

Town of Beech Mountain
Planning Board Meeting Minutes
December 1, 2009

Call to Order:

Vice Chairman Andy Porter called the meeting to order at approximately 9:05 A.M. Other board members present in attendance were Bill Watson, John Hoffman and Brian Barnes. Newly elected Town Councilmember Paul Piquet was also present for the meeting. Director of Public Works Riley Hatch and Sanitation Director David Hicks were present for various portions of the meeting.

Adoption of Agenda:

Brian Barnes made a motion that the agenda be adopted. The motion was seconded by Andy Porter and carried with no opposition.

Approval of Minutes:

Andy Porter made a motion that the minutes of the November 3rd meeting be approved. The motion was seconded by Brian Barnes and carried with no opposition.

Discussion of Possible Alterations to Garbage Bins Provisions:

The Board reviewed all changes created to the garbage bins provisions based upon the direction given at the previous Planning Board meeting. After reviewing and approving these changes, John Hoffman raised the issue of the continued use of in-ground receptacles. Bill Watson noted that in-ground receptacles were originally required by the Carolina Caribbean restrictive covenants, and suggested that it would be fair to “grandfather” these and allow their continued use. Other board members noted some of the problems with these underground bins, such as filling up with water, their location being obscured by ice and snow, the difficulty they impose on collection personnel, and animals and rodents falling in them. The board then considered whether existing underground bins should be allowed if they are kept in good working order. David Hicks stated that there are approximately 75 underground bins still in use on the mountain, the vast majority of which are not in good working order. Mr. Hicks then stated his opinion that it would be beneficial to phase out all the underground bins. He stated that they are “backbreakers” for collection personnel, they are generally in poor condition, they are difficult to locate, and they fill up with water. The board therefore agreed that it was necessary to phase out underground garbage bins. Brian Barnes made a motion that July 1, 2010 be used as a deadline for both the incorporation of the new garbage bin standards and the replacement of all underground garbage bins. Said motion was seconded by John Hoffman and carried with no objection. It was agreed that sanitation personnel would provide the Planning and Inspections Department with a list of underground garbage bins so that they could be notified of the new requirements.

Mr. Hicks also noted the problem that many residences’ garbage bins were not located near the right of way, and that collection personnel often had to walk up steps and

close to a person's house to collect their trash. Staff explained that the current ordinance already required that bins be placed "as close to the right of way as is practical," and that bins in other locations should be required to be moved. Mr. Hicks then stated that he was willing to continue to pick up garbage that was not near the right of way for persons with special needs.

Staff then asked Mr. Hicks his opinion on the incorporation of "mailbox flags" and lids on garbage bins as our proposed ordinance revisions would require. Mr. Hicks said that he was in favor of both measures, and that bins that currently had flags and lids were working well.

A motion was made and seconded to submit these changes to the Town Council at their January meeting. Said motion was carried with no opposition.

Discussion of Public Feedback to Elderberry Ridge Stopsign Proposal

The Board then considered public feedback to the proposal of emplacing a stop sign on Elderberry Ridge Road. Brian Barnes reported that he had spoken with Cliff Elder, a property owner along Elderberry Ridge Road, and that he was adamantly opposed to a stop sign being emplaced at that location. Andy Porter noted that to his knowledge, there have been no traffic accidents at this location, and therefore he did not see a pressing need for locating a stop sign there, especially given the public opposition to this measure. Public Works Director Riley Hatch stated that he felt it would be better to emplace a "Left Turn Yield" sign at this location. However, he further suggested that the Board consider simply allowing Public Works to correct the erroneous painting of the road lines at that location, and move forward with a "Left Turn Yield" sign only if problems persisted. The Board was in agreement with this proposal.

Other Business

The Board discussed possible agenda items for the next month's meeting, including a conditional use permit overlay request from Beech Mountain Club and a preliminary discussion of a sidewalk/ streetscape plan in the Town Center area. Riley Hatch noted that as Beech Mountain Parkway is a state-maintained road, any plans would have to be approved by the DOT. It was noted that the Town of Banner Elk would provide a great resource in this area, as they had recently completed a sidewalk project. Staff agreed to contact Banner Elk and gather information from them for discussion at the next meeting.

Finally, the Board discussed maintenance of town road signs and the enforcement of the sign ordinance in reference to real estate and rental signs. It was questioned whether signs posted in windows of residential homes are regulated by the ordinance, and it was determined that they are not.

Adjournment

Having no further business, Bill Watson moved that the meeting be adjourned. Said motion was seconded by Brian Barnes and carried with no opposition.

Respectfully Submitted,

**James Scott
Secretary to the Board**