MINUTES OF THE
GATLINBURG MUNICIPAL PLANNING COMMISSION
SEPTEMBER 30, 2025
Originally scheduled for September 25, 2025
TUESDAY, 4:00 P.M., CITY HALL

MEMBERS PRESENT	MEMBERS ABSENT	OTHER PRESENT
Jackie Leatherwood	Cam Caton	Alex Davis
Kirby Smith		Katie Valentine
Candace Ogle Morton		Travis Ogle
Jay Horner		Junior Watson
Chad Reagan		Tim Kuykendall
Larry Claiborne		David Hurst
		Sherilynn Hammonds
		Bob Bentz
		Taylor Forrester
		Carol Muszik
		Kelly Janis

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 August 21, 2025, meeting were unanimously approved following a motion by Mr. Larry Claiborne and a second provided by Mr. Chad Reagan.

STAFF REPORT

PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

OLD BUSINESS

Review and consideration of a proposed final commercial site plan for a multi-family development for "The Hollies Townhomes," being Tax Map 126N, Group H, Parcel 6.01, C-2 Zone, located on East Holly Ridge, requested by Dustin Cole.

Staff presented the request for final commercial site plan approval for a multi-family development for "The Hollies Townhomes," located on East Holly Ridge (no E-911 established currently). The proposed development comprises a single building containing 11 residential units. These units are all two-story, three-bedroom town homes, available in two distinct configurations. The submitted plan indicates 22 parking spaces, which satisfies the minimum requirement for the proposed unit sizes and incorporates essential interior parking lot planters. Included within the submittal are also exterior elevations of the proposed structure.

The project differs slightly from the previous review; the new layout shows the updated parcel configuration following a corrected survey being provided to staff that include the subdivision on the noted "lot 2" and shown at the intersection of Cherokee Orchard Road and East Holly Ridge Road. The applicant has provided items previously noted to be lacking, such as a Landscaping Plan, description of the total area of disturbance, dumpster location, and specifications for dumpster screening materials. At the time of this review, the only outstanding item prior to final approval set forth within the Zoning Ordinance is the certification of the parcel being absent of hardwoods ≥10" DBH, evergreens ≥15" DBH, specimen trees, public trees, significant tree groupings, and trees in environmentally sensitive areas. Lastly, the fire department have reviewed the access for the development, noting that what has been provided is sufficient for their adopted standards, if required sprinkler system and standpipe are to be installed.

Outside of the Zoning Ordinance requirements, the utilities department has requested that the project engineer provide profiles with existing utilities shown. A sewer extension in the public right-of-way requires installation by a licensed contractor with a MU license designation and a performance bond. It is to be noted that any asphalt disturbance in the public street would require proper restoration, a complete overlay of the surface, and a performance bond in addition to City Commission approval for work to be conducted in the right-of-way. This request is to be taken care of prior to permit issuance.

Additionally, outside of the Zoning Ordinance requirements, the fire department has requested a horizontal standpipe to be provided within the FDC located on East Holly Ridge, with a connection at every two units on the front of the building for a handline connection. This is due to limited space in the parking areas. This would be in addition to the required sprinkler system previously discussed with the applicant. This matter has been asked to be provided prior to permit issuance. Applicable Regulations: Article IV, Section 402 Off-Street Automobile Parking; Section 406 Planned Unit Development; Article VII, Section 707 C-2 General Business District.

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

NEW BUSINESS

Review and consideration for a proposed rezoning being Tax Map 108, Parcel 76.02, from R-1 (Low Density Residential) District to C-5 (Crafts Commercial) District located at 795 Buckhorn Road, requested by Katie Valentine.

