawal.

Mr. Rothrock asked the Zoning subcommittee when they could meet to begin the process of updating the sign ordinance. The subcommittee members present, Mr. Page, Chairman Harwood and Ms. Starnes, agreed to meet at 2:00 pm on June 22, 2017.

*Ms. Starnes made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mr. Ellis. **All members were in favor of the motion.***

Chairman Harwood adjourned the meeting at 6:18 pm.

Chairman David Harwood

Tammy Bentley
Planning & Zoning Support Specialist