

**TOWN OF BOONE WELLNESS
DISTRICT WORKSHOP MEETING
MINUTES
NOVEMBER 3, 2014**

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Pro-tem Rennie Brantz, Lynne Mason, Jennifer Pena, Fred Hay and Quint David

MEMBERS PRESENT: Chairperson Greg Simmons, Connor Boyle, Max Wlodarczak, Carolina Catoe, Tom Purpur, Susan McCracken and Jeff Templeton

STAFF PRESENT: Bill Bailey-Director of Planning and Inspections and Marlene Crosby- Board Secretary

OTHERS PRESENT: John Ward-Town Manager and Sam Furgiuele-Town Attorney

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Pro-Tem Brantz called the meeting to order at 6:13 p.m. and turned the meeting over to Mr. Bill Bailey, Director of Planning and Inspections.

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

This item was not discussed.

WELLNESS DISTRICT DESIGN STANDARDS WORKSHOP DISCUSSION

Mr. Bailey reviewed the fifty-two page Wellness District Design Standards draft plan revised on October 31, 2014. Mr. Bailey pointed out that in the beginning the Wellness District was called the Medical District Overlay.

Mr. Bailey said the Wellness District is anchored by the hospital and it services seven counties, five counties of which are primary counties. Mr. Bailey said this is a regional center for healthcare provision with the potential to provide medical services to approximately 300,000 people.

Mr. Bailey said the ultimate goal in looking at the Wellness District area was to see how the form-based code concept could be successful in the Boone area. Mr. Bailey added that another goal was to create a destination for health care services and to reduce traffic, when getting patients, employees and visitors from one place to another in the district.

Mr. Bailey talked about the role of the university, hospital and the town in regards to the proposed draft plan.

Mr. Bailey explained the areas in the draft plan that he feels still needs work. Mr. Bailey said parking is a large part of this small area plan that needs to be figured out, taking into consideration the needs of the patients, employees and visitors. Mr. Bailey further pointed out the potential for parking from Birch Street to Longvue Road with consideration to making it a pedestrian-friendly area.

Mr. Bailey talked about the condition and sizes of the existing buildings in the proposed Wellness District and the narrow streets.

Mr. Bailey talked about the direction that healthcare is going by consolidating and simplifying medical services and by moving the outpatient services out of the hospital, so they can use this space for more urgent or long-term care. Mr. Bailey said the outpatient services needs to be adjacent to the hospital as much as possible.

Mr. Bailey talked about the benefits in the proposed draft plan that would include crime prevention and safety which will attract workers to the area.

Mr. Bailey explained the challenges of forming the proposed draft plan and the process to complete the Wellness District Design Standards and zoning district.

Mr. Bailey referred to page nine, figure one of the District Map. He gave a brief overview of the proposed Wellness District area.

Planning Commission Member Templeton said that he thought in the early stages of the Medical Overlay District he was under the impression that the proposed draft plan was suppose to be an alternative to the current Unified Development Ordinance design standards. Mr. Bailey explained that you either had your conventional zoning in the existing UDO or you could select this proposed draft plan design standards. Mr. Bailey further explained that he realized this idea was not going to work, if the goal of the Council was to test how form-based codes would succeed or fail in the Boone area. Mr. Bailey said with this understanding this is how it became a total rezoning of the district with new regulations.

Planning Commission Member Templeton talked about the lack of incentives and the areas that are in the floodway. He talked about the areas that are all ready developed and the amount of undeveloped land owned by the university. He also talked about the developers taking advantage of the grandfathered properties because of the stringent restrictions placed on them by the proposed regulations.

Mr. Bailey pointed out on the map on page nine of the proposed plan the areas of the flood plain and flood way. Council Member David asked Mr. Bailey the difference between conventional zoning and form-based code. Mr. Bailey explained the difference in the design criteria and the change to narrowed buffers to help provide connectivity and the change of land use to mixed-use.

Council Member Pena asked how do we avoid more student housing? Mr. Bailey pointed out that there will be a heavy presence of university students in the Wellness District. Mr. Bailey talked about the type of building design and its bearing on student housing and the percentage of professional students looking to live in smaller dwelling units.

Mr. Bailey explained the proposed amount of commercial and residential use on the different floors of the buildings.

Planning Commission Member Templeton talked about the effects of restricting residential development in the district. He further explained that if you restrict student housing, you are creating value for properties that are all ready existing in the district.

Council Member David talked about the results of a housing study regarding empty apartment units. He also said that when people are looking for an apartment, they tend to go to a new apartment versus an old apartment with potential problems. Mr. Bailey said that he is seeing where renters are going for the new apartments over the older apartments with the only exception being the apartments adjacent to the university campus. Mr. Bailey pointed out that the older apartments are not easily converted to another use and they are expensive to convert.

