

**MINUTES OF THE
GATLINBURG MUNICIPAL PLANNING COMMISSION
MARCH 19, 2026
THURSDAY, 4:00 P.M., CITY HALL**

MEMBERS PRESENT

Jackie Leatherwood
Candace Ogle Morton
Jay Horner
Larry Claiborne
Cam Caton

MEMBERS ABSENT

Kirby Smith
Chad Reagan

OTHER PRESENT

Jim Downs
Dev Patel
Glen Palmer
Terry Matthews
Keith Grayson
Dan Saffelder
Andy Taylor

Staff Representatives: Dalton York, Planning Director
Marlea Green, Executive Secretary
Joe Barrett, ETDD representative

CALL TO ORDER AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Planning Commission Co-Chairman, Mr. Jay Horner, called the meeting to order at 4:00 P.M. The minutes of the February 19, 2026, meeting were unanimously approved following a motion by Mr. Cam Caton and a second provided by Mr. Larry Claiborne.

STAFF REPORT

PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Staff presented two letters from property owners regarding an already approved commercial site plan located on East Parkway.

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 Cliff at Downtown Gatlinburg," being Tax Map 126N, Group E, Parcels 22 and 42.01, located at 335 East Holly Ridge Road. The applicant seeks preliminary approval for a residential Planned Unit Development (PUD) proposed in five (5) phases, consisting of thirty (30) one-bedroom single-family dwellings and one (1) 5,141 sq. ft. commercial amenities building. The residential component includes three distinct unit types: twenty-four (24) "Glass Cabins" (294 sq. ft.), three (3) "Swiss Chalets" (455 sq. ft.), and three (3) "A-Frames" (455 sq. ft.). While the site plan identifies fifty (50) parking spaces, Staff notes that the current configuration would require tenants to back directly into the travel lane of East Holly Ridge Road, presenting a significant public safety concern. The proposed five-story amenities building is intended to be open to the public and includes a rooftop bar,

accessory arcade, spa, and wellness center. Staff has requested a detailed floor plan to confirm that the minimum parking requirements for these specific commercial uses are met in addition to the residential requirements.

Regarding the Hillside Overlay District (Section 715), the applicant has provided a landscaping plan intended to satisfy the mandatory 75% screening requirement in lieu of utilizing low-reflectivity or muted-toned building materials. This plan requires professional certification to ensure the 75% screening threshold can be achieved within the mandatory two-year growth period. Additionally, at the March 3rd BZA meeting, the development received a special exception to reduce the building separation requirement from 20' to 10'. Although the original public notice requested a reduction to 5', the applicant modified the plan to a 10' minimum separation, which subsequently reduced the total unit count from 37 to 30. During that hearing, the Fire Marshal stipulated that an ADA-compliant footpath (minimum 3' width at a 1/12 grade) must be integrated into the development to ensure safe passage for medical personnel.

Currently, the proposed plan requires several modifications to remain in compliance with City regulations. Notably, the applicant has submitted two (2) separate applications to the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA) for the April 7th, 2026, meeting: 1) a request for a special exception to allow guests to back directly into the public Right-of-Way of East Holly Ridge Road, and 2) a request to lower the required parking count for the amenities building. Additionally, the plan necessitates the formal establishment of an easement for the City-maintained water line and potential utility relocations. Applicable Regulations: Article III, being Definitions (specifically "Open Space"); Article IV, Section 402 (Off-Street Automobile Parking), Section 402.19, Section 406 (Planned Unit Development), Section 407 (Site Plan Regulations for Multi-Family, Commercial, And Industrial Uses), Section 407.3 (Landscaping Requirements), and Section 411 (Sign Regulations); Article VII, Section 715 (Hillside Overlay District); Article VII, Section 702 (C-2 General Business District).

Following the discussion, Ms. Candace Ogle Morton made a motion for the request to remain tabled until the Municipal Board of Zoning Appeals makes their determination. Ms. Jackie Leatherwood provided a second with all members voting, "aye."

NEW BUSINESS

Review and consideration of commercial site plan for "EOS Link Charging Stations," being Tax Map 126N, Group A, Parcel 15, located at 635 River Road, C-1 Zone, requested by EOS Link, LLC.

