

**Special Public Hearing
Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, January 6, 2016
5:30 p.m.**

COUNCIL MEMBERS:	Mayor Pro-Tem-Lynne Mason, Loretta Clawson, Jeannine Underdown, Jennifer Teague and Charlotte Mizelle
PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS:	Chairperson-Eric Woolridge, Vice-Chairperson Greg Simmons, Matthew Long, Jeff Templeton, Connor Boyle, Susan McCracken, Charlie Myers, Caroline Catoe and Michelle Dineen
STAFF PRESENT:	Bill Bailey-Director of Planning & Inspections, Jane Shook-Planning Supervisor, and Marlene Crosby-Board Secretary
OTHERS PRESENT:	John Ward-Town Manager and Allison Meade-Town Attorney

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Pro-Tem Lynne Mason called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

CASE 20150697 – Todd Rice has filed a Conditional District Zoning Map Amendment Petition

for property owned by MET Holdings, LLC to rezone two properties at 475 Blowing Rock Road from B2 Neighborhood Business to B3 General Business with a site specific development plan for a mixed -use building consisting of 24 efficiency apartments (Use 1.14 Multi-Family Dwelling in Mixed Use (up to 30 bedrooms) and 2,658 square feet of retail (Use 11.14 Retail Store up to 5,000 ft²).

Ms. Jane Shook, Planning Supervisor presented this case as outlined in the meeting packet. Ms. Shook noted that on page three of the staff report that this use in the B-3 is not subject to a transitional zone. She noted that the applicant was present at this meeting to answer any questions.

Mr. Tyler Moffatt, Attorney at Law came to the podium to present this case and he introduced the applicant, Mr. Todd Rice, Mr. Brent Davis, Architect from Brent Davis Architecture, Inc., and Mr. Jason Gaston, Civil Engineer from Valor Engineering, PLLC.

Mr. Moffat noted that Ms. Marty Rice, owner of MET Holdings, LLC has owned this property since the 1990's. Mr. Moffat talked about the surrounding property owners and total project investment.

Mr. Moffatt talked about how the proposed project being in compliance with the 2006 Comprehensive Plan, Smart Growth Plan and the 2030 Boone Master Plan. He said the property is within the G-2 and G-3 sectors of the master plan. He noted that this proposed project promotes walkability and livability. Mr. Moffat talked about the landscaping, community appearance, bicycle storage, crosswalk and sidewalk requirements and he said any other zoning requirements will be addressed during the zoning review process.

Mr. Moffatt noted that the applicant has met the conditions listed on page eight of the staff report.

Mr. Moffat talked about the 2030 ASU Master Campus Plan providing a pedestrian friendly environment.

Mr. Moffat contacted every surrounding property owner and gave Ms. Marty Rice's contact information.

Mr. Jason Gaston, Valor Engineering, PLLC came to the podium and pointed out the specifics of the request of this case on the proposed site plan. Mr. Gaston talked about the North Carolina Department of Transportation requirements. Mr. Gaston said the applicant is proposing to provide the infrastructure needed, as it applies to the grade change, curb and gutter and motorcycle parking. Mr. Gaston said the applicant will upgrade the sewer main with new materials. Mr. Gaston talked about the proposed commercial retail space.

Planning Commission Member Boyle asked about the sidewalk and the NCDOT right-of-way and how they are going to tie in together. Mr. Gaston said they will dead end the sidewalk and there will be a tie in on the other side of the property. Planning Commission Member Boyle asked about the interior stairwell and Mr. Gaston pointed it out on proposed site map.

Planning Commission Chairperson Eric Woolridge asked about the location of the curb from the entrance of the building and the sidewalk. Mr. Gaston said there has been communication with NCDOT on the sidewalks. Mr. Gaston pointed out the immediate access to the sidewalk connection.

Planning Commission Member McCracken asked if there was adequate storm retention. Mr. Gaston explained that it will be more than efficient with three barrels and further explained the flow rates.

Planning Commission Member McCracken asked about the entry to the retail space, if using the sidewalk. Mr. Gaston explained that there is a sidewalk all the way around the building.

