



Incorporated 1927

Town of Lake Lure

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Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Zoning and Planning Board

Tuesday, October 18, 2011

Lake Lure Municipal Center

Chair Paula Jordan called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

ROLL CALL

Present: Paula Jordan
Ric Thurlby
Bruce Barrett
John Wizniewski
John Moore, Town Council Liaison

Absent: Donnie Samarotto

Also Present: Suzy Smoyer, Planner/ Subdivision Administrator, Recording Secretary
Shannon Baldwin, Community Development Director
Sheila Spicer, Zoning Administrator
Chris Braund, Town Manager

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Paula Jordan recommended changes to the agenda, including postponing old business to a later date. Specifically, the discussion regarding open storage of vehicles in commercial zoning districts will be postponed until the November meeting, and the discussion regarding off-premise signage for civic organizations will be postponed until the Board discusses the economic development, transportation and appearance elements of the Comprehensive Plan. **Mr. Wizniewski made a motion to approve the agenda with the changes. Mr. Barrett seconded the motion.**

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The minutes of the September 20, 2011 regular meeting were approved as written upon a motion made by Mr. Wizniewski and seconded by Mr. Barrett.

DISCUSSION

(A) Presentation of Elements of the Lake Lure Comprehensive Plan

i. Natural Environment and Open Space

Chair Paula Jordan made a presentation of Section 10 of the Comp Plan: Natural Environment and Open Space, noting that the beauty, the varied topography and wildlife, and the health of the environment have always been important to residents and visitors here, and are the basis of our tourist economy. The key concern for the environment in 2006-07, the years when the plan was developed, was the rapid, unmanaged development then impacting water quality, wildlife habitat, and the safety and appearance of steep slopes and ridgelines in the town and surrounding area. Chief culprits in the damage were sedimentation and erosion from construction and deforestation; polluted stormwater runoff from construction sites, golf courses, agriculture, and such impervious surfaces as parking lots and roadways; as well as structure damage and erosion due to several destructive floods in the previous decade.

Ms. Jordan reported that good progress has been made since 2007, developing regulations for safe construction on steep slopes and flood plains, preservation of open space, and protection of trees, clean water, and scenic views; then commented that there is still work to be done. The protections begun need to be completed and sustained as the economy improves and development begins again. This is particularly important given the continuing growth of ecotourism – tourism based on active enjoyment of the natural world – which depends vitally on the health and beauty of the environment. Economic opportunity lies not only in serving the expected increase in attendees at Chimney Rock State Park (the Park) over the coming years, she said, but also in attracting and serving the many thousands of younger tourists who enjoy hiking, boating, rock climbing, trail biking, bird watching, and many other activities in the healthy natural environment that the Lake Lure area provides. She ended her talk with comments about the rediscovery of hiking trails near the Town Center that were first developed in the 1920's.

ii. Economic Development

Bruce Barrett gave a presentation of Section 2 of the Comp Plan: Economic Development, first commenting that updates were needed on that section given the economic downturn and continuing sluggishness since the Comp Plan's completion. He reviewed the demographic makeup of the town as reported in the Comp Plan, noting an average population growth rate of 3% per year over the past forty years, that there is a broad range of income here, and that the median age is much higher here than in the county or the state as a whole, largely due to our high percentage of retirees. He commented that there has been a change in employment patterns over the past five years with real estate and construction being much slower, but that tourism is a strong component of our economy.

In the area of issues and opportunities he noted that the town needs an overall economic development strategy to deal with the changes over the past few years, then commented

that there are untapped revenue streams available to us, such as the new gateway to the Park, and potential offerings in the arts and other special events. The Comp Plan recommended the development of a school here to attract a younger population and to spur economic growth, an expectation now being fulfilled as the new Lake Lure Classical Academy enters its second year.

In the area of goals, objectives, and policies he noted the Comp Plan's recommendation that the town should diversify the economy for long-term stability, develop a unified strategy for economic growth, capitalize on opportunities to provide balance and stability, and encourage new business to locate within commercial nodes in the town. Another key goal noted in the Plan is to balance residential life and tourism, enhancing tourism based on recreation and natural heritage assets.

The presentations ended with a general discussion of the issues presented, particularly the benefits and economic opportunity arising from the new school and from expanded ecotourism that strikes a balance between development of new recreational opportunities and continued environmental protection. Also discussed was the proposed revitalization of the Town Center area, to improve the local economy by better serving ecotourists, Park visitors, and the shopping and entertainment needs of the community as a whole.

(B) Consider Site Visits to other Town Centers such as Biltmore Village, Biltmore Park and Cherokee.

The Board discussed visiting each of these town centers. The Board decided to schedule a site visit immediately following the November Zoning and Planning Board Meeting.

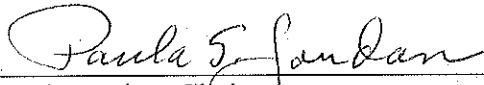
(C) Consider Amending Title of Board from "Zoning & Planning Board" to simply "Planning Board" in Bylaws.

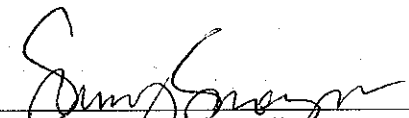
The Board briefly discussed a name change, as suggested. **John Wisniewski made a motion to keep the existing name of the Zoning and Planning Board. Mr. Barrett seconded the motion. All were in favor.**

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 a.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, November 15, 2011 at 9:30 a.m. at the Lake Lure Municipal Center.

ATTEST


Paula Jordan, Chair


Suzy Smoyer, Recording Secretary