

## STAFF REPORT

TO: Mayor Charlie Sellers and the Blowing Rock Town Council

FROM: Kevin Rothrock, Planning Director

SUBJECT: CUP 2018-01 The Speckled Trout

APPLICANT: The Speckled Trout, LLC

DATE: December 28, 2018

### REQUEST

The Speckled Trout, LLC is requesting a conditional use permit to locate and display an antique wine cask at the front of the building in the outdoor seating area. The property is located at 922 Main Street at the intersection of Hwy 221. The property is zoned CB, Central Business. The subject property is in the WS-IV-PA water supply watershed. The property is further identified by Watauga County PIN 2807-98-2723-000.

### BACKGROUND

Speckled Trout made some significant modifications to the restaurant building and property over the past year. Most noticeably they eliminated the parking along Main Street and Hwy 221, thereby preventing vehicles from backing out into the street at a busy intersection. The owners worked with the Town to remove the parking in anticipation of the sidewalk being planned along both street frontages with the pending Sidewalk to Bass Lake project. In exchange for removing the parking, the Town allowed the restaurant to create outdoor seating between the proposed back of sidewalk and the front porch of the restaurant. The seating area was enclosed by new iron fencing for safety purposes.

The new owners of the restaurant also purchased the adjoining parking lot to secure parking for their restaurant to offset the loss of parking in front of the building.

### PROPOSAL

The restaurant owners were gifted with an antique wine cask from France that they would like to display prominently at the front of the restaurant. The cask would serve as a signature feature of the restaurant as an iconic image and photo opportunity. The owners desire to have the cask located in the outdoor seating area in its current location. Another location possibility is about 10 feet back from the current location, closer to the front entry ramp (see aerial plan).

