

**MINUTES OF THE
GATLINBURG MUNICIPAL PLANNING COMMISSION
NOVEMBER 20, 2025
TUESDAY, 4:00 P.M., CITY HALL**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Jackie Leatherwood
Kirby Smith
Larry Claiborne
Jay Horner
Chad Reagan

MEMBERS ABSENT

Candace Ogle Morton
Cam Caton

OTHER PRESENT

Jim Leverette
Mike Werner
Kacie Huffaker
John Mistriotis
Casrissa Culpepper
Scott Cantrell
Terry Matthews
Clay England
Clay Johnson
Michael Simonis
Brandon Garrett
Tim Kuykendall
Andre Therrien

Staff Representatives: Dalton York, Planning Director
Jodi Bible, Deputy City Planner
Ekem Amonoo-Lartson, ETDD

CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Planning Commission Chairman, Mr. Kirby Smith, called the meeting to order at 4:00 P.M. The minutes of the October 23, 2025, meeting were unanimously approved following a motion by Mr. Jay Horner and a second provided by Mr. Larry Claiborne.

STAFF REPORT

PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

OLD BUSINESS

Review and consideration for a request to alter property lines along City Right-of-Way located at 533 Greystone Heights Road, being Tax Map 126K, Group A, Parcel 12.01, R-1 Zone, requested by Donna Cantrell and Surveying.

Staff presented the request to abandon a portion of the City's right-of-way (ROW) on Greystone Heights Road. The area proposed for abandonment is a historical right-of-way identified on past surveys and runs along the western property line of the subject lot. This historical ROW's current use is limited to existing utility lines. It contains a significant slope, making future road construction difficult should the City ever wish to utilize it. The applicant has proposed a permanent utility easement to accommodate the existing lines within the area to be abandoned.

Following Staff's presentation, several members of the audience who had signed up to speak addressed the request. The property owner then presented their explanation and shared conceptual building options illustrating scenarios both with a partial ROW abandonment and with the ROW remaining unchanged. These conceptual plans depicted the potential structures that could be developed under each scenario. The request received opposition from adjoining property owners in response to Staff's follow-up correspondence, which was issued at the direction of the Planning Commission after the October 2025 meeting.

Following a lengthy discussion between the Board, the property owner, and the requester, Mr. Jay Horner made a motion to recommend the request to the Board of Commissioners for their review and consideration. Mr. Larry Claiborne provided a second, and no additional motions were offered.

Mr. Chad Reagan then made a motion to deny the request, citing the potential for the City to utilize the right-of-way in the future. Ms. Jackie Leatherwood provided a second, and Chairman Kirby Smith cast an additional vote, resulting in a majority vote to deny the request.

Review and consideration for proposed amendments and additions to Section 706. - C-1 Tourist Commercial District, Article 3: Definitions, the addition of Section 407.4, and modifications to Article 7, Section 706, requested by Staff.

Staff presented the request for proposed amendments and additions to Section 706. – C-1 Tourist Commercial District, Article 3: Definitions, the addition of Section 407.4, and modifications to Article 7, Section 706. The amendment revises Section 706 of the Zoning Ordinance to allow for outdoor dining as a specific exception to the general prohibition on commercial activity within the front yard setback. This change provided a legal basis for the new use. The core regulations are detailed in the new Section 407.4, which outlines the requirements for approval and operation.

To obtain a permit, an application must secure approval from the Health Department, the Environmental Design Review Board (EDRB), and the Planning Commission.

The ordinance contains several specific prohibitions and conditions to mitigate public impact. It prohibits any encroachment into the public right-of-way and restricts outdoor dining areas from being within 150 feet of a residential property unless a special exception is granted. All patrons are required to be seated, as standing or general congregation within the outdoor dining area is prohibited. Additionally, all forms of smoking, including e-cigarettes, are prohibited, and this must be communicated through signage.

The ordinance also sets specific design standards to maintain the character of Gatlinburg. It requires that all furniture, awnings, lighting, and barriers be compatible with the area's design and materials. It prohibits the use of plastic and vinyl, mandates uniform or complementary designs for furniture, and restricts lighting to a warm, yellow colored glow that does not shine onto neighboring properties. Operational rules are also defined, including limitations on alcohol service to seated patrons and specific conditions for allowing dogs or live entertainment. Staff did propose two versions of this ordinance amendment. One being as previously described with there being no front yard setback requirement. The second being a proposed 5' front yard setback to alleviate public safety access on the sidewalk as previously discussed by other Planning Commission members.

