

**BOONE TOWN COUNCIL
BOONE NEXT DISCUSSION
MONDAY, MARCH 3, 2025, 9:00 AM
1500 BLOWING ROCK ROAD**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Pro Tem Dalton George, Todd Carter, Eric Plaag, and Virginia Roseman (arrived at 9:42 a.m.)

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: Mayor Tim Futrelle and Edie Tugman

PLANNING & INSPECTIONS STAFF PRESENT: Jane Shook-Director of Planning and Inspections, Brandon Wise-Deputy Director of Planning & Inspections, Jessica Mitchell-Advanced Planning Specialist, and Brenda Henson-Administrative Coordinator

OTHER TOWN STAFF AND REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT: Amy Davis-Town Manager, Todd Moody-Public Works Director, and Allison Meade-Town Attorney (arrived at 9:14 a.m.)

Call to Order

Mayor Pro Tem George called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m.

Boone Next (Comprehensive Plan) Discussion

Jane Shook, Director of Planning & Inspections, presented Council members with copies of the Land Use and Development chapter, the revised Land Use and Development chapter, section 50.292 from the Town Code regarding Secondary Pressure Zones, and various maps.

Ms. Shook outlined changes proposed by staff in the revised Land Use and Development chapter of Boone Next.

Ms. Shook noted that Staff had reviewed other comprehensive plans throughout the state and noted that they all varied in how land use maps were presented. She noted that Charlotte's land use descriptions provided visioning and simplicity in their descriptions without including complex regulatory information that belonged in the zoning ordinance.

Council Member Plaag suggested that each page of land use types be made into two pages with an overview on the front and the back, providing more granularity. He also suggested using more local or regional images in the plan. Ms. Shook felt that the Building Form section under each land use type should be removed and replaced with something more high-level and similar to Charlotte's plan.

Council Member Plaag referred to the East Howard Street area, noting that it would be a good location for higher-density development because of its proximity to campus.

Ms. Meade stated that if the best places for students were built for students, other areas could be developed for families. This would minimize the number of students competing with families for the same property. Ms. Meade also noted that the university would likely be approaching Town Council about the requirement for separate water meters for every apartment because it added an unbelievable expense.

Council Member Carter stated that professionals, not students or families, were never discussed. He expressed concern that this demographic might be left out of consideration of housing types.

Mayor Pro Tem George felt there was an opportunity in the walkable mixed-use to create smaller-scale commercial spaces that would encourage entrepreneurship. He stated that large commercial spaces were difficult for single entrepreneurs trying to make it work. Mayor Pro Tem George noted that the square footage for commercial spaces in the walkable mixed-use should be smaller.

Ms. Shook explained that new mixed-use construction often sat empty because of the cost of finishing the space. Council Member Carter asked if anything could be done to require the spaces to be finished. Ms. Shook replied that a possible negative would be that the finished space might not meet the requirements of the business type and would be costly to remove and upfit. Mayor Pro Tem George also felt that the commercial space should be distinct from the residential space above by creating more street-level and storefront-like facades.

Ms. Shook noted that parking was an issue for mixed-use developments. She stated that the ordinance standards created some issues. Ms. Meade added that flexibility should be provided. At the same time, there should be standards regarding size and scale so that developers actually have to make money through the commercial space and not just support the development with the residential space.

Ms. Shook stated that water and sewer controlled growth. Council members looked at the secondary pressure zone map. Ms. Shook noted that water service extensions were only allowed below 3,400 feet. Council Member Plaag asked if there was a way to store water at a higher elevation so that services could be extended. Todd Moody, Public Works Director, referred to the regulation in the Town Code that required a property to be located inside town limits prior to March 8, 2007, to be considered for a service extension. He felt that the date and the 3,400-foot threshold could be revised because they prevented growth. Ms. Shook agreed that Town Code policy 50.292 could be reconsidered if Town Council wished to promote growth in areas that were in secondary pressure zones. Mayor Pro Tem George felt that the requirement for annexation to receive services provided a mechanism to plan appropriately.

