

REGULAR MEETING  
TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE  
PLANNING BOARD  
JANUARY 21, 2008  
MONDAY - 5:30 P.M.  
TOWN HALL

The Planning Board held a regular meeting on Monday, January 21, 2008. Members present were Don Stephenson, Dan Wright, Rex Feichter, Gary Sorrells and Marty Prevost. Also present were Planning Director Paul Benson and Deputy Town Clerk Freida Rhinehart. Chairman Rex Feichter called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

Approval of Minutes of November 19, 2007 and December 17, 2007

Don Stephenson moved, seconded by Dan Wright, to approve the minutes of November 19, 2007 and December 17, 2007 as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

Application Requesting an Amendment to Land Development Standards to Permit an Increase in Sign Size Within the North Main Street Boulevard District

Staff Report:

The applicant, Sam Underwood, has applied for an amendment to permit larger monument signs in the NM-BD. Currently, the maximum size is 16 square feet with a maximum height of 4 feet. The stated reason for this request is that Mr. Underwood's building, located on the corner of North Main and Felmet Street, has multiple tenants and poor visibility, necessitating a larger sign than is currently permitted. The applicant is requesting that the maximum sign size in the NM-BD be increased to 32 square feet with a maximum height of 6 feet.

Staff Recommendation:

In reviewing this request the staff looked at the maximum sign sizes currently permitted in all other mixed-use/commercial district. All mixed-use districts either have a maximum size of 32 square feet with a maximum height of 6 feet, or 16 square feet with a height of 4 feet, except for the Central Business District with a maximum size of 24 square feet and a maximum height of 6 feet.

Business District Regulations for Free-Standing Signs:

Central Business District:

- Historic district – no free-standing signs
- Wall Street – 16 sq. ft., 4 ft. height
- Other – 24 sq. ft., 6 ft. height

Dellwood - Junaluska Area Center

32 sq. ft., 6 ft. height

Hazelwood Town Center:

16 sq. ft., 4 ft. height

High Tech District:

32 sq. ft., 6 ft. height

Hyatt Creek Area Center:

32 sq. ft., 6 ft. height

North Main Street Boulevard District

16 sq. ft., 4 ft. height

Pigeon Street Neighborhood District:

16 sq. ft., 4 ft. height

Raccoon Creek Neighborhood Center

16 sq. ft., 4 ft. height monument

Russ Avenue Town Center

32 sq. ft., 6 ft. height

South Main Business District

32 sq. ft., 6 ft. height

The staff agrees with the applicant that the maximum sign size should be increased to 32 square feet with a maximum height of 6 feet in the North Main Boulevard District. This district center is on a major thoroughfare with the primary use being medium-sized businesses. Many properties have more than one business, making the larger sign size desirable.

Any increase in signage raises concerns about aesthetic issues; however even with this increase in size the sign regulations will still promote much more attractive signage than currently exists in this district, where most existing signs exceed even these increased standards. In addition, a more reasonable new sign standard should promote replacement of existing nonconforming signs, whereas an unduly restrictive new sign standard promotes the preservation of existing nonconforming signs, defeating the intent of the ordinance.

Paul Benson presented a slide show of existing signs in the district between Felmet Street and West Marshall Street. The average size sign there is 40-50 sq. ft. with an average height of 15 to 20 ft. The thing that troubles him about the current situation is that with the 16 sq. ft. limitation, there is little incentive to improve their signage. Most of the main thoroughfares in town allow signs that are 32 sq. ft. Also, in this district most of the lots on which businesses are located are larger and the businesses set further back off the street. In Town Center districts, the businesses are more heavily concentrated in one area.

Rex Feichter said that he would like more time to consider the matter with more information and input from other Planning Board members since attendance was low for this meeting. Marty Prevost agreed. Mr. Benson responded that it could be carried over for 32 days but a recommendation to the Board of Aldermen would have to be made at that time.

Dan Wright and Don Stephenson agreed that the 32 sq. ft. signs for this district are appropriate. Mr. Stephenson pointed out that being more lenient with signage would encourage those with the large obnoxious signs to downsize their signs as well. Mr. Benson said that by having a very restrictive sign size those businesses that have large signs will just replace the face of the old sign rather than replacing it with a much smaller sign. If the sign requirements allow larger signs, existing businesses will be more likely to replace old signs that are non-compliant.

Dan Wright moved, seconded by Don Stephenson, to recommend to the Board of Aldermen that the permitted sign size in the North Main Street Boulevard District be increased to 32 sq. ft. with a maximum height of 6 ft. The motion carried. Marty Prevost and Rex Feichter opposed. Don Stephenson, Dan Wright and Gary Sorrells voted in the affirmative.

Preservation Way Condominium Development - Preservation Way and Park Drive - East Waynesville Neighborhood District (EW-ND)

Staff Report:

Description: This project consists of a total of 48 dwelling units contained in 3 buildings on a 6.53 acre property with a density of 7.4 units per acre. The maximum permitted density in the EW-ND is 16 units per acre. There are two larger buildings with 18 units each, and a smaller building with 12 units. All three buildings have three levels, but the individual dwelling units are 1-story. Of the 48 units, 29 are two bedroom and 19 are one bedroom.

Other features of the project include a new lane connection between Preservation Way (off Bellview Road) and Park Drive (off Hillside Road), and 69 parking spaces arranged into 2 parking lots and 9 on-street parking spaces. Sidewalks are planned along the internal lane extending to Park/Hillside and to Preservation Way. A woodland mulch path is also shown extending approximately 500'.