Staff presented the request for a commercial site plan for "EOS Link Charging Stations," being Tax Map 126N, Group A, Parcel 15, located at 635 River Road. This request seeks approval to install three (3) Electric Vehicle (EV) charging stalls behind the current Hilton Garden Inn located at the subject address. The proposed infrastructure includes one dual-port "side-by-side" charger and one single-port unit. If approved, the hotel's total parking count will be reduced from 120 to 116 spaces. Staff have reviewed the underlying parking requirements for this 114-unit hotel and confirmed that the revised total of 116 spaces still meets the minimum regulatory requirement, being one space per unit, plus two.

Regarding the physical equipment, the largest charging station is proposed closest to the hotel building and features a digital interface. In compliance with Gatlinburg Zoning Ordinance Section 411, this digital face will be positioned to face away from the public right-of-way of Oak Street to remove the visual impact of the screen. Applicable Regulations: Article IV, Section 407 Commercial Site Plan Regulations; Article VII, Section 706 (C-1 Tourist Commercial District).

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

Review and consideration of a commercial site plan for "Gas Station," being Tax Map 127H, Group B, Parcel 35, located at 1006 East Parkway, C-2 Zone, requested by Olson Custom Homes.

Staff presented the request for a commercial site plan for a "Gas Station," being Tax Map 127H, Group B, Parcel 35, located at 1006 East Parkway. The applicant is requesting approval for a retail gas station facility featuring four (4) fueling pumps. The primary structure is a two-story, 3,940 sq. ft. building designed for food preparation, retail sales, and second-floor administrative offices. Staff will note that while shower facilities are included on the upper level, the applicant has formally clarified these are for employee use only and the space is not intended for residential or overnight rental use. The proposed 58' x 52' canopy is situated outside the required 15' front yard setback, and the underground fuel storage tanks are positioned 33' from the neighboring property line, exceeding the minimum 20' requirement. The site provides 11 parking spaces, which meets the minimum threshold for a facility of this size under GZO Section 402. All proposed signage and architectural elevations must receive Environmental Design Review Board (EDRB) approval prior to permit issuance.

A tree survey identifies the removal of 14 protected trees, requiring 33 replacement units. The submitted landscaping plan proposes 40 new trees, satisfying the replacement ratio. This plan includes a Type B Buffer along the property boundaries; however, Staff finds that the buffer along the western property line must be extended by approximately 20 feet to ensure continuous screening from the adjoining parcel as required by Section 407.3. Applicable Regulations: Zoning Ordinance Article IV, Section 402 (Off-Street Automobile Parking), Section 407 (Site Plan Regulations for Multi-Family, Commercial, And Industrial Uses), Section 407.3 (Landscaping Requirements); Article VII, Section 707 (C-2 General Business District).

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Cam Caton made a motion to approve the commercial site plan as presented. Mr. Larry Claiborne provided a second with all members voting, "aye."

Review and consideration of a commercial PUD site plan revision for "Anakeesta," being Tax Map 126M, Group A, Parcel 33.03, located at 147 Baskins Creek Bypass, C-1 Zone, requested by Silverbell Investments.

Staff presented the request for a commercial PUD site plan revisions for "Anakeesta," being Tax Map 126M, Group A, Parcel 33.03, located at 147 Baskins Creek Bypass. This request seeks approval for a minor revision to the approved Anakeesta PUD site plan to allow for the installation of a permanent photo booth structure within the Stone Village portion of the development. As shown on the provided vicinity map, the structure is located internally within the development and is not visible from the public right-of-way of Baskins Creek Bypass or the Parkway. Staff has

reviewed the modified pedestrian flow around the new structure and finds that the layout maintains sufficient clearance for guest safety and emergency accessibility.

Due to the structure being under 1,000 square feet and located within an existing high-traffic pedestrian zone, it does not negatively impact the development's overall density or open-space requirements under GZO Section 406. Furthermore, the applicant has indicated that the exterior materials of the booth will match the established "Stone Village" architectural theme to ensure aesthetic consistency with the existing PUD. Applicable Regulations: Article IV, Section 406 Planned Unit Development.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Larry Claiborne made a motion to approve the PUD site plan revision as presented. Ms. Jackie Leatherwood provided a second with all members voting, "aye."

Review and consideration of a commercial site plan for "Cherokee Orchard Lodge," being Tax Map 126N, Group K, Parcel 31, located at 519 Cherokee Orchard, C-2 Zone, requested by Best and Associates.

