

**Town of Blowing Rock**

**Planning Board**

**Minutes**

**Thursday, March 20th, 2025**

**5:30 p.m.**

The Blowing Rock Planning and Zoning Board met on Thursday, March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025 for their regularly scheduled meeting. Members present were Bill McCarter, Chris Squires, Tom Barrett, Steven Cohen, GK Naquin, Brooks Mayson, Lindsay McClanahan-Cook, and Woody Hubbard. Staff members present were Planning Director Kevin Rothrock, Zoning Officer Brian Johnson and Town Clerk Hilari Hubner.

Meeting called to order at 5:30 p.m.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

*A motion was made by Tom Barrett, seconded by GK Naquin. All members in favor.*

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

*A motion to approve the February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025 minutes was made by Chris Squires, seconded by Woody Hubbard. All members in favor.*

New Planning Board member, Brandon Walker, was sworn in by Hilari Hubner. Tom Barrett and Chris Squires were also sworn in for their new terms.

The board members then elected a new Chairman and a new Vice Chairman for the Planning Board. Chairman McCarter stated he is a firm believer in term limits and did not want to be nominated for Chairman again.

*Steve Cohen made a motion to nominate Chris Squires as Chairman, seconded by Lindsay Cook. No other nominations. All members in favor.*

*Lindsay Cook made a motion to nominate Tom Barrett as Vice Chairman, seconded by Bill McCarter. No other nominations. All members in favor.*

Mr. Kevin Rothrock opened a general discussion for the meeting.

Chris Squires asked if there would be agenda items for next month. Mr. Rothrock stated he was unsure if there would be. The Hampton Inn project could potentially be on the agenda.

GK Naquin stated that sometimes he hears about projects from the public before he knows about them as a planning board member and asked if there was a way to be notified about projects being talked about or brought into the office by developers.

Mr. Rothrock stated that if there is an application for a project, he will notify people, like with the Hampton Inn because it is a Special Use Permit application that does not allow board members to discuss the application with the public.

Mr. Rothrock also said that sometimes applicants ask for the projects not to be talked about because it is not public yet. With that being said, if we receive an application, that is public information and it will be shared with the board.

Mr. Rothrock brought up the 7-acre property that we received an application for as well.

Mr. Brian Johnson stated there will be a re-zoning request coming and it could possibly be on the April agenda. It will be a re-zoning request for a piece of property near the Horse Show Grounds so they can have a barn and horses on that piece of property.

Woody Hubbard asked about the condo project off Laurel Lane and if there is any movement on the project.

Mr. Rothrock stated that he thinks they might go in another direction. He just started talking to a different architect for the project.

Lindsay Cook asked about the Reule project of Morris Street. Mr. Rothrock said they were working on plans being finalized.

Brooks Mayson asked about the Laurel Lane lot being cleaned up while they were re-thinking the project and stated the fences were falling and it just looked messy. Mr. Rothrock said he will notify them and ask them to clean up the lot.

GK Naquin asked about a way to confirm that applicants have the financing to back a project they present before it gets approved, referencing the Green Park Inn project and the Shoppes on the Parkway Project.

Mr. Rothrock stated that we cannot require an applicant to show any financing for a project. They could get approved and then sell the property. We are only approving the use of the land, not who does it. He stated we can require a lot to be maintained and neat and orderly during the whole process of a project.

At the end of a project, if certain aspects of the project are not complete, we can require a bond to show that they can complete those remaining items if they are not done yet.

Mr. Rothrock stated that he has all the members signed up for the UNC-SOG workshop with the High County Council of Governments on April 28<sup>th</sup>.

Chris Squires asked about the brewery that was supposed to go at the corner of Hwy 321 and Edmisten Rd. Mr. Rothrock said there has not been any submitted.

Woody Hubbard asked about the corner of Sunset and Hwy 321 where the wine shop is supposed to go. Mr. Johnson said he met with them last week and they are getting ready to mobilize and start building.

Lindsay Cook asked if a General Contractor has their license suspended for 90-days, what happens to any on-going projects. Our building inspector, John Warren stated that the work would have to stop during that period. Lindsay asked if they are still doing work, would they pay a fine? Mr. Warren said they would just stop work – the licensing board has more leverage than the town does so we would need to contact the licensing board about any work being done without a license.

Bill McCarter asked about the Hampton Inn project and it being a Special Use Permit and why the Conditional-Zoning application is more popular than Special Use. Mr. Rothrock stated that if he were an applicant and knew he could meet the code criteria with his project, he would go the Special Use route because you must meet the code and not public opinion or comment. If he had a complicated project where he wanted some concession or flexibility, he would go with Conditional-Zoning. The choice is up to the applicant, we don't try to sway anyone one way or another, we give them the options and they choose which process they want to utilize.

Mr. Rothrock stated we hit a record of \$42 million in construction costs in 2024. If we keep the current trend going, we will be well over that this year. Commercial projects drive that cost up quite a bit.

Bill McCarter asked about the 6-lot subdivision up on Green Hill Rd that never materialized. Mr. Rothrock stated it will be a subdivision but it's under a different owner.

Meeting adjourned at 5:57 p.m.

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Chairman Chris Squires

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Support Specialist Taylor Miller