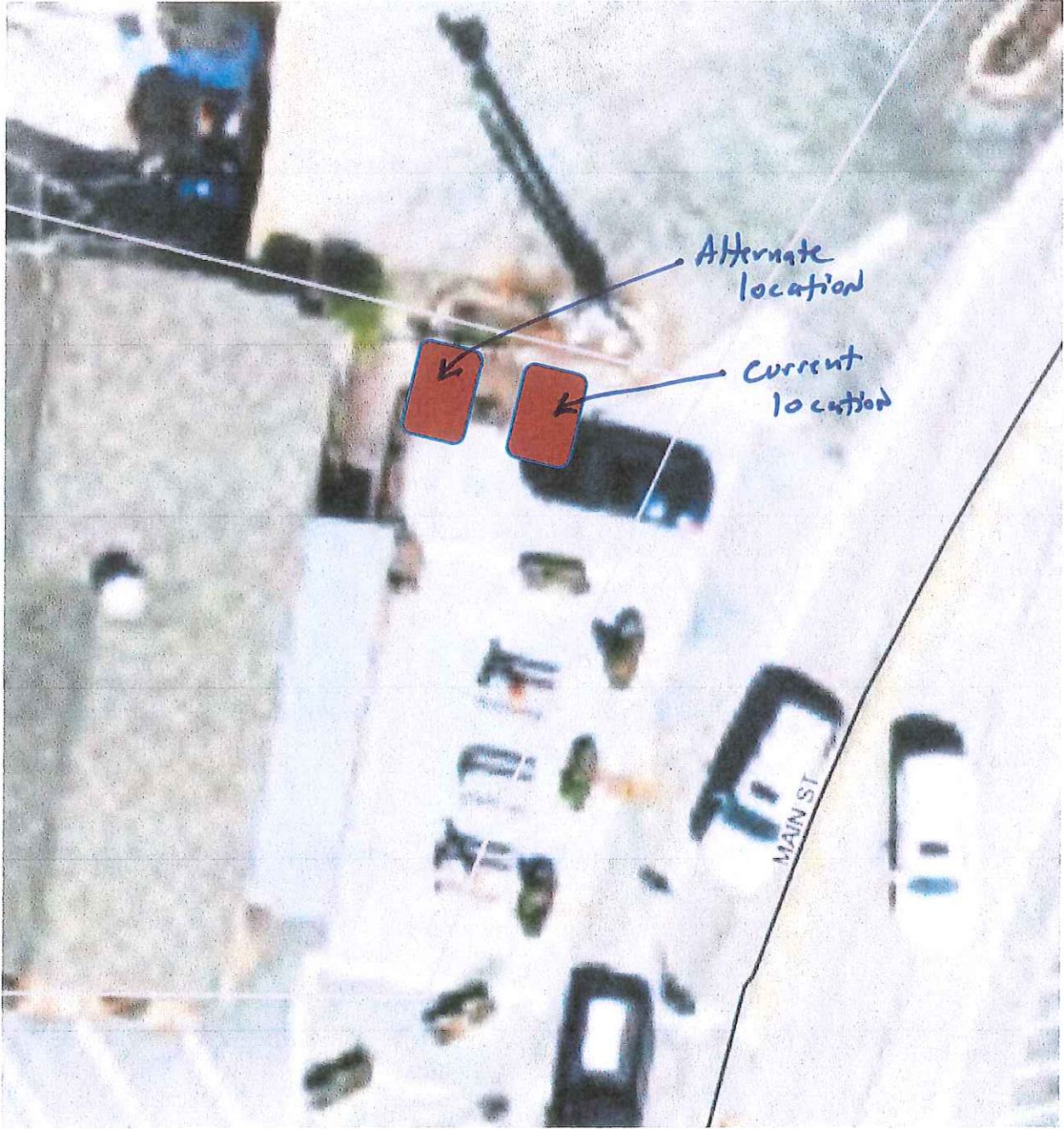
## **PLANNING BOARD RECOMMENDATION**

At the December 20, 2018 meeting, the Planning Board recommended approval of the CUP application with the following conditions:

1. The wine barrel structure must be moved to meet the applicable setbacks.
2. The applicant must obtain a building permit.

