

TOWN OF BEECH MOUNTAIN

Planning Board Meeting Minutes

July 29, 2014

Call to Order:

Chairman Andy Porter called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM. Other Board Members present in attendance were Max Riley, Pete Chamberlin, Matt LaVigne, and John Hoffman.

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 Requirements for the Commercial Thoroughfare

The Board resumed the discussion of potential Arch/ Aesthetic requirements for the Commercial Thoroughfare by picking up where they had left off previously.

The first item the board discussed was the way that the proposed ordinance used a list of desired characteristics as “allowed” followed by a list of characteristics that are “prohibited.” It seemed to cause confusion because the “allowed” list implied that it was exclusive- that is, that these were the only methods that could be used. James Scott contended that the intent was that the “allowed” list simply put forth things that were to be encouraged. It was decided that the headings for these lists should be changed to “recommended” rather than “allowed”.

Next, the board reviewed the proposed standards for windows. The board decided to remove wording that required a minimum of 1 window per 500 sq. feet of unbroken wall area and replace it with wording that required “a minimum of 10% of each unbroken wall façade greater than 100 sq. ft. facing Beech Mountain Parkway” to be windows. The board also decided to remove wording that prohibited “horizontal windows”. Instead, it was decided that language should be inserted that required windows to be a minimum of 2’ wide x 4’ tall.

Regarding colors, the board decided to remove the stipulation that “non-earthtone stains” were prohibited. They also decided to remove “windows, sills, and gutters” from the definition for “trim” as it applies to the regulation of color.

Regarding parking lots, the board decided to remove much of the language that applied to “parking lot yards” as these provisions were intended for larger developments that are irrelevant to Beech

Mountain. Moreover, it was decided that the qualifier “if terrain allows” should be added to mandates regarding the location of parking to the sides or rear of buildings. It was also decided that much of the language regarding “buffer yards” was superfluous and unnecessary.

The board then began to discuss the location of a required planting strip along the road and where that would be in relation to the 15’ strip of land that was proposed to be set aside for sidewalks. James Scott reviewed the ordinance at this time to try to answer these questions and became concerned that the current language did not clearly specify that an easement was to be set aside for future walkways. Andy Porter reiterated that the intent had been to require the dedication of such an easement even though the walkways may not be required at this time. It was questioned where the 5’ planting strip would be located if the development opted for on street parking as encouraged by the ordinance. It was clear that this aspect of the ordinance needed to be revisited. Max Riley stated that he felt that the ordinance should say that an easement would be required at the locations where it was depicted on an officially adopted pedestrian plan. It was discussed that such language would be acceptable even if such a plan had not yet been created or adopted.

The board decided that it would like to look over this proposed ordinance at least once more, with some of the problems addressed and corrections made as discussed in this meeting. It was hopeful that the proposed ordinance would be ready to send to the Town Council after one more Planning Board meeting.

Discussion of Benefits of Walkable Communities:

Summer intern Keri Hutchins made a presentation to the Board about the benefits of walkable communities. She began by handing out a diagram entitled “Town Maker’s Guide: Healthy Building Placement.” She explained that this illustration showed two different potential development methods for the same tract of land. One was conventional development standards, the other was a more walkable layout. The conventional development tended to be more automobile focused, while the walkable development was more people-focused. In this illustration, the aesthetics of the walkable development were more appealing than the large parking areas and narrow sidewalks of the conventional development. Other benefits of the walkable development included slower traffic speeds and more efficient use of space. She discussed that data and statistics show that younger generations prefer more walkable environments. Discussion that followed concerned the fact that due to topography, development as depicted in the illustration was not always possible. Furthermore, this illustration depicted an environment that was much more urbanized than Beech Mountain would ever be (or would desire to be). Nevertheless, the Board agreed that there are some benefits to more walkable development.

Other Business:

James Scott had proposed several items to be discussed under “other business.” Both items pertained to complaints or concerns that had recently been brought to his attention.

The first item was in regard to the parking of RV’s on residential lots. It was discussed that currently the Town has no prohibition of parking RV’s on residential lots, as long as they were out of the right of way. There were concerns about people bringing RV’s to camp on vacant lots. James Scott felt that while the ordinance didn’t prohibit parking of RV’s on lots (especially on occupied lots) it did prohibit camping in them. Some discussion involved whether there should be

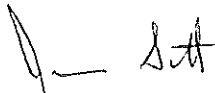
time limits for parking RV's or whether permits should be required. After some discussion it was decided not to pursue any changes to this policy.

The second item was in regard to camping on residential lots. James Scott mentioned that this was a topic that the Town Attorney had recommended that the Planning Board address, especially after some of the problems caused by camping during last summer's "Gnarnia" festival. John Hoffinan mentioned that this had been discussed before and that the board wanted to make it clear that camping was allowed on lots with a house for short periods of time- i.e. they didn't want to prohibit kids from camping in their back yards. It was decided that perhaps the board should look into an ordinance that specifies this in the future.

Call to Adjournment:

A motion to adjourn was made, seconded and carried.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Scott". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and a stylized "S".

James Scott
Secretary to the Board