TOWN COUNCIL AND PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING AND PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES
MONDAY, MARCH 23, 2026, 6:00 PM
1500 BLOWING ROCK ROAD AND WEBEX

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Dalton George, Mayor Pro Tem Todd Carter, Eric Plaag, Anne Pruitt, Virginia Roseman, and Adrian Tait

PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Frank Veno, Garrett Kight, Declan King, Michael Mileski, and Frida Paz-Miranda

PLANNING STAFF PRESENT: Brandon Wise-Deputy Director of Planning & Inspections, Amy Snider-Commercial Zoning Administrator, and Brenda Henson-Board Clerk

OTHER TOWN STAFF OR REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT: Todd Moody-Public Works Director, and Allison Meade-Town Attorney

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Call to Order

Mayor George called the Town Council to order at 6:04 p.m. Chair Veno called the Planning Commission to order at the same time. The meeting was held at the Town Council Chambers, located at 1500 Blowing Rock Road, Boone, as well as via WebEx.

Moment of Silence

A moment of silence was observed.

PUBLIC HEARING

Case A26-0066 Wynnefield Forward, LLC – Conditional District Zoning Map Amendment

Wynnefield Forward, LLC has submitted a Conditional District Zoning Map Amendment application for property located on Chestnut Drive and New Market Boulevard (Watauga County PINs: 2910-39-9335-000, 2910-39-9610-000, and 2910-49-2369-000) to rezone the property from Conditional District R5 55+ Housing to Conditional District R5 55+ with a site-specific development plan for Use 1.17 Adult Living Community.

Brandon Wise, Deputy Director of Planning & Inspections, introduced the case as The Villas at South Fork, noting that the project was previously approved for a Conditional District R5 55+ with a site-specific development plan for senior housing. He explained that the plan before the Council and Planning Commission tonight was different than the previously approved site-specific plan, which created the need for another CD approval. Mr. Wise noted that no deviations from the UDO were requested with this Conditional District. A minor lighting issue was found on the site plan, which would require the applicant to reduce the Kelvin rating from 4,000 to 3,000, and this had been relayed to the applicant.

Craig Stone with Wynnefield Forward addressed the Council and Planning Commission. He explained that their original approval was for 60 units, which had been reduced to 48 to improve the building's site stability. The building would be raised from three to four stories and moved down the hill on the site to be directly adjacent to the storage units. Mr. Stone stated that the building's footprint would be reduced by approximately 12%. The retaining walls at the top of the site would also be reduced in height. The entrance would be off New Market Boulevard, which was better suited to the topography. Mr. Stone stated that they had worked closely with staff to follow all the guidelines.

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Council Member Plaag asked for the elevation from grade on the south-facing side of the building to the roof peak. Mr. Stone replied that he was unsure, but estimated it would be 38-45 feet. Council Member Plaag asked how a four-story building could have a 38-foot elevation. Mr. Stone stated that there would be nine-foot ceilings. Commission Member Plaag felt that the elevation would exceed 38 feet. Commission Member Mileski noted that plan sheet 3.1 in the meeting packet indicated an elevation of 53 feet from grade to the top of the roof.

Council Member Pruitt asked whether consideration had been given to the area and its surroundings when developing the building's design. Mr. Stone replied that they planned to use brick and Hardi-plank and had adapted the façade to suit the area.

Council Member Plaag noted that the Boone Next plan had been adopted since the project's original approval. Boone Next identified this area as a walkable mixed-use area, with buildings oriented toward the street and parking to the side or rear. Sidewalks should be wider, and there should be street trees. He asked Mr. Stone whether they had considered building 4-6 smaller buildings to better take advantage of the topography. Mr. Stone replied that they did consider smaller buildings. However, the ADA required a slope of less than 2% throughout the site, leaving few options for locating multiple buildings.

Council Member Plaag referenced the serpentine path from the site to New Market Boulevard. He felt that older people would not use that path. He suggested a standalone elevator building to take people down to the New Market grade. Mr. Stone stated that they had spent a lot of time getting the site accessible for residents and meeting ADA guidelines. He added that moving the building down the hill allowed them to reduce the number of retaining walls on the top of the site.

Council Member Plaag noted that a number of neighbors expressed concern at the original public hearing that the building was out of scale for the area. He stated that the proposed building would be 53 feet above the roof of the Pinnacle Storage building and would block the view of Howard's Knob. Council Member Plaag added that this might not be the right location for a 55+ independent living facility.

Mayor Pro Tem Carter stated that he had the opposite reaction. He noted that securing LIHTC funding was difficult because very few properties qualified. He added that he appreciated the driveway entrance being on New Market Boulevard.

