

REGULAR MEETING
TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE
BOARD OF ADJUSTMENT
APRIL 5, 2011
TUESDAY - 5:30 P. M.
TOWN HALL - 9 SOUTH MAIN ST.

The Board of Adjustment held a regular meeting Tuesday, April 5, 2011. Members present were Gail Cross, Mack Noland, Mike Erwin, John Richardson and Neal Ensley. Also present at the meeting were Land Use Administrator Byron Hickox, and Administrative Assistant Eddie Ward. Chairperson Mike Erwin called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Approval of Minutes of March 1, 2011

Neal Ensley moved, seconded by Mack Noland to approve the minutes of March 1, 2011 as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Conversion of Old Waynesville Hospital - Request for Conditional Use Permit - from office use to multi-family residential apartments with 53 units.

Mike Erwin asked Byron Hickox to give a review of the Conditional Use Permit to convert the Old Waynesville Hospital from office use to multi-family residential apartments with 53 units. Mr. Hickox stated that any residential units with more than five units, or any development more than 100,000 square feet, are required to obtain a Conditional Use Permit. This project has fifty-three units proposed.

Mr. Paul Fitch, 2618 Monticello Dr., Winston Salem, NC., representing Hollis Fitch of Fitch Development Co., was asked to give a presentation of the rehabilitation plans to convert the Old Hospital into fourteen two-bedroom apartments, and thirty nine one-bedroom apartments for the elderly. The age requirement for these individuals is sixty two years of age and older.

Fitch Development will be using Historical Tax credits from the National Park Service to rehabilitate the building. The facade of the building will remain intact, and the interior features will be refurbished to their original design. Because of additions over the years, the configurations will be different from room to room. The State of North Carolina requires 700 square feet for a one bedroom apartment, and 900 square feet for a two-bedroom apartment. The apartments will not be designed for grandparents raising grandchildren or for children to stay overnight. The building will house a common area and a recreation area that will be appropriate for senior adults. Sun porches, gazebos, and a walking trail will also be incorporated into the area for the residents.

The trees that are planted in front of the Old Hospital were originally planted in memorial of residents of Haywood County who have given their lives for their country. There are memorial trees there also for doctors who have served the community for long periods of time. One very large tree, on the corner of East Marshall St. and North Main St., will require a specialist to help save the tree. A rock wall is along the sidewalk near the tree. The wall is cracked, and if it is brought up to current code, the roots will be exposed and the tree may have to be eliminated.

Mr. Fitch provided the Board with pictures of other buildings his company has restored in different states. He said all building codes will be adhered to, including access ramps that will be wheel-chair friendly.

The Board had several questions for Mr. Fitch. John Richardson asked if each apartment had individual kitchen facilities. Mr. Fitch explained each apartment would have full kitchen facilities, along with appliances. The kitchen in the Old Hospital is being used now to prepare meals for Meals On Wheels. This organization will be moving to another location soon and Mountain Projects will lease the kitchen for a nominal fee, and begin providing meals to the elderly and children. Renovation to the kitchen will be very minimal.

Gail Cross inquired about management for this project once residents are in place. Mr. Fitch said Gem Management Company from Charlotte, NC, would be managing the facility. This company manages several facilities, the closest being an elderly project in Sylva, NC. There will be an on site manager five to six days a week.

Neal Ensley asked if the existing elevators would be used or updated. Mr. Fitch stated the shaft of the old elevator could be used, but most likely one new elevator will be installed.

All traffic will enter and exit on the East Marshall Street side and parking will be on that side as well.

The income requirement for residents is in the \$21,000 - \$22,000 annual income range for a single person, and about \$28,000 annual income for two people.

The building is now on the nomination list for the National Register for Historic Buildings in the state of North Carolina. Byron Hickox stated the Historical Preservation Commission has given the development full endorsement for placing this building on the National Registry. Most of the renovations to the building will be to the inside, landscaping, and parking area. The halls inside the building are wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs and are handicapped accessible. The National Park Service requires that historical features of the building be preserved.

Mack Noland asked about the purchase transaction with Haywood County. The actual transaction has not been completed, Mr. Fitch explained. Fitch Development Company has applied for the first phase of the affordable housing tax credits with the NC Housing Financing Agency, and will file a tier two application in May 2011. This means that if all is approved, closing would be approximately in February or March 2012. The estimated completion date of the project is twelve to fourteen months. The floor tile in the building has asbestos, which will require longer than normal to remove. The building is five stories high and has 56,000 square feet. The parking lot will be level with the main entrance to the building on the first floor.

Chairperson Mike Erwin asked for any questions from the public. The first to speak was Francis Satterfield, 61 Overbrook Drive, Waynesville, NC. Ms. Satterfield asked if the windows in the building would be replaced. Mr. Fitch said the National Park Service wanted the windows to be maintained as close as possible to the original, meaning they will be replaced with new wooden

framed windows to duplicate the originals installed in the 1950's.

Ms. Satterfield also had some questions about the integrity of the residents moving into the facility. She was told the management will do a credit check on each tenant and a credit score of 550 will be required. Local police records will also be verified for each person.

Karen Kreitzburg of 365 East Marshall St, Waynesville, asked if the development company completed a project like this before, then changed the requirements for accepting tenants. Mr. Fitch explained that with the tax credits a contract is signed and requires a 30-year agreement that the project remain the same.

Dennis Dixon of 508 Big Cove Rd., Waynesville, asked about the restrictions concerning Section 8 housing. Mr. Fitch said as a general rule, in the family apartments, tenants pay their own rent. The typical range for rent is \$445 to \$550 per month. There is an opportunity for subsidy with vouchers for elderly citizens through Mountain Projects.

The security system for the facility will include a camera system that covers the parking area and the entrance and exit doors.

Chairperson Mike Erwin asked Mr. Hickox to present the Findings of Fact. He then asked if anyone had any more comments or questions for the board. A motion was made by Mack Noland and seconded by Gail Cross to approve the Conditional Use Permit conversion of the Old Waynesville Hospital from office use to multi-family residential apartments with 53 units. The motion was approved unanimously.

Adjournment

With no further business, Gail Cross moved, seconded by John Richardson to adjourn the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

Mike Erwin
Chairperson

Eddie Ward
Administrative Assistant

