MINUTES – WORKSHOP/RETREAT
BOONE TOWN COUNCIL
March 11, 2016

CALL TO ORDER AND WELCOME

Town Council members in attendance: Mayor Rennie Brantz, Loretta Clawson, Jeannine Underdown, Jennifer Teague, Charlotte Mizelle, and Lynne Mason (arrived at 8:45 a.m.)

Planning Staff in attendance: Bill Bailey, Jane Shook, Brian Johnson, Christy Turner, Chris Grubb, and Brenda Henson

Other Town Staff in attendance: John Ward-Town Manager

Others in attendance: Allison Meade-Town Attorney

Mayor Brantz called the Planning Retreat to order at 8:39 a.m. Mr. Ward noted that there was a large agenda and asked Mr. Bailey to begin.

BOARD PROMOTION & ADMINISTRATION

Mr. Bailey referred to the promotional flyer contained in the packet and stated, if agreeable by Council, this would be the beginning of the campaign to promote board participation. Mr. Bailey stated there would be subsequent flyers outlining each board's function and the information would be placed on the Town's website. There was general consensus that the Council was agreeable to this approach at promoting board participation and Mr. Bailey stated he would work on developing the campaign and bring the information back to Council.

While on the topic of boards, Ms. Meade explained to Council members that they were allowed to attend functions where several Town Council members were present without violating the open meeting law as long as they did not consider or deliberate on any business.

Ms. Meade also suggested that a brochure explaining the appeal process would be a great tool for the public in helping them understand what they need to do to appeal a decision of staff.

MIXED-USE

There was discussion regarding recreation space, parking, and what mixed-use really means. Council agreed that there should be a mechanism to allow a fee in-lieu of recreation space. They also agreed that Staff should re-evaluate UDO Section 15.10 regarding livability space as well as evaluate mixed-use requirements over all.

PARKING

Minimum versus maximum parking requirements were discussed, as well as bicycle parking and "sufficient" parking. Council Member Clawson stated she wanted to have minimum parking requirements not maximums. Council Member Teague felt that the B1 should have different regulations that other zoning jurisdictions. Ms. Meade questioned why the Town mandated parking and Mr. Bailey replied that it helped to provide for more quality development.

Ms. Shook noted that the Town did not currently have the best standards for bicycle parking.

Council agreed that Staff should implement a parking fee in-lieu for downtown, create minimum and maximum parking requirements, change "sufficient" parking to "adequate" parking, and implement a bicycle parking campaign.

Mayor Brantz called a break in the meeting from 10:37 a.m. until 10:50 a.m.

DOWNTOWN

Mixed-use in the B1 was discussed. It was felt that King Street should have a more historic feel to it, while Howard Street would be better suited for a more mixed appearance.

Centralized parking in the form of parking decks was discussed.

UDO UPDATES

There was discussion regarding signs and whether they should be regulated by use, if there should be a sign registration program, placement of temporary signs, window signs, appearance standards for signs, and how sign size should be calculated.

Ms. Meade felt that temporary, unpermitted signs in the right-of-way could be removed by Staff. Ms. Meade noted Staff and a customer had recently had different interpretations of how to calculate sign size as it pertains to building frontage. Council agreed that the UDO should be more precise in its definition of building frontage to emphasize that building frontage is the side of the building providing pedestrian access into the business.

Mayor Brantz recessed the meeting from 12:00 p.m. until 12:49 p.m. for lunch.

Mr. Bailey spoke about stormwater runoff calculations and the expense of having an engineer do those calculations for very small projects. He noted that ASU students had been working to develop a tool to help applicants determine the runoff calculations themselves. There was discussion regarding the need for stormwater runoff calculation waivers for small projects that are less than 200 sq. ft. Council members agreed this should be pursued.

Driveway locations and water allocations were discussed.

The distance for notice of hearing requirements was discussed. Ms. Meade felt the Town's notice of 150' should be increased to 300' or 400'. Council members agreed that the notice area should be increased to 300'. Mr. Ward suggested that he, Ms. Meade, and Staff work together to come up with a solution, taking into consideration all aspects of notice before a final decision is made.

Differences between efficiency and one bedroom units were discussed.