Mr. Bailey reviewed the comprehensive list of Permitted Land Uses found on page 13 of the proposed draft plan. Mr. Bailey said that there will be an opportunity to consolidate long term parking. Mr. Bailey agreed with Planning Commission Member Templeton that a lot of the buildings are newer or have been substantially remodeled and not on the table for redevelopment for some time.

Mr. Bailey talked about the streets being a big issue due to their width, no sidewalks and limited right-of-ways. Mr. Bailey said how does the stormwater, pedestrian walkways, bicycles and automobiles get handled. On page 15 of the draft plan, Mr. Bailey reviewed the street hierarchy and gateways of the district. Mr. Bailey said because this is a themed district, we want people to know when they have entered and exited the district.

Mr. Bailey talked about the Greenway Trail connectivity to the university and he said the Middle Fork Greenway Trail will be added later.

Mr. Bailey reviewed the ways that the avenues function and how the traffic will flow through the district. He said we are researching the ways to design the streets and cross sections of the streets with consideration to landscaping and the separation of the streets from the buildings.

Mr. Bailey talked about how we accommodate medical uses and the way they are laid out and their positioning in the district. He said this is not in the draft plan at this time.

Mr. Bailey talked about the 40 and 60 feet right-of-ways on the local streets.

Mr. Bailey talked about the need to control stormwater and he explained the difference in rollover curb and standard curb and gutter. He said a decision needs to be made on how you want to control stormwater. Mr. Bailey further explained the volume control of the stormwater in the current system.

Mr. Bailey said that the gateway needs to be defined to help visitors determine where they are in the district.

Mr. Bailey talked about cross walks and how we announce them.

Mr. Bailey talked about the importance of having a good streetscape and having a pedestrian friendly environment with a large mix of uses and having restaurants and retail stores close by for people to walk to from the hospital and other businesses.

Mr. Bailey talked about several things in the streetscape standards regarding, tree plantings, LED lighting and who will control these things. Mr. Bailey said since the streets are owned by the Town, the Town might want to consider controlling the lighting. Mr. Bailey said the Town will control the signage as well.

Council Member David asked if we still need to follow the Dark Sky light requirements. Mr. Bailey said that we are going to implement the Dark Sky requirements in the proposed Wellness District. Mr. Bailey further explained the way this type of lighting works.

Mr. Bailey talked about street furnishings. He noted that the Appalcart will not change the look of their bus shelters to fit into the proposed draft plan.

Mr. Bailey talked about incorporating the Greenway Trail into the proposed draft plan to support the connectivity to the proposed Wellness District in relation to promoting a healthy lifestyle.

Mr. Bailey talked about the Greenway Trail map and he pointed out the red colored dash lines are surrounding the proposed Wellness District.

Mr. Bailey talked about open or public spaces and wanting to consider their placement with the ability to add public art in the proposed Wellness district.

Mr. Bailey began discussion on building orientation and entrances, setbacks and building siting. Mr. Bailey did not get a consensus of the Council on whether to move the buildings back or place them near the road with consideration to parking. Mr. Bailey said that he would locate some photos and present them at the next workshop to help show the difference in the location of the buildings.

Mr. Bailey talked about the concerns of the Council regarding the building height in terms of feet and the building scale in a pedestrian environment. He asked the Council, if they were comfortable with the height in terms of stories which are controlled by the building code or do you need to be thinking of this in terms of feet. The second question was how tall is too tall for buildings, if we move the buildings closer to the street without going into the valley effect or feeling closed in. Mr. Bailey talked about density and the high cost of property and the public moving more towards smaller lots and taller buildings to try to make up the difference.

Council Member Pena asked how high a story in a building can be. Mr. Bailey explained the amount of feet in the different types of stories with different uses. Mr. Bailey also went over the amount of feet per story that the university will be using in their building. Council Member Pena asked for a more specific example to define the feet in stories.

Discussion ensued on building scale. Mr. Bailey gave an example of the Farmers Hardware building on W. King Street being 35 feet high. It was noted that Mr. Brian Johnson, Urban

Design Specialist has a list of building heights of the downtown buildings. Mr. Bailey said he would email this document to Council for their review. Council Member Mason asked if we could combine heights with the maximum stories whether it be three or five stories with the height limitation grade. Mr. Bailey said yes.