Council Member Pruitt noted that trees were removed along Chestnut Drive and that a bulldozer was brought to the site. Mr. Stone replied that they were performing geotechnical testing and mistakenly removed trees. He added that the driveway had been moved off Chestnut Drive and that access would be from New Market Boulevard. Council Member Pruitt asked how the residents would be shielded from the proposed parking lot. Mr. Stone stated that landscape buffering was included in the plan, and ordinance requirements would be met. He noted that he would be amenable to installing additional buffering along Chestnut Drive. Mr. Stone stated that the driveway access was moved off Chestnut Drive at great expense. However, emergency fire truck access would be on Chestnut Drive.

Mr. Wise explained that the property would require a neighborhood protection buffer. He stated that the emergency services entry would be closed off with knock-down bollards with geogrid. Mr. Wise noted that a 25-foot type C buffer with plantings on both sides of a fence would be installed. Existing landscaping would remain, and additional evergreens would have to be planted to create the buffer. Council Member Pruitt asked what type of fence would be required. Mr. Wise replied that the fence was required to be 6 feet high and opaque, with landscaping on both sides.

Council Member Pruitt asked if there would be a sidewalk on Chestnut Drive. Mr. Wise stated that a 5-foot-wide sidewalk would be installed on Chestnut Drive. He noted that the parking lot and the finished floor of the building would be within two or three feet from the top of the Pinnacle Storage building.

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Council Member Tait stated that the previously approved building was three stories and 47 feet in height. The proposed building would be four stories and 11 feet taller than the three-story building. He asked if the plan revisions were driven by cost. Mr. Stone replied that they were trying to reduce the retaining walls on the top side of the site. Council Member Tait noted the request for reduced parking and asked if the requested reduction was reflected on the site plan. Mr. Wise responded that the reduced parking was shown on the site plan.

Council Member Plaag stated that there had been a long-time dream of putting in a trail from the New Market area up to Howard's Knob to connect to the Greenway system. He added that there were some other projects already in the works along Hwy 421 that could help make that happen. He asked the applicant whether they would be open to widening the New Market sidewalk from 5 to 10 feet so it could be used effectively to connect Howard's Knob to the Greenway. Mr. Stone stated that he did not see a problem with doing that. He also offered to pay a fee in lieu. Ms. Meade reminded everyone that payment in lieu of sidewalk installation was not currently allowed under the ordinance.

Council Member Pruitt asked whether installing a sidewalk along Chestnut Drive would require cutting down more trees and wondered whether it was more important to have a sidewalk or an additional five-foot landscape buffer for the neighbors.

Allison Meade, Town Attorney, wished to address Boone Next and policy concerns versus the UDO. She stated that this was a Conditional District that allowed some movement from the applicant and the Town. Ms. Meade explained that the UDO had not been brought into consistency with the standards in the Boone Next plan, and applicants were coming forward with projects that met current UDO standards. Ms. Meade asked the Council to be aware that applicants were generally meeting current UDO standards, so deviations might be necessary to address policies in Boone Next. She added that some items in Boone Next that encouraged walkability were not in the UDO, and the UDO was very firm about requiring sidewalks with new development. Ms. Meade reminded everyone that the payment-in-lieu-of-sidewalk-installation option was removed from the UDO 3-4 years ago. Mr. Wise added that payment in lieu of sidewalks would only be allowed in extreme circumstances.

Council Member Plaag noted that part of the vote that the Planning Commission and Town Council took was to consider the standards and policies in the comprehensive plan. He stated that it would seem contradictory to approve a project that did not comply with the comprehensive plan, even if the UDO had not been revised to reflect the comp plan's policies. Council Member Plaag stated that he understood there was a requirement to comply with the UDO, but the CD process allowed deviations. Ms. Meade replied that the CD process did allow deviations. However, under state law, zoning amendments that were contrary or inconsistent with the comprehensive plan could be accepted with the understanding that those inconsistencies would be noted upon approval. Ms. Meade stated that if an applicant presented a project that met the requirements of the ordinance, and the Council does not approve the project because it was not quite what they had in mind, based on Boone Next, it seemed unfair to the applicant.

Council Member Roseman asked if the building's façade facing New Market Boulevard could be made to look more like the front of a building. Mr. Stone replied that they could add architectural windows that would not be operable to any unit. Council Member Roseman noted that she voted against the project when it was first approved. She stated that she liked that the building had been moved away from the neighborhood, that there was less parking along Chestnut Drive, and that the trash and recycling had been moved. However, her vote was not going to change.

Council Member Plaag asked the applicant whether they had explored the possibility of orienting the building parallel to New Market Boulevard, with the driveway entering from New Market, parking behind

the building, and having an access on the rear of the building at the third or fourth floor. This could allow seniors to walk out the door onto a grade-level sidewalk at New Market Boulevard and create a park-like setting in the space closer to the neighborhood. Mr. Stone replied that there was no adaptable way to make that work. Orienting the building to face New Market Boulevard would create a sightline down Chestnut Drive, allowing more of the building to be seen. Mr. Stone noted that the building would have to be cut into the grade, necessitating retaining walls around it. He felt this option would create safety issues. He stated that they did explore the option, but felt it was not feasible.

