Planning & Zoning Board members present: Chairman Bill Scheu

Bill Roberts

Mason Blake

Allen Crawford

Board of Commission members: Mayor Pro Tem Kent Otto

Commissioner Kitty Fouche

Commissioner Tom Widmer

Commissioner Alice Lentz

Commissioner Bill Gilliland

Board members absent: Mayor Tim Helms

Wade Burns

David Holcomb

Dan Dean

Sally Stansill

Town staff present: Adrienne Isenhower, Zoning Administrator

Alex Carmichael, Town Administrator

Angie Murphy, Town Clerk

Five members of the public were present. Mayor Pro Tem Otto called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m., and led the group in a moment of silence.

**Agenda Approval**

Commissioner Fouche moved to adopt the agenda as presented. Commissioner Widmer seconded and the motion carried 5/0.

**Old Business**

There was no old business to discuss.

**New Business**

1. Discussion of Planning & Zoning Commission Zoning Review: Chairman Bill Scheu started the meeting by asking the Council what their intent was with regards to the Zoning Review as well as the mood of the community towards development and restrictions. Mr. Scheu mentioned that at forthcoming meetings representatives from Montreat College, Mountain Retreat Association, realtors and contractors will be giving their input concerning development and restrictions in Montreat. Mayor Pro Tem Otto admitted that looking at the ordinances could be a daunting task. Commissioner Fouche has heard complaints about how restrictive the ordinances are to build in Montreat. She also feels that the ordinances may have been cut and pasted from a large city or town and may not even apply to Montreat. Commissioner Gilliland stated that the ordinances need to be reviewed and Council needs advisement on basically everything. Commissioner Gilliland mentioned that he thinks it is ludicrous that in the summer decibel readers are used outside of Anderson Auditorium to measure noise levels of the kids in worship. He thinks the noise ordinance does not make a lot of sense. Commissioner Gilliland would like to see some controlled development in Montreat and also felt we should adapt to the changing marketplace in western North Carolina. Commissioner Gilliland felt Montreators should recognize their heritage but look forward to the future. The environment has not always been welcoming to those who have moved in as new full time residents and that’s something that is changing rapidly. Commissioner Fouche felt that there are three different rule sets: state, county and town. She would love to see these rule sets combined. Also if Montreat requires something different from the county, state or town it needs to be investigated further. She used the example of setback requirements in Black Mountain versus Montreat. Commissioner Lentz feels that knowing the why is important. Commissioner Widmer stated that he knocked on a lot of doors during the election period and the ordinance issue was something he heard a lot about from everyone. Commissioner Widmer stated that a lot of people talked about the restrictive nature of the building ordinances with regards to other places. Commissioner Widmer heard from contractors and sub-contractors how it is much easier to work in other communities than in Montreat. Commissioner Gilliland also mentioned that he has received several calls about lots in the ETJ that are unbuildable. Mr. Scheu mentioned a psychology he found in the 2008 Comprehensive Plan that development was not welcome. Based on what he’s heard tonight he feels that is not the case anymore. Commissioner Fouche mentioned that it is the tendency of any town to want to keep development down but we need to grow the tax base and make it more welcoming. Commissioner Widmer commended Planning & Zoning for their process and likes their plans for upcoming weeks. Commissioner Gilliland felt that Zoning Administrator Adrienne Isenhower has a great perspective and can bring a lot to the table. Commissioner Lentz feels that the Comprehensive Plan of 2008 is still very relevant and a lot of good work went into its preparation. She complimented everyone who worked on that committee. Mason Blake felt that the Comp Plan needs some sprucing up but a professional is not necessary. Commissioner Fouche feels that the community would be open to change. Mayor Pro Tem Otto mentioned the call tonight was to bring a little clarity to their charge and he’s heard words like “simplify” and knowing the “why” of why ordinances are in place. He jotted down a couple of ideas during an earlier conversation with Mrs. Isenhower and suggested taking the zoning ordinances in chunks and “research the why”. He feels that this would be a possible first step.

**Public Comment**

Dr. Paul Maurer of Montreat College thanked Planning & Zoning for their hard work. It is the College’s belief that one question needs to be answered with respect to the college and that question is “does the Town want the College to succeed”? Dr. Maurer wants the Zoning Ordinance to reflect the answer to that question.

**Adjournment**

Commissioner Gilliland moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Widmer seconded and the motion carried 5/0. The meeting was adjourned at 5:58 p.m.

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Tim Helms, Mayor Angie Murphy, Town Clerk