Mr. Sam Furgiuele, Town Attorney pointed out that you are looking at the variability of height based on the base elevation and topography. He said you might want to allow higher heights on River Street and lower heights on Queen Street so you would not be completely out of scale. Discussion ensued on the building height of the hospital and college of health sciences. Mr. Furgiuele gave the building heights for the various zoning districts.

Mr. Bailey talked about Facades and said that we want to use materials that are compatible with the whole area of Boone and that will tell you that you are in a special purpose district. He said we are looking at neutral colors and using materials that require less maintenance and corporate branding, etc.

Mr. Bailey talked about Fenestrations and allowing windows and doors to take advantage of natural lighting.

Mr. Bailey talked about requiring pedestrian entrances and wanting them as close to sidewalks and parking lots.

Mr. Bailey talked about requirements for roofs in terms of design. Mr. Bailey said they want to take advantage of certain features. Mr. Bailey said they are looking at predominantly having flat roofs which are common in a commercial building. They are also looking at the ability to have green roofs and having colored plumbing stacks to blend in with the color of the roofs.

Planning Commission Member Templeton asked Mr. Bailey, if green roofs would be required and Mr. Bailey said no, they would be encouraged.

Council Member David talked about roof top gardens and said they would not be considered another story. Mr. Bailey agreed.

Mr. Bailey talked about integrating the Utilities, Mechanical Service Equipment and Dumpster Screening inside the buildings.

Council Member Pena asked Mr. Bailey how he is determining what is required versus what is encouraged. Mr. Bailey explained that he was covering the general design perimeters in this presentation. Mr. Bailey explained that he would like to have the Council's consideration and direction on how far they would want him to go on the design portion. Mr. Bailey said he was making notes of the feedback he is receiving from the Council and he will make alternatives accordingly. Mr. Bailey further explained that the university is asking for assurance that what they are proposing is going to work with the town's ideas in the proposed draft plan. Mr. Bailey further explained that he is trying to get an idea of the broader picture, so he can develop the regulations of the UDO from it.

Council Member David explained that the proposed zoning in the draft plan will allow more flexibility than what is in the other B zones of the UDO.

At 7:46 p.m. Mayor Pro Tem Brantz called for a ten minute break.

At 7:56 p.m. Mayor Pro Tem Brantz reconvened the meeting.

Mr. Bailey continued to talk about the Mechanical Service Equipment in relation to rooftop mechanical equipment. He also talked about the screening of penthouse elevators.

Council Member David asked about the code change for electrical meter boxes. He said that he did not want to see meter boxes in front of the buildings. Mr. Furgiuele explained the change to the code. Mr. Bailey added that when we get to that point of adding meters that would be a separate conversation with the utility department. Mr. Bailey added that he has a list of other utility issues that would need to be discussed. Mr. Furgiuele said that Mr. Rick Miller, Director of Public Utilities has done some preliminary research on this topic to reduce the amount of meters and try to maintain equalized cost and he suggested that we should go back to him for further discussion. Council Member Mason said one of the other issues with the code was there was no way to help people conserve. Council Member David talked about possible flow meters and monitoring system for them.

Mr. Bailey talked about requiring shared driveways to cut down on curb cuts as much as possible and the benefits of having shared driveways in a pedestrian friendly environment.

Mr. Bailey talked about parking and trying to eliminate impervious surface as much as possible and maximize the building footprint without sacrificing the green space.

Discussion ensued on a parking deck. Council Member Pena said she has no problem with a parking deck.

Mr. Bailey talked about the various ways of screening surface parking lots. Mr. Bailey said because we have such limited space for parking, it might be beneficial to have a stand-alone parking structure. Mr. Bailey talked about parking structures serving multiple purposes such as uses on the top deck.

Mr. Bailey talked about drive-throughs and the location of them.

Mr. Bailey talked about loading and unloading areas. Mr. Bailey said they would be screened and not seen from the pedestrian way.

Mr. Bailey talked about pedestrian walks and accessibility. He said the handi-cap ramps would be ADA compliant.

Mr. Bailey talked about two types of site furnishings which are private or public. Mr. Bailey said that within limits we want the furnishings to match the pedestrian environment.

Mr. Bailey talked about landscaping and wanting a more lush type environment by combining drive-ways and creating more dense type buffers. Mr. Bailey said the fencing will be the screening tool. Mr. Bailey pointed out other ways of adding landscaping.

Mr. Bailey talked about the benefits of fencing and how ornamental fencing can be used to separate the private from public areas.

Mr. Bailey talked about having pedestrian site lighting with bollards. Discussion ensued on getting the right amount of foot candles and illumination figured out.

