

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor J.B. Lawrence and Blowing Rock Town Council

From: Kevin Rothrock, Planning Director

Subject: Proposed Town Center District

Date: June 30, 2010

Chapter 1-D of the 2004 Comprehensive Plan lists several policy statements that support the creation of a Town Center District. The Mission Statement reads, *“To maintain the quality, character, and economic vitality of the Town Center through appropriate land use controls, parking improvements, sidewalk improvements, landscaping improvements, and park improvements.”*

The HyettPalma Retail Strategy also encourages the creation of a Town Center along Main Street between Hwy 221 to Globe Road, “in order to protect the retail and pedestrian character of those portions of Downtown fronting on Main Street.”

BRIEF HISTORY

In November 2009, a public hearing was held for comments regarding the establishment of a Town Center District. At that time the draft ordinance included setback and height standards for both Central Business and the proposed Town Center. After the public hearing, Council postponed a decision regarding Town Center until a later date.

Town Center was an agenda topic during the Council retreat in January 2010. Discussion on a Town Center was revisited this spring and consensus from a June 17th Council and Planning Board worksession was a “crawl, walk, run” approach. During the discussion, the group identified other advantages of creating a Town Center including:

- A. Other setback and height standards could be created exclusively for Town Center, because in reality, it is different from the rest of Central Business.
- B. Preservation of unique historic downtown character
- C. Town Center is primary tourist draw

It was agreed that the first step was to establish the Town Center District and apply that zoning to specific properties along Main Street. No changes in building heights, setbacks, or permissible uses are proposed at this time.

At some point the Council may consider the establishment of setback and building height standards for Town Center.

SUMMARY

Please note the following summary of the Town Center District

- It is a new zoning district that encompasses the heart of downtown on Main Street between Hill Street and Chestnut Street – distinct from rest of Central Business.
- It permits the same uses that are allowed in Central Business District – no changes proposed at this time.
- It establishes a separate zoning district that could also serve as a National Registry Historic boundary.
- It is not a separate tax district.

Staff has notified affected and adjacent property owners and published a public notice in the Blowing Rocker. If the Council recommends approval of the draft ordinance, the next step is a recommendation on the rezoning of the subject properties from Central Business to Town Center (covered in separate agenda item).

ATTACHMENTS

- Draft ordinance
- A map of the proposed district is included in the rezoning ordinance agenda item