Staff presented the request for a commercial site plan for "Cherokee Orchard Lodge," being Tax Map 126N, Group K, Parcel 31. The applicant is seeking commercial site plan approval for a 12-bedroom lodge on a 0.15-acre parcel (6,658 sq. ft.). The proposed four-story structure encompasses 10,922 sq. ft. of floor area. This results in a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of 1.64, which is within the maximum allowable FAR of 2.0 for the C-2 district. The maximum proposed building height is 72' 3", also remaining under the district maximum of 84'.

The site plan identifies 14 total parking spaces divided between an on-site parking deck on the main level and an adjacent onsite parking surface area. This meets the minimum parking requirement for hotel/lodge uses. However, a dedicated pedestrian circulation path connecting the lower parking area to the lodge entrance has not been provided. Staff finds this to be a safety concern that must be addressed in a revised layout.

The subject parcel is located within the Hillside Overlay District, and the applicant has selected Option #1, committing to the use of non-reflective materials and a muted, earth-tone color palette for the building's exterior finishes. Additionally, the development is located within the Critical Slope Floating Zone (CSFZ), because the site is within the CSFZ, project-specific geotechnical reports will be required at the time of permit application to ensure the foundation is adequately designed for the site's topography.

At this time, the plan lacks the Type B Buffer required around the exterior of the development per Section 407.3. Despite the absence of protected trees, a Type B Buffer is still required along the front and rear lot lines due to the nature of the surrounding usage. Given the limited area of the 0.15-acre site, Staff is concerned about the physical feasibility of accommodating these mandatory buffers alongside the proposed building footprint and parking requirements. Additionally, a pedestrian circulation path for the lower parking area has not been provided at this time presenting concerns of tenants using the highly trafficked Cherokee Orchard Rd. roadway to travel between the areas. Applicable Regulations: Article IV, Section 402 (Off-Street Automobile Parking), Section 407 (Site Plan Regulations), Section 407.3 (Landscaping Requirements); Article VII, Section 707 (C-2 General Business District).

Following a brief discussion, Ms. Jackie Leatherwood made a motion to table the request citing the lacking landscaping plan and the revised site plan was not provided in a timely manner for review. Mr. Larry Claiborne provided a second with all members voting, "aye."

Review and consideration of a commercial site plan for "Ski Mountain Lodge," being Tax Map 137B, Group A, Parcel 24, located at 510 Ski Mountain Road, requested by Best and Associates.

Staff presented the request for a commercial site plan for "Ski Mountain Lodge," being Tax Map 137B, group A, Parcel 24, located at 510 Ski Mountain Road. The applicant is seeking commercial site plan approval for a 28-bedroom lodge on a 0.77-acre parcel (33,345 sq. ft.). The proposed three-story structure encompasses 20,556 sq. ft. of floor area. This results in a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of .61, which is within the maximum allowable FAR of 2.0 for the C-2 district. The maximum proposed building height is 43' 9", also remaining under the district maximum of 84'. The site plan identifies 30 total parking spaces shown to be provided via an on-site parking area. This meets the minimum parking requirement for hotel/lodge uses.

The subject parcel is located within the Hillside Overlay District, and the applicant has selected Option #1, committing to the use of non-reflective materials and a muted, earth-tone color palette for the building's exterior finishes. Additionally, the development is partly located within the Critical Slope Floating Zone (CSFZ), because of this project-specific geotechnical reports will be required at the time of permit application to ensure any retaining wall along the rear of the structure is adequately designed for the site's topography.

At this time, the plan lacks a noted Type B Buffer required along the roadways and adjoining lot line with the existing single-family dwelling to the west per Section 407.3. Despite the absence of protected trees, a Type B Buffer is still required along the referenced area due to the nature of the surrounding uses. Due to the available area and usage of the existing vegetation of the site staff believe this can be accommodated with current conditions. Applicable Regulations: Article IV, Section 402 (Off-Street Automobile Parking), Section 407 (Site Plan Regulations), Section 407.3 (Landscaping Requirements); Article VII, Section 707 (C-2 General Business District).

Following brief discussion, Mr. Larry Claiborne made a motion to approve the commercial site plan, contingent upon Planning's thorough review of the revised submission provided immediately prior to the Planning Commission meeting. Mr. Cam Caton provided a second with all members voting, "aye."

Review and consideration of a commercial site plan for "Davenport Road Lodge," being Tax Map 126M, Group C, Parcel 8, located at 611 Davenport Road, C-1 Zone, requested by Best and Associates.

