

MINUTES
Town of Blowing Rock
Planning & Zoning Board
October 19, 2009

The Town of Blowing Rock Planning & Zoning Board met on Monday, October 19, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. The meeting took place at Town Hall 1036 Main Street, Blowing Rock. Present were Chairman Jim West, Board Members Jim Steele, Web Alexander, Sue Sweeting, Nelda Miller, Ada Webster, Brenda Fairbetter, Greg Grana, and Debbie DiSanti. Others in attendance were Planning Director Kevin Rothrock and Town Clerk Sharon Greene.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman West called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Board Member Sweeting made a motion to approve the minutes for September 17, 2009 as written, seconded by Board Member Alexander. Unanimously approved.

BUSINESS

1. Establishment of Town Center District

Planning Director Kevin Rothrock advised that since their regular meeting in September the zoning subcommittee had met to consider comments and suggestions made during the public discussion regarding the Town Center. The comments were as follows:

- Require less than 15-foot setback on east side of Main Street
- Allow up to 40-foot building height if building is moved back beyond standard setback
- Allow to build back to footprint, especially on east side of Main Street
- Include Hartley's Interior, Speckled Trout, Cabin Fever, and Footsloggers properties in the Town Center

Mr. Rothrock also gave a summary of the proposed changes in the draft ordinance that were recommended by the zoning subcommittee.

He advised that all adjacent property owners in the general area had been notified and a public notice was advertised in the *Blowing Rocket*. He stated if the Planning Board recommended approval of the draft ordinance, the next step would be recommendation of the rezoning of the subject properties from Central Business to Town Center.

Board Member Jim Steele asked for clarification on several of the proposed changes regarding setbacks, measurement of the public sidewalk area, etc.

Board Member Web Alexander asked if the changes had all derived from the subcommittee meeting. Mr. Rothrock replied that the changes were recommended during the subcommittee meeting with some editing done by town staff.

Chairman West opened the floor for public comment.

Ms. Sue Glenn thanked the Planning Board for listening to the public comments that were made and incorporating those suggestions into the draft ordinance.

Ms. Karyn Herterich also thanked the Planning Board for their recommendations. She had questions regarding setbacks and the width of sidewalks in the Town Center. Ms. Herterich stated as the town evolves and businesses sell, owners on the west side of the street will not want restrictions if they chose not to build back to the original footprint. It was her opinion that there should not be deviations in the east and west side of the street.

Mr. Rothrock stated that Main Street has been different for many years and as the town develops, safeguards are needed so the character of the town would not be lost.

Mr. Harry Turner, a resident of Rainey Street addressed concerns he had with vacant property located in front of his home and the building height requirements. He commented his view would potentially be obstructed if someone built on the property. Mr. Rothrock explained a building could be constructed up to 40 feet in height, depending on how the building was situated on the property. He also advised the proposed ordinance change had no effect on this situation.

Ms. Annie Whatley also concurred with Ms. Glenn's comments. She mentioned that a small section of her property was located in the Town Center with the majority being in Central Business. Property to the north and south were in the Central Business also. Ms. Whatley questioned the setback requirements should she decide in the future to increase her seating capacity and how her property would be treated. Mr. West explained the setback requirement issue had been discussed for a long time and Council had expressed their desire to have more trees, vegetation and setbacks on Main Street.

Ms. Herterich also suggested that a member of the Planning Board be present at each Council meeting should Council have questions regarding Planning Board recommendations.

Chairman West closed the public comment period and asked the board members if a consensus had been reached regarding the draft ordinance.

Board Member Sweeting made a motion to approve the draft ordinance as presented. She commended Town Staff for their work stating the ordinance was much easier to read with the revisions. Board Member Alexander suggested that in the Town Center only, setbacks be measured using 8-foot sidewalk width instead of a 10-foot. Ms. Sweeting commented she was unclear as to why this should be changed. Chairman West inquired if this was a suggestion before a second to the motion. Mr. Alexander stated it was. Members of the Board discussed this further and concluded the width of the sidewalk did not matter if the setbacks were measured from the face of the curb. Mr. Alexander seconded the motion as stated by Board Member Sweeting. Chairman West requested

that Planning Director Rothrock further clarify that the measurement of setbacks would be from a straight line and not from the bulb-outs that are to be installed in conjunction with the streetscape plan. Mr. Rothrock stated this was correct. Unanimously approved.

2. Rezoning of Properties from Central Business to Town Center

Planning Director Rothrock advised the second phase of the Town Center District rezoning was for the Planning Board to make recommendations on the rezoning of selected properties to Town Center.

In accordance with the NC General Statutes, the Planning Board must decide whether the proposed rezoning is consistent with the Town's Comprehensive Plan.

According to Mr. Rothrock, five additional properties had been included to the list for Town Center district designation since the Planning Board met in September. He also stated all adjacent property owners had received notification of this proposed change.

Mr. Rothrock stated those five additional properties had been added due to a visual standpoint. Mr. Rothrock stated the proposed Town Center district would be from Rumble Memorial Presbyterian Church to Hartley's Interiors. Several board members felt if Rumble Presbyterian was included in the Town Center that St. Mary's Episcopal Church should also be included. Mr. Rothrock stated if St. Mary's was included Birch Tree Condominiums would need to be included.

Chairman West stated there had to be a stopping point. Ms. Sweeting stated if parking spaces were located in front of a building on Main Street it should be included in the Town Center. Mr. Alexander stated he did not care if the churches were in the Town Center or if they were outside, just so it was consistent.

After further discussion, Board Member Sweeting made a motion to approve the Town Center boundary as proposed, seconded by Board Member Webster. Unanimously approved.

Mr. Rothrock stated that the proposed properties would receive notice of any zoning change prior to the Town Council meeting.

ADJOURN

With no further business to discuss, Board Member DiSanti made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:50 p.m., seconded by Board Member Sweeting. Unanimously approved.

Jim West, Chairman

Sharon Greene, Town Clerk