

**MINUTES OF THE
GATLINBURG MUNICIPAL PLANNING COMMISSION
MAY 21, 2026
THURSDAY, 4:00 P.M., CITY HALL**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Jackie Leatherwood
Kirby Smith
Jay Horner
Larry Claiborne

MEMBERS ABSENT

Chad Reagan
Candace Morton
Cam Caton

OTHER PRESENT

Clarke Chambers
Chris Kirkland
Matt Waroway
Kacie Huffaker
Sherilynn Hammonds
Derrick Breau
Bob Bentz
Jordan Richardson

Staff Representatives: Dalton York, Planning Director
Jodi Bible, Deputy City Planner

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 April 28, 2026, meeting were unanimously approved following a motion by Mr. Larry Claiborne and a second provided by Ms. Jackie Leatherwood.

STAFF REPORT

Staff congratulated the reappointed members of the Planning Commission- Mr. Larry Claiborne, Ms. Candace Morton, and Mr. Kirby Smith.

PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

OLD BUSINESS

Review and consideration of a preliminary PUD site plan for "The Cliffs at Downtown Gatlinburg," being Tax Map 126N, Group E, Parcels 22 and 42.01, located at 335 East Holly Ridge Road, C-2 Zone, requested by Chris Kirkland.

Staff presented the request for a preliminary PUD site plan for "The Cliffs at Downtown Gatlinburg," located at 335 East Holly Ridge Road. The applicant seeks preliminary site plan approval for residential Planned Unit Development (PUD) proposed to be completed across five (5) distinct phases. The submittal encompasses thirty (30) new one-bedroom, single-family dwellings and one (1), 5,141 square foot commercial amenities building. The residential component introduces three distinct unit configurations, consisting of twenty-five (25) "Glass Cabins," (294 square feet), three (3) "Swiss Chalets," (455 square feet), and two (2) "A-Frames," (455 square feet). The proposed amenities building stands at five stories in height and is intended to operate open to the general public, incorporating a rooftop bar, spa, and wellness center.

The site plan identifies fifty (50) total off-street parking spaces. The Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) evaluated a special exception for the development, authorizing a reduction in the mandatory building separation from the required twenty feet (20') down to ten feet (10'). Additionally, BZA approved a special exception to reduce the off-street residential baseline standard from 1.25 per bedroom to 1 space per one-bedroom dwelling unit.

Regarding the Hillside Overlay District regulations (Section 715), the applicant has submitted an initial landscaping plan intended to satisfy the mandatory 75% screening threshold from Cherokee Orchard Road in lieu of utilizing low-reflectivity or muted-toned structural building materials. This plan requires formal validation to ensure the required screening percentages can be achieved within the standard municipal timelines. Furthermore, the Utilities Department has noted that the applicant must maintain a minimum 15-foot clear utility easement and guarantee uninterrupted municipal service access to the city sewer main traversing the property.

To advance to final PUD site plan approval via Planning Commission, the following supplemental documentation and plan modifications are required:

1. Provide a comprehensive engineering package including a verified clearing and grading plan alongside a detailed stormwater and erosion control plan.
2. Modify the site plan to include the absolute removal of the pedestrian stairway leading directly down to the Cherokee Orchard Road public right-of-way.
3. Provide a formal, signed certification from a Tennessee-registered Landscape Architect confirming that the proposed plan materials will provide at least 75% visual screening of the development from Cherokee Orchard Road within a two-year growth period, pursuant to Gatlinburg Zoning Ordinance Article VIII, Section 715.
4. Revise the layout to explicitly reflect the required 15-foot easement clearance and continuous maintenance access path dedicated to the City sewer line.

Per the Fire Department, these requirements are in place for the development:

1. No trees shall be between structures unless there are more than 20' in separation between the structures.
2. Non-combustible materials will be required on the exterior of the dwelling due to their proximity to one another.

The final occupant count for the commercial building needs to be explicitly laid out.

Following the discussion, Ms. Jackie Leatherwood made a motion to approve the preliminary PUD plan stating that all requested documentation be provided prior to final consideration. Mr. Jay Horner provided a second with all members voting, "aye."

Review and consideration of a proposed rezoning being Tax Map 118, Parcel 18, from R-1 (Low Density Residential) District to C-5 (Crafts Commercial) District located on Glades Road, requested by Matt Waroway.

