

# TOWN OF BEECH MOUNTAIN

## Planning Board Meeting Minutes

April 16, 2014

### **Call to Order:**

Chairman Andy Porter called the meeting to order at 6:05 PM. Other Board Members present in attendance were Pete Chamberlin, Matt Lavigne, James True and John Hoffman. Town Councilman Alan Holcombe was in attendance, as well as several persons from the community, including Fred Pfohl, and Jim Frye.

### **Adoption of Agenda:**

The agenda was adopted as presented.

### **Approval of Minutes:**

There was a motion that the minutes be approved. Said motion was seconded and passed with no objection.

### **Public Comment Period:**

There were no public comments.

### **Discuss Architectural/ Aesthetic Standards for the Commercial Corridor:**

James Scott walked the group through a presentation on the possibility of architectural standards in Beech Mountain. He began the presentation by showing a video on architectural standards produced by the NC Dept. of Commerce, Division of Community Assistance. The video showed examples of different types of development and discussed why people tend to prefer certain types over others. It also demonstrated the importance of good design and asked whether we want to pass along and preserve for our children places that have value and character.

Following the video, Mr. Scott discussed that the objectives of the meeting were to 1. Gather feedback from stakeholders to determine if the community desires architectural standards for the commercial corridor of Beech Mountain, and 2. If standards are desired, which topics and characteristics should be regulated and in which ways. He stressed that this meeting was not intended to address the details of how the standards would work or the particulars of what would be regulated. This meeting, rather, was intended to gather general feedback from which a draft set of standards could be created that would be further explored at later meetings.

Mr. Scott explained that good design was important because it was a key component of "community character" that had been identified by respondents to the Comprehensive Planning Survey as a major concern for the town. The Comprehensive Plan that was developed pursuant to that survey and other public input made identifying, preserving, and enhancing that community character a main priority.

The presentation then showed photos of various local examples of where good design and aesthetics had not been priorities. Mr. Scott explained that without architectural standards, it was likely that this type of development would occur in Beech Mountain. These examples included structures with large parking lots in front of the buildings that set the buildings back and made them seem isolated and unwelcoming. Some of the buildings seemed like they were built to be used by cars rather than humans. They also included prefabricated metal buildings, buildings with no windows along the road frontage, and buildings with flat roofs.

The presentation then went on to consider what the characteristics of Beech Mountain's current built environment that made it special or desirable. Examples were shown of structures that illustrated that Beech Mountain's commercial structures tend to be residential in scale. Other photos showed the use of wood, stone and natural/ local materials in the construction of appealing buildings. Still more photos showed some of the prevailing architectural styles in the area. These included chalet designs, round houses and deck houses, among others.

Fred Pfohl discussed some of the history of design in Beech Mountain. He discussed how the original development had very tight architectural controls that made the place unique, but that these had relaxed over the years. He also discussed the development of the town of Helen, Georgia and how that town visited Beech Mountain when developing their Bavarian theme. It was discussed that the architectural controls in Helen made that town a successful tourism destination.

The next part of the presentation involved discussion of when architectural standards would apply. It was discussed that standards should only be applicable to commercial or multifamily development, and only in the designated Beech Mountain Parkway corridor. It was also discussed that aesthetic standards should only apply to the exterior of structures. Finally, James Scott said that he felt that the standards should only apply to new buildings, new additions to existing buildings, and alterations or modifications to existing buildings would either have to comply with the standards or substantially return the building to its original character. Some of the feedback received at this point indicated support for making the standards more broadly applicable. It was suggested that the standards should apply if a project cost was more than a certain percentage of the value of the structure, or if the project involved more than a certain percentage of the area of the structure. Jim Frye advocated for farther-reaching standards.

Next the discussion turned to the area in which the standards would apply. James Scott showed a map of what he called the "Commercial Corridor" of Beech Mountain Parkway. This area included all parcels that were zoned for either commercial or multi-family use that were adjacent to Beech Mountain Parkway from Town Limits to the entrance to Beech Mountain Resort. Those present agreed that this area was the area in which the standards should apply.

The discussion then turned to which features of structures should be regulated. James Scott introduced a series of features that could be regulated and then asked for feedback following each. The topics included roofing materials, roof slope, scale, windows, site aspects including setbacks, landscaping, parking, pedestrian access, and the potential prohibition of prefabricated metal buildings.

James Scott discussed that a potential way of regulating these items was through the use of a “points system” in which an applicant would receive points for their project having desirable characteristics in each of the above categories. Once a certain number of points were established, it would demonstrate compliance to the reviewing body (presumably the Planning Board in an Architectural Review capacity). Fred Pfohl and others questioned whether such a system had ever been used before and suggested that Beech Mountain model our system after other localities. James Scott, however, felt that such a system was preferable to many other methods, because it allowed for flexibility, but still encouraged good design.

James Scott thanked those present for their attendance and feedback, and stated that their input would be used to draft a set of potential standards that would be discussed by the Planning Board and potentially sent to the Town Council for consideration.

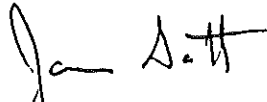
**Other Business:**

There was no other business.

**Call to Adjournment:**

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded and carried.

Respectfully Submitted,



James Scott  
Secretary to the Board