Mr. Wise clarified that the ordinance currently allowed modifications that allowed buildings to be oriented away from the primary public way, as long as there was safe and convenient access for pedestrians. The side of the building facing the public way would have to meet the 10% ground-floor window requirement.

Council Member Tait noted there were 48 proposed units. He asked what the expected occupancy would be for the project. Mr. Stone replied that they would receive approximately 500 residency applications because there was a waiting list. He expected to be 100% occupied. Council Member Tait clarified that he wanted to know how many people would be living in the building. Mr. Stone anticipated an occupancy of 48-50.

Council Member Pruitt noted that the development would be for adults aged 55 and over. She asked the applicant how they would handle the age requirement if someone was 54 or had a grandchild who wanted to live there. Mr. Stone explained that strict federal guidelines could allow someone under 55 to qualify. Otherwise, there would be deed restrictions, a tenant selection plan, and other items that they would submit to the state. Mr. Stone stated that there were extensive requirements regarding how they chose tenants. Council Member Pruitt asked whether this project would be independent living or include any assisted living. Mr. Stone replied that there would be no assisted living at this facility. He noted that they planned to work with the university and local resources to help with credit empowerment. They also plan to offer health checks.

Commission Member Paz-Miranda asked whether there would be a priority for housing Boone residents. Mr. Stone replied that federal fair housing guidelines would not allow that. The housing would be on a first-come, first-served basis. Commission Member Paz-Miranda stated that she was sympathetic to the need for housing for older community members. However, the sheer scale of this building was hard for her to accept. The height of the building would ruin the viewshed of Howard's Knob, one of our biggest and most iconic mountains, and Hwy 421 was a gateway to the community. Commission Member Paz-Miranda recognized that senior housing was needed, but felt that this was not the right site.

Chair Veno asked if there would be stairs from the property to New Market Boulevard. Mr. Stone replied that there would be a sidewalk with an extensive switchback to meet ADA requirements.

Council Member Roseman stated that she bought her house knowing that it butted up against a business district. However, the people in this neighborhood bought their homes knowing that the subject property was zoned R1. She felt that the proposed development was too large for this area. Council Member Roseman again noted that she voted against the original rezoning request and would do so again.

Mayor George invited public comment.

Carolyn Ward of 253 Chestnut Drive provided Council and Commission members with a copy of her comments **(on file)**. She stated that she and many of her neighbors were strongly opposed to Wynnefield Properties' conditional district zoning requests to develop the property on Chestnut Drive into a four-story apartment building. Ms. Ward felt that their neighborhood had been under attack from encroaching development for the last seven or eight years. Pinnacle Storage, a four-story building, sat up against multiple one-level single-family homes. Sheetz was built to face the neighborhood, so the neighborhood

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has been subjected to noise, loitering, traffic, and light impacts. Ms. Ward stated that instead of the Town fighting for and protecting them, they were fighting the Town to keep their R1 neighborhood from development that was not in harmony with the surrounding structures. The scale of the proposed 53-foot-tall building would dwarf the surrounding homes. Ms. Ward noted that the objectives in Boone Next were to protect existing housing stock from incompatible redevelopment. This property was labeled as walkable mixed-use, but she felt that this development did not meet that definition. Ms. Ward asked if their neighborhood was not worth protecting. She stated that the neighborhood had been left out of any discussions or planning throughout this process. At the neighborhood meeting, when pressed about landscaping and buffers, the Wynnefield representative stated that they would do what the Town forced them to do, that they would do what is required. Ms. Ward stated that the applicant had proven to the neighborhood that they would do no more than necessary to comply with the Town's requirements. She noted that her home sat directly across from the area where the trees were improperly removed. Ms. Ward stated that she was not opposed to increasing the affordable housing stock. However, that could be attained by constructing small cottages or duplexes, but a project of this size was not right for this location. She added that she supported the affordable housing project off Hwy 421 because it was a suitable site, away from single-family homes, near businesses, and other apartment buildings.

Crystal Cheek stated she had lived at 211 Chestnut Drive for over 20 years. She noted that she had submitted a letter and pictures to the Planning and Inspections Department and requested that copies be shared with each member of the Town Council **(on file)**. The images included views from her driveway, areas near Sheetz and Pinnacle Storage, and homes located above and across from her property, as well as close-up pictures of the buffer required to help protect their neighborhood from the impacts of the adjacent commercial development. Ms. Cheek stated that the neighborhood has experienced increased noise from vehicles and revving engines 24 hours a day, light spilling directly into homes, and visual impacts from commercial activity. She added that the required neighborhood protections were not sufficient. The angled emergency exit on Chestnut Drive would not provide any meaningful protection for the residents. Ms. Cheek stated that there was no realistic way to buffer the height, lighting, and visual impacts of a four-story structure towering above a single-family neighborhood. The size and presence of a building of this scale would fundamentally alter the character of their neighborhood. Ms. Cheek recognized the challenges related to growth and housing. However, she felt that solutions should not come at the expense of a long-standing neighborhood. Ms. Cheek stated that Boone needed more workforce housing and asked what steps the Town Council had taken to create workforce housing in neighborhoods that would balance growth while still protecting existing residential communities. She asked that the Council carefully consider the impacts of its decision on the neighborhood's residents.