Staff presented the request for a proposed rezoning being Tax Map 118, Parcel 18, R-1 (Low Density Residential) District to C-5 (Craft Commercial) District. The applicant is requesting a zoning map amendment for the subject parcel from R-1 to C-5. The primary objective of this rezoning is to facilitate the development of a Residential Planned Unit Development (PUD).

Transitioning the property to the C-5 district would increase the allowable Floor Area Ratio (FAR) from 0.25 to 0.50. The C-5 (Crafts Commercial) District is one of the City's most specialized and restrictive commercial zones. Permitted uses within this district are limited to:

- Single-Family and Multi-family Dwellings
- Restaurants/Food Establishments
- Arts and Crafts Shops
- Bed and Breakfast Establishments
- Antique Shops
- Wedding Chapels
- Farmers Markets

A significant portion of the parcel is situated within the Critical Slope Floating Zone (CSFZ). Consequently, any future development must strictly adhere to the site development and roadway standards outlined in Section 714 of the Zoning Ordinance.

The request was tabled at the April 28, 2026, meeting citing the need for the applicant to provide a conceptual plan so that the Board could better envision the rationale for the request. The conceptual plan was also a way for the applicant to provide a better framework for the adjoining property owners to be able to see what the potential development would look like if the rezoning were approved. The conceptual plan shows eight (8) single-family dwellings accessing off Poter's Ridge and two (2) single-family dwellings accessing PA Proffitt. It is important to note that the conceptual plan provided is not being reviewed or approved via this request.

Following this discussion, Mr. Jay Horner made a motion to recommend the proposed rezoning to the Board of Commissioners for their review and consideration. Mr. Larry Claiborne provided a second with all members voting, "aye."

NEW BUSINESS

Review and consideration of a preliminary commercial site plan for "Rail Runner-Sunkid Coaster," being Tax Map 126M, Group A, Parcel 33.03, C-1 Zone, located at 147 Baskins Creek Road, requested by Silverbell Investments, LLC.

Staff presented the request for a preliminary commercial site plan for "Rail Runner-Sunkid Coaster," located within the Anakeesta Planned Unit Development. This request seeks preliminary site plan approval for proposed mountain coaster expansion. The submittal encompasses an addition to the existing "Rail Runner," mountain coaster, introducing a secondary track to facilitate side-by-side racing. The proposed expansion will utilize a portion of the existing track infrastructure while introducing newly revised track alignments. The total length of the expansion is proposed as follows:

- Inner Line (Rider's Right): 3,644 feet total (2,650 feet downhill/994 feet uphill)
- Outer Line (Rider's Left): 3,829 feet total (2,848 feet downhill/981 feet uphill)

Additionally, the plan proposes replacing the current station structure with a larger redesigned facility capable of accommodating the dual-line configuration. All applicable C-1 PUD setback regulations are also adhered to.

Prior to final site plan consideration and approval, the applicant must submit the following outstanding documentation:

1. A formal tree survey satisfying the requirements of the City's Tree Protection Ordinance.
2. Definitive confirmation of the limits of construction disturbance accompanied by a professionally designed clearing and grading plan.
3. Complete building elevations certified by licensed design professional.
4. A comprehensive project landscaping plan.

Applicable Regulations: Section 406, Planned Unit Development; Section 407, Site Plan Regulations for Commercial Uses; Section 706, C-1 Tourist Commercial District; and Article VIII, being the Area, Yard, and Height Requirements.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Larry Claiborne made a motion to approve the preliminary commercial plan as presented, requesting the lacking items be provided prior to final approval. Ms. Jackie Leatherwood provided a second with all members voting, "aye."

Review and consideration of a preliminary PUD site plan for "Reagan Outdoor Resort," being Tax Map 126, Parcel 12 and Tax Map 126E, Group C, Parcel and 17, R-1 and C-4 Zone, located at 313 Little Caney Road, requested by Compass Ventures.