Planning Commission Member McCracken asked about the bicycle parking. Mr. Gaston explained the locations of the long and short term bicycle parking.

Council Member Mizelle asked about the location of the retail parking spaces. Mr. Gaston said that he would leave this up to the management of the retail business.

Council Member Teague asked the location of the proposed building, picnic table and green space area. Mr. Gaston showed the location of these things on the proposed site plan map.

Council Member Mizelle asked if there is adequate lighting on the left side of the building. Mr. Gaston said there is lighting for pedestrian access.

Mr. Moffatt asked Mr. Brent Davis of Brent Davis Architecture to review the proposed elevation plans for this project. Mr. Davis pointed out the location of the apartments and retail space which included the store front and he went over the square footage of the proposed building.

Planning Commission Member Boyle asked if there would be roof access to the solar roof top units. Mr. Davis said that there would need to be engineering done for the solar units.

Council Member Teague asked for more information on the efficiency apartments. Mr. Davis explained the floor plan of the apartments.

Council Member Clawson asked if the apartments were designed for more than one student. Mr. Davis said the apartment management would handle the leasing of the units.

Mr. Moffat asked Ms. Marty Rice the owner of the property to come to the podium. Ms. Rice said she has owned the property since the 1980's through MET Holdings, LLC. She gave a brief history of the property. She noted that this property needs a make-over. She gave the details of the proposed project. She feels the proposed project would enhance the university area. She commented on the architect and engineer costs that have been spent to bring the proposed project thus far. She said the proposed project was created with the current market in mind. She said the Boone High Country Rentals will be managing the leasing of the property and they are located close to the property with 24 hour availability.

Ms. Rice noted that the proposed project will have 24-hour Security lighting and it is pet friendly based on the size of the pet. Ms. Rice noted that it is a popular thing for single tenants to have a pet.

Ms. Rice talked about green energy and the installation of solar panels on the roof of the proposed building which would benefit the tenants of the building.

Ms. Rice talked about her offer of a two by two which means for the first two years, she will offer two percent of her net proceeds from the development to the Town of Boone, specifically, for the Greenway extension into Downtown Boone.

Planning Commission Member Templeton asked Ms. Rice if she would have put commercial space on the bottom floor of this building, if it was not a code requirement. Ms. Rice said yes because she feels that there is a need for it.

Council Member Teague asked Ms. Rice if she had any ideas for the rental cost of the commercial space in the proposed building. Mr. Moffat said that he would ask Mr. Todd Rice a licensed real estate broker at Blue Ridge Investments to answer that question.

Mr. Rice talked about the conditional shell of the building and the completed finished retail space having different costs. Mr. Rice talked about the advantages of having a rental leasing company managing the property which is location, experience and competitively priced units. Mr. Rice said rental his leasing company manages around 200 rental properties in the area. Mr. Rice talked about the assigned parking spaces per residential unit and the number of people per unit. Mr. Rice said the leases will be set-up with one person per unit.

Council Member Mizelle asked about the renting out of the parking spaces and if they would be rented out separately like the Winkler property. Mr. Rice said there will be assigned parking spaces per residential unit. Mr. Gaston explained further the proposed plan for parking. Mr. Rice said the price of the parking has not been determined and the retail parking spaces will be designated with signage.

Planning Commission Member Dineen asked about the parking spaces. Mr. Gaston referred to page C-1 of the proposed site plan and said the applicant is proposing 22 residential parking spaces and six retail parking spaces for a total of 28 spaces which does not include bicycle and motorcycle parking.

Planning Commission Chairperson Woolridge said that he thinks the parking is sufficient. Planning Commission Member Dineen thought they should charge the tenants for parking to discourage on-site parking.

Planning Commission Member Myers said he did not think that one space per unit is necessary.

Council Member Teague talked about the reduction of parking spaces and asked about the towing and booting of cars. Mr. Rice said he is open to either towing or booting. Mr. Rice said that not every student has a car and they prefer to walk or bike to class or work.

Mr. Moffat talked about the minimum and maximum requirements for parking.

Mr. Gaston further talked about the ways to achieve parking reductions. He noted that there are no longer minimum and maximum parking requirements in the UDO.