Lynne Mason provided the Commission and Council members with a handout of her comments **(on file)**. She stated that she spent 18 years as a Council member fighting for neighborhoods. The proposed project met a housing need, but was in the wrong location. Ms. Mason stated that there were not enough neighborhoods in Boone for our workforce. She said that existing neighborhoods were slowly eroding away and expressed concern that this pattern would continue. Ms. Mason stated that the four-story building would not be in harmony with the neighborhood and that the parking lot lighting would shine into the neighborhood all night. Boone Next planning principles supported established neighborhoods, and this neighborhood did not feel supported or protected. Ms. Mason stated that none of the recent commercial developments near this neighborhood was mixed-use. She noted that there had been prior interest in developing this parcel into workforce housing, which was needed. Ms. Mason concluded by saying that approval of this conditional district zoning map amendment would set a precedent for future encroachments into single-family residential neighborhoods, which were repeatedly under attack.

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Andy Mason stated that more workforce and elderly housing were needed, but he felt this was the wrong location for that. He did not think any amount of buffering could hide or reduce the impact on this neighborhood. Mr. Mason stated that Chestnut Drive was not a great walkable area because it was steep. He suggested that if a walkway to New Market were installed, there needed to be a better way for people to cross that street. Mr. Mason asked that this project not be approved.

Virginia Williams stated that she lived on Chestnut Drive directly across from the proposed four-story building, and when she and her husband bought their home, they verified that the surrounding property was zoned R1. She asked Commission and Council members if they had four-story apartment buildings across the street from their homes. Ms. Williams asked if enforceable deed restrictions were only for those who could afford to live in gated communities. She stated that the developer had already proven what kind of neighbor they would like to be by doing work on the site without a permit. There is a pile of debris on the site, and the buffer consists of a few dead rhododendrons and four-foot-tall evergreens. Ms. Williams noted that at neighborhood meetings, the current residents had never been asked about their concerns. Because Boone residents would not be guaranteed a place in the building, this project would encourage low-income seniors to move here, even though Boone was already bursting at the seams. Ms. Williams stated that there needed to be a balance between providing affordable housing and protecting existing neighborhoods.

Joanne Puliatti of 275 Chestnut Drive stated that she was wholeheartedly opposed to this development. She said the neighborhood was filled with working-class or retired people, and that they deserved the neighborhood they had bought into. Ms. Puliatti stated that, if this project were approved, she would request opaque barriers.

Mark Neussmeier of 169 Hidden Valley Circle stated that he often walked down Chestnut Drive, which he considered an inappropriate place to walk. He added that he wanted to preserve the view of Howard's Knob. Mr. Neussmeier felt that more planning was needed so that this type of issue would not be addressed at gunpoint. He noted that the designers had packed a ton of stuff on the site, but it was just not the right location for this development.

Jasmine Shoshana stated that there was an enrollment crisis instead of a housing crisis. She said that ASU was constantly being forced to increase its numbers. Ms. Shoshana noted that we were supposed to be a government for the people and by the people, and it was very obvious that the people were not in favor of this development. She stated that the Town was not here to represent developers, but to represent the people. Ms. Shoshana concluded by saying that if ASU were at a suitable number, there would be plenty of housing.

James Milner stated that the last time this project came up, he made it clear that it was the right project in the wrong location. R1 neighborhoods should be protected. Mr. Milner stated that, if the project was approved, he asked that the building be oriented to the primary way, which meant rotating the building 90 degrees to New Market Boulevard.

Mayor George closed the public comment portion of this hearing.

Council Member Plaag stated that there was an opportunity to have this building on this site, but it would need to orient to New Market Boulevard, tuck it into the hillside, leave the back half of the lot wooded, create a very clear buffer from the neighborhood, still have senior housing with LIHTC financing, and protect an R1 neighborhood at the same time. However, the developer said that they did not want to do that. Council Member Plaag stated that this was a lovely project, but it was not the right place. He added that the applicant's complete disregard for the development requirements in Boone made him question whether the applicant was an honest player. Council Member Plaag stated that he would not vote on this

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request because it was his last week on the Town Council, but he did not support the project as currently proposed.

Council Member Tait stated that the project brought up the question of what should buffer R1 neighborhoods from our other developments. Arguably, what was appropriate was some form of housing, such as an eight-unit townhome complex or a duplex. He felt that the proposed development was too much in this spot, citing issues with the topography and retaining walls. Council Member Tait stated he was struggling because he really wanted to support housing for senior adults.

Commission Member Paz-Miranda again stated that this was the right project, but not the right site. For her, the building had to be adjacent to New Market Boulevard on grade, or there should be no project at all. She added that the grade was steep up to the crosswalk on New Market Boulevard, making it difficult and dangerous for senior citizens.