Staff presented the request for a preliminary PUD site plan for "Reagan Outdoor Resort," located at 313 Caney Creek Road. The subject proposed involves a multi-parcel development tract. The applicant is proposing construction of nine (9) new one-bedroom dome structures intended for use within the overnight rental program. The plan specifies two sizing tiers for the rental units, consisting of three (3) structures designed as 30-foot diameter domes and six (6) structures designed as 24-foot diameter domes. The preliminary PUD plan identifies twelve (12) total parking spaces, which provides one (1) space over the minimum municipal baseline requirement of eleven (11) spaces for this configuration.

These structures are located within the established floodplain of Dudley Creek. As identified on the submittal, the individual domes will be accessed via an elevated pedestrian walkway connecting each unit directly to the development's centralized parking area. To advance to final Planning Commission approval, the following supplemental documentation and plan revisions are required:

1. Final architectural building plans and elevations for each individual structure, signed and stamped by a licensed Tennessee design professional.
2. Explicit plan notations and specifications confirming the paving of all driveways and parking surfaces.
3. A comprehensive solid waste management and dumpster screening plan.
4. FEMA Elevation data for each individual structure, validating compliance with building standards within the AE Floodplain of Dudley Creek.

Applicable Regulations: Article IV, Section 402 (Off-Street Automobile Parking); Section 402.19, Section 407.3 (Landscaping Requirements); Article VII, Section 701 (R-1 Low Density Residential) District; Section 706 (C-4 Recreation Commercial District); Article VIII, being the Area, Yard, and Height Requirements.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Jay Horner made a motion to approve the preliminary PUD site plan, requesting all items be presented prior to final PUD consideration. Mr. Larry Claiborne provided a second with all members voting, "aye."

Review and consideration of a preliminary commercial site plan for "Ober Mountain," being Tax Map 136, Parcel 1, C-4 Zone, located at 1339 Ski Mountain Road, requested by Ober Adventures, LLC.

Staff presented the request for a preliminary commercial site plan for "Ober Mountain," located at 1339 Ski Mountain Road. This request seeks preliminary site plan approval for a proposed mountain coaster addition. The submittal introduces a new single-track mountain coaster

expansion within the existing Over Mountain resort footprint, situated adjacent to the current Alpine Bobsled attraction near the base of ski slopes.

The proposed coaster measures a total length of 3,838 feet, divided as follows:

- Uphill Track lift: 1,179 feet
- Downhill Track run: 2,659 feet

The applicant has submitted an initial tree survey for the areas directly impacted by the alignment. Based on Staff review, approximately 143 protected trees fall within the construction footprint. The applicant has noted an intent to implement localized protective measures to preserve a portion of these specimens; final clarification and counts will be formalized prior to final consideration. Additionally, the proposed alignment spaces across what Staff identifies as a blue-line stream. The applicant has indicated that they are currently coordinating with the Tennessee Department of Environmental and Conservation (TDEC) to formally determine stream classifications and/or secure the necessary aquatic resource alteration and stream crossing permits.

Prior to final site plan consideration and approval, the applicant must satisfy the following criteria:

1. Submit a comprehensive tree replanting and mitigation plan that satisfies the mandates of the City's Tree Protection Ordinance.
2. Provide a full set of professionally engineered civil plans, including verified limits of disturbance, a clearing plan and a grading/stormwater management plan.
3. Provide a formal conflict-resolution review confirming track placement in relation to the existing municipal utility lines addressing specific concerns raised by the Utilities Department.

Applicable Regulations: Section 406, Planned Unit Development; Section 407, Site Plan Regulations for Commercial Uses; Section 710, C-4 Recreational Commercial District; and Article VIII, being the Area, Yard, and Height Requirements.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Jay Horner made a motion to approve the preliminary commercial site plan, requesting all lacking items be provided prior to final commercial site approval. Mr. Larry Claiborne provided a second with all members voting, "aye."

Review and consideration of a proposed commercial site plan revision for "The Scoundrel," being Tax Map 126, Group N, Parcel 8, C-1 Zone, located at 305 Airport Road, requested by Robert G. Campbell and Associates.

Staff presented the request for commercial site plan revision for "The Scoundrel," located at 305 Airport Road. This proposal seeks approval for proposed commercial site plan revision, specifically for the placement change of the dining area, from the roof-top as originally approved, to a surface-level outdoor dining area addition to existing establishment. The property is situated within the C-1 Tourist Commercial District where outdoor dining areas are allowable subject to the specific criteria established under Section 407.5 of the Zoning Ordinance. Staff has conducted a review of the submittal and verified that the business qualifies as a primary dining establishment under the definition of a "full-service restaurant" pursuant to TCA §57-4-102.

