

**MINUTES OF THE
GATLINBURG MUNICIPAL/REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 18, 2016
THURSDAY, 5:00 P.M., CITY HALL**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Robert Maples
Dana Soehn
Larry Claiborne
Don Smith
Charlie Moore
Teresa Cantrell
Kirby Smith
Bud Ogle

MEMBERS ABSENT

Jackie Leatherwood

OTHERS PRESENT

Brennon Garrett
Mike Suttles
Logan Coykendall
Alex Davis
Joe Waggoner
Hank Byma
Stephen Buck
Jay DeFoe
Wesley Hawley
Brett Ogle
Paula Ogle
Bruce Cantrell
Bob Bentz
Karen Bentz
Bruce Bentz
Stephen Kircher
Jack Maples
Guy Wantiez
Mike Klassen
Linda Klassen
Ned Vickers
Juli Neil

Staff Representatives: David Ball, Building & Planning Director
 Chad Davis, ETDD
 Gerri Lawall, Executive Secretary

CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Maples called the meeting to order at 5:00 P.M. The minutes of the January 21, 2016 meeting were unanimously approved following a motion by Mr. Larry Claiborne and a second by Mr. Don Smith.

STAFF REPORT

Staff requested that the Staff Report be moved to the last item for review to do a presentation on the Land Use Plan updates. The Board was agreeable.

PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATONS FROM THE PUBLIC

No petitions or communications from the public.

OLD BUSINESS

Review and consideration for final plat approval of a minor subdivision of the “Mildred Ogle Property,” located at 642, 646, and 702 East Parkway, Tax Map 127H, Group B, Parcel 4, Zoned C-2, requested by 360 Surveying & Mapping, LLC.

Staff presented the subdivision of the “Mildred Ogle Property” and reminded the Board that the plat was amended from the January 21, 2016 Planning Commission meeting to consolidate two (2) of the initial lots to alleviate lot access concerns. Staff explained that further revisions have occurred with the plat since the submission. Mr. Brett Ogle presented the revised plat and explained that it was better to join the lot in question with the restaurant property rather than the car wash property.

After a brief discussion, a motion to approve the plat as presented was made by Mr. Bud Ogle, and a second was made by Mr. Larry Claiborne. All members voted “Aye,” passing the motion.

NEW BUSINESS

Review and consideration for a proposed rezoning of Tax Map 126M, Group A, Parcel 31, located at 551 Baskins Creek Rd, from R-1 (Low Density Residential) to C-1 (Tourist Commercial) District, requested by Silverbell Investments.

Staff presented the request to change this portion of the property zoned R-1 to C-1. Staff reminded the Board that the addition of this portion of the plat to the adjoining 55 acre tract was previously approved and that the current owners, the Bentz’, were asking for the rezoning to retain continuity with the rest of the parcel.

Mr. Bob Bentz was present and explained that this portion of the property is located at the top of the mountain and no other properties are close to this portion. The potential use for this property is in conjunction with smaller retail space, and the property is located about 750’ from Baskins Creek, so the piece in question is remote.

Mr. and Mrs. Klassen were present and had a question about noise potentially on the rezoned portion. Mr. Bob Bentz explained that it was 700-800 feet to Baskins Creek, and there is no noise that will be produced from this portion of the property that would affect the residential properties. Mr. Bentz also pointed out that due to the distance above and steep terrain, there is no access to this property from Baskins Creek, so there should be no impact to residential properties along Baskins Creek. Mr. Bentz further noted that the single family residences along Baskins Creek have not been rezoned and will stay single family residences. Mr. Bentz also stated that there will be no access to the portion in question from Baskins Creek, and there is a non-buildable ridge between this property and residences, ensuring no impact to those property owners. This request was just to retain continuity with the rest of the parcel.

Staff also reminded the Board that, as with all commercial developments, a site plan will be required and further evaluations can be made with regard to any impacts by development before any development occurs on that parcel which is being rezoned.

Mr. Charlie Moore made a motion to approve the request with a recommendation to the City Commission for approval. Mr. Don Smith provided the second and the motion carried with all members voting “Aye.”

Review and consideration for a plat approval of a minor subdivision of the “Terry Property – Lots 1 & 2,” located at 478 Loop Rd, Tax Map 126L, Group F, Parcels 9 and 9.01, Zoned R-1, requested by Silverbell Investments.