Planning Commission Vice-Chairperson Simmons asked about the as built primary and secondary setbacks. Mr. Davis explained the reason for the secondary set back and the proposed building height.

Planning Commission Member Dineen talked about the size of the closets noting they are two feet by six feet. Mr. Davis explained the reason for the closet sizes.

Mayor Pro-tem Mason asked about the transitional zones. Ms. Shook and Mr. Bill Bailey, Director of Planning and Inspections explained that there was no transitional zones triggered in the proposed project.

First speaker on this case was Mr. Mickey Schweitzer, owner of property at 455 Blowing Rock Road. Mr. Schweitzer wanted to know why the proposed project had to be zoned B-3 General Business instead of B-2 Neighborhood Business. He asked for clarification on the zoning districts. He was concerned about the location of one of his properties that it is near the proposed green space area. He was concerned that the disturbing of the ground will affect his older building and cause water run-off problems. He asked if there will be a fence or petition between his property and the proposed project during construction. He was concerned with parking issues. He is concerned with a potential construction problem that might cause his tenant to have to close down his business and suffer a monetary loss and he was concerned about adequate lighting.

Mr. Bailey reminded Council that this area is a high growth area and Council had asked staff to look at this area as another overlay district.

Mr. Moffatt said that the applicant agrees to add a fence as a condition.

Planning Commission Chairperson Woolridge said from the Planning Commission's standpoint, he would like to see as many details as possible about the fence on the proposed plan. He also said that he would like to see these details on the proposed plan. He also said the front street yard is the most important part of this proposed project. He said he would like to see a design that would compliment this area.

Planning Commission Member Myers talked about the existing confusion on the street front of the proposed project with regard to the bike lanes.

Planning Commission Member McCracken talked about the proposed project from an ascetic view point. She said she would really appreciate someone setting their standard very high in the Boone area.

Discussion ensued on the need for more parking and more greenspace in the Town.

Mayor Pro-Tem Mason closed this public hearing.

CASE 20150896 – Appendix B Revised Plant List – Text Amendment a request to modify the UDO to revise Appendix B, Guide for Landscaping and to replace the old plant list with an updated, native plant focused plant list and include a Guide for Pruning Standards.

Mr. Brian Johnson, Urban Design Specialist presented this case as outlined in the meeting packet.

Mr. Johnson noted that the red-lined text is what the staff had proposed to be removed from UDO-Appendix B.

Mr. Johnson noted that the Mr. Jim Hamilton, Director of the Watauga County Cooperative Extension and Ms. Wendy Patoprsty, Natural Resources Extension Agent reviewed the draft document. He noted that this section of the UDO had not been updated in some time.

Mr. Bailey talked about the blue and green column being added to the Appendix B Table.

Commission Member Templeton asked about the availability of some of the plants that are listed in the proposed plant list. Mr. Johnson said the plants can be purchased off the mountain and plants on the revised list can survive in this area which is a zone six.

Mayor Pro-Tem Mason complimented the Staff on the improved proposed plant list.

Council Member Clawson asked about the replacement trees being smaller in size. Mr. Johnson explained the success rate of this size of trees. Mr. Bailey noted that the Staff also worked with the local electric companies with the planting of trees.

Mr. Bailey and Mr. Johnson explained how the Staff works with the planting of trees around a site triangle.

Mr. Johnson talked about the pruning process and the national standard for pruning. Mr. Johnson said if there is a question on pruning, he will meet with anyone to go over the process.

Planning Commission Member Boyle asked if there was a plan for choosing trees that are not on the revised plant list. Mr. Johnson explained the plan for choosing trees. Mr. Johnson explained the layout of the revised plant list.

Mayor Pro-Tem Mason closed this public hearing.

ADJOURNMENT

Council Member Mizelle made a motion to adjourn the special public hearing at 7:49 p.m., seconded by Council Member Clawson.

VOTE:

Aye-All

Nay-None

The vote was unanimous.

Lynne Mason, Mayor Pro-Tem

Marlene Crosby, Board Secretary

Eric Woolridge, Planning Commission Chairperson