

Bland County Planning Commission Meeting Minutes for December 5th, 2005.

Members Present:

Henry Blessing, John Dodson, Jim Baker, Jerry Mercer, Elmer Chewning, Allen Newberry, Stephen Kelley, Guy Boone, Deborah Looney, and R.B. Anderson

Members Absent:

Robert Trobaugh

Others Present:

Jonathan D. Sweet, Planning Commission Secretary, Herschel P. Blessing, James Gregory, Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth W. Prosch, and Jack Poe.

CALL TO ORDER

At 6:30 PM, Planning Commission Chairman Jerry Mercer called the meeting of the Bland County Planning Commission to order at the Bland County School Board Office, Bastian, Virginia.

ROLL CALL

Planning Commission Secretary Jonathan Sweet took the roll call and announced that there was indeed a quorum present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Chairman Mercer requested a motion to approve the minutes of the November 7th, 2005 meeting. Vice Chairman Chewning made the motion to approve the minutes of the November 7th, 2005 meeting as presented; Commission Member Kelley provided a second and the motion passed unanimously.

ITEMS TABLED FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

None

PUBLIC HEARING ON REZONE AND/OR CUP

SJ Real Estate LLC,'s Application for Rezone

Chairman Mercer officially opened the public hearing to receive public comment on SJ Real Estate LLC,'s, application to rezone 1 acre from Agriculture to Commercial in order to locate and operate retail stores, § 62-242, (35), on Tax Parcel No. 48-A-26 & 27. The site is located on

Rt. 614, 0.1 of a mile from Rt. 52 and situated between the Bland Medical Clinic and the Bland Rehabilitation Center (Kegley Manor).

Chairman Mercer provided the floor to Mr. Herschel P. Blessing to address the Commission and public on the proposed application. Mr. Blessing stated that this request to rezone from agriculture to commercial to conduct commercial, i.e., retail operations was John Gregory's purpose for purchasing the property in 1983. He feels that this is a good location for such an establishment. He also feels that it is a positive way to give back to the community, as it will create jobs, generate tax revenues and provided needed services and amenities to the citizens of Bastian and Bland County. Mr. Blessing stated that he has received six calls regarding the leasing of facility space since the legal advertisement went out in the paper two weeks ago. He mentioned that this interest has already exceeded their expectations and clearly demonstrates the high demand for retail space within Bland County and specifically at the Bastian Interchange. Mr. Blessing also explained that the dirt from the site would be relocated across the street onto commercially zoned property owned by Mr. Charles Starks. Mr. Blessing speculated that this activity would provide great assistance in preparing the Starks property for development.

Commission Member Looney asked what types of operations are expected within the strip mall. Mr. Blessing responded that there has been interest in financial institutions, pharmaceutical field, convenience stores and germane operations.

Mr. Blessing also offered that the facility's parking lot would assist the Bland County Clinic with much needed additional parking.

Chairman Mercer then presented the floor to Mr. Jack Poe to address the Commission of his position with respect to the application. Mr. Poe stated that he wanted to publicly state that he is not for any additional commercial establishments that would be located any closer to his home. He stated that he lives down Rt. 614 and he would not like to see commercial developments sprawl any closer to the residential area of Rt. 614. His primary concerns were the garbage that these places create. Mr. Blessing addressed Mr. Poe's concerns by explaining that garbage would be collected and housed in behind the facility. He also showed renderings of the building to explain the quality and show its attractiveness. And promised to maintain a clean and professional look at all times.

Commission Member Blessing asked how they proposed to address the substantial bank along the back of the property. Mr. Blessing explained that a retaining wall will be constructed if and when an evaluation has been conducted on the amount of rock that the site possesses.

Secretary Sweet provided a recommendation to the Commission that this rezoning request is consistent with the Comprehensive Plan, as its location is part of a commercial cluster at an interchange along I-77 and it is within close proximity to currently zoned industrial property.