Plan Review Comments:

1. The buildings meet all applicable standards for entryway, maximum height and scale.
2. The parking lot adjacent to Building 1 is shown with two entryways on to the private lane; these do not meet the minimum separation of 50' measured between the closest edges.
3. Parking and vehicular use area buffers are not shown to include tree plantings 30' on center as required.
4. Planning Board approval should be contingent on the Town Public Works Director's approval of utility plans, including the stormwater management plan.
5. A lighting plan with point-by-point footcandle array and light fixture specification are required if site lighting is planned.

Staff Recommendation:

The staff recommends Planning Board approval of this project on condition that the issues in staff comments 2 and 3 are revised, and that utility plans be approved as indicated in comment 4.

Presentation of the project was made by Peter Alberice architect for the project and Matt Sprouse landscape architect.

Mr. Sprouse addressed the site plan for the 6.5 acre property located at the end of Preservation Way and Hillside Drive which sits atop a knoll. They are making application for 48 condominium units located in 3 buildings. The site plan attempts to supply the buildings with necessary parking and amenities while adhering to the ordinance. The plan as presented allows for much more preservation of the site. They will have a lane connection from Hillside Drive to Preservation Way. Hillside Drive will be the primary access to the property. The property is probably within a 10 minute walk of downtown so marketability should be very high.

It is proposed that the two larger buildings front on the lane and the smaller building on Preservation Way. This will allow for parking to the side and rear of the buildings and there are some on-street spaces. The ordinance requires 62 parking spaces. To allow for visitors, 68 spaces are planned. Only 3.01 acres are being disturbed of the 6.5 total acres. The disturbance is all on the top which allows trees to remain surrounding the site. The top of the knoll had already been scraped clean years ago by another developer, sewer and water are already there, so disturbance will be kept to a minimum. Stormwater will be handled by the use of pervious pavers and rain gardens. The landscape plan will exceed ordinance requirements. The sidewalk will come up Hillside at street level and connect to a private pathway for the owners with a connection to Preservation Way. Preservation Way will remain much as it is now so as to allow for preservation of the stone wall and surrounding area. The second entryway has been eliminated to comply with Item 2 of the Staff Report. The trees have been brought together in the parking lot to 30 ft. on center, they are working with civil engineers on the stormwater management plan, and the lighting plan is in process.

Mr. Alberice said the buildings are about 10,000 sq. ft. per floor. The units will be stick built and will be for sale. It is anticipated that the units will be a mix of primary and seasonal homes. Buildings 1 and 2 are the larger. Each building must have two exits. There will be enclosed corridors and entryways. Approximately 2/3 of the units are 2 bedroom, 2 ½ baths of approximately 1200 sq. ft. The 1 bedroom, 1 ½ bath units are approximately 1000 sq. ft. All units have balconies off the living room space. Building entries are on the second level from the parking lot side so the buildings blend in with the landscape. The buildings are intended to look like large mountain houses with stone foundations, clapboard siding, cedar shakes architectural shingles. It will be broken up with different dormers and gables so it appears to be a cluster of houses into one larger building rather than a monolithic building with a single roof over it. No artificial materials will be used.

Marty Prevost asked if there would be any garages. Mr. Alberice responded that all parking will be open.

Rex Feichter asked if “green” building guidelines would be followed. Mr. Alberice replied that the North Carolina Energy codes which are rather stringent will be met.

Dan Wright said he would like to see more of the natural timber look and detailing of the gable ends. The buildings appear to be very “boxy” and plain. Mr. Alberice explained that these drawings are block models to give an idea of the mass. None of the final details are being presented now.

Gary Sorrells asked if the buildings are handicap accessible. Mr. Alberice answered they are—both the entrances and elevators.

Marty Prevost complimented their efforts to preserve trees.

Dan Wright asked what checks and balances are available to assure compliance with the exterior appearance standards. Mr. Benson responded ordinance requirements have been met and any conditions that the Board of Adjustment might wish to place on the conditional use permit can be added. Some architectural detail can be requested to make the project more harmonious with surrounding properties. Mr. Benson said town staff primarily looks at compliance with the ordinance but the Planning Board can make recommendations that might be appropriate concerning appearance. There is room for discretion with a conditional use permit. Mr. Wright’s main concern was having an attractive development project and would like to have someone representing the Town back in the loop to assure this happens.

Mr. Benson explained that developers typically like to have permits in hand before architectural plans are completed as a matter of economy. He pointed out that their statements are binding. If they state that they will use a particular material, they must do so or not receive approval to proceed with construction. These statements become a part of the record and are binding.

Mr. Alberice said the owners intend to have a product that will appeal to the market. They are seeking a market that would require a quality home. They will be willing to come back with material samples to present to town staff or boards. Mr. Benson suggested that the Planning Board might recommend to the Board of Adjustment that a condition be placed on granting of the Conditional Use Permit to present final drawings to Community Appearance Commission for final input prior to application for a building permit.

Dan Wright moved, seconded by Marty Prevost, to follow staff recommendation to recommend to the Board of Adjustment that this project be approved on the condition that it meets Town Staff requirements. The motion carried unanimously.

Dan Wright moved, seconded by Marty Prevost, that prior to issuing building permits for this project, the applicants should schedule a second review of final plans by Community Appearance Commission. The motion carried unanimously.

Adjournment

With no further business, the meeting adjourned at 6:45 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

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Rex Feichter  
Chairperson

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Freida F. Rhinehart  
Secretary