

Town of Beech Mountain
Planning Board Meeting Minutes
August 4, 2009

Call to Order:

Chairman Paul O'Connell called the meeting to order at approximately 9:05 A.M. Other board members present in attendance were Andy Porter and Brian Barnes. Town Council member Pete Chamberlin was also present for the latter portion of the meeting.

Adoption of Agenda:

Brian Barnes made a motion that the agenda be adopted. The motion was seconded by Paul O'Connell and carried with no opposition.

Approval of Minutes:

Paul O'Connell made a motion that the minutes of the July 7th meeting be approved. The motion was seconded by Brian Barnes and carried with no opposition.

Discussion of Sign Ordinance Recommendations:

At their meeting on July 14th, the Town Council approved the amended Sign Ordinance to go before a public hearing on Tuesday, August 11th (during the next council meeting). However, in approving the amendments to go before the public hearing, it was asked that the Planning Board clarify its position regarding the material and style requirements for Residential and Commercial Signs. Specifically, it was asked that we consider the allowance for commercial signs to be "raised" or "shaded or painted to provide a three dimensional appearance," while residential signs are required to be "routed, sandblasted, or carved."

Andy Porter noted that the intent of the sign ordinance is to regulate those signs which lie in view of the general public and give others an impression of our town. As most residential signs are in low-visibility areas and their audience is limited, it seemed counter to our purposes to regulate them more stringently. Also, he noted that a large percentage of the residential signs in town would fail to comply with this standard, and that strict enforcement may result in substantial backlash from the public. He suggested making the requirement for residential signs the same as for commercial signs, or possibly more lenient as to allow painted residential signs.

In order to make the standard for residential signs the same as for commercial signs, whether attached or detached, and to keep the wording as clear and concise as possible, Brian Barnes moved that the Planning Board's position with respect to Section 1906(b) as pertains to material and style for residential signs is that it be changed to read "All residential signs must comply with section 1909(f) and 1909(g)." This motion was seconded by Paul O'Connell. After some discussion the motion was carried with no opposition.

In accordance with this decision, a letter stating the Planning Board's position in this matter will be drafted and sent to the Town Council for their consideration at the August 11th meeting.

Other Business:

Brian Barnes raised the issue of the Town's need for sidewalks and a "Streetscape" along the main thoroughfare of Beech Mountain Parkway. It was noted that there had been such a plan prepared at an earlier time, but that it had not been carried through. The danger that is posed by pedestrians walking along the road was discussed. It was also mentioned that the Town may not require a total "Streetscape" that included landscaping, benches, and lights. It was suggested that a sidewalk alone may spur this type of beautification, because individual business owners may provide benches and landscaping on their own or through private donations to attract pedestrian traffic. The Board discussed other neighboring towns' successful streetscape plans and the consensus was that, were funding available, Beech Mountain would greatly benefit from such a project.

At this point Pete Chamberlin suggested that the Planning Board look into the creation of a trail that would connect the commercial district of Beech Mountain Parkway to the trail head for the Pond Creek trails and the town's existing trail network at Perry Park. He stated that such a plan would compliment and augment a streetscape design in the commercial district. He provided a tax map that illustrated that the Fire Department and the Town already owned much of the land that would be necessary for such a trail, and that access to another small strip of land that was previously owned by the town would provide the rest of the land necessary to complete the project.

Finally, it was asked that Town Staff look into the creation of a regulation that specifically and clearly addressed the creation of high density institutional developments such as "Hope After Dope" within Town limits.

Adjournment:

With no further business, it was moved that the meeting be adjourned. Said motion was seconded and carried with no opposition.

Respectfully Submitted,

**James Scott
Secretary to the Board**