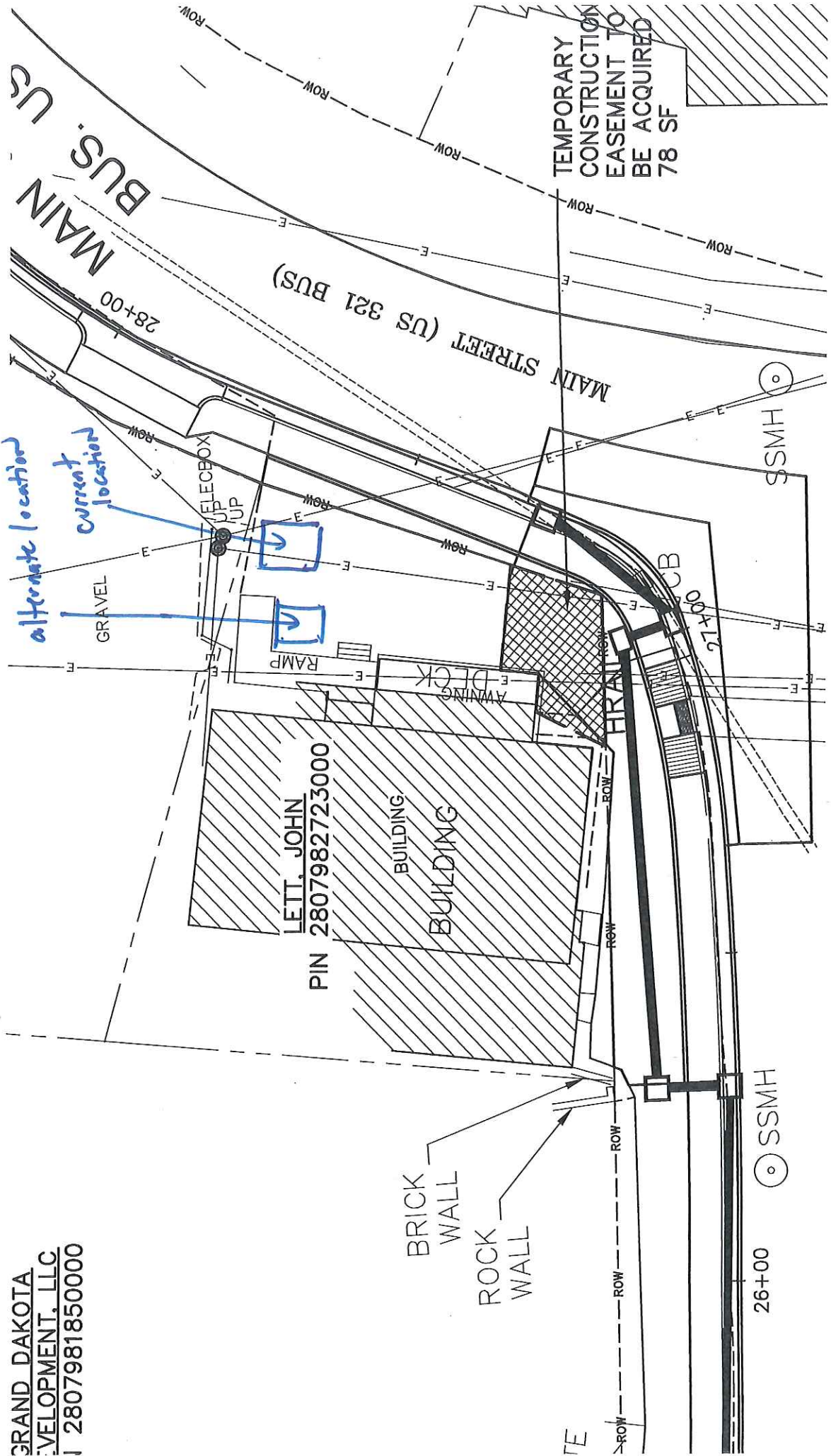
## **ATTACHMENTS**

1. Draft CUP
2. Letter from Emily and Erica Brinker
3. Aerial map of subject property
4. Survey of the subject property
5. Photos of building frontage and cask



Speckled Trout

GRAND DAKOTA  
DEVELOPMENT, LLC  
2807981850000



TEMPORARY  
CONSTRUCTION  
EASEMENT TO  
BE ACQUIRED  
78 SF

MAIN  
BUS. US

MAIN STREET (US 321 BUS)

LET. JOHN  
PIN 2807982723000

BUILDING

BRICK  
WALL

ROCK  
WALL

AWNING  
DECK

RAMP

UP  
UP  
ELECTROBOX

GRAVEL

alternate location

current location

SSMH

26+00

SSMH

27+00

TE



12-13-18

Dear Town of Blowing Rock,

Since Erica and I took ownership of The Speckled Trout in March of 2016 we have worked diligently to improve and repair the image of our corner in town. The old Speckled Trout operated for over 30 years and had fallen into a state of much needed repair. We saw so much potential in the location on the corner of Main and 221. After completely gutting the interior of the building to provide a warm, clean, modern space where patrons can gather for a meal or drink, we turned our attention to the outside.

Our exterior planters grow seasonal herbs we use in the restaurant as well as add color and beauty to the town's streetscape. By adding family style picnic tables and umbrellas, a cornhole game, and giant Jenga we created a space where our customers can enjoy outdoor dining and play spaces. Then we added the railing and ledge which defined the perimeter and created a great "people watching" spot. One of the main attractions to tourists (and locals) is our beautiful weather. The more inviting our outside space is the more attractive we are to patrons.

The newest improvement to our property came as a gift from our mother-in-law. She purchased the barrel from an importer who specializes in handcrafted antiques. We love the richness and history of the barrel! It is a handcrafted vessel that was actually used in the production of wine in Burgundy, France over 100 years ago. The care and craftsmanship that went into creating the barrel, the process of aging wine, and creating a wonderful product all speak to our values and mission at The Speckled Trout which are: thoughtful, community and care.

We placed the barrel out front, in the most aesthetically pleasing place we could, as a piece of history that reflects our business and our love of useful antiques. During our rebranding we added the Bottle Shop and over 200 bottles of wine. Half our interior space is dedicated to selling retail merchandise that is local, like honey from Blue Ridge Apiaries, coffee from Hatchett, and antique picnic and wine related merchandise. The barrel out front is relevant to the Bottle Shop concept and helps to further differentiate us from the old Speckled Trout.

