

TOWN OF BEECH MOUNTAIN

Planning Board Meeting Minutes

June 24, 2014

Call to Order:

Chairman Andy Porter called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM. Other Board Members present in attendance were Max Riley, Pete Chamberlin.

Adoption of Agenda:

The agenda was adopted as presented.

Approval of Minutes:

There was a motion that the minutes be approved. Said motion was seconded and passed with no objection.

Public Comment Period:

There were no public comments.

Discuss Architectural/ Aesthetic Requirements for the CS-1 District

Mr. Scott began by explaining that after the last meeting, based on the board's feedback, he had developed a cohesive set of draft standards that were based on those that Banner Elk currently has in place. Mr. Scott noted that while these standards are very similar to Banner Elk's, he did change a few things throughout to make them fit in with Beech Mountain.

Mr. Scott also noted that he is an advocate for sidewalks/ walkways along the commercial overlay district. However, he felt that before sidewalk/ walkway standards were incorporated into this ordinance (as they are in Banner Elk), the Town should review its Streetscape Plan and develop some design and construction standards for walkways. Therefore, the portions of the ordinance that were related to sidewalks have been "greyed out" for the time being, and a note identified them as "for potential later inclusion." Andy Porter agreed that there needs to be more sidewalks along the commercial district. The board started to discuss the appropriate approach to mandating commercial properties to set land aside for sidewalks to be connected in the future, but agreed that these issues could be further explored after the getting a basic set of architectural controls adopted.

At this point the board began proceeding item by item through the draft ordinance and discussing issues as they proceeded. The first portion discussed was regarding the designation of the Planning Board as the "Architectural Review Committee" who would be charged with reviewing applications for construction under these standards. Pete Chamberlin suggested that perhaps the language should allow the Planning Board to designate a sub-committee to this task, in case the work load became too demanding in the future. After some discussion the board decided not to pursue this option.

The board then discussed the provisions regarding when the architectural standards of the Commercial Thoroughfare Overlay District would be effective. The draft regulations listed 3 circumstances when the standards would come into play for other than single family residential uses

in the Overlay District. Those are: 1) when a new building or portion of a building were constructed 2) When an existing building was modified or altered, the modifications or alterations would have to meet the standards or return the structure to its previous state, or 3) All exterior projects in which the cost of the project was greater than 50% of the current tax assessed value of the structure would require the entire site to be brought into compliance. Max Riley questioned the third circumstance. He questioned whether we intended to make someone actually relocate a structure if it did not meet the new setback requirements. Everyone agreed that was not intended. It was also debated that there would be very few circumstances in which the value of an exterior renovation would exceed 50% of the value of a structure. It was discussed that one of the major items that we hoped to achieve through making the whole site comply with the standards was to have existing structures set aside land for the creation of walkways. However, since provisions regarding walkways were not included in the ordinance at this time, it was decided to “grey out” item 3 and (after rewording it appropriately) consider it for inclusion at a future time when sidewalks/ walkways were addressed.

Next, the board discussed the location of the “Commercial Thoroughfare Overlay District” in which these standards would be effective. James Scott passed around a map of the area. The board agreed that the Town’s Public Works current location should be included in the commercial district as its entrance touches Beech Mountain Parkway, and it is very visible from the parkway. Mr. Scott plans to adjust the map to reflect this change.

The board then discussed the procedure for negotiating these regulations. The draft ordinance stated that two plans are to be submitted to the town for approval. Max Riley suggested two full size plans, as well as a plan on a 11x17 size sheet for easier copying. It was also discussed whether a Professional Engineer or Architect’s seal should be required on the set of plans submitted to the Architectural Review Committee. It was noted that if the plans submitted to the architectural review committee were not sealed, but that the building official required sealed plans for the issuance of a building permit, there could be changes to the design. It was decided that the regulations should require that a copy of the plans approved for building permit issuance be reviewed by the Zoning Official to ensure no significant changes had occurred prior to issuing a building permit. If the plans changed, it would have to be re-submitted to the architectural review board at another meeting.

Lastly, the board began discussing the content of the standards themselves. Several items were discussed in more detail:

- In reference to roof slope, it was recommended that the roof pitch should be a 6:12 instead of 4:12, as well as a minimum overhand of 18 inches instead of 12 inches.
- Board members noted some variation between the proposed standards and the current ordinance about the diameter of trees, Mr. Scott plans on making the necessary changes so the two read the same.
- There was discussion on whether to allow vinyl siding at all in the commercial district. The board decided to hold off on this decision until a future date when samples of new vinyl siding could be presented.
- Many board members were in disagreement about parking lot locations. It was suggested to any standards regarding this topic be flexible due to the terrain of the town. Traffic concerns as well as feasibility was raised in the discussion. This discussion raised some philosophical questions about the vision for the commercial district of the town. Pete Chamberlin felt that there should not be a maximum setback and that he preferred when buildings were set back

far from the road and their parking was located in front of them. Conversely, Mr. Scott felt that buildings should be close to the street, as this created a sense of vibrancy and excitement and promoted a walkable commercial atmosphere. It was discussed that Beech Mountain was not, and would never be, and “urban” area- even in this commercial district. But Mr. Scott suggested that he envisioned more of a village or hamlet that was walkable and where buildings were welcoming and appealing to people, not just convenient for cars. He used Fred’s General Mercantile as an example of a building set close to the street that had become a vibrant focal point for the Town. However, several board members pointed out problems with Fred’s that they would not want to see repeated in future construction. It was clear that further discussion on this topic was necessary and would need to be continued in the future.

Other Business:

There was no other business.

Call to Adjournment:

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded and carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James Scott". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "S".

James Scott
Secretary to the Board