Staff presented the request for a proposed rezoning being Tax Map 108, Parcel 76.02 from R-1 (Low Density Residential) District to C-5 (Crafts Commercial) District located at 795 Buckhorn Road. The request is to change the zoning district of the subject parcel from R-1 (Low Density) Residential to the C-5 (Crafts Commercial) District. The rezoning is intended to allow the current structure to be used as an eatery, as it previously operated as a commercial business. The commercial use grandfathering was lost due to ceasing operations for a period greater than 30 days. This rezoning will also be in keeping with the Glades Arts and Crafts district. Staff have not received any correspondence from neighboring property owners opposed this request. Applicable Regulations: Article VII, Section 701 (R-2 Medium Density Residential) District and Section 710 (C-5 Crafts Commercial District).

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

Review and consideration for a minor PUD revision for "Anakeesta," being Tax Map 126M, Group A, Parcel 33.03, C-1 Zone, located at 576 Parkway, requested by Silverbell Investments.
Staff presented the request for a minor PUD revision for "Anakeesta," located at 576 Parkway. The request seeks a minor PUD revision for a modification to the chairlift, its landing areas, and the parking configuration for the Anakeesta PUD. The proposed modifications for the development include a revision of the chairlift system to be retrofitted to encompass gondolas, as well as a new maintenance building, photo booth, expanding walking path and waiting areas, a covered waiting area for the upper loading zone, and a new retaining wall. Additionally, the lower portion of the development bordering Parkway is being modified to include a new waiting configuration and temporary structures for the construction phase, including photo tents, security tents, and a validation tent. The "Ridge Rambler," loading area is also being revised, and ADA parking is being shifted to the northwestern portion of the parking lot. All C-1 PUD setbacks and height restrictions are adhered to. The development's replacement support poles for the gondola lift are considered "towers" per the Zoning Ordinance and are limited to a maximum height of 150 feet. The current proposal keeps the maximum tower height under 80 feet, which aligns with the original approval for the development. Currently, the proposal only lacks an approved SWPPP plan from TDEC. The developer is aware of this requirement and is currently working TDEC to get coverage for the revised outfall location as shown in the proposed PUD revision. 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; Article 14- Wireless Telecommunications Towers and Antennas.

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

Review and consideration for a preliminary PUD for "Upper Alpine Way," being Tax Map 136D, Group H, Parcel 3, C-2 Zone, located at 1236 Upper Alpine Way requested by Robert Campbell and Associates.
Staff presented the request for a preliminary PUD for "Upper Alpine Way," located at 1236 Upper Alpine Way. The request seeks preliminary approval for a multi-family development consisting of five, two-family structures. The plan provided shows three larger buildings that will each contain six 3-bedroom units, and two smaller buildings that will each house four, 2-bedroom units. All 20 units are intended for short-term rental use. The applicant has indicated that they plan to phase the development over the next five years and are seeking preliminary approval to proceed with installation of utilities for the entire development.

At the time of staff review, several items must be addressed prior to final consideration, per adopted zoning regulations. These include providing a tree survey for the entire disturbed area, a landscaping plan for the overall development, and a stormwater plan that addresses both permanent and temporary construction measures. Additionally, roadway details for private access, including drainage specifics and profiles must be provided, along with the proposed dumpster location and screening materials. Lastly, a geotechnical report is required because the parcel is located within the Critical Slope Floating Zone.

Outside departments also provided comments-emergency services have requested that building #1 and building #4 be sprinklered and that details on the fire separation between the units of building #2 and building #3 be provided. Emergency Services also requested that a fire hydrant be installed on the upper portion of the development in the last proposed curve of the access drive. The Utilities Department has requested proposed on-site water and sewer line locations, noting that these lines, even for fire protection, will be required to be reviewed for compliance. Finally, the Sanitation Department has requested that the proposed dumpster locations be shown with the required three-sided screening. Applicable Regulations: Article VII, Section 701 (R-1 Low Density Residential) and Article VIII (Yard, Area, and Height Requirements).

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Larry Claiborne made a motion to approve the preliminary PUD request, stating that all items would need to be satisfied prior to receiving full PUD approval. Mr. Jay Horner provided a second with all members voting, "aye."