The ordinance restricts outdoor dining space to no more 40% of the total gross interior dining floor area or 2,000 square feet. The existing building contains approximately 2,734.27 square feet of interior dining floor area, which allows for a maximum outdoor footprint of 1,093.7 square feet. The proposed 1,092 square foot outdoor area meets this requirement. The plan states that the interior layout will accommodate 88 indoor seats, supplemented by 38 proposed outdoor seats.

The outer perimeter of proposed outdoor dining area does not encroach into the public right-of-way, and the site plan identifies a minimum setback of nine (9) feet from the public right-of-way line to ensure the orderly and safe flow of pedestrian traffic along Airport Road. The restaurant will serve alcoholic beverages within the patio space, which city regulations limit exclusively to patrons seated at tables, and food service must always remain available the patio is operating. Furthermore, the hours of operation are restricted to the normal operating hours of the principal restaurant. Applicable Regulations: Section 407 (Site Plan Regulations for Commercial Uses); Section 407.5 (Guidelines for Outdoor Dining and Cafés Areas); Section 706 (C-1 Tourist Commercial District); and Article VIII (The Area, Yard, and Height Requirements).

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Larry Claiborne made a motion to approve the commercial site plan revision. Ms. Jackie Leatherwood provided a second. Mr. Jay Horner abstained from the vote.

Review and consideration for proposed signage for “Raíz and Fuego,” located at 1235 East Parkway, requested by Margen Banegas. (Approved by EDRB 5.5.2026)

Staff presented the request for proposed signage for “Raíz and Fuego,” located at 1235 East Parkway. The request is for a wall sign and a mall directory sign. Wall sign will be back lit and will be place in the existing cabinet at the location. The wall sign measures 21 square feet. The mall directory sign is also a preexisting sign structure. The mall sign measures 9 square feet. The graphics utilized on the sign are fire, sombrero, and roots. The colors used are yellow, green, variations of red and brown. Applicable Regulations: Section 411, being the Sign Regulations.

Following a brief discussion, Ms. Jackie Leatherwood made a motion to approve the request as presented. Mr. Jay Horner provided a second with all members voting, “aye.”

Review and consideration for proposed signage for “Le Crème Cheesecakes,” located at 170 Glades Road, Suite 32, requested by Brandy and Chris Anders. (Approved by EDRB 5.5.2026)

Staff presented the request for proposed signage for “Le Crème Cheesecakes,” located at 170 Glades Road, Suite 32. The request is for one wall sign the measures out to 24 square feet. The sign material is metal with no dimension or lighting provided. The colors utilized on the sign are black, white, and burnt orange. Applicable Regulations: Section 411, being the Sign Regulations.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Jay Horner made a motion to approve the request as presented. Ms. Jackie Leatherwood provided a second with all members voting, “aye.”

Review and consideration for proposed signage for “Gatlinburg Trading Co.,” located at 608 Parkway, requested by Sign Co. (Approved by EDRB 5.5.2026)

Staff presented the request for proposed signage for "Gatlinburg Trading Co.," located at 608 Parkway. The request is for one projecting sign that is located 10'6" above the entry of the retail space. The proposed sign measures out to six square feet and will be internally illuminated with LEDs. Applicable Regulations: Section 411, being the Sign Regulations.

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

Review and consideration for proposed signage for "Reggae Jam," located at 450 Brookside Village Way, requested by The Sign Shop. (Approved EDRB 5.5.2026)

Staff presented the request for proposed signage for "Reggae Jam," located at 405 Brookside Village Way. The request is for a wall sign that will be located above the restaurant entry and will face East Parkway. The proposed signage measures out to 32 square feet with no dimension and lighting and is made of ACM composite material. An inaccurate rendering of the proposed signage was submitted to Staff initially, but Ms. Gabby Taylor was present to discuss the request in detail. Providing an accurate rendering to the Board, both renderings are compliant under Section 411. During the discussion, the Board and Ms. Taylor were able to make some compromises on the proposed signage, which included cutting the white boarder off the proposed signage and utilizing only the graphic and eliminating the dead space. Applicable Regulations: Section 411, being the Sign Regulations.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Jay Horner made a motion to approve the request as presented, reiterating the sign should not be a banner and that the white space around the graphic be removed. Mr. Larry Claiborne provided a second with all members voting, "aye."

