

BANNER ELK PLANNING BOARD MEETING
MONDAY, JANUARY 04, 2021
MINUTES

Members Participating to the Zoom Meeting: Aaron Barlow, Allen Bolick, Ray Knowles, Meredith Olan, Joel Owen, Penny VonCanon

Others Participating: Matt Bagley

Staff Participating: Zoning Administrator Cheryl Buchanan, Town Manager Rick Owen

Due to the Covid-19 Pandemic and the restrictions placed on the State of North Carolina in conducting public meetings, the Planning Board meeting for January 2021 was conducted via Zoom audio and video. Chairman Joel Owen called the zoom meeting to order at 6:03 pm; noting that Aaron Barlow, Allen Bolick, Ray Knowles, Meredith Olan, Joel Owen, and Penny VonCanon were present for audio and video. A quorum was present, and the meeting was called to order.

Consideration of the November 2020 Minutes

Penny VonCanon motioned to approve the minutes for the November 2020 meeting as submitted. Ray Knowles seconded the motion. The vote was:

Aaron Barlow – Yea
Allen Bolick – Yea
Ray Knowles – Yea
Meredith Olan – Yea
Joel Owen – Yea
Penny VonCanon – Yea

The vote was unanimous, and the motion carried.

Old Business

Special Use Permit Request – Matt Bagley – Grandfather View Mini Golf

Matt Bagley came before the Planning Board with additional information as requested in the November 2020 meeting. Included in the information provided this time were a course hole layout drawn to scale, boundary survey and site plan drawn to scale, and a parking plan drawn to scale showing 20 parking spaces total. During Mr. Bagley's presentation he presented a power point with conceptual illustrations of what the course could look like.

Mr. Bagley indicated that this course was at the lower end of what he wanted but with limited space he felt like this would work. The design is for 18 holes, 10 in the front and 8 in the back. Mr. Bagley gave some examples of course he had visited recently and the one in Chimney Rock, NC was very compact but was being used regularly. Ray Knowles said he had looked over the topo map and was concerned that with the slope, it may be difficult to make this course work and asked if the slope was part of the design. Mr. Bagley stated that he thought there would be a little grading done but some slope would remain. Mr. Knowles asked about walkways. Mr. Bagley said that the first 1 hole in front would have pervious pavers to allow for ADA accessibility, but that the remaining course would be gravel. Penny VonCanon expressed concern with the culvert

area and small children being attracted to the water. Mr. Bagley said the culvert is a result of the water being diverted off Highway 184 by NCDOT. Town Manager Rick Owen said that this was not the responsibility of the Town but the property owner and the NCDOT. Mr. Bagley said he was planning to have the walkway skirt the culvert and use some fencing or plantings to hide the culvert from the public. Joel Owen suggested some thorny shrubbery for that area to deter children from heading in that direction. Mr. Bagley said it was his goal to make sure that area would be safe. Mr. Bagley said that Municipal Engineering is coming to look at this and advise him how to handle this area or if something else can be done to improve it. Mr. Bagley said that some of the runoff from Highway 184 goes down Stonebridge Lane and puddles in the back of the property making it a little marshy. Municipal Engineering will address that too.

Meredith Olan said she liked the fencing to separate the car wash from the golf area. Matt Bagley said that the two enclosed bays make the most noise with the dryers; but he also plans to have some soft background music like what he uses for the car wash. Mr. Bagley referred to the parking plan to show where the new pervious pavers, shown in light gray, would be used to enlarge the parking area. Additionally, Mr. Bagley said that a small retaining wall may be needed at the back of the car wash where the newer parking is shown to shore the bank up, but not over 4 or 5 feet. Meredith Olan said the plan is pretty tight and asked if there was any wiggle room once they start the work. Joel Owen asked that special attention be paid to the large maple at the corner of his property and the neighboring property along Highway 184. The tree is substantial and could easily be undermined in the preparations for the course.

Aaron Barlow said he was concerned about how tight the project was on this piece of property and asked Mr. Bagley if he had looked at other properties for this same use? Mr. Bagley said it wouldn't be cost effective for him with the price of property in Banner Elk. Aaron Barlow said the idea is a good one and Banner Elk needs something for the tourists to do that come here. Mr. Bagley was asked about whether he would be open for winter? Mr. Bagley said he had planned to install some large heaters to allow for that, giving the skiers something to do in between times when the ski slopes are shut down for maintenance. Mr. Bagley said that natural gas was available to the site and he planned to use that.

With no further discussion, Meredith Olan motioned to recommend this project to the Board of Adjustment for review, paying special attention to aesthetics and safety. Penny VonCanon seconded. The vote was:

Aaron Barlow - Nay

Allen Bolick – Yea

Ray Knowles – Yea

Meredith Olan – Yea

Joel Owen – Yea

Penny VonCanon – Yea

The vote was 5 to 1, and the motion carried.

With no further business, Aaron Barlow motioned to adjourn with a second by Meredith Olan. Everyone agreed and the meeting came to an end at 7:52 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Buchanan, Zoning Administrator, Town of Banner Elk