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 alter property lines along a City right-of-way located at 533 Greystone Heights Road. The request seeks to abandon a portion of the City's right-of-way on Greystone Heights Road. The area currently contains existing utilities, which the applicant has proposed to accommodate with a utility easement. The main reason for the requested abandonment is to formally close the historical right-of-way shown on past surveys, which runs along the western property line of the subject lot.

Staff consulted with various departments regarding the request. The Fire Department initially had some concerns with emergency services and turnaround, but the current iteration eases those concerns, as the additional turnaround area is no longer requested for closure. Furthermore, the Utilities Department has reiterated that no structure can be placed upon the existing utility line should the abandonment be granted. The applicant is aware of those terms. Ms. Carol Muszik, owner of the adjoining property, was present to express concern about the approval of the request due to pass denials of a similar request. Applicable Regulations: Article VII, Section 701 (R-1 Low Density Residential District) and Article VIII, being the Area, Yard, and Height Requirements.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Chad Reagan made a motion to table the request asking Staff to provide some more information to further affirm Ms. Muszik's claim of previous denials, the Board also requested staff to provide the plat showing the relinquishment of the 40' of property by adjoining property owners. Mr. Larry Claiborne provided a second with all members voting, "aye."

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.

The proposed amendments revise Section 706 of the Zoning Ordinance to allow for outdoor dining as specific exception to the general prohibition on commercial activity within the front yard setback. This change provides a legal basis for the new use. The core regulations are detailed in the new Section 407.4, which outlines the requirement for approval and operation. To obtain a permit, an applicant 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 congregations 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 the neighboring properties. Operational rules are also defined, including limitations on alcohol service to seated patrons and specific conditions for allowing dogs or live entertainment.

Following Staff's presentation of information, the Board engaged in discussion amongst themselves. A local constituent provided their opinion on the ordinance as asked by the Board. The local explained that they did not feel that the ordinance was in keeping with the vision of Gatlinburg and that Boardway Street in Nashville is not our market; the local also stated that they found the ordinance would be close to impossible to enforce due to list of guidelines. The Board discussed limiting the patio option to the first floor of the establishment.

Following a discussion amongst Staff and the Board, the Board wants to have a workshop on this item especially due to the list of guidelines provided. Mr. Chad Reagan made a motion to recommend the proposed amendments and additions to the Board of Commissioners for their review and consideration. Mr. Larry Claiborne provided a second, but the motion died to lack of a majority with Ms. Candace Ogle Morton, Ms. Jackie Leatherwood, and Mr. Jay Horner voting in opposition. Ms. Jackie Leather made a motion to table the request citing the need for a workshop. Ms. Candace Morton provided a second with all other members voting, "aye."

Review and consideration for proposed amendments to Section 402.19, being Off-Street Parking Requirements, requested by Staff.

The proposed amendment to Section 402.19 revises the requirements for utilizing the remote off-street parking, shifting the regulation from a broad area to a highly connected, safety-focused provision. The current ordinance allows for remote parking up to 400 feet from the main entrance without requiring a dedicated pedestrian path, creating safety and convenience concerns. The revision introduces three core changes:

1. <u>Proximity and Adjacency:</u> The maximum distance is drastically reduced from 400 to 75 feet maximum walking distance. The new rule mandates that the remote lot must be immediate and functional extension of the primary use.

2. Pedestrian Connectivity: The amendment requires that the parking space be connected to the principal by using a sidewalk that meets minimum adopted building code standards. The walking distance must be measured along this sidewalk and any necessary crosswalks, directly addressing the current safety deficiency by providing a safe, dedicated, pedestrian route.
3. Detailed Lighting Requirements: New standards are added to ensure both safety and aesthetic consistency. The ordinance now mandates specific light pol heights (9 to 15 feet), minimum output (5,000 lumens) and maximum output (9,500 lumens), and requires the lights to be warm-colored (3000 K or lower). Furthermore, lighting fixture must be architecturally consistent with existing light poles in the immediate area, which helps mitigate light pollution and promotes design equity.

