

MINUTES
Town of Blowing Rock
Town Council Meeting
November 12, 2025

The Town of Blowing Rock Town Council met for their regular monthly meeting on Wednesday, November 12, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. The meeting took place at Town Hall located at 1036 Main Street, Blowing Rock, NC. Present were Mayor Charlie Sellers, Mayor Pro-Tem Doug Matheson, Council Members Cat Perry, David Harwood and Melissa Pickett. Council Member Pete Gherini was unable to attend. Others in attendance were Town Manager Shane Fox, Town Attorney Joey Petrack, Town Engineer Jared Wright, Planning Director Kevin Rothrock, Police Chief Nathan Kirk, Finance Director Tasha Brown, IT Director Thomas Steele, Landscape Director Cory Cathcart and Town Clerk Hilari Hubner, who recorded the minutes.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Sellers called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone. Mayor Sellers verified attendance via roll call.

THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MINUTE APPROVAL

Mayor Pro-Tem Matheson made the motion to approve the minutes from October 14, 2025, regular session and closed session, seconded by Council Member Pickett. Unanimously approved.

REGULAR AGENDA ADOPTION

Council Member Perry made a motion to adopt the regular agenda, seconded by Council Member Harwood. Unanimously approved.

CONSENT AGENDA

- 1. Budget Amendment - #2025-19**
- 2. Tax Releases**
- 3. Resolution – Public Rights of Way and Easements By the Headwaters of the New River LLC**
- 4. Tax Policy**
- 5. Project Ordinance**
- 6. Lease Resolution**

Council Member Harwood made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented, seconded by Council Member Pickett. Unanimously approved.

SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR

Frank Irizarry – 148 Royal Oaks Dr spoke in favor of the board considering term limits for

all elected officials in Blowing Rock. Shared thoughts regarding the recent controversial application for a hotel project on Valley BLVD that went before Planning Board. With traffic being the foremost concern, his opinion was had a traffic concurrency study been implemented and required the application wouldn't have gotten to the point of review. He explained that traffic is a huge issue in this town and felt that should be a requirement to make life a lot easier. Lastly near and dear to his heart is the American with Disabilities Act. Mr. Irizarry explained he has severe hearing loss and the current camera system the Town utilizes is not favorable to people with disabilities. He felt the Town needed to consider upgrading the video equipment for recording and streaming the meetings, especially given the age demographic in this community.

Deatra Sellers – 137 Hill Top Way spoke about following Town Ordinances. She expressed concern that the Town has gotten to a place where everyone has an exception and would like to remind Council in order to keep the cute, charming Town we love ordinances need to be followed.

SPECIAL PRESENTATION

Mr. David Goodson, 499 Wonderland Trail – Gave a presentation on Japanese Knotweed.

PUBLIC HEARING

1. Greenpark Inn

Planning Director Kevin Rothrock stated the applicant, Mr. John Winkler, is requesting an amendment to the conditional rezoning ordinance of the Green Park Inn property at 9239 Valley Blvd. The request is for a reduction in the 16-foot opaque buffer on the western property line adjacent to the Blowing Rock Country Club (BRCC) golf course hole #4 green and hole #5 tee along Goforth Road. Based on the site layout, the rear decking overhang of the condos extended further over the parking area than expected. Accordingly, the Applicant needs four (4) additional feet in the parking lot for clearances, and they wanted to reduce the buffer by four (4) feet to gain the space. By reducing the buffer, the parking lot space depth (19 feet) and drive aisle width (24 feet) will still meet the minimum code standards.

The Applicant's request is to reduce the opaque buffer width along the BR golf course by four (4) feet from sixteen (16) to twelve (12) feet.

Mayor Sellers opened the public hearing.

Mayor Sellers asked if NC DOT still owned Goforth Rd.

Mr. Rothrock stated as far as he was aware there is a right of way, but ownership goes to the center of the property line and NC DOT has the rights to the road.

Mayor Sellers further asked if there was anything in writing from NC DOT stating they relinquished rights to Goforth Rd.