With nothing further, Mayor George closed the public hearing for this case at 7:31 p.m.

Case A26-0067 Taft-Mills Group, LLC – Conditional District Zoning Map Amendment

Taft-Mills Group, LLC has submitted a Conditional District Zoning Map Amendment application to rezone property located on the corner of US Hwy 421 S and Yosef Drive (Watauga County PINs: 2911-70-9321-000, 2911-80-0228-000, and 2911-80-2433-000) from B3 General Business to Conditional District R3 Multiple-Family Residential with a site-specific development plan for Use 1.13 Multi-Family Dwelling (>100 bedrooms).

Amy Snider, Commercial Zoning Administrator, introduced the case. She stated that the project consisted of a 93-unit, 188-bedroom, multi-family affordable housing community. Ms. Snider noted that the applicant's requested deviations were listed on pages 82 and 83 of the meeting packet. She stated that elevations were not submitted, but it appeared the building's orientation would be more inward, which may require a deviation.

Council Member Plaag asked why the project was before them without renderings or elevations, as that was normally part of a site-specific development plan. Ms. Snider replied that the staff had received the site plan, but no elevations had been submitted. She added that comments were submitted, noting that ordinance requirements would be met. Mr. Wise clarified that if the applicant's intent was to meet ordinance requirements, they were not required to submit elevations at this point. However, the Council or Commission could request those renderings. Ms. Meade added that Planning staff could not require the applicant to submit renderings, but it was within the Council's prerogative to request them. She stated that she did not see the requested number for the livability ratio or the retaining wall height deviations in the narrative. It was noted that these items were contained on the site plans.

Council Member Plaag stated he was excited about the prospect of this project, noting that it was in the right place and would help address an acute housing need, but he wanted to know what they would be getting. He explained that the CD process was intended to provide a clear understanding between the Town and a developer of what the development would look like. Council Member Plaag stated that if this were a by-right development, the applicant could build whatever they wanted within the ordinance's regulations without input from the Council. However, this was a conditional district request that afforded the Council the opportunity to seek items outside the strict regulations.

Council Member Pruitt agreed with Council Member Plaag. She stated that this development would be one of the first things people saw upon entering Boone on Hwy 421. While they were meeting the requirements, she still wanted to see what the project would look like.

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Chelsea Garrett, attorney representing the Taft-Mills Group, introduced Nate Broman-Fulks from the Taft-Mills Group, Tristan Williams from the Taft-Mills Group, Brian Cook from McMillon, Pazdan, Smith Architecture, and Toby Harris from Three Notch Group. Ms. Garrett stated that they had quite a few examples of what the Taft-Mills Group had done with other projects. She asked Mr. Broman-Fulks to speak.

Mr. Broman-Fulks stated he was the Vice President of development for the Taft-Mills Group, a real estate development company specializing in building multi-family affordable housing using Low Income Housing Tax Credits. He noted that the company, based in Greenville, North Carolina, had developed over 100 of these communities, was active in North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, and Maryland, was ranked among the top 50 affordable housing developers in the country, and had received the state's highest honor in affordable Housing from the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency. Mr. Broman-Fulks presented a slide showing examples of completed or currently under-construction developments so that Commission and Council members could see what their developments typically looked like. He noted that the architecture could be tailored to the site and what the Town wanted, as much as possible. Mr. Broman-Fulks stated that they had not been asked to provide an elevation and were therefore unprepared for the Council's request. He added that they were working with their architects to create a site-specific plan for Boone and were happy to discuss what that would look like. Mr. Broman-Fulks noted that the site met the high threshold required by the North Carolina Housing Finance Agency to be considered a competitive site, including having access to a grocery store, pharmacy, parks, doctors, schools, etc., within 2 miles of the site. The project would be affordable for households at 60% of the county's area median income, meaning about $40,000 for a one-person household, or $65,000 for a four-person household. They proposed three residential buildings with a mix of one, two, and three-bedroom units to serve a variety of housing sizes. Mr. Broman-Fulks stated that this was not student housing, explaining that through the tax credit program, there could not be a household of all students. However, there were a few exceptions, such as if one of the residents had grown up in foster care or was a married couple. He stated that it would be difficult for a student to qualify because applicants could not earn too much or too little. Mr. Broman-Fulks noted that the clubhouse would include a community room, an indoor exercise facility, a business center, an outdoor recreation area, an on-site property manager, and maintenance staff.

Brian Cook stated that there was extensive topography and that they looked at how best to cite the buildings on the site. He noted that the buildings were parallel to Hwy 421 but set back up the hill, and that spaces would be created between them to allow residents to walk and interact. Mr. Cook stated that there would be a playground, picnic shelter areas, and pathways between the buildings. Parking would be in the rear. He noted that the property stepped up quite a bit, but they were trying to terrace the buildings up the hillside. Mr. Cook added that they planned to leave some of the buffer on the back side of the property. The buildings would be three stories with a basement, clad in brick and fiber-cement siding to give a more mountainous look.