The amendments are necessary to enhance pedestrian safety, improve walkability, and introduce clear standards for connectivity and illumination.

Mr. Taylor Forrester, legal counsel for Aatmos Hospitality, a local hotelier, was present to discuss points of support, areas of concern, and suggestions for improvement. A letter outlining the claims presented during the meeting has been entered into the ordinance record. Applicable Regulations: Article IV, General Provisions; Section 402, Off-Street Parking Requirements.

Following the discussion amongst Staff and the Board, the Board requested that the 75' be upped to 100', the ordinance will need to include language clarification, and that a workshop would be beneficial to all parties affected.

Following the discussion, Mr. Chad Reagan made a motion to recommend the proposed amendments to the Board of Commissioners for their review and consideration with the addition of the notes previously provided. Ms. Jackie Leatherwood provided a second with all members voting, "aye."

Review and consideration for proposed signage for "Gatlinburg Adventure Rentals," located at 379 East Parkway, requested by Laurentiu Cirstea. (EDRB approved 9/2/2025)

Staff presented the request for proposed signage for "Gatlinburg Adventure Rentals," located at 379 East Parkway. The request is to utilize the pre-existing sign structure left from the previous business. The applicant is seeking to replace the sign face insert with a sign that displays the adventure rental logo and business name. The proposed sign measures out to be 48 square feet. The sign will be flat with no dimensions and no lighting provided. The applicant is adding new landscaping to the base of the sign. The sign is white, black and yellow. 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 signage for "Sips and Sweets," located at 450 Parkway, requested by Michael Dunlow. (EDRB approved 9/2/2025)

Staff presented the request for proposed signage for "Sips and Sweets," located at 450 Parkway. The request for one (1) wall sign. The sign measures 50 square feet, is flat with no dimensional features, and will be placed above the retail space entryway. The proposed color palette includes pink, purple, teal, and yellow. Applicable Regulations: Section 411, being the Sign Regulations.

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

Review and consideration for proposed signage for "Capital Vacations," located at 414 and 515 Airport Road, requested by Capital Vacations (EDRB approved 9/2/2025)
Staff presented the request for proposed signage for "Capital Vacations," located at 414 and 515 Airport Road. The request encompasses signages for both locations 414 Airport Road and 515 Airport Road. 515 Airport Road includes a monument sign face replacement measuring out to 40 square feet. The second monument sign 414 Airport Road, another sign face replacement that measures out to 12 square feet. The wall sign located at 414 Airport Road that will be placed on the preview center building will measure 56 square feet. The applicant added a new wall sign facing Airport Road, that sign measures 10 square feet. The business is given 70 square feet per address point/business license bringing their allowable signage to 140'. The request includes 118'. Applicable Regulations: Section 411, being the Sign Regulations.

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

Review and consideration for proposed signage for "Mountain Treasures," located at 735 Parkway, requested by Brainchild Creative, LLC. (EDRB approved 9/2/2025)
Staff presented the request for proposed signage for "Mountain Treasures," located at 735 Parkway. The request is for one (1) wall sign. The proposed wall sign measures 15 square feet. The sign is made of PVC and fiberglass with acrylic with halo lit standoff letters. The sign will have dimensional features. Applicable Regulations: Section 411, being the Sign Regulations.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Chad Reagan made a motion to approve the proposed signage as requested. Ms. Candace Ogle Morton provided a second with all members voting, "aye."

Aesthetic review and consideration for "Mountain Treasures," located at 735 Parkway, requested by BrainChild Creative, LLC. (EDRB approved 9/2/2025)
Staff presented the request for an aesthetic review for "Mountain Treasures," located at 735 Parkway. The storefront façade will be fabricated of fiberglass and painted with automotive grade paint. The rockwork will have small fiber optic lights throughout the façade to add accent lighting. Staff did inform the Board that the applicant is aware that the lights are to remain static, not twinkle, and must not line the doorway. The rockwork will not exceed 18" from building face. Applicable Regulations: Architectural Guidelines for the Commercial Corridor.

