MINUTES OF THE
GATLINBURG MUNICIPAL PLANNING COMMISSION
FEBRUARY 27, 2025
ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED
FEBRUARY 20, 2025
THURSDAY, 4:00 P.M., CITY HALL

MEMBERS PRESENT	MEMBERS ABSENT	OTHER PRESENT
Kirby Smith	Jay Horner	Brian Davin
Larry Claiborne		Charles Taylor
Jackie Leatherwood		Diane Taylor
Jay Horner		Jeremy Puckett
Cam Caton		Luke Manning
Chad Reagan		Jeff Collart
		Samuel Tinsley
		Keeley Morton
		Vic Patel

Staff Representatives: Dalton York, Interim City Planner
Jodi Bible, Executive Secretary

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 January 16, 2025, meeting were unanimously approved following a motion by Mr. Chad Reagan and a second by Mr. Larry Clairborne.

STAFF REPORT

Staff explained the recent changes to our Board approval process, a newly implemented sign and aesthetic approval. Staff explained that all items once presented and approved by Environmental Design Review Board would be affirmed by the Municipal Planning Commission.

PETITIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

OLD BUSINESS

NEW BUSINESS

Review and consideration for a proposed property exchange concerning Tax Map 126O, Group B, Parcels 33 + 34, C-2 (General Business) District (official March 4, 2025), and Tax Map 126O, Group B, Parcel 36, C-2 (General Business) District requested by CEC, Inc.
Staff presented the request for a proposed property exchange between Tax Map 1260O, Group B, Parcels 33+34 and Tax Map 1262O, Group B, Parcel 36. The proposal is sought after to allow for a waterline connection that will allow for a loop system of the City's water lines serving the Winfield Heights subdivision area. The parcel with which the easement will be provided is the

current Bed and Breakfast located on Winfield Heights Road. The property owner, AVR, has expressed the intent to use the property it is received for Ski Mountain Road access, but ownership will transfer to AVR in fee through a standard Quitclaim Deed. The property transfer also corrects an issue with the placement of the trolley stop that is currently located outside the subject City owned property. Applicable regulations: City of Gatlinburg Subdivision Regulations.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Chad Reagan made a motion to recommend the proposed property exchange to the Board of Commissioners for their review and consideration. Ms. Candace Ogle Morton provided a second with all members voting, "aye."

Review and consideration of a proposed rezoning being Tax Map 117N, Group A, Parcel 22 from R1-A (Low-Density Residential) District to C-2 (General Business) District located on Ivy Road, requested by Ashley Foster.
Staff presented the request for a proposed rezoning being Tax Map 117N, Group A, Parcel 22, R1-A (Low-Density Residential) District to C-2 (General Business) District located on Ivy Road. The proposed rezoning for an overnight rental is to be constructed without the limitations of the R1-A setbacks. A requirement for a proposed rezoning in R1-A district entails mailing out letters to every property owner located within the R1-A district, the basis for this is to receive as much feedback as possible from the property owners. Staff received feedback from 33 members of the community, three of whom were for the proposed rezoning and 30 provided opposition. A few members of the Montgomery Wood subdivision were present at the meeting to express concern regarding the proposed rezoning and the effect of an overnight rental being in their established long-term residential neighborhood. Applicable Regulations: Article VII, Section 701 (R-1 Low Density Residential) and 702 (R-1A Low Density Residential); Title 5, Chapter 7 (Tourist Residency Permits) of the Gatlinburg Municipal Code.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Chad Reagan made a motion to deny the request due to the opposition from the residents in Montgomery Woods neighborhood. Mr. Larry Claiborne provided a second with all members voting, "aye."

Review and consideration of proposed rezoning being Tax Map 126N, Group E, Parcel 35 from R-2 (Medium Density Residential) District to C-2 (General Business) District located at 111 W. Holly Ridge, requested by Jeremy Dilley.
Staff presented the request for a proposed rezoning being Tax Map 126N, Group E, Parcel 35 from R-2 (Medium Density Residential) District to C-2 (General Business) District located at 111 W. Holly Ridge. The request comes following the neighboring parcel being approved at the December 19, 2024, Planning Commission meeting for 151 W. Holly Ridge Road. The intent of the rezoning request is to allow for the placement of two smaller cabins (one or two bedrooms) on the parcel rather than the currently allowable eight plus bedroom cabin. Applicable regulations: Article VII, Section 703 (R-2 Medium Density Residential) District and Section 707 (C-2 General Business).

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

Review and consideration for preliminary PUD site plan approval for "Franklin Ridge at the Glades," being Tax Map 117D, Group A, Parcel 24, R-2 Zone, located at 811 Franklin Drive, requested by Dustin Cole.
Staff informed the Board that this item was to be removed at the request of the applicant.

