

TOWN OF BOONE
WELLNESS DISTRICT WORKSHOP
APRIL 13, 2015
5:30 P.M.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT:

Mayor Pro-Tem Rennie Brantz, Member Lynne Mason, Jennifer Pena, Quint David and Fred Hay

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chairperson Eric Woolridge, Vice-Chairperson Greg Simmons, Connor Boyle, Jon Tate, Matthew Long, Susan McCracken, Tom Purpur, Tom Jamison, Caroline Catoe, Frank Bolick and Maxwell Wlodarczak

STAFF PRESENT:

Bill Bailey-Planning Director, Jane Shook-Development Coordinator, Brian Johnson-Urban Design Specialist and Marlene Crosby-Board Secretary

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Pro-Tem Brantz called the meeting to order at 5:37 p.m. and turned the meeting over to Mr. Bill Bailey, Director of Planning and Inspections.

Mr. Bailey opened the meeting and explained that this was a charrette-style workshop with the Council and the Planning Commission to answer questions and hear public input on the draft Wellness District Small Area Plan. Mr. Bailey explained there were two different tables set up with copies of the proposed small area plan, maps and other adopted plans of the Town with Staff available to take questions on the proposed small area draft plan draft. Mr. Bailey encouraged everyone to participate and review the materials presented.

At 5:45 p.m. the informal public input session began until 6:14 p.m. when Mayor Pro Tem Brantz reconvened the meeting for discussion and feedback received on the proposed small area plan during the public input session.

Mr. Bailey explained why the proposed Wellness District Small Area Plan was drafted around wellness. He explained the difference between conventional code and the form-based code. He talked about the residential needs for the medical profession, and he talked about the property values. He talked about the need for other uses such as restaurants and coffee shops to be included in the proposed area.

Mr. Bailey said there was a question regarding the selection process for the properties shown on the proposed small area draft plan. He noted that Highway 321 was a natural boundary for a gateway into the proposed district. He explained that the idea for the gateways into the proposed district and the effort to create a neighborhood-like feel so that people know when they have entered and exited the proposed district. He further explained that natural boundaries were closer. He noted that the Brown property off of Fairway Drive would be removed from the area since single-use multi-family was no longer a permissible use within the district.

Mr. Bailey said that building materials were discussed a lot and the proposed draft does have provisions for corporate colors.

Mr. Bailey answered questions on building orientation and landscaping around buildings.

Mr. Bailey said the questions or concerns he heard in the public input session were about residential uses, property values, floodway and floodplain, architectural standards, street frontages. Mr. Bailey noted that one of the stakeholders had mentioned the possibility of having a therapy-type farm or rehab-animal rescue facility on her property. Mr. Bailey encouraged everyone to let him know of other uses they might have for uses in the proposed district.

Mr. Bailey said another question was about the retail use over 25,000 square feet. He said this type of question would be a policy question for the Council's consideration.

Mr. Bailey talked about the importance of parking for retailers and restaurants in the proposed district. Mr. Bailey said that consideration for the Middlefork Greenway along Deerfield Road was included in the proposed plan.

Mr. Robert Holton noted his concern for the prohibiting of the single-slope shed roofs. Mr. Bailey said that the idea of the single-slope shed roof was to prevent an addition to a building. He said the renderings in the draft plan do not show a mountain theme and he would encourage more of a mountain look in the architectural standards.

Mr. Jim Deal talked about his concern for walkability and the possibility of having a grocery store in the proposed district.

Mr. Holton asked Mr. Bailey to elaborate on the building of residential space in the proposed district. Mr. Bailey said that the proposed plan only restricts residential from the first floor.

Discussion ensued on density in the proposed district.

Dr. Ford said whether the building is leased or built, he talked about the high cost of development in the proposed district. He said with the cuts on an annual basis on government programs like Medicare and Medicaid, he does not see an average medical doctor being able to afford to have a practice in the area. Mr. Bailey talked about the marketing of the buildings and their uses in the proposed draft plan.

