

Bland County Planning Commission Meeting Minutes for April 3rd, 2006.

Members Present:

Jerry Mercer, Elmer Chewning, John Dodson, Henry Blessing, Jim Baker, Stephen Kelley, R.B. Anderson, Robert Trobaugh, and Guy Boone

Members Absent:

Deborah Looney, Allen Newberry

Others Present:

Jonathan D. Sweet, Planning Commission Secretary; Ms. Sarah D. Brackens, Applicant; Bruce & Tracey Shelton, Applicants; Robert Wynn, public comment; and Dot Kidd, audience observer

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 March 6th, 2006 meeting. Commissioner Kelley made the motion to approve the minutes of the March 6th, 2006 meeting as presented; Commissioner Baker provided a second, and the motion passed unanimously.

ITEMS TABLED FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

None

PUBLIC HEARING ON REZONE AND/OR CUP

Public Hearing on a CUP Application for a Warehouse Storage (47), Garage (52), and Dwelling Extension (22) – Sarah D. Brackens

Chairman Mercer officially opened the Public Hearing to receive public comment on an application from Sarah D. Brackens requesting a Conditional Use Permit for Warehouse Storage (47), Garage (52), and Dwelling Extension (22) upon her commercial property, located at 265 Main St., Bland, Virginia; Tax Parcel No. 77A3-10 17 & 21A.

Chairman Mercer presented the floor to Sarah Brackens to brief the Commission on her application. Ms. Brackens stated that she is seeking the conditional use permits for warehouse storage (47) and garage (52) because they most resemble what she will need to house Superior Paint, Inc., her commercial painting company, in the old Pic-Pac building. The proposed CUP for a dwelling extension (22) will be for 6,000 sq. ft. of single level apartments.

The Commission asked what types of products would be warehoused. Ms. Brackens responded that the building would simply house equipment and vehicles associated with the day to day operations of the commercial paint business and would not have any bulk storage of paint or chemicals. Additionally, a majority of the chemicals and paint will remain within the stowed vehicles, as the product is transported to the site where work has been contracted to take place. Ms. Brackens further explained that paint is delivered to and stored at the work site and not at this facility. She concluded by explaining to the Commission that no exterior changes are slated for the building except to reinstall a garage door where one had previously existed while the Pic-Pac was in operation.

Chairman Mercer presented the floor for public comment. Mr. Robert Wynn approached the Commission and stated that there were a couple of errors denoted in Ms. Brackens' deed to the above referenced property. Mr. Wynn articulated that the error exists with the denotation of Route 1106. He claimed that it should be 1006. Mr. Wynn made a final statement that Mrs. Brackens has dramatically cleaned and improved the property and it looks really good. He congratulated Ms. Brackens on all she has done at that location. Ms. Brackens responded and stated that she was not aware of this error. She insured the Commission that she would look into it and thanked Mr. Wynn for bringing it to her attention. Secretary Sweet pointed out that the suspected deed error would not impact the application, as the property is clearly defined on the application with a 911 address as well as a tax map parcel number.

With no further questions from the Commission, Chairman Mercer closed the public hearing and called for a motion.

Vice Chairman Chewning made the motion to recommend to the Bland County Board of Supervisors the approval of a Conditional Use Permit for Warehouse Storage (47), Garage (52), and Dwelling Extension (22) upon her commercial property, located at 265 Main St., Bland, Virginia; Tax Parcel No. 77A3-10 17 & 21A. Commissioner Anderson provided the second. The motion carried unanimously.

Public Hearing on a CUP Application to operate an amusement or entertainment establishment (43) – Bruce & Tracy Shelton

Chairman Mercer officially opened the Public Hearing to receive public comment on an application from Bruce & Tracy Shelton requesting a Conditional Use Permit to construct and operate an amusement or entertainment establishment (43), upon property located 0.1 mile from Exit 52; located off of Rt. 52/42, diagonally across from the Kangaroo; Tax Parcel No. 91-A03A & 3B.

Chairman Mercer presented the floor to Bruce Shelton to brief the Commission on his application. Mr. Shelton stated that he is seeking a Conditional Use Permit to construct and operate a 16 lane bowling alley and an approximate 100 seat restaurant located at Exit 52 off of I-77 on 2-acres currently owned by John Melvin. Both the bowling alley and sit down restaurant will be a metal building construction and have a face-out and façade around the separate entrances. Secretary Sweet interjected that a restaurant is needed to attract other establishments to the interchange, including a hotel. Mr. Shelton provided the Commission with investment numbers totaling approximately \$2 million.

The Commission asked questions of market research and probability of success. Mr. Shelton stated that bowling is the #1 participatory sport in the U.S. Additionally, the closest bowling allies are located all the way in Bluefield, Marion, and Christiansburg. One does not exist in Bland County or Wytheville, allowing us to capture a larger market. Mr. Shelton told the Commission that he had done extensive word of mouth research into the demand and the potential to patronize such an establishment. He feels strongly that a bowling alley and a sit down restaurant are needed in the community and locals as well as travelers would support such an investment. He also added that this is an important investment for families and our youth, providing a safe and nurturing environment free of drugs and alcohol.

The Commission discussed and derived potential conditions to be recommended to the Board of Supervisors. Those recommended conditions are as follows:

1. Construction to begin within one (1) year of the date the Bland County Board of Supervisors approve the Conditional Use Permit, and to be completed within two (2) years from same date.
2. Access road from Rt. 52/42 and parking lot to be paved to state specifications.

Additionally, the Commission discussed the need for a master plan for the development of the interchange by those local developers who own large tracts with intentions of developing them. Secretary Sweet took note of this request and stated that he would look to address this matter with those private developers in the future.

With no further questions from the Commission, Chairman Mercer closed the public hearing and called for a motion.

Commissioner Anderson made the motion to recommend to the Bland County Board of Supervisors the approval of a Conditional Use Permit to construct and operate an amusement or entertainment establishment (43), upon property located 0.1 mile from Exit 52; located off of Rt. 52/42, diagonally across from the Kangaroo; Tax Parcel No. 91-A03A & 3B. Vice Chairman Chewning provided the second. The motion carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS

None

NEW BUSINESS

Application for a Conditional Use Permit for an Inn/Lodge (31) upon commercial property – James & Cindy Stuart

The Commission reviewed the application from James & Cindy Stuart for a Conditional Use Permit for an Inn/Lodge (31), upon their commercial property, located 177 Jackson St., Bland, VA; Tax Parcel No. 91A2-2-52, and took no action due to the absence of representation from the Stuart's.

Commissioner Dodson made a motion to table the approval of the application till the subsequent meeting of the Planning Commission, pending adequate representation at that time. Commissioner Baker provided the second. The motion carried unanimously.

Sale of National Forest Properties – Bland County

Chairman Mercer with concurrence from the Planning Commission, allowed Commissioner Dodson to bring before the Commission an item that was not placed on the agenda. This item was to draft a letter to our state and federal legislators in opposition to the sale of Jefferson National Forest lands within Bland County to private citizens.

The Commission discussed the pros and cons of the matter.

Commissioner Dodson made a motion directing Secretary Sweet to draft a letter to state and federal legislators conveying the Commission's opposition to the sale of National Forest lands to private citizens. Commissioner Boone provided the second. The motion carried with Commissioner Anderson providing an abstention.

(*see attached letter)

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Baker made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Commissioner Kelley provided the second.

Chairman Mercer obliged, and the meeting was adjourned.