Review and consideration for a change of use for a commercial development for "Arts and Crafts Village," being Tax Map 117, Parcel 22.01, C-2 Zone, located at 170 Glades Road, requested by CEC, Inc.
Staff presented the request for a change of use for a commercial development for "Arts and Crafts Village," being Tax Map 117, Parcel 22.01, C-2 Zone, located at 170 Glades Road. The request to change the use of the Smoky Mountain Arts and Crafts Village complex from commercial to residential. The intent relayed to Staff for the proposal is to have the current units of the complex converted into one-to-two-bedroom units for long-term rentals. The total number of units located within the complex is 27. The established parking is 16 spaces over the minimum requirement for a multi-family development of this degree. Landscaping is already in place at the development, so there are no additional landscaping requirements unless the Planning Commission finds the existing landscaping insufficient for the use. The owner has conveyed to Staff that the restaurant sue will remain until the conclusion of the unit's lease ends in December of this year (2025), this would be allowable since the property is zoned C-2 (General Business) District. 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 703 (R-2 Medium Density Residential District.)

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

Review and consideration for a special exception for Section 411.3.4 of the Sign Regulations for proposed sign height, being Tax Map 126L, Group A, Parcel 24, located at 229 East Parkway, C-2 Zone, requested Vic Patel.
Staff presented the request for a special exception of Section 411.3.4 of the Sign Regulations, being sign height, for two (2) proposed channel letter signs to be placed on the hotel, one of the southern elevations and one of the eastern elevations of the property. The sign height request is for 73', 48' above the maximum sign height requirement set forth in 411.3.4, that being 25', above average grade. The ordinance further provides flexibility in cases of unique topography or congestion, allowing that the height may be extended to a maximum of 30' above any point of grade. The development received a recommendation for approval for the placement of one (1) monument sign located along East Parkway and two-sign face replacements for a single freestanding structure along Parkway. The development proposed an approximate total of 215.91 sq. ft. of signage, with this item's signage encompassing 78.02 sq. ft. each. The square footage of the proposal was previously deemed by Staff as allowable as it is grandfathered due to the previous business and its signage being erected prior to the adoption of the Gatlinburg Zoning Ordinance and its respective sign regulations.
Other establishments in town have received a height variance, or special exception, like this one. All previously approved height variances, or special exceptions, for sign height had provided a hardship in detail on their position. Those minutes are available in the City of Gatlinburg's Planning Department.

Following a discussion, Mr. Chad Reagan made a motion to approve the special exception for sign height, but the applicant must not exceed the maximum signage allotment for a commercial business, being 150 square feet. This allows the applicant to reconfigure the proposed signage to appease the approval set forth by this Board. This motion also states that the applicant will have to go back to Environmental Design Review Board to receive their recommendation to the Planning Commission for their review and consideration. Mr. Larry Claiborne provided a second with all members voting, "aye." Ms. Candace Ogle Morton abstained from the vote.

Review and consideration for one (1) proposed wall sign and one (1) proposed roof sign for "Pizza Rio," located at 373 Parkway, requested by Sign Co., Inc. (Passed Environmental Design Review Board 2.13.2025).

Staff presented the request for one (1) proposed wall sign and one (1) proposed roof sign for, "Pizza Rio," located at 373 Parkway. The proposed wall sign measures 23'.2", and the location will the front face of the business facing the parkway. The materials used on the wall sign include painted aluminum cabinet (black) with push through acrylic letters (golden-yellow)-internally illuminated with LEDs. The roof sign presented in this submittal received approval from the Board of Zoning Appeals on October 28, 2024. Per the City's Zoning Ordinance (Section 411.8.2), roof signs shall be allowed only where pre-existing conditions of the land or structure which make the use of other sign locations impractical and impose a physical hardship. The applicant presented their case, and the Municipal Board of Zoning Appeals found that the item met requirements set forth in Section 411.8.2; resulting in the applicant receiving the approval for a roof sign not to exceed 6.7 (the sign in this submittal is 6.6 square feet). Roof sign materials include an aluminum sign cabinet with panned plastic face and digitally printed graphics; internally illuminated with LEDs. Total square footage proposed in this request is 29.9 square feet, this approval will bring their business signage to a total of 41.8 square feet, to a total of three business signs-grandfathered free-standing sign, approved by EDRB February 22, 2024, same materials and color scheme as what is currently presented. The proposal is compliant with Section 411, being the Sign Regulations of the Gatlinburg Zoning Ordinance.

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

Review and consideration for sign-face replacements for "Ripley's Believe It or Not," located at 800 Parkway, requested by S & S Sign Tech, LLC (Passed Environmental Design Review Board 2.13.2025).