Mr. Bailey talked about different ways to screen vehicles. Council Member David talked about bio-retention for parking lots. He said they typically go down instead of up like a ditch with vegetation. He said this looks more like a berm in the photograph. Mr. Bailey said that storm water will alter some of these things. Mr. Bailey said you can still do bio-vegetation type swells that allow the water to come in and filtrate. Planning Commission Member Boyle said a rain garden could be used.

Mr. Bailey talked about the proposed district being in a floodplain which will limit what can be done in this area. Mr. Bailey said depending on the style of development the federal rules will have to be followed. Mr. Bailey said the Town adopted the states' rules and the state adopted the federal rules. Mr. Bailey pointed out on the map on page 49 of the draft plan where the streams and rivers are located and where a storm-retention area is located on Furman Road shown as a rectangular box.

Planning Commission Member Templeton asked Mr. Bailey if the university has to comply with all the rules that are being discussed in this proposed draft plan. Mr. Bailey said that the university would need to comply with the zoning regulations but not to the building code. Mr. Bailey said the university is subject to the state's rules with regard to floodplain and soil erosion control. Mr. Bailey explained that the Town adopted the state's model for flood water for special flood hazard areas. Mr. Bailey said basically the town and university are required to follow the state's rules but the university will not come to the Town for approval. Mr. Bailey confirmed that the design standards developed for this area will be binding on the university.

Planning Commission Member Purpur talked about the building setbacks.

Council Member David said he is willing to work with the university on any issues that may arise regarding the proposed draft plan to help them with the construction of their building.

Mr. Bailey explained the involvement of the university's consultant from Cole, Jenest and Stone in creation of the proposed draft plan and other university personnel that was involved in the proposed draft plan. Mr. Bailey confirmed that what the university needs is what the Town wants to see in the proposed Wellness District.

Planning Commission Member McCracken said that currently the university use is not approved in the O/I or B-3 zoning districts. She said that the proposed draft plan more broadly defines the

types of uses that can be in a small area plan which is more realistic to how our community will operate in the future.

Mr. Bailey talked about the floodplain, floodway and flood fringe and explained the areas listed under the Hydrology Legend on the Hydrology map. Mr. Bailey explained where the university is going to develop on State Farm Road and they are trying to stay within the all ready developed footprint from prior development.

Mr. Bailey talked about watershed, stream buffers and stormwater. Mr. Bailey said with regard to stormwater, there would need to be discussion on low impact techniques. Mr. Bailey talked about stormwater strategies. Mr. Bailey said at this time, we can do low impact design and this is allowed by the state.

Mr. Bailey talked about wayfinding signage and the various techniques for signage throughout the proposed Wellness District.

Mr. Bailey asked the Council for questions or direction on what was presented to them.

Council Member David commented and thanked the consultants for their help and expertise on the creation of the draft plan.

Council Member Mason asked Mr. Bailey to recognize everyone that was involved in working on the proposed draft plan. Mr. Bailey outlined the following: Mayor Ball, Council, Planning Commission, Planning Commission sub-committee members which were Eric Woolridge, Greg Simmons, Matt Long, Jon Tate, Maxwell Wlodarczak (Appalachian Student), Brian Williams and Yogi Collins from the Community Appearance Commission, Tree Board and Bill Bailey, Jane Shook and Marlene Crosby (Planning and Inspections staff). Cindy Hoffman, Consultant from Cole, Jenest and Stone from Raleigh, North Carolina, Paul Boney, Senior Vice-President from LS3P Associates, Ltd from Charlotte, North Carolina and Herbie Hames, Hospital Consultant from Criterion Healthcare and Carol Acquesta, Architect from Appalachian State University and others from the university.

Mr. Bailey further explained how the town, hospital and university informational feedback was processed into the proposed draft plan. Mr. Bailey said it has been a tremendous relief to have a consultant to balance out all of the information.

Council Member Mason asked if they anyone wanted to share any of their thoughts on the proposed draft plan that was presented.

Ms. Carol Acquesta, Architect at Appalachian State University said that this is an exciting and unique opportunity for the town, hospital and university to have a collaborative partnership. She said that the university had some significant challenges to overcome with the site but they have overcome most of them, if not all of them. She said hopefully the university will be able to continue to work together to develop some standards that will help the college of health sciences come to fruition. She thanked the Town for the opportunity to work with the university on this proposed draft plan.

