MINUTES – WORKSHOP/RETREAT
BOONE TOWN COUNCIL
November 15, 2016

WELCOME

Mayor Brantz called the Planning Retreat, held in Town Council Chambers located at 1500 Blowing Rock Road, to order at 8:39 a.m.

Town Council members in attendance: Mayor Rennie Brantz, Jeannine Underdown Collins, Loretta Clawson, Charlotte Mizelle, Lynne Mason, and Jennifer Teague

Planning Staff in attendance: Bill Bailey, Jane Shook, Brian Johnson, and Brenda Henson

Other Town Staff in attendance: John Ward-Town Manager

Others in attendance: Allison Meade-Town Attorney, Phil Trew-Facilitator, and Kate Hayes-Planning Commission

UPDATE

2016 MID-YEAR PLANNING RETREAT RECAP OF PRIORITIES

Mr. Bailey stated that the following list of priorities was from the mid-year Planning Retreat and not in any order.

Board Promotion & Administration - An intern has worked on this task but it was not considered a higher priority.

Mixed-Use - To be discussed at this meeting.

Parking - To be discussed at this meeting.

Downtown - To be discussed at this meeting.

Signage - Staff is working to re-do the sign ordinance.

Stormwater - Rich Crepeau's class worked on formulas and has developed a spreadsheet that still needs to be streamlined and simplified.

Hearing Notices - Property owner notification for projects requesting a Planned Development was increased from 150' to 300' which exceeds requirements of state law.

Recreational Use - This topic was deferred until after the Mountain View Speedway case was resolved.

E1 & E2 - No direction was given by Town Council.

Wellness District - The Wellness District has been partially established and rezoning of the entire district will be going to the November Public Hearing.

Comprehensive Plan and 2030 Master Land Use Plan - No definitive direction was given by Town Council but a desire was expressed to combine the two documents into one.

Urban Forest Program - No actual direction was given by Town Council, just the idea that the program was important. The program has been set up and the staff from the Tree Board was shifted to this program. Public Works and Planning are working well together.

Neighborwoods Program - This program has been refined.

Watch for Me - Several events have been held and this program has been very successful.

Enforcement - Enforcement zones were created and each zone patrolled. Numerous violations were discovered and most were corrected with phone calls, resulting in few written notices of violation. There has been a downturn in the number of sign violations since beginning area wide enforcement.

Staff Needs - No action was taken.

Lighting Standards - No action was taken.

UPDATE: URBAN FOREST PROMOTION & PROTECTION PROGRAM

Mr. Johnson explained that the Neighborwoods Program allowed the Town to partner with neighbors to provide replacement trees through the Boone Relief Program, which would operate with matching funds. Mr. Johnson stated that the Town has interest in partnering with Ed Miller from New River Light & Power regarding tree pruning and replacement. Mr. Bailey stated they were getting close to ready to present the program to Town Council and the program would help maintain and build the tree canopy.

Mr. Johnson noted that the Town did receive the Tree City USA award this year. He also stated that on Friday, November 18, 2016 at 10:00 a.m. there would be an Arbor Day event with the kids at Hardin Park School. Mr. Johnson stated that the Town may try to partner with the Chamber of Commerce in the spring to have an Arbor Day event geared more toward adults.

Council Member Mason asked if DOT had given a time when they would be installing the trees they promised to install on 421. Mr. Ward replied that he had talked with Mike Pettijohn from DOT and the trees are still in DOT's budget but because it is too dry right now, they will likely not be installed until spring. Mr. Johnson added that the trees would be small, ornamental trees no more than 4" in caliper.

DOWNTOWN DESIGN

The proposed Historic Core and Interface Area that was proposed as a result of the Community Appearance Commission's workshop regarding their proposed Downtown Design Guidelines was discussed. Mr. Bailey stated it did not appear that there would be a Downtown Historic District but felt there could still be a Historic Core and an outlying Interface area.

Mr. Ward suggested that the Historic Preservation Commission make a list of properties that could be designated as Local Landmarks and work toward getting those properties designated as soon as possible.

It was the consent of Council to expand the Historic Core to include Farmers' Ski Shop and Footsloggers properties on Depot Street. Council Member Teague stated for the record that she did not agree with the Historic Core or the Interface.

Building heights were discussed and it was suggested that 3 stories be allowed in the Core and 4 stories in the Interface with parapets, elevators, and rooftop amenities being exempt.

Mr. Bailey stated they would come back to Town Council with changes and illustrations.

A break was taken from 10:18 am until 10:30 a.m.

Mr. Bailey suggested a general use rezoning of B1 for the areas and modifying the B1 standards in the UDO instead of applying them as an overlay district. Council Member Teague stated she was not in favor of rezoning and would rather have the standards applied as an overlay. Mr. Bailey noted that, as proposed, all properties in the Historic Core and the Interface would be zoned or rezoned as B1. Mr. Ward added that the Municipal Service District should include residential properties.

Council Member Clawson asked if the Historic Preservation Commission could have a copy of what was decided about the Historic Core and the Interface Area. Mr. Ward replied that as soon as the issue was settled the HPC could have a copy.

MULTI-FAMILY IN MIXED-USE

Mr. Bailey stated that multi-family in mixed-use created a series of challenges such as empty commercial space, parking problems, and multi-family housing in a commercial district.