Toby Harris stated that the biggest challenge they faced was the topography, which required retaining walls throughout the site to accommodate the buildings and the required parking.

Ms. Garrett asked about the deviation regarding landscaping between the retaining walls. Mr. Harris replied that he would not know the exact extent of the retaining walls until a full grading plan was completed, but there would be several walls. The ordinance required that the walls be terraced, which would push into the parking lot and cause them to lose required parking. Ms. Garrett noted that a deviation was requested for the retaining wall height. Mr. Wise explained that the UDO required no single wall to exceed eight feet. Additionally, if retaining wall systems exceeded 16 feet in height, buffers were required between the walls. The applicant requested deviations to allow a retaining wall with varying

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heights up to 26 feet. Mr. Cook stated that the step-back requirements for each retaining wall would push the buildings farther back into the site and up the hill, thereby eliminating parking spaces.

Ms. Garrett asked about the deviation from the requirement that 25% of the units have a garage or carport. Mr. Cook explained that, under LIHTC guidelines, they were required to provide 1.75 parking spaces per unit. Incorporating garages or carports would take up space that was needed to meet the North Carolina Housing Finance Authority's requirement for parking. For clarification, Ms. Garrett asked whether the 1.75 parking spaces were a requirement of the NCHFA rather than the Town. Mr. Cook replied that this was correct.

Ms. Garrett questioned if there was a deviation from livability space requirements. Ms. Snider stated that the required livability would be a 10% increase from 40%, as required in R3, to 50%, as required in 15.03, so there is no deviation.

Ms. Garrett asked the applicant whether they would agree to install landscaping, to the extent possible, between the retaining wall tiers. Mr. Broman-Fulks agreed to install as much landscaping as possible.

Ms. Garrett asked about the existing AppalCART stop. Mr. Broman-Fulks replied that they proposed to cover the existing stop.

Mr. Broman-Fulks stated that the requested deviations were necessary to support this development and further align the project with Boone Next.

Council Member Roseman mentioned the tall retaining wall at King Street Flats, which seemed to blend into the surroundings, and the retaining wall on Hwy 421 across from New Market Center, which was so visible.

Council Member Plaag stated that he would normally ask for the building to be broken up; however, he felt that doing so would not work because of the topography. He suggested a single building facing Hwy 421, with parking lot access at the back and a deck with green space at the top. This would allow the tenants to have the whole back of the lot and the top level of the deck to recreate. Council Member Plaag felt that this would get them closer to the livability ratio and solve the problem of retaining walls. Mr. Cook replied that they started with a larger building, but because of the topography and the need to avoid steps within the building, it was better to have multiple buildings. This configuration also allowed more light into the units and more air movement between the buildings.

Council Member Roseman stated that she wanted the buildings to look like they were part of the community. Ms. Garrett stated that the façade facing Hwy 421 would be architecturally pleasing and not resemble the back of a building.

Ms. Garrett asked how long it would take to complete the renderings. Mr. Cook replied that it would take about a week.

Council Member Tait asked whether the applicant had ideas during the design process that they could not construct due to UDO restrictions. Mr. Cook stated that the location of mature trees was challenging. Mr. Broman-Fulks added that they considered a parking deck but found it not financially feasible at this location.

Council Member Pruitt asked whether any remediation would be required as a result of the oil-change business. Mr. Broman-Fulks stated that they would be required to perform a Phase I environmental analysis and would follow any cleanup requirements.

Mayor Pro Tem Carter asked the applicant if they had met with AppalCART to discuss increased ridership from their development. Mr. Broman-Fulks replied that they had met with Craig Hughes from AppalCART,

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who informed them that the project would be incorporated into AppalCART's planning process and that he did not anticipate any issues. He noted that if the rezoning was approved and they were awarded the tax credits, it would be approximately three years before the project was completed.

Ms. Garrett asked the applicant how they arrived at the number of units for this development. Mr. Borman-Fulks explained that they evaluated how many units could be accommodated on the site, taking into account site constraints, including parking, topography, height, density, and financing.

Council Member Plaag asked whether the applicant could turn the higher building so that it was oriented south to north along the west line, and step the building up the terrain to create enough parking in the center area to allow them to decrease the retaining wall height on the east side of the site. Mr. Cook replied that they looked at an iteration similar to that, but the grade jumped up about 30 feet or more in that direction. He added that this configuration would create more steps throughout the site.

Council Member Tait asked if there was a right-of-way or an easement to access the property from Yosef Drive. Mr. Broman-Fulks replied that the survey showed a 60-foot right-of-way to their property line, and they were currently in the process of performing title work to confirm whether that right-of-way would align with their proposed access location. If not, they would work with neighboring property owners to obtain an easement.

