

**PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES
MONDAY, JUNE 26, 2017 AT 5:30 P.M.**

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS: Chairperson Connor Boyle, Adrian Thompson, Elizabeth Shay, Eric Woolridge and Becky Gosky

STAFF PRESENT: Jane Shook, Director of Planning and Inspections, Christy Turner, Senior Planner, Marty Little, Planner, and Marlene Crosby, Board Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT: Allison Meade, Town Attorney

CALL TO ORDER

Chairperson Connor Boyle called the meeting to order at 5:50 p.m. in the Council Chambers located at 1500 Blowing Rock Rd.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Member Gosky made a motion, seconded by Member Thompson, to approve the May 22, 2017 Planning Commission meeting minutes as written.

Vote: Aye – All
Nay – None

The motion passed.

CASE PL00479-050817 EDUCATIONAL DISTRICTS AND USES – UDO TEXT AMENDMENT

Request to modify UDO Article 14, 15, 16, 17, and 34 in regards to educational districts and uses. Amendment may also be made to other Articles to conform them to changes made in these Articles.

Ms. Jane Shook, Director of Planning and Inspections said the Staff are not proposing any changes at this time. Ms. Shook said this proposed change will simplify the uses in the U-1 zoning district which will help the university and Town Staff to know which uses are permissible and which ones are not permissible.

Discussion ensued on future interpretations of this case. Ms. Allison Meade, Town Attorney talked about the Council's concern of the university encroaching into the B-1 zoning district. She said that the university is aware of this and she thinks they have no intention of doing it. She confirmed that college or university uses have to remain in the U-1 zoning district.

FIRST MOTION AND VOTE: Chairperson Boyle made a motion, seconded by Member Woolridge, that the proposed amendment to the Town's zoning ordinance is consistent with the Town's Comprehensive Plan and other applicable adopted plans of the Town which relate to this application because per the Comprehensive Plan policy 2.1.1.E.1, which is to continue to look at ways to allow development regulations and permit procedures more predictable and timely; evaluate opportunities for administrative review and permit issuance for development projects which, due to their small size or relatively minor impacts, may not require review by a formal public commission or board.

Vote: Aye – All
Nay – None

The motion passed.

SECOND MOTION AND VOTE: Chairperson Boyle made a motion, seconded by Member Woolridge that the Planning Commission recommends approval of the proposed amendment to the Town's zoning ordinance and believe the approval is reasonable and in the public interest because it is keeping with the intent of the Comprehensive Plan policy 2.1.1.E.1.

Vote: Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

CASE PL00558-061217 USE 14.04 MICROBREWERY – UDO TEXT AMENDMENT

Request to modify UDO Article 15 to allow Use 14.01 Microbrewery in the M1 Manufacturing District. While recently reviewing a request, Staff discovered that Use 14.04 Microbrewery, a manufacturing use, are not permissible in the M-1 Manufacturing District.

Upon review of the description for the M1 Manufacturing District and definitions for each of the brewery related uses, Staff feels that not including Use 14.01 Microbrewery as a principal use in the Manufacturing District was an error when the Table was revised to allow three uses in 2013. The report includes the description of the M1 Manufacturing District, the definitions for brewery related uses and excerpt of the Table of Principal Uses modified to allow Use Microbrewery in the M1 Manufacturing District.

There was no discussion on this case.

FIRST MOTION AND VOTE: Member Woolridge made a motion, seconded by Member Thompson, that the proposed amendment to the Town's zoning ordinance is consistent with the Town's Comprehensive Plan and other applicable adopted plans of the Town which relate to this application because it appears that it is a mistake that the Microbrewery was not included in this section of the zoning code and this particular proposed amendment allows the Staff to clean up the language and allow a use that seems to be consistent with the original intent of the M1 Manufacturing District.

Vote: Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

SECOND MOTION AND VOTE: Member Woolridge made a motion, seconded by Member Thompson to approve the proposed amendment to the Town's zoning ordinance and believe the approval is reasonable and in the public interest because of the reasons stated in the first motion.

Vote: Aye – All

Nay – None

The motion passed.

Discussion ensued on the Planning Commission having a short discussion at this meeting on opening up potential uses in the industrial park.

Member Woolridge began discussion on this topic. He talked about his firm needing to expand, he said at this time his firm has 10 to 12 people and they are looking to expand to a 20-person firm in the next three to five years. He said that his firm has had a difficult time trying to locate a larger space that fits his business model. He said he would like to keep his firm in the Downtown area but he has not been able to find a space. He said he would like to have a certain type of atmosphere or social environment with public activities that would attract architects and landscape artists but it does not exist in Boone.