Mr. Deal talked about property values. He said that probably some of the properties values will go up and some will go down. He talked about the property along Highway 321 being sold by the front foot and it is the most expensive property in our community. He said property value is significantly diminished, if we include it in the proposed district with the limitations that are outlined in the proposed plan. Mr. Deal said that it does not make sense to include this property in the proposed plan.

Council Member David talked the options that developers have in the draft plan. He talked about restrictions and not making a decision based on one-piece of property.

Mr. Bailey talked about the state requirements for the encumbered properties by floodway and floodplain.

Discussion ensued on the square footage requirement for a building. Mr. Deal said that he felt a 25, 000 square foot restriction was an enormous restriction on a corridor property and it is the larger issue. Mr. John Ward, Town Manager asked Mr. Deal if he would have the same opinion, if the size restriction was not in the proposed draft plan, along with some of the requirements.

Mr. Deal said probably not. Mr. Deal said the idea is to make the process less cumbersome for a project. Mr. Deal talked about other ways that could impact the long-term property value.

Discussion ensued on the changes to the draft plan to allow 25, 000 square feet of retail in the corridor district.

Council Member Pena talked about what can be located in the proposed Wellness District and on Highway 321.

Planning Commission Member Susan McCracken asked with the form-based code, if we ever evaluated accumulative square footage in retail versus institutional versus office. Mr. Bailey said that is one way to look at uses. He said in a growth management environment this is exactly what you would think of. He said you would look at densities of different uses and control them through those mechanisms. He gave examples of different types of uses as it relates to density.

Mr. Tim Wilson asked Mr. Bailey how he derived at the residential shortage for professionals. Mr. Bailey said that he got this information from conversations with the hospital.

Mr. Tim Wilson told Mr. Bailey that he feels that the infrastructure has been neglected over the years and is it addressed in the draft plan. Mr. Bailey said that infrastructure is in the draft plan; however, the way it is addressed still needs to be determined. Mr. Bailey talked about the stormwater with consideration of sidewalks.

Planning Commission Member Frank Bolick left the meeting at 7:06 p.m.

Discussion ensued on the University's College of Health and Sciences project. Mr. Bailey said that from what he has seen of this proposed project, it is following the requirements in the proposed draft plan.

Discussion ensued on possible flooding in the area due to the construction of the College of Health and Sciences project. Mr. Bailey said the university will have to follow state guidelines, when developing this project.

Mr. Holton talked about the property he owns in the current R-3 zoning district in the proposed district and how he does not want his property to become a non-conforming use as it relates to re-development. He noted that most of these buildings were built in the 1970's.

Mayor Pro-Tem Brantz asked Mr. Bailey to outline the next step in the process. Mr. Bailey outlined to Council for their consideration, the direction that he would like to see the process

Council Member Mason said that she felt it was important to hear the comments and recommendations from the Planning Commission members on the proposed plan.

Council Member Mason said discussion is needed on the transition from Blowing Rock Road to the proposed Wellness District.

Discussion ensued on higher square footage, adding uses and still allowing design opportunities in the proposed district.

Discussion ensued on having a separate section in the proposed plan for properties that are located within the corridor district overlay.

MOTION AND VOTE:

Council Member David made a motion to direct staff to make some changes to the proposed Wellness District small area draft plan in order to present to the Planning Commission at their May 2015 meeting and to hear their comments in the form of a recommendation at the June 2015 Council meeting, seconded by Council Member Pena.

VOTE:

Aye – All
Nay- None

The motion carries.

Council Member David and Mr. Bailey thanked everyone for coming to the charrette. He said that he and Mr. Bailey are available, if they have any questions on the proposed plan.

Council Member Mason said it is important to continue the dialog on the proposed plan, as we continue to receive input from the various stakeholders.

ADJOURNMENT

Council Member Pena made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:22 pm., seconded by Council Member Mason.

VOTE:

Aye – All
Nay- None

The motion passed.

Mayor Pro-Tem Rennie Brantz

Planning Commission Chair, Eric Woolridge

Board Secretary, Marlene Crosby