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 "Over Easy Al's," located at 1019 Parkway, requested by Kirby Smith. (EDRB approved 9/2/2025)

Staff presented the request for proposed signage for "Over Easy Al's," located at 1019 Parkway. The request encompasses two (2) proposed signs. Sign #1 is a blade sign measuring 38 square feet. The colors used in the proposed sign are red, black, cream, and yellow. The sign graphic includes the business name and a rooster with sunglasses. Sign #2 is a 25 square foot blade sign that will be located at the corner of Parkway and M&O Street. There will be a small spotlight located above Sign #2. Total signage request is 63 square feet well within their allowable 70 square feet.

Following a brief discussion, Ms. Jackie Leather made a motion to approve the proposed signage as presented. Mr. Chad Reagan provided a second with all members voting, "aye." Chairman Kirby Smith abstained from the vote.

Review and consideration for proposed ornate objects for "Over Easy Al's," located at 1019 Parkway, requested by Kirby Smith. (EDRB approved 9/2/2025)

Staff presented the request for proposed ornate objects for "Over Easy Al's," located at 1019 Parkway. Two ornate objects are included in this request. Two baskets to be placed upon the awning roof with eggs in them. The measurement of each ornate object is 32 square feet each. No wording or images to place upon the crates. Applicable regulations: Section 412 Super Graphics & Other Ornate/Foreign Objects.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Jay Horner made a motion to approve the proposed ornate objects as presented. Mr. Larry Claiborne provided a second with all members voting, "aye." Chairman Kirby Smith abstained from the vote.

Aesthetic review and consideration for "Over Easy Al's," located at 1019 Parkway, requested by Kirby Smith. (EDRB approved 9/16/2025)

Staff presented the request for an aesthetic review for "Over Easy Al's," located at 1019 Parkway. The request is for exterior paint that will be utilized around the windows and on the front entrance woodwork. The color proposed to be used is "vivid yellow." The Board discussed how the other variations of wood and stonework help minimize the visual impact of the color. Applicable Regulations: Architectural Guidelines for the Commercial Corridor.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Jay Horner made a motion to approve the aesthetic review as presented. Mr. Larry Claiborne provided a second with all members voting, "aye." Chairman Kirby Smith abstained from the vote.

Review and consideration for proposed signage for "Food City," located at 1219 East Parkway, requested by Junior Watson. (EDRB 9/16/2025)

Staff presented the request for proposed replacement signage. The proposal encompasses a request to replace the free-standing sign located by East Parkway. The proposed free-standing sign replacement measures out to be 70.63 square feet. The free-standing sign will include an electronic reader board that is to remain static per Section 411.5.7. Sign specifications provided to staff goes as follows: one double-sided I.D. cabinet with routed faces backed with plex; one decorative 3" tubing topper; one double sided full color emc; one double sided Starbucks logo; two pole covers with decorative accents; one faux rock base with routed address numbers. 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 for proposed signage for "Mountain Breakfast," located at 544 East Parkway, requested by The Sign Shop. (EDRB 9/16/2025)
Staff presented the request for proposed signage for "Mountain Breakfast," located at 544 East Parkway. The request is for a new breakfast restaurant that will be occupying the old UTV rental. The applicant is requesting to utilize the existing sign structure. The structure is a free-standing sign located right at the setback line. The request is to keep the same color scheme removing "Adventure Rentals," and "Rocky Top," and adding the name of the restaurant "Mountain Breakfast," to sign face. The sign measures out to be 48 square feet. Applicable Regulations: Section 411, being the Sign Regulations.

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

Adjournment
The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 p.m. upon a motion by Mr. Jay Horner and a second motion provided by Mr. Larry Claiborne.

Approved:
Jackie Leatherwood
Planning Commission Secretary

10/23/25
Date