Staff presented the request for the re-platting of the interior lot line between “Lots 1 and 2.” Staff noted that the property adjoins Loop Road to the eastern boundary. Staff further noted that Lot 1, under the current lot configuration, does not appear to have adequate public street frontage. However, Staff stated that the proposed subdivision appears to improve the lot area of “Lot 1” as well as provide better public street frontage for the lot along Loop Road. Staff noted that the proposed request does reduce the lot area of “Lot 2” but an area of .62 acres (28,284 sq. ft.) will still be provided for the lot. The subdivision as shown divides the lots into very similar lot size.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Bud Ogle made a motion to approve the plat, subject to the submission of the missing signatures and information required. Mr. Larry Claiborne provided the second and the motion carried unanimously.

Review and consideration for a commercial site plan approval of “Hampton Inn,” located at 520 Historic Nature Trail, Tax Map 126N, Group C, Parcel 41.00, Zoned C-1, requested by Hospitality Solutions.

Staff presented the request for the site plan approval for a development of the previous Holiday Inn property with a 114 unit “Hampton Inn.” Staff noted that the request consists of a 5-story building located on the front piece of property. Staff stated that the applicants were requesting to utilize the recent amendment to the Zoning Ordinance to increase the height of the buildings per the added footnote provisions to Article VIII. Staff advised that the amendments passed 2nd reading at the February 16, 2016, City Commissioner’s Meeting and noted that the amendment will become effective 15 days after the passing. Staff reminded the Board that this footnote will allow a C-1 zoned property the height increase allowed under C-2 zoned property if on-site parking is provided and if the applicants can demonstrate a certain amount of non-parking open space in the design of the development.

Mr. Jay Defoe was present and he explained to the Board that in regards to the Footnote requirements, they are providing on-site parking with 116 parking spaces presented. Mr. Defoe also stated that there will also be approximately 22,600 sq. ft of open space, non-parking area, which exceeds the 5,600 sq. ft. required to meet the landscaping requirements. Mr. Defoe noted that the area will also include enhanced landscaping. Mr. Defoe stated that the building design takes the topography of the property in to account and consists of five (5) stories at the front of the property where the land is gently sloping and then transitions into a six (6) story building near the creek. The concentration of the landscaping will be located near the higher sections of the building. Mr. Defoe further noted that there will be evergreens and a meandering pathway with a pedestrian link and potentially a wooden bridge located on the property to connect with future development across the stream. Mr. Defoe noted that the design will include larger mature trees and larger landscaping beds with all trees at 2-3 times the minimum required size as outlined in the Ordinance, thus providing a more established landscaping.

Mr. Robert Maples then asked Mr. DeFoe if they were planning to use the parking across the creek. Mr. DeFoe replied that the intent is for the dumpster to be located across the creek, and not the parking at this time. Staff then noted that there were 5 parcels of land, and that they will eventually need to come before the Board with regard to a subdivision request to join the parcels. After brief discussions, Mr. Charlie Moore made the motion to approve the site plan subject to all needed information being submitted to Staff for review. Mr. Larry Claiborne seconded the motion and all members voted "Aye."

Review and consideration for a PUD site plan approval of "Tennessee Parkway Properties Alpine Coaster," located at 386 Parkway, Tax Map 126E, Group B, Parcels 14.00, 16.00, and 17.00, Zoned C-1 and C-2, requested by Mark Williford.

Staff presented the request for an Alpine Coaster amusement ride. Staff stated that the City Commission had established the revised setback for amusements to 50' between Traffic Light #1 and #3. Staff presented the rendering and the site plan, noting that they were adhering to the setback line.

Mr. Charlie Moore asked about the location of the proposed coaster. Staff replied that the location was right next door to Zoder's but across Roaring Fork Creek. Mr. Bud Ogle asked if all the existing buildings would be removed from the property to which Staff responded yes. Staff then noted that it is 5 acres located on 3 separate parcels. Staff noted that a subdivision will be required prior to building permits to consolidate the property.

Staff noted that the property does lie in a potential Hillside Overlay District but final determination has yet to be determined. Staff noted that view shed analysis of the property will be required at final site plan approval to determine compliance to the Hillside Overlay requirements. Staff explained that the way the amusement ride is configured, visibility of the Coaster will be minimal, especially during the May – October timeframe. Mr. Mike Suttles explained that the maximum height is 30' on a loop section on the lower part of the property. Mr. Suttles further noted that one (1) loop is behind the former bookstore building and another further up on the property. Mr. Suttles stated that due to existing vegetation, and the fact that the track is only 3 feet above ground, it will not be overly visible. Staff also explained that there is existing vegetation between this proposed coaster and the Parkway.