It was felt that recreation use categories needed to be better defined.

Council agreed that Staff should pursue posting notifications for interpretations if the interpretation is site specific.

E1 & E2 ZONING DISTRICTS

Mr. Bailey asked Council members to look over the updates made to the E1 & E2 chart and let him know if they had any concerns. Ms. Shook noted that ASU could not have any projects outside of U1 until the E1 and E2 fields were populated in the table. Council Member Mason expressed concern that event venues in the Government Uses category would be permitted by right without regard for neighborhood impacts. She noted that the definition of government uses was broad and included the State of North Carolina and Watauga County.

Mayor Brantz called a break in the meeting from 2:23 p.m. until 2:38 p.m.

WELLNESS DISTRICT ZONING DISTRICT

Mr. Ward noted that ASU had announced a groundbreaking for their building in the Wellness District for April or May, 2016. Mr. Ward stated he would work with Mr. Bailey to complete the regulations for the district.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN AND LAND USE PLAN

Mr. Bailey felt that the Comprehensive Plan and the 2030 Land Use Plan needed to be updated in order to create a clearer vision of what the Town should look like. He suggested combining various plans into one document. Council Member Mason noted that there should be a public meeting in order to determine what is or is not working.

After some discussion, Council members wished to have Staff work on changes to the UDO before making any changes to the Comprehensive Plan.

PROGRAMS

Mr. Bailey stated that the Tree Board had been dissolved and Brian Johnson and Brad Vines would be the Town

Staff members who would maintain the Urban Forest Promotion and Protection Program, as required to meet Tree City, USA requirements. Mr. Bailey noted that there used to be a Mayor's Tree Fund containing money collected from tree cutting penalties and he believed that this line item was dissolved and the funds were placed in the General Fund. Mr. Ward stated the Town had received a monetary donation that may help with this program. Mayor Brantz felt this was an important program that should be pursued. Council Member Mason mentioned allowing a fee in-lieu of trees for commercial projects.

Mr. Johnson stated that the NeighborWoods program could present the opportunity to work with residents to plant and grow the tree canopy. He also noted that New River Light & Power had expressed a willingness to provide some matching funds to the program for the purchase of trees and to provide tree removal within the utility right-of-way when warranted. Mr. Johnson stated he would continue developing a plan for the NeighborWoods program.

Mr. Ward asked Mr. Bailey to provide him with a detailed list of educational, staff, and equipment needs for budgeting purposes for the Urban Forest Promotion and Protection Program.

Ms. Shook stated that the Town was in their 3rd year of participation in the Watch for Me program. She noted that promotional items and incidentals would require at least $1,000 to fund this year.

Mayor Brantz felt the bike rodeo was a great event and this was a good program to support.

ENFORCEMENT

The enforcement process was discussed.

Council agreed that education should be expanded, Staff should have the ability to remove temporary signs from the right-of-way, there should be a standardization of penalties, and active enforcement should continue on a Staff time available basis.

STAFF NEEDS

The need for a full-time Code Enforcement Officer to handle all Department related enforcement actions was discussed and Council was asked to consider the position.

2016 PRIORITIES - DEBRIEF AND REVIEW OF DISCUSSION ITEMS

Council set the following priorities for the Planning & Inspections Department for the coming year:

- Wellness District
- Parking
- Mixed-Use
- Signage
- Lighting Standards
- NeighborWoods Program
- Urban Forest Program
- Downtown Plan including parking & height
- E1 & E2
- Board Promotion
- Fees in-lieu
- Review Sign Registration

Mr. Ward suggested he, Mr. Bailey, and Ms. Meade work together to devise some incentives for redevelopment of undesirable properties.

Mr. Ward also felt that Planning & Inspections should be allowed to use their discretion to determine that a case needed to go to Public Hearing and go ahead and send it instead of sending the request to Town Council for permission to send the case to Public Hearing. Consent was given by Council.

ADJOURNMENT

With nothing further, Mayor Brantz adjourned the Planning Retreat at 4:18 p.m.

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Brenda Henson, Admin. Support Specialist

Christine Pope, Town Clerk

Rennie Brantz, Mayor