Commission Member Looney made a motion to recommend the approval of SJ Real Estate LLC,'s, application to rezone 1 acre from Agriculture to Commercial in order to locate and operate retail stores, § 62-242, (35), on Tax Parcel No. 48-A-26 & 27 to the Bland County Board of Supervisors. Commission Member Anderson provided the second and the motion passed unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

To Discuss the Goals of the Comprehensive Plan

Commission Member Newberry made a motion to table discussion of the Goals of the Comprehensive Plan due to the inclement weather and the potential danger for delaying departure. Commission Member Baker provided the second and the vote was unanimous.

NEW BUSINESS

CUP Application for a Bed & Breakfast – Kenneth Prosch

Chairman Mercer presented the floor to Mr. Kenneth Prosch to discuss and explain his application requesting a Conditional Use Permit to conduct a bed & breakfast operation within his home, 350 Valley View Ln.; Bland, Virginia.

Mr. Prosch addressed the Commission and explained that he wished to operate a bed & breakfast out of his new 5 bedroom home that was much larger than simply he and his wife needed. He explained that his wife was disabled in a car accident many years ago and he was the victim of a hereditary degenerative bone disease that has forced him from his former occupation. Mr. Prosch further explained that it is their dream to work out of their home and attempt to make a living. He feels that such an operation would be a mutually beneficial endeavor for both he and his family and the County, as there is not a lot of boarding opportunities. He also made mention of the residual impacts that would be positive, such as free advertising to this beautiful county for individuals to fall in love with, just as they had.

The commission requested more information regarding the home and how this would work. Mr. Prosch shared that the home has 5 bedrooms, 1 for he and his wife's use, 2 that would be used for his personal guests, and two that could be utilized for visiting patrons of his bed & breakfast. He stated that the home formally owned by Elmo Sadler, used to have a restaurant in it and has a sufficient commercial grade septic, commercialized kitchen, two driveways, and tons of room to accommodate what little traffic we will experience.

Commission Member Baker made a motion to hold a public hearing at the next meeting of the Bland County Planning Commission to receive public comment on Mr. Kenneth Prosch's application requesting a Conditional Use Permit to conduct a bed & breakfast operation within his home, 350 Valley View Ln.; Bland, Virginia. Commission Member Looney provided the second and the motion passed unanimously.

Election of Officers for Calendar Year 2006

Chairman Mercer turned the meeting over to Vice Chairman Chewning who opened the floor for nominations for Chairman. Commission Member Blessing nominated Jerry Mercer for the position of Chairman. Commission Member Newberry made a motion that nominations be ceased. Commission Member Dodson provided the second, and the motion was nine (9) yes, zero (0) no. Jerry Mercer provided the only abstention. Jerry Mercer was reappointed to

Chairman by acclimation.

Chairman Mercer opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chairman. Commission Member Dodson nominated Elmer Chewning for the position of Vice Chairman. Commission Member Boone made motion that nominations be ceased. Commission Member Baker provided the second, and the motion was nine (9) yes, zero (0) no. Elmer Chewning provided the only abstention. Elmer Chewning was reappointed to Chairman by acclimation.

Administrative Recommendation

Commission Member Newberry requested that better site maps be provided to the Commission for a clearer understanding of the location and the impact to adjoining land owners. Secretary Sweet stated that staff would do a better job of providing the desired information and will provide county maps that are currently being produced for the Commission to utilize as a point of reference.

January Meeting Date

Secretary Sweet reminded the Commission that they may want to consider a meeting date change in January due to the upcoming holiday season.

Commission Member Newberry made a motion to move the Bland County Planning Commission's January meeting from Monday, January 2nd, 2006 to Monday, January 9th, 2006. Commission Member Anderson provided the second and the motion passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Commission Member Baker made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Commission Member Dodson provided the second.

Chairman Mercer obliged and the meeting was adjourned.