Town Manager Shane Fox noted the Town has not received anything stating that.

Mayor Sellers explained surveys in town are pretty common trends and noted his property as well as neighbor's property goes to the center of the road, but it is public right of way. He further expressed his thoughts were the Town needs to know what NC DOT is for that road.

Council Member Perry stated she didn't see the relevance of that.

Mayor Sellers felt it was relevant because it is taking up part of Goforth Rd.

Council Member Perry reminded the Council already approved sixteen (16) feet and the Applicant is only requesting an additional four (4) feet that is not going to affect the road, only add more space at the condos. She just couldn't understand the relevance of Mayor Sellers' point.

The Applicant, Mr. John Winkler explained the reason for the request is in their planning the decks are only twelve and a half feet off the ground on the first (1) floor and the concern was keeping service/delivery trucks away from the building. He further explained delivery trucks can be as tall as thirteen and a half feet tall and they wanted to keep those away from the decks and prevent them from causing any potential damage to the decks. He noted the extra four (4) feet request would help with that.

Mayor Sellers explained his concern was allowing change across a public road, but if NC DOT has relinquished rights to the road then so be it.

Ms. Chelesa Garrett, Attorney with Deal, Moseley, di Santi, Garrett and Martin, reminded the plan already approved months ago meets all the required setbacks and the only change requested is changing the landscape strip from sixteen (16) feet to twelve (12) feet. She stated Mayor Sellers point regarding the road was only relevant in the previous request and not in this request.

Ms. Garrett noted he was correct in NC DOT has not provided anything officially in writing but has indicated in discussions the intention so she felt that would be something they would have to continue to have to pursue NC DOT about. She acknowledged Mayor Sellers had a good point asking the question.

Mayor Pro-Tem Matheson asked Mr. Winkler if he would be willing to increase the landscaping and make it a bit thicker.

Mr. Winkler explained Mr. Rothrock had mentioned that to him and agreed to do whatever the Town would like him to do.

With no further questions or comments Council Member Harwood made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Council Member Pickett. Unanimously approved.

Council Member Perry made a motion to accept the Applicant's request to reduce the buffer from sixteen (16) feet to twelve (12) feet, seconded by Council Member Pickett. Unanimously approved.

2. CZ 2025-02 Laurel and Pine LLC

Mr. Rothrock stated Laurel and Pine, LLC is requesting a new conditional rezoning of the Pine and Laurel townhomes property to Conditional Zoning – Central Business (CZ-CB). The 0.29 acre property is located between Pine Street and Laurel Lane and was approved for a conditional rezoning in 2021 for a 14-room hotel project and approved for eight (8) townhomes in November of 2024. The Applicant is now proposing the construction of five (5) townhomes on the property.

The site was approved for a 14-room hotel in 2021. Initially the site was graded and underground utilities installed. Once building footers were dug and poured, the ownership paused with construction. The Applicant has modified the plans again and requests a conditional rezoning to build a 5-unit townhome project.

The applicable street setback for Central Business is fifteen (15) feet and is measured from the back of the existing/proposed sidewalk along each street. The proposed buildings meet the required street setbacks from both Pine and Laurel.

The side setback is five (5) feet and the proposed buildings meet the side setbacks.

The maximum building height for Central Business zoning was changed to thirty-five (35) feet in November 2024. The previously approved town homes were allowed to be thirty-nine (39) feet ten (10) inches for the two (2) middle units. The current plans show the middle unit roof to be at thirty-seven (37) feet three (3) inches which is two (2) feet shorter than the previously approved plans. There are two roof peaks on each side of the townhomes with a roof height of thirty-seven (37) feet one (1) inch. The Applicant has requested as a condition that the roof peaks be allowed to be increased up to thirty-seven (37) feet three (3) inches for every additional five (5) feet of horizontal distance from the fifteen (15) foot street setback.

The building materials include heavy wooden beams, vertical wood siding, horizontal lap siding, stone veneer, stucco, architectural roof shingles and architectural stone veneer. Some metal roofing accents are planned for some shed dormers and eave overhangs.

