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Town of Lake Lure

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Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the Zoning and Planning Board

Tuesday, January 17, 2012

Lake Lure Municipal Center

Chair Paula Jordan called the meeting to order at 9:35a.m. Ms. Jordan asked that the Board take a moment to remember Dick Washburn, noting that she doesn't know anyone who has given that much service to the community. Mr. Wisniewski remembered when Mr. Washburn would call him on Mondays before the Zoning and Planning Board to confirm that he would be at the meeting. The Board continued to share kind words about Mr. Dick Washburn.

ROLL CALL

Present: Paula Jordan
Ric Thurlby
Bruce Barrett
John Wisniewski
Donnie Samarotto
John Moore, Town Council Liaison

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

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Mr. Samarotto made a motion to approve the agenda with the changes. Mr. Wisniewski seconded the motion. All were in favor.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The minutes of the December 13, 2011 regular meeting were approved as written upon a motion made by Mr. Wisniewski and seconded by Mr. Samarotto.

2012 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS

The 2012 Schedule of Meetings was approved as presented upon a motion made by Mr. Samarotto and seconded by Mr. Thurlby.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Mr. Wisniewski made a motion to elect Paula Jordan as Chair and Donnie Samarotto as Vice-chair. Mr. Barrett seconded the motion and all were in favor.

OLD BUSINESS

(A) Discussion regarding amending the Zoning Regulations to define “special events” and identify zoning districts for this type of use.

Paula Jordan gave an overview of the progress made with the sub-committee since the last meeting. Bruce Barrett and Paula Jordan, members of the sub-committee, met with Town Staff to discuss the amendment in more detail. There were a number of unanswered questions as outlined in the memo. Ms. Jordan suggested that the sub-committee will need additional time to review and discuss the issues outlined in the memo. Mr. Samarotto indicated that he is concerned about the impacts that an amendment would have on the events held a Rumbling Bald. Ms. Jordan assured him that the intent was to support these types of establishments and not scare away business, while protecting community concern. Ms. Jordan suggested sending a memo to Town Council requesting additional time. Mr. Barrett made a motion to send a memo to Town Council. Mr. Samarotto seconded the motion. All were in favor.

(B) Discussion regarding amending the Subdivision Regulations to allow creation of new lots without water and sewer services provided that future development on these lots is prohibited based on a conservation easement, deed restriction or other similar restriction.

Suzy Smoyer gave a brief overview of the proposed amendment that would change the definition of open space and allow for the subdivision of open space tracts without water and sewer services provided that they meet certain criteria. She reviewed the draft resolution included in the ZPB packets. There was a discussion regarding the various scenarios that this section would be applicable. It would be a voluntary process that a property owner could use in order to subdivide property that they would like to preserve as open space and that does not have access to water and sewer. Mr. Barrett made a motion that staff drafts a definition of passive recreation, and bring the proposed amendment back to the Zoning and Planning Board at next month's meeting. Mr. Samarotto seconded the motion. All were in favor.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN PRESENTATIONS

(A) Paula Jordan – Transportation Element

Paula Jordan gave a presentation regarding Transportation and Circulation. A copy of this power point presentation will be saved with the Community Development Department. Shannon Baldwin told the group about the January 26th meeting with

NCDOT regarding the proposed Comprehensive Transportation Plan for Lake Lure, Chimney Rock and Chimney Rock State Park.

(B) Identify presenters for February presentations

Donnie Samarotto and John Wisniewski will make presentations at the February Zoning and Planning Board meeting.

DISCUSSION

(A) Report on Sign Investigations and Progress

Sheila Spicer gave an overview of a report on sign investigations and progress. Ms. Spicer gave an overview of two ongoing projects related to signage in town limits: wayfinding signs and abandoned signs.

At the request of Pat Buede with the Hickory Nut Gorge Chamber of Commerce, Town Council directed the Zoning and Planning Board in August, 2011 to review the regulations concerning off-premise directional signs for civic organizations and make any recommendations for amendments. The Zoning and Planning Board discussed this issue at their regular meeting on September 20, 2011. They voted at that time to postpone further discussions regarding this issue until after reviewing applicable sections of the 2007-2027 Town of Lake Lure Comprehensive Plan, specifically the sections pertaining to economic development, community appearance, and transportation. In addition to Ms. Buede's request, other business owners in town have expressed a desire to post off-premise directional signs to assist visitors in finding the businesses. The current state of the economy has significantly affected area businesses, and business owners feel wayfinding signs could be an important economic development tool. One point to keep in mind when considering off-premise directional signs is the fact that Memorial Highway has been designated a scenic byway by the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT). Section .0224 of the NCDOT Regulations for the Control of Outdoor Advertising prohibits new off-premise, outdoor advertising signs along scenic byways. The NCDOT is beginning the development of a regional transportation plan, and the town is petitioning them to integrate wayfinding signage into the overall plan process.

The Zoning Regulations, in §92.147 and §92.159(B), designates a sign that advertises a business that is no longer in operation an abandoned sign. The Town Manager has asked for an opinion on an enforcement approach for certain abandoned signs in town limits. Ms. Spicer had discussions with James Evans, Engineering Technician with NCDOT, about these signs and other billboards along Memorial Highway advertising defunct businesses. Mr. Evans has stated that NCDOT can require these sign owners to remove the advertising for these businesses; however, placing an "available" notice on the billboard is all that is required to bring it into compliance with NCDOT standards. Ms. Spicer recently completed an inventory of business identification signs in town limits and identified twelve signs for businesses that are no longer in operation. (See attached photos.) These include both freestanding signs and signs attached to buildings. Per the

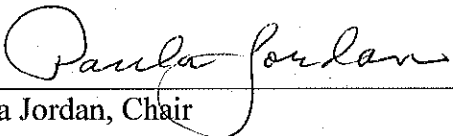
regulations, the town has the authority to require that these signs be removed. For some of these, removing the signs would be a relatively simple matter. However, some of these signs are held by sign supports that are either permanently affixed to the building or on supports that would be difficult to remove and potentially expensive to replace once a new business is in place. In most cases, the property owner would most likely simply remove the sign and leave the empty sign support in place, as has been done at Willowbrook Properties, if removal of the abandoned sign was required. Therefore, the economic impacts to the property owner and the aesthetic impacts to the community as a whole need to be carefully weighed against any benefits that would be gained by removing advertising for obsolete businesses.

John Wisniewski made a motion to appoint himself and Paula Jordan on a sub-committee to study the sign regulations. Paula Jordan seconded the motion and all were in favor.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Mr. Wisniewski and seconded by Mr. Barrett, the meeting was adjourned at 11:32 a.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, February 21, 2012 at 9:30 a.m. at the Lake Lure Municipal Center.

ATTEST



Paula Jordan, Chair



Suzy Smoyer, Recording Secretary