The applicant is seeking commercial site plan approval for a 16-bedroom lodge on a 0.4-acre parcel (17,243 sq. ft.). The proposed four-story structure encompasses 12,788 sq. ft. of floor area. This results in a Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of .74, which is within the maximum allowable FAR of 2.0 for the C-2 district. The maximum proposed building height is 54' 2", also remaining under the district maximum of 84'. The site plan identifies 19 total parking spaces divided between an on-

site parking deck on the main level and a lower adjacent on-site parking area. This meets the minimum parking requirement for hotel/lodge uses.

The subject parcel is located within the Hillside Overlay District, and the applicant has selected Option #1, committing to the use of non-reflective materials and a muted, earth-tone color palette for the building's exterior finishes. Additionally, the development is located within the Critical Slope Floating Zone (CSFZ), because the site is within the CSFZ, project-specific geotechnical reports will be required at the time of permit application to ensure the foundation is adequately designed for the site's topography.

At this time, the plan lacks the Type B Buffer required around the exterior of the development per Section 407.3. Despite the absence of protected trees, a Type B Buffer is still required along the front and rear lot lines due to the nature of the surrounding uses. Given the limited area of the 0.4-acre site, Staff is concerned about the physical feasibility of accommodating these mandatory buffers alongside the proposed building footprint and parking requirements. Additionally, the Sanitation department has requested a revised placement for the dumpster provided. Applicable Regulations: Article VI, Section 402 (Off-Street Automobile Parking); Section 407 (Site Plan Regulations); Section 407.3 (Landscaping Requirements); Article VII, Section 707 (C-2 General Business District).

Following a brief discussion, Ms. Jackie Leatherwood made a motion to approve the commercial site plan contingent upon Planning's thorough review of the revised submission provided immediately prior to the Planning Commission meeting. Ms. Candace Ogle Morton provided a second with all members voting, "aye."

Aesthetic review and consideration for "Mountain Heritage Inn," located at 575 River Road, requested by Amy Bales. (Approved by EDRB 3.3.2026)

Staff presented the aesthetic review for "Mountain Heritage Inn," located at 575 River Road. The request is for some exterior changes to the preexisting sign. The request is to remove the rock and lantern display located on the left-hand side of the sign structure. The applicant is requesting to remove the rock from the display case and add it to the sign structure for the Inn. Applicable Regulations: Architectural Guidelines for the Commercial Corridor.

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

Aesthetic review and consideration for "Riley's Dental Office," located at 1332 East Parkway, requested by Garrets Building Company. (Approved by EDRB 3.3.2026)

Staff presented the aesthetic review for "Riley's Dental Office," located at 1332 East Parkway. The request is for the new dental office going in on East Parkway beside "Santa's Claus-et." The proposed colors are Laurel Woods, for the siding, (SW 7749), Black Bean, for trim, (SW 6006), and Black Onyx for the shingles of the dental office. The Environmental Design Review Board requested that any other changes to the exterior must be brought before the Board prior to moving forward with exterior changes. Applicable Regulations: Architectural Guidelines for the Commercial Corridor.

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

Aesthetic review and consideration for "EOS Link Charging Stations," located at 635 River Road, requested by EOS Link, LLC. (Approved by EDRB 3.3.2026)

Staff presented the aesthetic review for "EOS Link Charging Stations," located at 635 River Road. The request for a new electric car charging station to be placed in the parking lot of Hilton Garden Inn. The signage included in this request is considered "informational" signage per the Zoning Ordinance. The aesthetic review is for the paint used to signify charging parking spaces. The request adheres to Section 411, being the Sign Regulations and Architectural Guidelines for the Commercial Corridor.

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

Aesthetic review and consideration for "Five Guys," located at 815 Parkway, requested by McKay Family Partners LP. (Approved by EDRB 3.3.2026)

Staff presented the aesthetic review for "Five Guys," located at 815 Parkway. The aesthetic request for the front patio remodel is currently underway. The request comes before the Board following a zoning review via our permitting system. Staff noted the change from the stone columns and black iron fencing to the wooden fencing proposed in this request. The color of the wood used is brownstone solid. Applicable Regulations: Architectural Guidelines for the Commercial Corridor.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Cam Caton made a motion to approve the aesthetic review as presented. Ms. Candace Ogle Morton provided as second with all members voting, "aye."

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:32 p.m. upon a motion by Mr. Larry Claiborne and a second motion provided by Ms. Candace Ogle Morton.

Approved:

Jackie Leatherwood
Planning Commission Secretary

4/28/26
Date