

MINUTES OF THE  
GATLINBURG MUNICIPAL/REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION  
JUNE 18, 2015  
THURSDAY, 5:00 P.M., CITY HALL

MEMBERS PRESENT

Robert Maples  
Don Smith  
Larry Claiborne  
Dana Soehn  
Bud Ogle

MEMBERS ABSENT

Charlie Moore  
Kirby Smith  
Jackie Leatherwood

OTHERS PRESENT

James Tomiczek  
Matt Sprinkle  
Jeff Schoenfield  
Alfred & Cindy Tribby  
Ken Simonis  
Tony Watson  
Randy & Natalie Corlew

Staff Representatives: David Ball, City Planner  
Chad Davis, ETDD Representative  
Debbie Soesbe, Executive Secretary

Chairman Maples called the meeting to order at 5:04 P.M. The minutes of the May 21, 2015 meeting were unanimously approved following a motion by Mr. Larry Claiborne and a second by Mr. Don Smith.

Petitions and Communications from the Public

Staff Report

Staff stated that there are three (3) future educational opportunities being provided by ETDD. The dates are September 24, October 22 and October 29. No signups are required. We will distribute the information.

Staff introduced Ms. Debbie Soesbe, and noted that Debbie is taking Ms. Diane Townsend's place on a temporary basis. Staff explained that due to the increase in agenda items, future meetings will be attended by the Planning and Building Department Secretary for the purpose of recording and taking minutes of the meeting proceedings.

Old Business

New Business

**a) Review and consideration for site plan approval for "Zipcoaster", located at 201 Parkway, Tax Map 126E, Group B, Parcel 1, Zoned C-1, requested by Carol Muszik.**

Staff presented the request for approval of a site plan for a Zipcoaster. Staff explained that the drawings show the location and course layout of the coaster. Staff stated that it is a combination of a zip line and roller coaster or basically, a zip line on a rail system. Staff further explained that it attaches to existing vegetation with one exception where a pole attaches to the ground. Staff

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added that due to the installation technique, there is no requirement for storm water. Staff stated a few months back, the City Commission amended the Municipal Code that permits amusement rides to be installed within 50' of Parkway between Traffic Light #1 and #3. Staff noted that the zoning is C-1, Tourist Commercial District. Staff also stated that the device does appear to be considered an amusement per the State of Tennessee Commerce and Insurance Division defining terms. Staff explained that the site plan shows, three (3) on-site parking spaces will be added in addition to what is already located on and adjacent to the right-of-way area of Parkway. Staff stated that the applicant has indicated that the ride will only accommodate a single rider at a time. Mr. Claiborne asked if any trees will be removed. Staff stated that there will be no trees removed from the property per the applicant other than some possible removal of understory growth. After brief discussion, Mrs. Dana Soehn made a motion to accept the site plan. Mr. Don Smith seconded the motion, and it carried unanimously.

**b) Review and consideration for a plat approval of a minor subdivision of the “Shirley Watson property” located on Grassy Branch Road, Tax Map 108, Parcel 95, Zoned RR-1, requested by Tony Watson.**

Staff presented the request for a plat approval of a minor subdivision of the “Shirley Watson Property.” Staff explained that the property is located in the Planning Region. Staff stated that the property is currently a 3.4 acre single tract, and Mr. Watson is requesting that it be subdivided into two (2) equal lots of 1.7 acres each. Mr. Watson, who was present, stated that there are two (2) structures that will remain on one piece of the property. Staff stated that the proposed subdivision meets all minimum design standards. Ms. Dana Soehn asked if there would be a new driveway cut in from the road. Mr. Watson stated there is an existing driveway entrance from the road which will separate into driveways once on the property. Mr. Watson further stated that the lots are for him and his sister, so there will be no need to put in a separate driveway, and they will deal with having to do an easement agreement if it ever comes to that. Mr. Bud Ogle made a motion to approve the minor subdivision plat. Mr. Larry Claiborne seconded the motion, and it passed unanimously.

**c) Review and consideration for a PUD site plan approval of Westgate Resorts, Phase 15, located on Westgate Resorts Road, Tax Map 116, Parcel 195, Zoned C-4, requested by CEC, Inc.**

Staff presented the request to approve a PUD site plan for the Phase 15, of Westgate Resorts. Staff briefly discussed the revisions from the previous month's review. Staff noted that the revisions included changing the street to a cul-de-sac, a reduction of the turnaround grades to less than a three percent (3%) grade, retaining wall heights, and unit setback encroachments. Staff added that the final PUD site plan has been revised to correct the aforementioned issues.