Staff also noted that Hillside Overlay information, as well as lighting plan and Critical Slope Floating Zone soil analysis information will be required at the time of final site plan approval.

Mr. Don Smith made the motion to grant preliminary PUD site plan approval and Mr. Kirby Smith provided the second. All members voted "Aye, passing the motion.

Review and consideration for a site plan approval of "Benson Lane Warehouse," located at 219 Benson Lane, Tax Map 126N, Group K, Parcel 14, Zoned C-2, requested by Brennon Garrett.

Chairman Maples noted that this had been removed from the Agenda at the request of the applicant.

Review and consideration for a site plan approval for a commercial parking lot, located at 1151 Parkway, Tax Map 126N, Group B, Parcels 10 & 11, Zoned C-1, requested by Brennon Garrett.

Staff presented the request for the Parking Lot proposed at 1151 Parkway. Mr. Brennon Garrett was present and advised the Board that it was a 110 space parking lot, with a kiosk, requiring no attendant. Mr. Garrett further noted that there is a limited ingress on Ski Mountain Rd and the egress is narrow on River Road. Staff noted that the kiosk will allow easy access to the site and thus alleviate the need for car stacking. Staff noted that 4,551 square feet of landscaping area will be incorporated into the site, which exceeds the minimum requirements of the landscaping requirements. Staff noted that the plan

also depicts the addition of 40 trees to the site with the majority of the trees being located on the southern boundary line adjacent the National Park. Staff noted that based on the area of parking, the total tree count is less than required by the zoning ordinance, which is 121 trees. Staff did remind the Board that they have the authority to deviate from the provisions of the ordinance if the Board feels the intent of the ordinance is being met with the proposed landscaping plan.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Charlie Moore made the motion to approve as presented, and Mr. Bud Ogle provided the second. All members voted "Aye," except for Ms. Dana Soehn and Ms. Teresa Cantrell who abstained.

Review and consideration for a site plan approval for a commercial parking lot, located on 756 Parkway, Tax Map 126N, Group E, Parcel 1, Zoned C-1, requested by Ned Vickers.

Staff presented the request and noted that Mr. Ned Vickers was present to present the request. Mr. Vickers noted that the request was to add 31 parking spaces to an existing parking lot due to the recent demolition of the "Ramada Inn" motel structures. Mr. Vickers noted that there are two points of ingress and egress with four (4) car stacking on the existing Parkway access, and 2 car stacking on the new access off of Reagan Drive. The new access will replace the old access drive that was adjacent "Shamrocks", allowing for better slope and better configuration. Staff also noted that this should improve drainage on the site, due to the removal of impervious buildings and areas that will be replaced with landscaping.

Mr. Bud Ogle made the motion to approve the request, with Mr. Charlie Moore providing the second. The motion passed unanimously, with all members voting "Aye."

Review and consideration for a PUD site plan approval of "Gatlinburg SkyLift," located on 765 Parkway, Tax Map 126K, Group D, Parcel 22.01, Zoned C-2, requested by Boyne Resorts.

Staff presented the request, noting that the applicant had previously requested and received a height variance from the Board of Zoning Appeals. Staff then introduced Mr. Hank Byma to present the request to the Board. Mr. Byma introduced Mr. Steve Kircher, the property owner, and explained that they are referring to this Development as "Sky Park," a 17 and a half acre adventure attraction designed to call attention to the natural beauty of the surroundings. Mr. Byma then gave a detailed overview of the proposed project. Mr. Byma went on to explain that this plan is designed to provide a way for people of all ages to enjoy the surroundings and beauty of the terrain in a unique way that still retains the natural surroundings. Mr. Byma stated that the plan has several elements, including the expanded viewing area which will be terraced, enabling over 100 people to enjoy the view of the City and of the Smoky

Mountains. Mr. Byma also noted that the plan includes a Zipline, Sky Bridge and a rope course in the trees.