Access to the site will be through Pine Street, one-way through the site and exiting to Laurel Lane. The proposed project requires fifteen (15) parking spaces and those are provided in garage spaces and surface spaces.

Since fire apparatus cannot pass through the site but will serve the property from both streets, the building is required to be sprinkled.

The storm water runoff from the site will be conveyed to an onsite detention system and released to Pine Street. This system has already been installed with the previous hotel

construction.

Sewer has been connected to Pine Street. Water has been connected to Pine Street.

A hot box for the sprinkler system and backflow preventer has been installed along Laurel Lane. It has a bright silver cover that the Town is requesting be painted or changed out to a brown or green to blend with the surroundings. This has been included as a condition of approval from the Applicant.

All electrical services will be provided underground.

Garbage collection will be through roll-out containers in an enclosure located on the east side of the property adjacent to Pine Street.

There is a significant buffer along Laurel Lane since the Town owns an area of twenty (20) feet from the back of the existing sidewalk. As part of the hotel project, the Applicant has removed the large white pines on the Town property and will replace with other trees.

The Applicant's Proposed Conditions

1. The properties must be combined by a recombination plat prior to issuance of a building permit.
2. Applicant must submit a receive approval if a method to camouflage and screen the hotbox already installed along Laurel Lane.
3. Building heights may step up beyond the 35' max height at a rate of 1' of vertical height for every additional 5' horizontal distance from the setback with a maximum height of 37' 3".

A neighborhood meeting was held at Town Hall on October 8, 2025.

At their meeting on October 16th, the Planning Board made a recommendation to approve the conditional rezoning with the following conditions:

1. That the building height be limited to thirty-five (35) feet
2. That stucco not be used as building material

Mayor Sellers opened the public hearing.

Council Member Perry inquired about the location of the additional parking spaces.

Mr. Rothrock stated each unit has garages with two (2) spaces in each and an additional parallel space in the porte-cochere.

Mayor Pro-Tem Matheson asked about garbage rollouts and inquired if the garbage truck would be able to get in and out.

The Applicant stated the garage locations would be the same as in the previous plan that

was already approved last year.

Council Member Harwood asked for the applicant to elaborate on the need to extend the thirty-five (35) feet.

Matthew Jones, architect for the project, explained it's a biproduct of good design as they could make it within the allowed height, but it would be more of a boxy design and less of an articular façade. He further explained they felt having the tiered design was a better approach and better design for the community. They tried to keep a more minimal impact for the community.

Council Member Harwood asked what the roof slopes were now.

Mr. Jones stated they are six (6): twelve (12).

Council Member Harwood asked if they were anything less than six (6): twelve (12).

Mr. Jones stated a few of the accent roofs are, which they are allowed to be.

Council Member Harwood asked if that would need to be added as a condition.

Mr. Rothrock didn't think so as they were just little dormer roofs.

Mayor Pro-Tem Matheson asked where the HVAC units would be located.

Mr. Jones advised they would be in little alcoves behind landscaping and be well screened.

Council Member Harwood asked for clarification, wasn't there a requirement to have thirty (30) percent windows on the lowest floor.

Mr. Rothrock stated it was fifty (50) percent windows and doors.

Council Member Harwood stated he was more concerned with the windows and doors being compliant than he was about the height. He asked Mr. Jones if he thought that would be achievable to comply with.

Mr. Jones felt that was something they could comply with.

Council Member Harwood complemented the design and thought it was a very attractive design.

Ms. Jamie Dixey of 193 Norwood Circle asked if stucco would be used.

Mr. Jones highlighted the proposed areas for stucco which were very minimal and made note it was not a hill they were going to die on if Council chose to not allow stucco to be used.

Council Member Perry asked for an explanation on how they could make the fifty (50) percent requirement of windows and doors work on their design.

Mr. Jones stated it didn't have a plan off the top of his head, but he would look at it, evaluate and work with Mr. Rothrock on how to make it happen.