Mayor George asked whether green space could be installed on both sides of the sidewalk to bring it more in line with the Grove Street connector plans. Todd Moody, Public Works Director, replied that a five-foot buffer between the roadway and the pathway along Hwy 421 would be required, and this would be in line with the Grove Street connector plan.

Council Member Plaag asked whether a translucent perimeter fence could be installed as a safety measure for children playing so close to Hwy 421. Mr. Cook stated that landscaping or walls between Hwy 421 and the buildings could help create a barrier.

Commission Member King stated that he lived on Yosef Drive and had a good knowledge of the area. He noted that he would not compare the retaining walls across from New Market Center to the proposed retaining walls at this development. Commission Member King supported the idea that the development would bring a sidewalk or multi-use path to the area.

Commission Member Kight asked whether the parking deck that was considered would have been a standalone deck or integrated into a building. Mr. Cook replied that they viewed it as a podium, with the building on top and coming down around the parking deck, so that it was almost enclosed. This configuration would have worked with the topography, but they could not justify the cost.

Commission Member Mileski asked whether there were plans to add windows to the back side of the building at the basement level to provide some daylight to that level. Mr. Cook stated that there would be no windows there because the area would be underground.

Commission Member Paz-Miranda asked what would happen to the current occupants of the house that was on the site. Mr. Broman-Fulks replied that the occupants of the house would relocate.

Chair Veno asked how many people would occupy the 93 units. Mr. Broman-Fulks stated that there would be a mix of one-, two-, and three-bedroom units, with a total of 188 beds, so he estimated an occupancy of approximately 188. Chair Veno asked if the development triggered a transportation impact analysis. Mr. Broman-Fulks replied that the staff determined that a TIA was not required because none of the thresholds were triggered.

Mayor George invited public comment.

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Kellie Reed-Ashcraft, Executive Director of the Watauga Housing Council, provided the Commission and Council with a handout **(on file)**. She stated that the mission of the Watauga Housing Council was to increase the supply of housing for Watauga County's cost-burdened residents through partnerships and systemic change. Ms. Reed-Ashcraft noted that the WHO supported both of the restricted-income resident rental housing initiatives presented this evening. This project would provide non-student, multi-family housing for community residents earning 60% of the area median income, while the other project would increase housing for our senior community residents.

Casey Maslow, Housing Program Manager at Oasis, stated that her clients faced affordable housing issues every day because of limited incomes, or they were faced with homelessness due to fleeing a situation they could no longer deal with. Ms. Maslow asked the Commission and Council to remember that it was not about how this building would look, but about providing a place where people could continue their lives in the high country.

James Milner noted an earlier statement that Watauga County had an enrollment problem rather than a housing crisis, and he felt that could not be further from the truth. He stated that the only way to fix the housing crisis was with different types of housing stock. However, he encouraged the Council and the Planning Commission to remember that a site's topography did not necessarily create a hardship. Mr. Milner added that a developer could find another site that might not have as many topographical challenges. In the spirit of consistency, Mr. Milner asked that the Planning Commission place a condition on the approval of this development to require the rotation of all three buildings 90 degrees to face the primary way, which was Yosef Drive.

Mayor George closed the public comment portion of this hearing. He suggested moving the final case on the agenda to be the next item heard.

Council Member Plaag made a motion to amend the agenda to have Case A26-0123 be the next case heard. The motion was seconded by Council Member Roseman.

VOTE: Aye – 5
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Mayor George called a break in the hearing from 8:38 p.m. until 8:45 p.m.

Council Member Plaag stated he was a big believer, particularly with the CD process, in knowing what they would be getting. He added that he was supportive of and appreciative of the applicant's pursuit of a project to help address a critical housing need. However, the presentation lacked some of the necessary information. Council Member Plaag supported continuing the public hearing to allow the applicant time to explore other solutions to the retaining wall issue and to come back with elevation drawings showing what the project would look like, including access to the Greenway or the Grove Street connector.

Council Member Roseman asked whether there would be an opportunity to include some small storage units in the design. Mr. Cook stated that the housing finance requirements include 17 square feet of storage per unit, so they have planned interior closets in the hallways of the buildings and/or cages or individual storage in common rooms to meet that requirement.

Mayor Pro Tem Carter stated he had extensive experience with Housing Finance Agency buildings and that the agency's requirements to keep the property in pristine condition were intense and lasted for 30 years. He supported the project and was amenable to continuing the public hearing.

Ms. Garrett stated that the applicant had a tax deadline that could put them off a year if zoning was not in place by May 15, 2026. Mr. Wise noted that the next regular public hearing would be on April 27 and

the following Town Council meeting would be on May 13, 2026. Ms. Meade suggested continuing the public hearing at the regular Town Council meeting on April 8, 2026. Mr. Wise stated that the applicant would need to have everything sent to Planning and Inspections by next Thursday to accommodate an April 8 hearing. Council Member Plaag suggested scheduling a special hearing for this case only. Ms. Garrett suggested that the Planning Commission proceed with a recommendation, subject to the condition that the applicant present the requested information at the Town Council meeting for a final vote.