Aesthetic review and consideration for "Country Town and Suites," located at 535 East Parkway, requested by Dharmesh Patel. (Reviewed by EDRB 5.19.2026)

Staff presented the request for an aesthetic review for "Country Town and Suites," located at 535 East Parkway. The request was originally presented to the Board in October 2024. The Board reviewed option 1 during that meeting and requested a more neutral palette to be more in keeping with the City's Architectural Guidelines. The applicant provided four options for the Board to review. The breakdown of those options are listed below:

- Option 1: Minimal white (SW1011); Skyline Steel (SW 1015); Coral Bells (SW 6593); Cajun Red (SW 8); Pink Flamingo (SW80); Porpoise (SW 7047)
- Option 2: Repose Gray (SW 7015); Intellectual Gray (SW 7045); Porpoise (SW 7047); Urbane Bronze (SW 7048)

The Environmental Design Review Board decided on Option 1 or 2 being the most appropriate option regarding the Architectural Guidelines.

Following a brief discussion, Ms. Jackie Leatherwood made a motion to approve the aesthetic request as presented, specifically, Option 1 or Option 2, being utilized on the exterior. Mr. Jay Horner provided a second with all members voting, "aye."

Aesthetic review and consideration for "Village Candles" located at 1400 East Parkway, requested by Stephanie Lang. (Reviewed by EDRB 5.19.2026)

Staff presented the aesthetic review for the new roof to be located at the Village Candle complex. The proposed shingle roof will be removed and replaced with a metal roof. The proposed color is Slate Gray (SW-4026), and will look very similar to the "Wood Whittlers'," roof that is located adjacent to the complex. Applicable Regulations: Architectural Guidelines for the Commercial Corridor and Section 715 of the Gatlinburg Zoning Ordinance.

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

Review and consideration for proposed signage for "Gatlinburg Winery," located at 702 Parkway, requested by Pam Campbell. (Reviewed by EDRB 5.19.2026)

Staff presented the request for proposed replacement signage for "Gatlinburg Winery," located at 702 Parkway. The replacement is for the wall sign is 48' LED light box with new digital graphics, which measure 15 square feet. The bottom portion of the proposed sign replacement is a new LED channel letters on raceway which also measures out to 15 square feet, equating to 30 square feet in total. The sign will have a white acrylic face with black returns raceway to match the exterior color. Staff did want to note that the initial request is over the signage allotment for the location, and a representative of Gatlinburg Winery said they would remove the 2' decal located in the front entrance door to make the request compliant with Section 411, being the Sign Regulations.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Larry Claiborne made a motion to approve the request as presented. Ms. Jackie Leatherwood provided a second with all members voting, "aye." Mr. Jay Horner voted, "nay."

Aesthetic review and consideration for "Nick Bales Construction," located at 1780 East Parkway, requested by Nick Bales. (Reviewed by EDRB 5.19.2026)

Staff presented the aesthetic review for a proposed new roof located at 1780 East Parkway. The applicant is seeking to replace the existing metal roof with a brown metal roof. Although no specific color codes were provided, the provided rendering adheres to the Architectural Guidelines for the Commercial Corridor and Section 715 of the Gatlinburg Zoning Ordinance.

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

Unscheduled Items

Staff presented a draft of new ordinance amendments for Section 701- R-1 (Low Density Residential) District, 706-C-1 (Tourist Commercial) District, and 411-Sign Regulations. The proposed ordinance amendments address proposed signage regulations for overnight rentals, eliminating the use of QR codes or other digital scannable technology. Any current QR codes will have 180 days to be removed following the adoption of the proposed amendments. Following the presentation, the Planning Commission requested that the proposed amendments be added to the June agenda for review and consideration.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:12 p.m. upon a motion by Ms. Jackie Leatherwood and a second motion provided by Mr. Jay Horner.

Approved:

Jackie Leatherwood
Planning Commission Secretary

6.18.26
Date