Staff presented the request for proposed sign-face replacements for "Ripley's Believe It or Not," located at 800 Parkway. Ripley's has recently undergone some branding updates, and this request is specifically for the font change on "Ripley's". Most Ripley attractions have received approval for the style change. Specifically, this request refers to "Ripley's Believe It or Not," signs located on Reagan Drive, Parkway, and the sign facing the corner of Parkway and Reagan. The previously approved colors will be used on the sign-face. The change in branding does minimize the square footage of the signage by one foot. The proposed sign-face replacements are compliant with Section 411, being the Sign Regulations of the Gatlinburg Zoning Ordinance.

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

Review and consideration for a proposed signage for "Cambria," located at 229 East Parkway, requested by Sign Co., Inc. (Passed Environmental Design Review Board 2.13.2025).

Staff presented the request for proposed signage for "Cambria," located at 229 East Parkway. Staff also mentioned that *the two large channel letter signs provided in the submittal will not be a part of the review currently being discussed*, as the item is required to be reviewed by another Board due to the special exception request regarding the item. The monument sign is located on East Parkway; sign measurements are as follows, 28 square feet, Cambria boxed area, Altitude (restaurant) boxed area is 32 square feet (total 60 square feet). The grandfathered free-standing sign located on the Parkway measures out to be 80.75 square feet, it is compliant with the grandfathering status of the previous sign which measured 81 square feet. The sign height was provided by applicant for this review, and it is confirmed by Staff that the height allowance provided is 12' which is compliant with Section 411.3.4, Sign Height (9' is the requirement for overhead). The monument's sign location from the setback allots for 80 square feet of signage to be distributed amongst four permanent business signs, in addition to the grandfathering signage located on the Parkway. Following the review by Staff, Staff found that the submission is compliant with Section 411, being the Sign Regulations.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Chad Reagan made a motion to approve the sign request as presented, excluding the two large channel letter signs provided in submittal, Mr. Larry Clairborne provided a second with all members voting, "aye." Ms. Candace Ogle Morton abstained from the vote.

Review and consideration for a proposed free-standing sign face replacement for "Bodies Human," located at 219 Airport Road, requested by The Sign Shop (Passed Environmental Design Review Board 2.13.2025).

Staff presented the request for proposed signage for "Bodies Human," located at 219 Airport Road. The requestor is utilizing an already established free-standing sign structure. The proposed sign measures 48 square feet and is double sided. Currently a fluorescent light box but would need to convert to house neon for icon (logo) and LED channel lettering (for text). The proposed colors are red (more of a scarlet), white (outline, minimal usage), and blue (muted navy). Staff did mention that the submittal included the usage of the term "sequence" and ***noted that no portion of the sign shall change and must always remain static per Section 411.5.7, Flashing/Blinking Signs.*** The current proposal is compliant with Section 411, being the Sign Regulations of the Gatlinburg Zoning Ordinance. The business owner and sign maker were present to confirm that the sign will remain static. There is no dimension associated with the proposed signage.

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

Review and consideration for proposed signage for "Myron Mixon," located at 762 Parkway, Suite 5, requested by Sign Co., Inc. (Passed Environmental Design Review Board 2.13.2025).

Staff presented the request for proposed signage for "Myron Mixon," located at 762 Parkway, Suite 5. The newly proposed BBQ restaurant will replace Crawdaddy's on the Parkway. The proposal includes (3) business signs- 1 projecting blade sign, 1 fascia sign, and a wall sign located above the entry of the new restaurant. The main entrance sign measures 25.2', sign design is backlit channel letters, marquee style globe bulbs, flat bronze metal background with die cut filigree, backlit channel style icon in tarnished metal look. The projecting blade sign (sign #2) included three variations- option #3 is the most aligned with the preferred color wheel and Architectural Guidelines. Option three projecting sign included channel style icon tarnished metal look, LED neon pig with flapping wings to remain **static**- the application states flapping, and Staff confirmed that the sign will remain static. Sign #2 measures 4.6'. Staff also noted that the building is located within the 5-foot setback area, wall signage shall not project more than 12 inches from the building wall or structural members. Sign #3, fascia sign, measures 37'. Sign design: backlit channel letters, backlit channel icon, marquee style globe bulbs, flat bronze, metal background with die cut filigree, channel style icons in tarnished metal look. During the initial review process, staff noted that the submittal was not compliant with Section 411.3.6.1, following a conversation with the applicant, size changes were made and provided to Staff so that we are able to confirm compliance with Section 411.3.6.1. The sign submittal package in its' entirety complied with the 60 square foot maximum allowed for signage for commercial development.

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

Unscheduled Items

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m. upon a motion by Mr. Larry Claiborn and a second motion provided by Ms. Candace Ogle Morton.

Approved:

Jackie Leatherwood

Planning Commission Secretary

4.24.25

Date