

BANNER ELK PLANNING BOARD
MONDAY, 04 APRIL 2011
MINUTES

Members Present: Allen Bolick, Joel Owen, Dawn Sellars, Dave Shoemake, Ann Swinkola, Penny VonCanon

Staff Present: Cheryl Buchanan, Rick Owen

Others Present: Susan Brown, Christie Greenaway and daughter, John Heinlein, Robert Tufts, Charlie B VonCanon

Chairman Joel Owen called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. He opened with the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Consideration of the March 2011 Minutes

With no changes noted, Penny VonCanon moved to approve as submitted. Allen Bolick seconded. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Discussion of the Sign Ordinance

John Heinlein, Susan Brown and Christie Greenaway were present to speak about their needs for changes to the sign ordinance. The following topics were discussed:

- Real Estate Signs and the required supporting post,
- Info tubes to be connected to the bottom of the sign,
- The use of balloons on a temporary basis for advertising,
- Open House temporary signs,
- Additional real estate signs as directional signage.

John Heinlein brought a real estate sign with a metal post that he used as an illustration of what might be acceptable. The metal post stick above the sign by one inch and the bottom of the post is angled to make it easier to stick in the ground. Bill Dicks made the post and staff will need to get in touch with him to determine exactly what type of post it is. The Planning Board said that acceptable colors would need to be specified and height restrictions, but that wooden posts will still be acceptable also.

The Planning Board was amenable to allowing the info tubes to be placed at the bottom of the sign as long as they did not extend beyond the sign's dimensions.

Open House signs were discussed as being allowed for "same day" use, but could not be left up overnight. John Heinlein asked if the planning Board could make their sign ordinance uniform with Sugar Mountain and Beech Mountain so that all their signs would work in each zoning district. Rick Owen said that Beech Mountain had fashioned their color choices around Banner Elk's and

that our size restrictions are close to the same, with Beech Mountains being a little more restrictive. Susan Brown said that Sugar Mountain allows three colors per sign. Penny VonCanon asked if the Open House signs could be put out on some sort of schedule. John Heinlein said that it is sporadic, that he is never really sure when he is going to have an open house, it depends on his amount of free time.

Balloons were the next topic of discussion. Dawn Sellars was on the planning committee when the Architectural Review Guidelines (ARG) was written. She said the intent then was to avoid excessive “clutter” in the town with balloons, flags, pennants, etc... and that the ordinance applies to everyone, not just realtors. Therefore, if you are going to allow balloons, everyone will be able to put them out and she asked if that is what the Planning Board is considering. Cheryl Buchanan said she was concerned that this might become an enforcement nightmare. Making sure that balloons that are put up are taken down the same day.

Ms. Buchanan also said she was concerned that balloons that are on really long strings and are placed next to the road could blow towards oncoming traffic and be a distraction to traffic, perhaps causing an accident. Penny VonCanon said she was not in favor of balloons but if the Board decides to allow them, limit them to two balloons and the string length should be much shorter. She also suggested that we allow balloons on just the open house sign so that when the open house sign is removed, the balloons would go with them, causing less of an enforcement problem. Color was also a topic that was addressed. Rick Owen said the Planning Department would look at area ordinances and see how they address balloons and get back to the Planning Board.

At this point Rick Owen told the Board and those present that an amendment to the ordinance allowing for a penalty each time that an illegal sign is put out, including weekends, is being considered. The Town’s Attorney will review the amendment before the text is brought before the Planning Board and Town Council.

Other types of signs were brought up for comment. These included sandwich boards, corporate flags and the number allowed per lot, windsocks, and “open” fabric signs. Cheryl Buchanan will be looking at area ordinance to see how these are handled and will get back to the Board.

The next item was a list of goals out of the Land Use Plan. Ms. Buchanan took all the goals and put them together to allow the Board a review to ensure that none were duplicated and if something was forgotten, we could address it now. One goal that will be added to Parks and Recreation would be to take into consideration a parks and recreation department to be staffed by a paid employees. Several suggestions were given for this goal that will be added for the next review.

Rick Owen reviewed the Town’s plan to participate in the State’s Litter Sweep activities and will be posting some additional information soon. With no further

comment, Ann Swinkola moved to adjourn. Dawn Sellars seconded. All were in agreement and the meeting came to a close at 8:22 PM.

Respectfully submitted,
Cheryl Buchanan, Planning Department