Following the discussion, Mr. Chad Reagan made a motion to recommend the proposed amendments and additions to Section 706 to the Board of Commissioners for their review and consideration, with the addition of the 5' front yard setback and definition. This approval also grants a special exception allowing "Pucker's Sports Grill," to serve in the front setback, not adhering to the 5' front yard setback requirement. Mr. Larry Claiborne provided a second with Mr. Jay Horner voting with Mr. Chad Reagan. Ms. Jackie Leatherwood is opposed to the proposed amendment. The three "ayes" make the majority carrying the motion to the Board of Commissioners for their review and consideration.

New Business

Review and consideration for commercial site plan approval for a new restaurant to be constructed at 1605 East Parkway, being Tax Map 117, Parcel 236.04, C-2 Zone, requested by Gatlinburg Flats, LLC.

Staff presented the request for a proposed commercial site plan for a new restaurant to be constructed at 1605 East Parkway. The provided site plan encompasses a 5,425 square foot one-story restaurant space, which includes a fenced in play area and converted deck connecting the play area to the main restaurant. The parcel is 1.15-acres (50,281 sq ft). While the parcel contains portions with slopes 30% or greater, most of the proposed development will be placed on the flatter area of the lot as shown on the provided plan. The parcel did receive a front yard variance for a reduction from the required 15' C-2 setback to 2'.

The development has a maximum service capacity of 176 seats. This capacity requires a minimum of 44 parking spaces, which the applicant has provided. Parking lot and exterior landscaping have been provided to meet the minimum standards of Section 407 for the proposed use. A TDOT approval has also been provided for the access point off East Parkway.

At this time, the only lacking information requested by Staff is a Tree Survey and necessary replanting details. Once provided, the only necessary modification to the plan would be the inclusion of additional plantings on the landscaping plan. Furthermore, the development still required Environmental Design Review Board (EDRB) and subsequent Planning Commission approval for aesthetics and signage. Applicable Regulations: Article IV, Section 402 Off-Street Automobile Parking & Section 407, General Provisions; Article VII, Section 707 C-2 Tourist Commercial District.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Chad Reagan made a motion to approve the proposed commercial site plan as presented subject to lacking replanting details. Mr. Larry Claiborne provided a second with all members voting, "aye."

Review and consideration for a PUD revision for "Hidden Hills Vistas- Phase 2A Cabin Development," being Tax Map 117, Parcels 236, 236.03, 9, C-2 Zone, located on East Parkway and Hidden Hills Road, requested by CEC, Inc.

This request was removed from review and consideration per applicant's request.

Aesthetic review and consideration for "Ober Adventure, LLC," located at 1339 Ski Mountain Road, requested by Jim Downs (approved by EDRB 11.4.2025)

Staff presented the aesthetic review for "Ober Adventure LLC," located at 1339 Ski Mountain Road. This request is for aesthetic changes for 1339 Ski Mountain Road, specifically, the adventure park. The request entails replacing and updating two buildings and adding an additional two buildings while refreshing the existing layout of Mount Harrison. The request includes exterior rendering of the proposed buildings with dark wood finish with matching roof, larger windows, and a stone base. The overall proposed modifications establish cohesion amongst the buildings located at the mountain top adventure park. The aesthetic review adheres to the Architectural Guidelines for the Commercial Corridor.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Chad Reagan made a motion to approve the aesthetic request as presented. Mr. Larry Claiborne provided a second with all members voting, "aye." Ms. Jackie Leatherwood abstained from the vote.

Review and consideration for proposed signage for "Garner Hotel," located at 421 Reagan Drive, requested by Morristown Signs, Inc (approved by EDRB 11.4.2025)

Staff presented the request for proposed signage for "Garner Hotel," located at 421 Reagan Drive. The request is for the new hotel that will move into the old Comfort Inn and Suites. The request is for two signs-one free standing and a wall sign. The free-standing sign is a sign face replacement. The sign-face replacement measures out to 50'. The sign cabinet will be painted satin black with a seafoam green line down the middles of the cabinet per Garner Hotel sign standards. The second wall sign received a variance for the sign height placement in January 2015. The second wall sign measures out to be 30' bringing their total signage to 80', which is their maximum signage allotment per Section 411. Applicable Regulations: Section 411, being the Sign Regulations.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Chad Reagan made a motion to approve the proposed signage as presented. Mr. Larry Claiborne provided a second with all members voting, "aye."

