

BANNER ELK PLANNING BOARD MEETING
MONDAY, 02 OCTOBER 2017
MINUTES

Members Present: Aaron Barlow, Allen Bolick, Jacki Lecka, Meredith Olan, Penny VonCanon

Staff Present: Zoning Administrator Cheryl Buchanan

Vice Chairman Penny VonCanon called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm. The Vice Chairman opened with the pledge of allegiance to the flag, a prayer and noted that there was a quorum present.

Consideration of the August 2017 Minutes

Meredith Olan asked if the word “opaque” was meant to be translucent. Zoning Administrator Cheryl Buchanan answered yes and with no other corrections to the minutes Meredith Olan motioned to approve the August 2017 minutes with the one correction. Aaron Barlow seconded the motion. Penny VonCanon asked about the discussion on Halo lettering in the last meeting and if the 6500 lumens was for the whole sig or just each letter. Cheryl Buchanan said the spec sheet specified 6500 lumens per letter. No changes came for this discussion and the vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

New Business

Sign Request – Bella’s Breakfast

Zoning Administrator Cheryl Buchanan stated that this was a very simple request, that the sign would be black and white. However, since the location is in the Heritage Overlay District, it required approval from the Planning Board. Aaron Barlow motioned to approve the application as presented. Meredith Olan seconded. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Land Use Plan Goals for Sections 2 and 3

Zoning Administrator Cheryl Buchanan said she had decided to divide the goals up instead of asking the Board to look at all of them at one time, that she felt this was easier to grasp. The Board agreed. The Board talked about the entrance into Banner Elk and beautification of that corridor into Banner Elk. The need for a bypass was discussed considering the widening projects into Boone and Spruce Pine and the project that was coming out of Mitchell County. Once the 4se projects converge, Banner Elk will see a lot more traffic and will need to seriously talk about a bypass as an option. Additionally, addressing the 100 foot right-of-way the NCDOT has coming into Banner Elk and how that will affect those businesses is important. If the NCDOT decided to use that r-o-w, then those businesses will either disappear or be forced to relocate.

Aaron Barlow asked if Banner Elk had the capability to institute a vacant building tax on those properties that had remained vacant for a long time and had become unsightly, most specifically mentioned were the old hospital and the old Hardees building. Cheryl Buchanan said it would

require legislation from Raleigh to institute a new tax, that the Town Council did not have the authority to do that.

The discussion on affordable housing and how that equates to Banner Elk brought some unique perspectives to the discussion. Understanding who the affordable housing is for and what role they play in the make-up of the demographics of Banner Elk was a good conversation. Understanding that Banner Elk is made up of mostly retirees and/or second homeowners for those looking to spend time in a resort town and trying to determine exactly what is affordable has always been one of the biggest hurdles for the Town. There are some very small houses being built in Banner Elk's ETJ and they are selling for \$165,000. In 2005, when the housing industry was booming, developers said that a \$300,000 home was affordable housing. However, those who work for the businesses and services that support those second homeowners also need a place to live and planning for them in the future is something Banner Elk may want to consider. The Board discussed reserving 10 percent of a development for affordable housing would require a change to the Zoning Ordinance. Meredith Olan provided some valuable information she had found on the Housing and Urban Development (HUD) website.

The discussion of the economy bouncing back and what the people who come to Banner Elk are looking for led to a discussion of what a wonderful job Allen Bolick and the Town of Banner Elk had done with the Historic Banner Elk School project. Allen Bolick speaks to a lot of the visitors and said that he gets a feeling that people are looking for cultural events, like festivals, art galleries or theatre.

Biking in the area was another topic and how Banner Elk, along with the NCDOT could work together to make it safer for those who like to bike in and around Banner Elk. Penny VonCanon attends the Bike Committee meetings and told the Board that the Chairman, Ted Silver, remains very active in all things biking.

The Greenway was another topic from Section 3. Realizing that the Town has met a road block at the Beasley property, Aaron Barlow suggested that the Town look at taking the Greenway from the back of the Art Cellar, around behind the ball fields and connecting with Hickory Nut Gap Road to take the Greenway up to Wild Cat Lake. Mr. Barlow felt this would be a great destination and perhaps could be looped with Hemlock trail to take people back to Banner Elk along a different track. Cheryl Buchanan said she would take these ideas back and write them up for presentation to the Board at the next meeting.

Old Business

There was no old business.

With no further business, Aaron Barlow moved to adjourn. Jacki Lecka seconded. The vote was unanimous and the meeting came to an end at 7:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl Buchanan, Zoning Administrator, Town of Banner Elk