Staff then stated that the only remaining unresolved issue relates to the National Park Service's concerns with regard to the traffic study. Staff then referenced an e-mail from Mr. Clayton Jordan (attached) in which he asks the Planning Commission for a deferral to allow more time

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for the completion of the Federal Highway Administration's Eastern Lands Division review of the traffic study. Chairman Robert Maples stated a concern with making a final decision on the site plan without the permissions and input from all effected stakeholders. Mr. James Tomiczek, project engineer, then addressed the Board with regard to the Park Service's email. Mr. Tomiczek stated that there has been ongoing discussion with Mr. Jordan regarding the study and FHWA's review. Mr. Tomiczek noted that the study was submitted to the Park Service on April 16<sup>th</sup> for their input and response but have yet to receive a response. Mr. Tomiczek voiced a concern that while the traffic engineer feels all of the Park's concerns with the study and the methodologies used in the preparation of the traffic study have been adequately addressed, that the process could go on for months and that they may never satisfy the FHWA. Mr. Tomiczek further stated that FHWA may want more studies, which results in more project delays, but may never completely satisfy FHWA. Mr. Maples further stated that the City is trying to be a good neighbor to the Park, and that the City needs to make the best decision for everyone. Board Member Bud Ogle stated that there are public safety issues and concerns and asked what would happen if the Board waited on a response from the FHWA. Mr. Tomiczek stated that it will affect the road construction for Phase 14. Mr. Tomiczek stated that the costs associated with the road construction of the new road from Dudley Creek Road cannot be justified if the developer will not be able to obtain approval for Phase 15. Chairman Maples reiterated that the City wants to do what is right by all parties involved and is concerned with being a good neighbor to the National Park. Staff noted that if the Board chooses to approve the request that the motion be stipulated that no development permits would be issued until the completion of the new road and sewer infrastructure improvements. After further discussion regarding the appropriate action of the Board, Mr. Maples made a motion to table the request until the next meeting. Mr. Bud Ogle seconded the motion. Ms. Dana Soehn abstained, and the motion was carried.

**d) Review and consideration for a commercial site plan for the "Seven Hills Hospitality Development," located at the intersection of East Parkway and Hidden Hills Road, Tax Map 117, Parcels 236 and 236.03, Zoned C-2, requested by Seven Hills Hospitality.**

Staff presented the request to approve a commercial site plan for "Seven Hills Hospitality Development." Mr. Randy Corlew, project engineer, then proceeded to explain that the current request would consist of an 89-room, "Comfort Inn & Suites." Mr. Corlew then presented a Power Point overview to the Board, and explained that the development hopes to benefit from the close proximity to the Rocky Top Sports World, and will be utilized by teams competing at sports complex. Mr. Corlew explained that the plan includes the construction of a new access road that requires various sections of retaining wall structures that have been terraced with landscaping in accordance with the City's adopted ordinances. Mr. Corlew presented the Board with visuals depicting the screening of the development with existing and proposed vegetation and discussed storm water elements of the site. Mr. Corlew noted that the future buildout plan would be to subdivide the property into commercial tracts for further development along the new access road. Mr. Corlew discussed with the Board the retaining wall elements and the construction process of the walls and site elements. Mr. Corlew stated that the owners feel this has great commercial potential, and would possibly build another hotel in future. Chairman

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Maples stated his concern about the cost of retaining walls, and the angle/rise of the access road in relationship to the steep terrain of the property. Mr. Alfred Tribby, attorney for the developer, was present and explained that the proposed hotel alone would not cover the expense of the wall and infrastructure improvements but that future commercial development of the property will offset the costs and make the project a more feasible project. Mr. Corlew further stated these would be “mechanically enhanced” retaining walls. Staff noted that there is a concern that the walls encroach on the State right-of-way along Hwy. 321. Mr. Corlew stated that the plan layout would be revisited and adjustments would be made to ensure there was not encroachments into the State Right-of-way.

Staff then explained that the Utility Department has reviewed and approved the utilities plan with a note that if the access road remains under private ownership that a master meter will be required at the new roads intersection with Hidden Hills Road. Staff explained that due to the extensive retaining wall construction and the issues of maintenance of the walls, there is a strong potential that the new road and wall system will not be accepted by the City as a City Street. Staff further noted that if in fact the City refuses to accept the street as a City Street, the option of developing the property under a commercial Planned Unit Development will be a development option in order to permit the private street with potential ability to subdivide the property into commercial tracts for future development. Ms. Dana Soehn asked how long the new road is, and the grade. Mr. Corlew stated that the new road would be around 1300 feet, and the maximum grade would be approximately 7-1/2 – 8 percent.

Staff noted that the plans shows several hydrants throughout the development and that the Fire Department will have to review and approve the final location of the Fire Department Connection. Staff also stated that a new left-hand turn lane on Hidden Hills Road onto Hwy. 321 is being recommended to alleviate potential traffic congestion on Hidden Hills Road. Mr. Corlew stated that the turn lane was discussed with the City Manager earlier in the day and that the turn lane was favorable by both parties. Mr. Corlew added that the developer would consult with Mr. Bob Bowers, with CDM Smith, to look at the details of implementing a new turn lane. After further discussion, Mr. Bud Ogle made a motion to approve the site plan which was seconded by Mr. Don Smith. The motion was unanimously passed with all members voting aye.

8. Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 5:45 P.M. after a motion by Mr. Larry Claiborne and a second by Mr. Don Smith.

**Approved:**

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**Planning Commission Secretary**

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**Date**