Aesthetic review and consideration for "Tesla Superchargers," located at 1219 East Parkway, requested by Tesla (approved by EDRB 11.4.2025)

Staff presented the aesthetic request for "Tesla Supercharger," located at 1219 East Parkway. The request is for the new supercharger stations that will be installed in the Food City Parking lot near the bar where the employee parking is currently located. The request includes supercharger renderings and non-visible (from right-of-way) signage. The aesthetic review adheres to the Architectural Guidelines for the Commercial Corridor.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Larry Claiborne made a motion to approve the aesthetic request as presented. Mr. Chad Reagan provided a second with all members voting, "aye."

Review and consideration for a proposed ornate object for "Anakeesta," located at 576 Parkway, requested by Anakeesta, LLC (approved by EDRB 11.4.2025)

Staff presented the request for a proposed ornate object for "Anakeesta," located at 576 Parkway. The proposed ornate object is for their annual Christmas Festival, Enchanted Christmas. The proposed ornate object will be placed in the plaza near the ticket booth. The tree will adhere to

the Winterfest requirements. This is the same ornate object that has been placed in the plaza in the past. The proposed ornate object is close to 30 feet tall. Applicable Regulations: Section 412: Ornate Objects & Other Foreign Objects.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Chad Reagan made a motion to approve the proposed ornate object. Ms. Jackie Leatherwood provided a second with all members voting, "aye."

Review and consideration for proposed seasonal signage for "Anakeesta," located at 576 Parkway, requested by Anakeesta, LLC (approved by EDRB 11.4.2025)

Staff presented the request for a proposed seasonal signage for "Anakeesta," located at 576 Parkway. The submission is for their winter event signage, Enchanted Christmas Festival. The request encompasses two sign proposals-one being a 20 square foot banner that will be placed above the gondola loading station. The special event banner is currently permitted by Staff per Section 411.3.1.2. The second sign in the proposal is for their free-standing sign located 30' off the setback. The free-sign measures 32 square feet. Applicable Regulations: Section 411, being the Sign Regulations.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Chad Reagan made a motion to approve the seasonal signage as presented. Mr. Jay Horner provided a second with all members voting, "aye."

Review and consideration for proposed signage for "Gatlinburg Sports Cards," located at 467 Parkway, requested by Oliver Morton (approved by EDRB 11.4.2025)

Staff presented the request for proposed signage for "Gatlinburg Sports Cards," located at 467 Parkway, #1. The request is for a small location located within "Speedworkx." The applicant wants to utilize some extra space in the exotic car museum. The proposed signs are for two small vinyl signs that will be placed in the windows of the retail space. The proposed signs measure out to be 6 square feet each, totaling 12 square feet. The vinyl signs will have the same graphics which entails a white sign with black lettering with a baseball being used for the "O" in sports and a basketball used in "cards," with a black bear wearing an American flag helmet. Applicable Regulations: Section 411, being the Sign Regulations.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Chad Reagan made a motion to approve the proposed signage as presented. Mr. Jay Horner provided a second with all members voting, "aye."

Review and consideration of proposed signage for "Best Western," located at 242 Bishop Lane, requested by T and T Signs, Inc. (approved by EDRB 11.18.2025)

Staff presented the request for proposed signage for "Best Western," located at 242 Bishop Lane. The request is for a rebranding of the "Howard Johnson," located on Bishop Lane. The request is for two signs and the removal of four others. The first is a monument sign located at the corner of Cherokee Orchard and Bishop Lane. The monument sign measures out to be 24 square feet with LED illumination. The colors being utilized in both signs are gray lake, noble white, and the hotel logo being digital print. Sign materials include vinyl, aluminum, and LED modules. The second sign will be placed in a new location for the hotel-facing the main entrance off Bishop Lane. The proposed wall sign is an illuminated LED, flex face, and a wall sign measuring 54 square feet. Total square footage in this request is 78 square feet within their allowable 80 square feet. Applicable Regulations: Section 411, being the Sign Regulations.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Larry Claiborne made a motion to approve the proposed signage as presented. Mr. Jay Horner provided a second with all members voting, "aye."