Mayor Pro Tem George asked if the town could push for the voluntary annexation of multiple properties. Ms. Meade replied that it could be done but cautioned that the annexations would have to be entirely voluntary. Ms. Shook added that there was a 10% limitation on annexations. She also noted that other town services, such as police and sanitation, would have to be extended to the annexed properties.

Ms. Shook replied that during the next step the town would need clear and predictable standards for so that applicants could build the town the community envisioned.

Mayor Pro Tem George stated he would like to look at the downtown edge toward Old Bristol Road and consider making that area part of downtown. He felt that the downtown stopped at an odd place. Council Member Plaag thought the delineation was architecturally and historically driven. Ms. Shook noted that the topography changed in that area, making it difficult to maintain the downtown feel.

Ms. Shook stated that there were two downtown land use types. She suggested reviewing those two downtown land use types and seeing the difference between the downtown and the downtown edge to see if there was a benefit of one over the other.

Council Member Plaag stated that the Wellness District plan had not been promoted. He suggested looking at the Biltmore Square in Asheville because it contained many elements that the town wanted to see in the Wellness District. Ms. Shook replied that the town should have been more inclusive with the property owners when the plan was in development. When the plan was presented, the property owners were concerned and fearful of what might happen to their property. Ms. Shook felt this was a lesson to involve those affected by small area plans from the beginning of the process. Ms. Meade suggested revising some language in the Wellness District standards to make them more flexible and provide the district as an opt-in or overlay district.

Council Member Plaag asked if there had been any discussion about redeveloping the golf course. Ms. Shook said there had not been any applications or recent inquiries in the Planning Department regarding the golf course. She noted that the golf course could be a place for housing opportunities should someone seek to redevelop the property.

Mayor Pro Tem George suggested expanding the B1 along Queen Street from Ms. Meade's office to the funeral home. Council Member Plaag added that this could be an area for higher density, mixed-use development. Mayor Pro Tem George proposed selling the street-front portion of the town-owned parking lot property and using those funds to help pay for a parking deck on the back portion of that property. Council Member Plaag suggested this property could be used as a new municipal center with parking underneath.

Ms. Shook stated that much of what Council members discussed was covered in Boone Next, except for some descriptive narrative.

Council Member Plaag suggested that the Oak Street area gradually step back to lower intensity, with properties closer to Hardin Street and Blowing Rock Road being more intensive residential. He also included the Quail Drive and Dove Circle neighborhoods in the same scenario, noting that the single-family housing stock in these areas was no longer single-family housing.

Ms. Shook expressed a need for various housing types to house the people who live and work here. She stated that Boone did not have enough land to develop only single-family homes to meet the needs of the community.

Ms. Meade asked how the town could incentivize protected neighborhoods so they would not become dilapidated. Ms. Shook felt that this could be accomplished through small area plans.

Council Member George suggested putting up corporate boundary signs to educate the public on where the Boone town limits were located.

Discussion ensued on a potential student housing overlay that would be close the University's main campus.

Council Member Plaag suggested that new construction buildings in the historic district go through a PD-like process.

Ms. Shook encouraged Council members to review the changes in the revised Land Use and Development chapter before the next meeting on Monday, March 10, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. She suggested that this meeting occur in the Planning & Inspections conference room, where ideas could be drawn on the map using the department's equipment.

Mayor Pro Tem George mentioned planning a town hall for the Junaluska community. Ms. Shook felt having regular meetings with the neighborhoods was good practice. She asked that Planning & Inspections be notified of Town Halls and potential topics of conversation so the department could participate or provide information.

Adjournment

With nothing further, Council Member Plaag moved to adjourn the meeting at 12:21 p.m. Council Member Carter seconded the motion.

Vote: Aye – 4
Nay – 0
Absent – 1 (Tugman)

The motion passed.

Dalton George, Mayor Pro Tem

Brenda Henson, Administrative Coordinator