

**Draft**

**Planning and Zoning Board**

**Minutes**

**Thursday, February 16, 2017**

**5:30 p.m.**

The Blowing Rock Planning and Zoning Board met on Thursday, February 16, 2017 for their regularly scheduled meeting. Chairman Harwood called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. Members present were Joe Papa, Lisa Stripling, Mike Page, Genie Starnes and George Ellis. Members absent were Natalie Bovino, Kim Hartley and Wes Carter. Staff members present were Planning Director Kevin Rothrock and Planning & Zoning Support Specialist Tammy Bentley.

Chairman Harwood expressed his appreciation for Vice-Chairman Wes Carter chairing the November 2016 meeting.

Chairman Harwood asked if there were any changes to the agenda. There were none. *Ms. Starnes made a motion to accept the agenda order, seconded by Mr. Page. All members were in favor of the motion.*

Chairman Harwood asked if there were any changes to the November 17, 2016 meeting minutes. There were none. *Mr. Papa made a motion to approve the minutes. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ellis. All members were in favor of the motion.*

**Discussion – Cluster Subdivisions**

Mr. Rothrock gave the staff report and Powerpoint presentation. The Town Council asked the Planning Board to review Cluster Subdivisions and recommend if Cluster Subdivision language should be added back to the Land Use Code. Mr. Rothrock added that the zoning subcommittee met on February 1<sup>st</sup>, 2017 to discuss options. After discussion, the majority of the zoning subcommittee in attendance recommended that Cluster Subdivision language not be added to the Land Use Code at this time.

Mr. Rothrock presented an example of a Cluster Subdivision using a property on Heather Ridge Lane and a Cluster Subdivision on a 40 acre tract. Mr. Rothrock told the Board that Cluster Subdivisions can allow smaller lots with additional land preserved as green space.

Mr. Papa asked if there is any property in the ETJ that would be suitable for Cluster Subdivisions. Mr. Rothrock confirmed there was.

Mr. Ellis asked if property owners that owned property when this language was in the code are grandfathered to be able to develop a Cluster Subdivision. Mr. Rothrock said only if the property was subdivided and plat recorded when this was allowed. Chairman Harwood commented that property owners may be able to subdivide property absent Cluster Subdivision language.

Mr. Ellis asked what currently allowed use is closest to a Cluster Subdivision. Mr. Rothrock said that King's Ransom was close in that the lots are smaller and there is some open space.

Mr. Ellis said that there is not much excitement about adding Cluster Subdivisions to the code and asked the argument for adding it. Mr. Rothrock referred to the Cluster Subdivision examples in the Powerpoint presentation. He said that setbacks need not apply to each lot, allowing smaller lots and lesser setbacks. Mr. Rothrock noted that the Cluster Subdivision standards referenced in the staff report was removed in 2004. Mr. Rothrock said that the Board could amend the requirements for Cluster Subdivisions if they want to add them back to the ordinance. He added that this would eliminate flexibility from property owners regarding dedication of open space. A Cluster Subdivision could require less infrastructure and more green space. Mr. Rothrock said that this could be useful on steep tracts, reserving the steeper grade for open space.

Mr. Papa asked if a Cluster Subdivision could be allowed now. Mr. Rothrock said perhaps under a Conditional Zoning request. He added that it would be nice to have specific language in the code for reference. He said that developers like to see guidelines from which to work.

Mr. Ellis asked if neighbors would like to see Cluster Subdivisions. Mr. Rothrock said that with traditional subdivisions lots may be contiguous to adjacent lots and that Cluster Subdivisions could offer more of a buffer.

Chairman Harwood said he understands the concept of Cluster Subdivisions, but that Blowing Rock does not have 40 acre tracts available. He added that with the smaller tracts that are available the buffer area would not be that significant. Chairman Harwood communicated his concern that houses could be clustered along the street in R-15 zoning districts, which could be out of character with an established neighborhood.

Mr. Page asked if developing a Cluster Subdivision is currently possible. Mr. Rothrock said it is not in the code. Mr. Page asked if it could still work. Mr. Rothrock said that he is not comfortable confirming. He added that if allowed, the proposal would have to be approved by the Town Council. Mr. Papa asked if neighbors have a say. Mr. Rothrock confirmed. Ms. Starnes said they would have two opportunities. Mr. Rothrock replied yes, at the Planning Board and Town Council meetings.

Mr. Rothrock said that if someone wanted to develop a Cluster Subdivision that there are no guidelines to follow. He added that the examples are scenarios; that he is not an advocate either way.

The Board discussed various types of developments and the zoning districts in which they are allowed. Mr. Rothrock noted that Cluster Subdivisions is not a zoning distinction; it is simply an underlying concept.

Mr. Rothrock showed the aerial GIS map of the Town and noted that there is not a lot of larger land tracts available in Blowing Rock.

*Chairman Harwood made a motion to take the subcommittees' recommendation to not include Cluster Subdivision language in the Land Use Code. Mr. Ellis seconded the motion. All members were in favor of the motion.*

### **BRAAC Membership – draft ordinance**

Mr. Rothrock gave the staff report. In 2015, an ordinance reducing BRAAC membership from nine (9) residents and citizens of the Town's planning and zoning to seven (7) members was adopted. BRAAC has now asked that the membership be reduced from seven (7) to five (5) members, and the related quorum be reduced from 4 to 3. Mr. Rothrock added that BRAAC is having difficulty finding members to consistently provide a quorum.

*Mr. Page made a motion to reduce the BRAAC membership from seven to five, seconded by Ms. Starnes. All members were in favor of the motion.*

### **Metal Roofing – draft ordinance**

Mr. Rothrock gave the staff report. In the past 18 months several commercial and one residential (commercial rental) project have requested the use of metal roofing. This type roofing has become increasingly popular due to its rustic characteristics and its durability. The current ordinance requires Town Council approval if the metal roof is more than 25% of the overall roof structure. Town Council has asked Planning Board to review a draft ordinance that would allow staff to approve metal roofing on commercial buildings, with more specifics with respect to roof material color.

Chairman Harwood said that listing colors is good. Mr. Page asked if colors are limited to those on the list.

Mr. Page suggested changing 'ex' to 'for example' in the draft ordinance.

*Mr. Ellis made a motion to approve the ordinance, amended to replace 'ex' with 'for example'. The motion was seconded by Ms. Stripling. All members were in favor of the motion.*

### **Other Business**

Mr. Rothrock told the Board that Ms. Bovino finds it difficult to serve on the Board due to her Physician's Assistant class responsibilities and asked members to suggest potential members living in the ETJ to fill her term.

Mr. Page distributed information on the recent Supreme Court ruling regarding signage content. He commented that it will be a challenge to update the sign ordinance to comply with this ruling.

*Mr. Papa made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Ms. Starnes. **All members were in favor of the motion.***

Chairman Harwood adjourned the meeting at 6:45 pm.

---

Chairman David Harwood

---

Tammy Bentley  
Planning & Zoning Support Specialist