Review and consideration of proposed signage for "Novelty Nest," located at 738 Parkway, #2, requested by Tennessee Sign Company. (approved by EDRB 11.18.2025)

Staff presented the request for proposed signage for "Novelty Nest," located at 738 Parkway, Suite 2. The request is for a new retail space that will be taking the place of "Legends of Old Time Photo," by Mayfield's. The new sign is a wall sign that will measure out to 9 square feet and is digitally printed with ACM panel. Exact coloring of the sign was not provided to Staff by the applicant, other than sign mockup stating the face colors will be digitally printed. Applicable Regulations: Section 411, being the Sign Regulations.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Chad Reagan made a motion to approve the proposed signage as presented. Ms. Jackie Leatherwood provided a second with all members voting, "aye."

Review and consideration of proposed signage for "Mobility Scooter Rentals," located at 379 East Parkway, requested by Laurentiu Cirstea. (reviewed by EDRB 11.18.2025)

Item was removed for review and consideration due to the request being tabled at the Environmental Design Review Board meeting on November 18, 2025.

Aesthetic review and consideration for "Miller's Rondettes," located at 575 River Road, requested by Amelia Bales. (approved by EDRB 11.18.2025)

Staff presented the aesthetic request for "Miller's Rondettes," located at 575 River Road. The request is for an exterior paint color change for the yurt styled cabins located at "Mountain Heritage Inn." The color change is to go from the barnwood red currently utilized to a beige color that will match the other portions of the Inn. The applicant also plans to install a new rock work around the foundation of the "rondettes". Applicable Regulations: Architectural Guidelines for the Commercial Corridor.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Chad Reagan made a motion to approve the aesthetic review as presented. Ms. Jackie Leatherwood provided a second with all members voting, "aye."

Review and consideration of proposed replacement signage for "Luigi's Pizza," located at 1017 Parkway, requested by RJM Holding. (approved by EDRB 11.18.2025)

Staff presented the request for proposed replacement signage for "Luigi's Pizza," located at 1017 Parkway. The request is for sign-face replacements for the free-standing sign located on the Parkway and for the wall sign located at the back of the pizzeria, that is seasonally visible from the right-of-way. The new sign inserts will be white with black lettering displaying "Luigi's Pizza," and their phone number. The free-standing sign will have four incidentals displayed beneath it measuring out to 8 square feet in total, adhering to Section 411.3.1.2. The wall sign located on the back of the pizzeria will be the same in design and will be 36 square feet. Applicable Regulations: Section 411, being the Sign Regulations.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Jay Horner made a motion approved the proposed signage as presented. Mr. Larry Claiborne provided a second with all members voting, "aye."

Review and consideration of proposed new signage for “Luigi’s Pizza,” located at 1017 Parkway, requested by RJM Holding. (approved by EDRB 11.18.2025)

Staff presented the request for proposed new signage for “Luigi’s Pizza,” located at 1017 Parkway. The request is for a new mural to be placed on the side of building as patrons enter. The mural is white letters on the black building and will display the name of the business. The request is viewed as signage due to the contents of the request and measures out to 28 square feet. The addition of the mural brings their accumulate signage square footage to 64 square feet within their allowable 70 square feet. Applicable Regulations: Section 411, being the Sign Regulations.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Chad Reagan made a motion to approve the proposed signage as presented. Mr. Jay Horner provided a second with all members voting, “aye.”

Review and consideration for proposed Gatlinburg Zoning Ordinance Revisions, requested by Staff.

Staff presented the request for proposed Gatlinburg Zoning Ordinance Revisions. This request encompasses an array of changes ranging from clarification on definitions, proposed revisions to Article IV: General Provisions; Section 411 and 412, being Sign Regulations; Article VII: Provisions Governing Use Districts; Article VIII: Area, Yard, and Height Requirements; Article IX: Enforcement. Staff provided the board and overview of the proposed revisions. The proposed zoning ordinance revisions were presented and discussed during a Public Workshop that took place at City Hall on Tuesday, October 23, 2025.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Chad Reagan made a motion to recommend the proposed Zoning Ordinance Revisions to the Board of Commissioners for their review and consideration. Mr. Larry Claiborne provided a second with all members voting, “aye.”

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:07 p.m. upon a motion by Mr. Chad Reagan and a second motion provided by Ms. Jackie Leatherwood.

Approved:

Jackie Leatherwood
Planning Commission Secretary

12.18.25

Date