James Milner with Appalachian Commercial Real Estate addressed the Council. Mr. Milner stated he considered himself an expert in commercial real estate and felt that the ratio of commercial space versus residential space in mixed-use projects was not correct. He also noted that the Affordable Housing Task Force recommendations from 3 years ago had only created 3 project that utilized the ordinance requirements in 15.10.

Ms. Meade provided everyone with a handout showing development requirements of R3 multi-family versus B1, B2, and B3 multi-family in mixed-use **(on file)**. She posed the question of where the Town really wanted multi-family development. Ms. Meade stated that the requirements in 15.10 were a deterrent for renovations. She felt that the scale and massing of projects in the B1 be addressed but maintain the requirement of multi-family in mixed-use in the B1.

Mr. Bailey stated that mixed-use is currently required for all multi-family projects in the B3 district and questioned what kind of scale would be comfortable outside of Downtown.

Council Member Teague noted that scale was relative to setbacks.

Lunch break was taken from 11:57 a.m. until 12:33 p.m.

There was discussion regarding recommendations for mixed-use. Council Member Teague suggested a 20' setback for mixed-use along corridors. It was felt that a solely multi-family building was not acceptable along a corridor. Allowing multi-family in mixed use along a corridor with a 50% ratio of floor area and getting rid of double-dipping was suggested. Also suggested was requiring buildings along the corridor to be strictly commercial but allowing strictly multi-family buildings to be located behind the commercial building on deep lots.

Setbacks that allowed buildings to be placed close to the street were a concern due to the creation of a tunnel effect, the lack of landscaped area along the street, and the illusion that there is no parking for the building. It was suggested that at least 1 row of parking be placed at the front of the building.

Council Member Mizelle felt that the requirement for parking garages should be removed.

Ms. Meade suggested the requirement of on-call management versus on-site management.

Council Member Mason suggested that the Affordable Housing Task Force revisit UDO Section 15.10.

PARKING

Mr. Bailey stated there were no requirements for parking in the B1. Council Member Mason felt there should be a provision that on-site parking be provided. Council Member Clawson stated she could not believe the Town would allow residential buildings to be built without parking.

Ms. Meade mentioned a parking fee in-lieu that would go toward parking structures. Discussion ensued regarding parking decks. It was the general consensus for the Town Manager to move forward with research and plans for a parking deck at Town Hall and on Queen Street. Ms. Meade noted that Alan Crees with Municipal Engineering had stated that parking structures would not work in the B3 due to ordinance construction regarding floor area and open space.

Ms. Meade suggested revising Article 16.

A break was taken from 2:06 p.m. until 2:16 p.m.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN & BOONE 2030 LAND USE PLAN

Mr. Bailey stated it would take a lot of Staff time to update both documents and felt a blending of the documents

would be easier. Council Member Teague asked if the current workload would allow Staff to take on this task. Mr. Bailey replied that it could be done by Staff but would take about 6 months. Mr. Ward asked Mr. Trew if the High Country Council of Governments could contract the merging of the documents and he replied that they could. Mr. Ward suggested the blending of the 2 documents then looking toward doing updates or a rewrite in the future. Council Member Mason felt the Planning Commission should play the lead role in this exercise. It was suggested that the COG update a section then send it to Planning Commission for review and then on to Town Council. Mr. Bailey stated that the Comprehensive Plan was required and should be the basis of the blended document.

RECAP AND DIRECTION

Downtown Design

- Planning & Inspections will revise guidelines
- Provide photo examples
- Allow 3 stories in the Historic Core and add maximum height
- Allow 4 stories in the Interface Area and add maximum height
- Allow exemptions for roof penetrations
- Allow for rooftop amenities
- Add Farmer's Ski Shop and Footsloggers to the Historic Core
- Implement through rezoning and text amendments
- Update HPC of proposed changes

Multi-Family in Mixed-Use

- 20' setback
- No double count for recreation or parking
- No multi-family only buildings on corridors
- Require 50% commercial floor area along corridors
- Allow multi-family only buildings behind commercial on some lots
- Further direction from Comp Plan update
- Have AHTF review UDO Section 15.10

Parking

- Pursue fee in-lieu for Downtown
- Proceed with Town Hall parking deck
- Proceed with Queen Street parking deck
- Streamline the revised Intensity Table

Comprehensive Plan & Boone 2030 Land Use Plan

- Have COG blend Comp Plan, 2030 Plan, West Downtown Alive Plan, and the Wellness District Small Area Plan
- Use Comp Plan as basis
- Have Planning Commission review blended document section by section

PRIORITIES

1. Downtown - Update HPC then send to the January Public Hearing for rezoning
2. Article 15 - Setback changes to November Public Hearing
3. Article 16 - To Planning Commission in November or December
4. Multi-Family in Mixed-Use - Clean up language about commercial space and send to November Public Hearing. Send full revisions to February Public Hearing.
5. Parking deck financial feasibility - John Ward working on
6. Revise Intensity Table - Allison Meade will streamline and send to January or February Public Hearing

ADJOURNMENT

Council members discussed the December 12, 15, and 19 Town Council meeting dates noting that the December 19 Public Hearing may be cancelled.

With nothing further, Mayor Brantz adjourned the Planning Retreat at 3:41 p.m.

Brenda Henson, Administrative Support

Rennie Brantz, Mayor