Member Woolridge said the Town of Boone does not have a lot of already built vacant manufacturing facilities like Lenoir, North Carolina and other cities that have large vacant manufacturing space that could create opportunities for the re-use of existing buildings. Member Woolridge said he has been exploring the possibility of his firm moving to the industrial park. He is looking at about 3,000 to 5,000 square feet of the US Steel building. He said if Stickboy Bakery, Microbrewery and recreation type uses were allowed there, it would create a great social environment that would be conducive to his business and he feels this is the key to his business being successful.

Discussion ensued on Staff concerns for certain potential uses in the industrial park. Ms. Shook said some of the locations have good parking but in the other locations parking can be more challenging. She talked about the concern for the possibility of one business complaining about another business for example the coming and going of delivery trucks and loading and unloading at businesses daily.

Member Thompson said he thought it would be more logical for manufacturing facilities to want to be located in larger cities with other manufacturing facilities where there is more accessibility without having to drive through the mountains to get to and from their manufacturing facility. Ms. Meade said that businesses do not always start in the place where it is the cheapest for transit.

Ms. Shook said the Staff can do an assessment on how many M1 properties that are located outside the industrial park.

Chairperson Boyle asked Ms. Shook, if she thought that vacancy rates would keep increasing in the industrial park. Ms. Shook indicated she was unsure but noted it may depend on whether the uses allowed change.

Member Thompson asked Ms. Shook if the Economic Development Commission deals with the vacant space. Ms. Shook they are aware and they work with the property owners to help tenants find a building that suits their needs.

Ms. Shook said when she talked to Mr. Furman and he agreed to opening up the M1 zoning district to other uses and he cautioned to be careful with the potential new uses because there is not a lot of available space for smaller manufacturing or warehouse uses.

Discussion ensued on the cost to the business owner to move into a vacant space. Ms. Shook mentioned the building code requirements for each space to be up fitted as well as the zoning requirements.

Discussion ensued on the possibility of creating job opportunities. Member Woolridge talked about drawing office professionals to this area to work in our community.

Discussion ensued on the need to discuss opening up the uses beyond the industrial park. Ms. Shook said most uses are captured in the B-3 zoning district. She said we have always been conservative with the M1 zoning district because of the potential uses that could go within the M1.

Ms. Meade said after hearing this discussion on opening up the uses, she feels that there is a certain attraction to a mix of uses in the M1.

Ms. Shook talked about doing an analysis of the current infrastructure of the industrial park. She said the Staff would also have to evaluate things like sidewalks and increased traffic.

Ms. Shook noted that the industrial park is fully built out with the exception of certain business owners may have some room for expansion.

Discussion ensued on using the industrial park as a possible test center to test potential uses before opening up the potential uses to the public. Member Gosky and Member Shay agreed the industrial park would be a great location to use for a test center.

Ms. Shook explained that currently almost any manufacturing use that goes into the industrial park is by right and there are no requirements for transitional zones because the industrial park has already been vetted for the industrial site. She further explained that the Staff were getting approached about the vacant spaces in the industrial park with businesses that were not allowed in the M1 zoning district. She said this is the reason she brought this topic forward to the Council and Planning Commission. She said that Staff had suggested that the property owners come in and speak with the Staff to learn about the Staff's concerns regarding the permissible uses.

Member Woolridge noted that it is his preference to keep his firm in the Downtown area. Chairperson Boyle said he loves to see areas getting re-developed that have a mix of different activities going on in it.

Discussion ensued on the Deal Moseley and Smith office building being the newest of office buildings in the Downtown area. It was noted that building is still not built out and vacant space is available in it that is not being used. Ms. Shook noted that a lot of the existing buildings are designed in a way that it is not conducive to what certain businesses need to set up their offices.

Ms. Shook noted that she can work with the feedback that she has received from the Planning Commission on the potential uses.

RECOMMENDATION FOR AN AFFORDABLE HOUSING TASK FORCE MEMBER

Ms. Shook explained that the Affordable Housing Task Force meets on the first Monday of each month at 5:30 p.m. in the Planning and Inspections Department-Upstairs Conference Room located at 680 W. King Street. She noted that the July 3, 2017 meeting has been cancelled and the next scheduled meeting will be held on August 7, 2017.

Member Woolridge nominated Chairperson Boyle, seconded by Member Thompson, as a Planning Commission representative to the Affordable Housing Task Force. Chairperson Boyle accepted the nomination on an interim basis. Ms. Shook told Chairperson Boyle that she would meet with him in July to review the charge of the Affordable Housing Task Force.

Vote: Aye – All
Nay – None
The motion passed.

ADJOURNMENT

Member Woolridge made a motion, seconded by Member Thompson to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 p.m.

Vote: Aye – All
Nay – None
The motion passed.

Chairperson, Connor Boyle

Board Secretary, Marlene Crosby