Mr. Byma noted that the intent was to maintain a sustainable footprint, as they are mindful of minimum clearing of the native vegetation. Mr. Byma stated that the placement of the SkyBridge was done to enable a less obtrusive way and to achieve stability of the bridge. Mr. Byma explained that the chosen locations of the bridge slope connection points make it so no grading work is required to accomplish the attachment of the bridge or to effect the slope under the bridge. Mr. Byma stated that there will be minimal disturbance to the vegetation, as the only permanent foundation work will be at the expanded viewing area. Mr. Byma noted that the intent is to do selective pruning and that native vegetation will be replanted to enhance the existing vegetation. Mr. Byma noted that the walkway will follow the contour of the ridge line, and the Bridge will be below the ridge line, making it hard to see the cable in the vegetation on cross section. Mr. Byma then presented a sample of the mesh which the SkyBridge railing will be constructed of along with a sample of the lighting that will be used at dusk. Mr. Byma noted that the proposed lighting will provide a light glow to the footpath of the SkyBridge for safety purposes. Mr. Byma then noted that the SkyBridge would be open with the SkyLift hours, which during busier times is 9am – 11pm. Mr. Robert Maples then asked if the kick plate shown on the sides will be on both sides of the walkway. Mr. Byma confirmed that it would be on both sides and for the length of the Bridge. Mr. Byma noted that this should keep lighting to a soft glow and not visible off the SkyBridge. Mr. Byma also stated that there will be landscaping lighting at the end of the SkyBridge, serving as a target to show walkers where they are going, but not to be a beacon. Mr. Byma further noted that the lighting would only be on from dusk until closing. Mr. Robert Maples then commented that if it is a solid walking surface, there should be no light penetration, causing the light to be seen on the mountain scape. Mr. Byma concurred with Mr. Maples comment.

Ms. Dana Soehn then asked how tall the terraced wall will be at the expanded viewing area. Mr. Byma answered that it would be roughly about 8 feet. Ms. Soehn asked about screening and Mr. Byma noted that there would be native Mountain Laurel to screen the wall and that native stone or rock would be applied to the surface of the wall as shown in the presentation packets. Mr. Byma stated that all natural colors and textures would be used throughout the development.

Ms. Soehn then noted that that rock wall on the face of the mountain would be the most visible part and then asked if there would be any big posts or poles. Mr. Byma confirmed that due to the design, there would be no posts or poles. Mr. Byma noted that the owners have looked at potential uses for this property for the past 4 years, and this design is the least impactful and best use of the property.

Ms. Soehn then noted that she appreciated the spirit of the design in complimenting the natural surroundings. Ms. Teresa Cantrell then asked that in the master plan, the path seems to meander in and out of the setback line, and wondered if that was an issue. Staff then answered that in the PUD's the setback typically refers to structures and buildings, and that they do not apply these setbacks to natural paths and walkways.

Staff then mentioned the possibility of the SkyLift owners painting the existing SkyLift structure poles and elements to be less obtrusive to the mountain scape, to keep in spirit with the new development blending with the natural surroundings. Mr. Steven Kircher then noted that he realized that painting the towers had been discussed, but in his opinion, the SkyLift is an iconic feature of Gatlinburg, and that orange is appropriate with its location within "UT country."

Ms. Dana Soehn then reiterated the appreciation of the design, but also recommended that due to the location of the development, that the trash containers be made bear-proof receptacles. Ms. Teresa Cantrell reiterated the request and also stated that the design was very much appreciated. Mr. Kirby Smith then made the motion to approve the site plan as presented, based on the specific details presented and noted that should any future changes in the plan elements, lighting, and/or design occur would be a basis for an additional review of the plan by the Board. Mr. Charlie Moore provided the second. The motion passed, with all members voting "Aye," except for Mr. Larry Claiborne who abstained.

STAFF REPORT

Mr. Chad Davis presented a status update to the proposed amendments of the adopted Land Use Plan. The Board was presented with a handout about the history of Gatlinburg and Staff noted that this is a starting point in the study and that more updates would be provided in future meetings. The presentation also included a timeline with major points in Gatlinburg's history and how it affected Land Use. Ms.

Dana Soehn also noted that she may have some material from Gatlinburg's Bicentennial celebration that would help with the history element of the plan.

UNSCHEDULED ITEMS

There were no unscheduled items to report.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was unanimously adjourned at 6:42 p.m. after a motion by Ms. Dana Soehn and a second by Mr. Charlie Moore.

Approved:

Planning Commission Secretary

Date