Mr. Herbie Hames from Criterion Healthcare shared his involvement in the proposed draft plan. He said he is working with Mr. Richard Sparks representing the hospital. He gave credit to Cole, Jenest and Stone and LSP3 Associates for taking a model with formed-base code and applying it to the proposed Wellness District. He said he talked with Mr. Bailey last week and talked a lot about healthcare and this area being a regional destination. He said this means that vehicles will be coming to this region and the formed-base code controls the movement of these vehicles to allow patients to come here and get from one place to another by foot and by vehicle. He said that the hospital wants to see some minor changes. He talked about adding restaurants and coffee shops with keeping in mind the hospital is a 24 hour facility. He talked about the future growth of the hospital. He said that Cole, Jenest and Stone and LSP3 Associates are moving in the right direction with their work on the proposed draft plan.

Mr. Bailey said he is proposing the adoption of the proposed draft plan. He said after the adoption of the proposed draft plan, the Planning and Inspections staff would work on the regulations for the proposed Wellness District. Mr. Bailey explained that after the adoption of the proposed draft plan, he would then come back and have further presentations and discussions on the things that the Council is requesting more information on.

Council Member Mason asked Mr. Bailey what is the relationship between the proposed draft plan and the Unified Development Ordinance. Mr. Bailey explained how this will work. Mr. Bailey explained that after the creation of the Wellness District the regulations have to be developed to control what happens in the Wellness District. Mr. Bailey explained the process after the adoption of the proposed draft plan, if adopted. Mr. Bailey explained the public hearing process.

Mr. Bailey asked the Council and Planning Commission if they would like to hear from the engineers, architects and consultants that were familiar with the proposed draft plan.

Mr. Paul Boney, LSP3 Associates came to the podium and talked about building heights between the different buildings in the area and gave some perspective on the difference in floor heights in feet per floor in the college of health sciences building. Council Member Pena said that this information was very helpful. Discussion ensued on building heights for academic buildings without restricting the growth of the hospital and density requirements. Ms. Cindy Hoffman, Cole, Jenest and Stone talked about different uses having different floor to floor ratios.

Council Member David talked about this area being the place for taller story buildings compared to other areas of the Town.

Planning Commission Member McCracken talked about visiting the City of Raleigh and talked about her feeling of walking and driving through their areas that have tall buildings with regard to setbacks, etc. She said she would like to see a discussion on the visualization of this for the proposed Wellness District. Mr. Bailey said that he can provide photos to help improve visualization.

Council Member Pena explained her understanding of what was presented in the proposed draft plan and how it could have been better understood, if it had been written or presented differently

with regard to the visualization of the buildings. She said she would have liked to have seen the information on the building height in the beginning of the presentation rather than at the end of the presentation.

Mr. Bailey explained the earlier concept was considered was to put the property on the other side of State Farm Road in a separate area of the proposed draft plan.

Council Member Mason asked if this would be site specific or district specific. Mr. Bailey said that you would need to call out those areas to have different design criteria in the plan and the Council would adopt the plan. Mr. Bailey added that the hospital will be limited because they are in the Watershed.

Vice-Chairperson Simmons asked if it is site specific, he said he is not taking this to mean that every project is going to be a conditional district use project within this district. Mr. Bailey agreed. Vice-Chairperson Simmons also pointed out that the Wellness District is not King Street and you cannot make it look like the medical mile, if we try to make it look like King Street. He also noted that this area is located within the Watershed and it is in a basin and it is a great place to achieve height. Council Member Pena agreed.

Planning Commission Member Templeton talked about the lack of incentives for the private sector to want to re-develop any of the existing properties into what we want to see. He suggested that we find some ways to incentivize, if the proposed draft plan is something we want to see to happen. Council Member David agreed that he would like use whatever incentives the staff can find to use in this area as well.

Planning Commission Member Templeton asked if it too early to tell how these proposed design standards will impact the temporary trailers located at the hospital because they do not currently meet the proposed design standards. Mr. Bailey said that the hospital's consultant will figure all the hospital changes out.

Mr. Bailey asked the Council if they wanted to set another workshop date and public hearing date at this meeting. It was the pleasure of the Council to set up another workshop date at this time. Discussion ensued on the date and time of the next workshop.

Mr. Bailey explained the timing of the completion of the next workshop and public hearing on the proposed draft plan.

SET DATE FOR NEXT WORKSHOP

Council Member Mason made a motion to schedule the date of a special meeting for the purpose of a workshop to continue to discuss the proposed Town of Boone Wellness District Design Standards draft plan at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, November 17, 2014 after the 5:30 p.m. Council meeting, seconded by Council Member David.

VOTE:

Aye- All
Nay - None

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The motion carries.

SET DATE FOR SPECIAL PUBLIC HEARING

This item was not discussed.

ADJOURNMENT

The workshop was adjourned at 9:12 p.m.

Rennie Brantz, Mayor Pro-Tem

Marlene Crosby, Board Secretary

Greg Simmons, Planning Commission Vice-Chairperson