Council Member Harwood made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Matheson. Unanimously approved.

Council Member Perry stated she didn't vote for the project when it came before Council last time, primarily because of the height. She further stated she was in favor of less condos, which instead of eight (8) they have proposed five (5). She likes the fact that they have brought the height down from what was approved. She thinks when we talk about the charm of the town from a development standpoint it is going to be something that is attractive and if they have to make it more of a boxy shape that is going to change the whole look of this design and not be as appealing. She further stated she didn't think anyone in town would be happy with it.

Mayor Pro-Tem Matheson asked if Council Member Perry was ok with leaving the height as requested, adding the condition of the fifty (50) percent windows and doors requirement and no stucco.

Council Member Perry stated she was, but after seeing the stucco material she didn't think it would look that bad and further stated it was the same stucco material they use at Biltmore Village.

Mr. Rothrock stated stucco can be used as long as it is not on Main Street and it is the approved stucco from the building materials.

Council Member Harwood wanted to discuss options around the windows and doors requirements and acknowledged he wanted it to be tasteful. He asked for Councils thoughts.

Mayor Pro-Tem Matheson's opinion was that if it was landscaped correctly you wouldn't see that area.

Council Member Pickett noted it would be within walking height.

After further discussion Council was in agreement the windows already included on the design and landscaping would be far more attractive than extra windows in a stairwell area.

Council Member Harwood made a motion to approve the project as presented with the condition that the garbage corral will be included, noting he only mentioned that because it wasn't on the plans, and consideration for additional landscaping on the street sides, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Matheson. Unanimously approved.

REGULAR AGENDA

1. TDA Board Appointment

Council voted by ballot to appoint Ben McKethan to the vacant TDA Board seat.

OFFICIAL REPORTS & COMMENTS

- Mayor Sellers – Thanked Manager Fox for his 5 years as our Town Manager – he has accomplished so much in his time and has taken our Town to the next level. Next step is to hire a Interim Town Manager and Council will possibly make that decision in Closed Session. Thanked everyone for coming out and voting and his hats off to everyone who chose to run for Council.
- Council Member Perry – Congratulated Manager Fox for his next endeavor. He will be greatly missed, he is a public servant of the highest caliber, a good manager, an expert and he has everything going for him and needs to progress his career now. She was completely supportive of what he is doing but sad for our Town.
- Council Member Harwood – He stated it's been the upmost privilege to have worked with Manager Fox – noted the importance of saying work with – and getting to do that twice was even better. He is a friend, a professional and he adores him and his family, wished him God's Speed and the best of luck. It was also and incredible pleasure to serve with Melissa Pickett and Pete Gherini and he will miss them both.
- Council Member Pickett – Manager Fox will be missed, and it's been an honor to work with him and to call him a friend. It's also been an honor to serve her community for the past four (4) years.
- Mayor Pro-Tem Matheson – Had a great friendship with Manager Fox and it's not goodbye it's see you later. For sixteen (16) years he's had a Pickett on either side of him and for him that will be an adjustment.
- Town Attorney Joey Petrack – None
- Town Manager Shane Fox – Gave an update on Memorial Park, USDA, Audit, Website and gave a lengthy "thank you" to staff and Council his five (5) years as Town Manager.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 7:30 p.m. Council Member Perry made a motion to go into closed session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11.(a)(5) – discussion of potential property acquisition and NCGS 143-318.11 (a)(6) - personnel, seconded by Council Member Pickett. Unanimously approved.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:35 p.m. Council returned to open session. With no further action, Council Member Pickett made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Council Member Harwood. Unanimously approved.

MAYOR _____
Charlie Sellers, Mayor

ATTEST _____
Hilari Hubner, Town Clerk

Attachments

Budget Amendment #2025-19 – Attachment A

Resolution – Easement Headwaters of the New River LLC – Attachment B

Tax Releases – Attachment C

Project Ordinance – Attachment D

Lease Resolution – Attachment E

Greenpark Inn – Attachment F

CZ 2025-02 Laurel and Pine – Attachment G