We have received wonderful feedback from the tourists and locals. One local said he never bothered to come in until we placed the barrel. After he saw it he realized we must really be different from the old restaurant and came in for lunch; then purchased several bottles of wine to go. Many tourists have taken photos in front of the barrel and it has provided a great talking point for all.

Our intent is to work with the town Planning Department to make sure the barrel placement complies with setbacks and ordinances and becomes a permanent fixture to our corner. Without realizing there was a process for locating exterior decorative elements we did not ask permission from the town first and we do apologize. We have applied and paid for the Conditional Use Permit and hope to have the barrel approved at the January 8<sup>th</sup> council meeting. To move the barrel temporarily causes a great financial hardship, at a cost of at least between \$1500 - \$2000 to unbolt the platform and get a crane to lift it out and trailer it off property. We are hopeful that it can remain in place until the council meeting.

We will bring a letter of support from our neighboring residents, businesses, and The Chamber to the Town Planning meeting on the 20<sup>th</sup> and look forward to meeting with you then.

Sincerely,

*Emily Brinker and Erica Brinker*

**ATTACHMENT #1-B.2**

NORTH CAROLINA

WATAUGA COUNTY

**TOWN OF BLOWING ROCK CONDITIONAL USE PERMIT  
Speckled Trout  
CUP No. 2018-01**

On the date listed below the Town Council of the Town of Blowing Rock met and held a public hearing to consider the following application:

Applicant: Emily Brinker and Erica Brinker

Project Name: Speckled Trout

Property Location: 922 Main Street

Tax Parcel Nos.: 2807-98-2723-000

Property Owners of Record: John Lett and Pat Boylan

Proposed Use of Property: Restaurant as currently used

Specific Request: To allow the erected and display of an antique wine cask in front of the restaurant

Current Zoning Classification of Property: CB, Central Business

Meeting Date: January 8, 2019

Having heard all of the evidence and arguments presented at the above-referenced hearing, the Blowing Rock Town Council finds that the application complies with all applicable requirements of the Code of Ordinances of the Town of Blowing Rock, and that, therefore, the application to make use of the above-described property for the purpose indicated is hereby approved, subject to all applicable conditions of the Land Use Code and the following additional conditions:

1. The Applicant shall complete the development of the subject property in accordance with the site plans submitted and approved by the Council, except as amended by the following conditions. Where said plans are in conflict with the provisions of the Land Use Code, the provisions of the Land Use Code shall prevail, except as specifically provided herein. Copies of said plans are made a part hereof as if fully rewritten herein, and shall be maintained in the Conditional Use Permit file in the Town Clerk's office. Any deviations from or changes in the plans must be pointed out to the Administrator in writing and specific written approval must be obtained as provided in the Blowing Rock Land Use Code.
2. The Applicant is hereby permitted to display an antique wine cask as an element of their restaurant atmosphere, with the following specific conditions:
  - (a) The Applicant shall obtain a building permit to erect the wine cask and support framing consistent with the NC Building Code.

(b) The Applicant shall relocate the wine cask in a location that meets the 15-foot street setback and 5-foot side setback.

- 3. All signage shall conform to the Land Use Ordinance.
- 4. The restaurant shall maintain one (1) van-accessible handicap space on the adjacent gravel parking lot area. The space shall meet the NC Building Code.
- 5. The dumpster enclosure shall be maintained in a neat condition and free of trash and debris.
- 6. The handrail placed around the outdoor seating area is subject to relocation by the owners for the future construction of a sidewalk along Main Street and Hwy 221.
- 7. Failure to comply with any provision herein shall subject the Applicant to forfeiture of the Permit and a stop work order on any further construction.
- 8. If any of the conditions affixed hereto or any part thereof shall be held invalid or void, then this Permit shall be void and of no effect.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the Town of Blowing Rock has caused this Permit to be issued in its name and the undersigned being property owner(s) and/or agent(s) of the property owner(s) does hereby accept this Conditional Use Permit, together with all of its conditions as binding upon them and their successors in interest.

TOWN OF BLOWING ROCK

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Charlie Sellers, Mayor

ATTEST: \_\_\_\_\_  
Hilari H. Hubner, Town Clerk

(CORPORATE SEAL)