

BANNER ELK PLANNING BOARD MEETING
MONDAY, 01 AUGUST 2016
MINUTES

Members Present: Allen Bolick, BR Hoffman, Will Mauney, Martha Laura Miller, Meredith Olan, Joel Owen, Penny VonCanon

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

Chairman Joel Owen called the meeting to order at 6:01 pm. The Chairman opened with the pledge of allegiance to the flag and noted that there was a quorum present.

Consideration of the August 1, 2016 Minutes

Chairman Owen asked if anyone had changes to the minutes from the July 2016 meeting Cheryl Buchanan noted that it had just been brought to her attention that the minutes were not complete and asked that they be tabled until next meeting.

Preliminary Plat Review – Valley View

Zoning Administrator Cheryl Buchanan introduced the plat from Boggs Road, LLC. This is the same property that came before the Board last month for a rezoning request. The rezoning was withdrawn and now the developer is just subdividing the property. Ms. Buchanan said that there was a checklist included in the packets and that Mr. Elliot Harwell is present to answer any questions the Board might have. Ms. Buchanan stated that this is simply a subdivision of property, no more and no less. There is already a well site on the property that can produce enough water for all 8 lots but the developer anticipates drilling another well. The septic field will be a shared drain field as opposed to individual drain field. Mr. Harwell has already spoken to the Avery County Health Department and they see no problem with this system.

Penny VonCanon asked about a turnaround for emergency vehicles. Elliot Harwell answered that he will put one at the end of the street servicing lots 1-5. Chairman Owen said he thought you could only service 3 lots with one drive. Ms. Buchanan said she had been searching for this since she and the Town Manager had the same discussion, but could not find it. Penny VonCanon mentioned that Ms. Buchanan's memo said that a cross section of the streets should be included. Ms. Buchanan asked Elliot Harwell to get that before next Monday night.

With no further discussion, BR Hoffman motioned to approve the preliminary plat as submitted. Penny VonCanon seconded. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Remodel of the Sunrise Shopping Center

Ms. Buchanan told the Board that in the beginning of Section 500, Architectural Standards, there is a statement that any remodeling of non-residential property must be reviewed by the Board. Steve Cuff of Eagles Nest was present and is overseeing the remodeling job. Joel Owen said he had some concerns about crossing Highway 184 as it starts up the Beech Mountain Parkway. Mr. Cuff said they had been looking at that and are toying around with purchasing the property across the road. Ms. Buchanan mentioned that this would be a good project to get the NCDOT involved in.

Penny VonCanon remarked on the “Eagles Nest Tower” feature pictured on the renderings. Steve stated that it was only 42 feet tall and that all the work is being engineered so as not to pose any danger to the residents and surrounding properties. Penny VonCanon asked if this might be considered a facsimile sign, like a chicken bucket. Penny VonCanon then asked if it could be considered artwork. Some Board members did not agree with this, therefore, it will simply be a decorative structure at 32 feet. Steve said that they own the property and do not intend to put anything there that is not safe. Penny asked if they needed more documentation on what will be going on there. Ms. Buchanan said they plan to use all natural materials like logs and natural stone. She also noted that there is one portico near the back entrance that is being looked at more closely to ensure it stays within the setbacks from Highway 194.

With no further discussion, Penny VonCanon made a motion to approve the look of the remodel. Allen Bolick seconded. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

Discussion on relaxing the Height Requirements for Future

Chairman Owen stated that this is another one of those projects that we cannot talk about. Ms. Buchanan went into a description of why the proposed hotel would need to be taller than the required 35 feet. The developer said he needed 26 feet for the first floor and 10 for every floor after that and that he needed 3(three) floors in order to make the project work. The developer also stated that he would like to put a pitch roof on the hotel instead of a flat roof. Ms. Buchanan said that before the discussion begins, she had something she wanted to say. She had received several calls from people who were upset because they were told that this project would allow contaminated water to runoff into the creek. Ms. Buchanan said that one of the Town’s main objectives was to protect the pristine waters here and that stormwater was addressed in our ordinance. Ms. Buchanan said that no project would ever come before the town without stormwater being addressed during the planning stages.

Penny VonCanon was the first to speak and said that this discussion has come up before. Mrs. VonCanon said that it was important to protect the views of Banner Elk and that there were a few pieces of property that this type of building would work well on, but that out in the middle of town on a flat piece of property was not well thought out. Mrs. VonCanon used the old hospital property as an example of property that would be able to take this type of project and make it look like it was nestled in a valley without looking odd. Mrs. VonCanon said that Banner Elk is unique and that it is up to those working on these Boards to protect it and that Boone has plenty of this type of projects going up, let them go to Boone.

Steve Cone is a resident of Bear Run Subdivision and asked to be recognized by the Chairman. Mr. Cone agreed that the old hospital property would be the best location.

Julia Heinlein was also recognized and said that she was a realtor in Banner Elk. She often has contact with tourists and their remarks are about how beautiful the town is and that allowing a project like this would not be in keeping with the vision of Banner Elk.

All members of the Planning Board were in agreement with Penny VonCanon with none supporting a change to the height requirements.

Joel Owen said he had another meeting to attend and asked to be excused since there was a quorum present. Martha Laura Miller motioned to excuse Joel Owen from the meeting. Meredith Olan seconded. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried. Penny VonCanon serves as Vice Chairman and she assumed the role as acting Chairman.

Cheryl Buchanan handed out a paper written by the Appalachian State University students who had attended a previous Planning Board meeting to talk about content based signs. The students were given an assignment to read and review Banner Elk's sign ordinance as it relates to content based signs and the ruling from the Supreme Court. Since she just received it that day and she not have time to give it out before the meeting, those present decided to table to sign ordinance until the next meeting. Meredith Olan made a motion to table the sign ordinance review until the next regularly scheduled meeting. BR Hoffman seconded. The vote was unanimous and the motion carried.

With no further business, Meredith Olan moved to adjourn. Martha Laura Miller seconded. The vote was unanimous and the meeting came to an end at 7:04 pm.

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