Council Member Tait felt it was important to recognize and discuss the requested deviations. He noted the request to deviate from the units' makeup to allow two-bedroom units, which seemed appropriate for families. Council Member Tait noted the deviation for the retaining walls and suggested that they might be able to move some of the buildings around to reduce the retaining wall heights. He stated he had no objection to the requested tree removal. Eliminating the carports made sense for this development. Council Member Tait noted that he also supported the requested vesting period.

Mayor Pro Tem Carter stated that he was not a fan of the carports and supported the requested deviations.

Chair Veno stated that his understanding was that a Conditional District Zoning Map Amendment request must be accompanied by a site-specific plan and asked whether it was correct that this was not included with the request. Ms. Meade replied that a site-specific plan could mean different things. A site-specific plan was submitted with this request, but it was not as specific as the Council generally required.

With the majority of the Council and Planning Commission members in favor of continuing the public hearing, Council Member Plaag made a motion to continue the public hearing for Case A26-0067 until April 8, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. in Town Council Chambers. The applicant must submit elevations and any revisions to Planning and Inspections by April 2, 2026. The motion was seconded by Council Member Roseman.

VOTE: Aye – 5
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Case A26-0123 Signs, Phasing & Nonconformities – UDO Text Amendment

Modification of UDO Articles 4, 7, and 26 to adopt standards for the phasing of development construction, create a single-family nonconformity exemption, and remove master sign plan regulations.

Mr. Wise stated that this amendment was not a general setback change. He explained that a nonconformity was accidentally omitted from the ordinance at some point, and staff realized the omission when an application was submitted for a new single-family home affected by the nonconformity. Mr. Wise stated that the omitted language allowed a demolished single-family home that did not meet setback requirements to be rebuilt under the preexisting nonconformity. The current UDO language would require a new single-family home to meet current setbacks, and any nonconformity would have to seek a variance from the Board of Adjustment. Mr. Wise noted that this text amendment would be universal throughout town and not specific to any one neighborhood. Ms. Meade added that the language was inadvertently deleted during another UDO amendment, so this would restore it to the ordinance. She stated that the language reestablished the administrator's flexibility regarding setbacks for nonconforming residential lots. She reiterated that this applied to all neighborhoods, but was especially important in neighborhoods with smaller, more irregular lots.

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Mr. Wise stated that this request would also restore the phasing language that had inadvertently been deleted. This amendment also addressed the requirement for a master sign plan for multi-tenant developments. Mr. Wise stated that the requirement was added 3-4 years ago, but had become more of a hurdle than a tool for compliance, so they requested that the language be removed.

Council Member Plaag felt that all three of the requested revisions were appropriate.

Commission Member Paz-Miranda asked whether this amendment would affect commercial signs. Mr. Wise replied that commercial sign requirements would otherwise remain the same.

Mayor George invited public comment.

Traci Royster stated that she attended the Boone Mennonite Church 30 years ago when the African American Junaluska community was thriving. However, that changed a few years ago when someone from outside of their community built a house there. Ms. Royster stated that someone originally from the community now wanted to build a house there but could not meet the requirements of the current ordinance because of the removal of the nonconforming language. She asked that the amendment be approved so this family could build their home.

Fred Hay agreed with Ms. Royster's comments. He added that the ancestors of the current residents of the Junaluska community did not buy the land; they were assigned it. The land was considered undesirable at the time, on the side of the mountain, rather than the bottom lands, which were much more useful for gardens. Mr. Hay stated that this community had stayed intact because of its limited footprint. With many of the lots being small, they would not comply with the current code. Mr. Hay felt that the community deserved the Council's support because it wanted to remain viable.

Anitra Ball stated that she was the one trying to place a modular home on her land at 132 Tremont Drive. She said that she and her dad were currently living in the mobile home park behind Walmart, and were fortunate to still have a standing structure after Hurricane Helene. However, the moisture and mold were creating issues for her dad because he had COPD. Ms. Ball stated that she wanted to get her dad into a healthy living environment. She added that she wanted to go back to the neighborhood where they grew up.

Mayor George closed the public comment portion of this hearing.

Mayor Pro Tem Carter stated that the language was inadvertently removed and was never intended to harm this historic community. He added that he would love to see every single block in Junaluska reborn to the vision that the residents wanted in that community.

Mayor George stated that the Planning Commission would make a recommendation this evening, and the Council would make its final vote at the second Council meeting in April. An audience member asked if they could vote on this amendment at the April 8 meeting. Ms. Meade explained that the previous case would have a continued public hearing on April 8, but the actual vote on all of tonight's cases would be on April 22.

Council Member Roseman asked Ms. Ball if she had a deadline to move. Ms. Ball replied that they were ready to move on the permit but were at the mercy of the text amendment approval. Mr. Wise clarified that a zoning permit application for the new single-family home had been submitted, but without this text in the UDO, the zoning permit would require a variance for staff to approve. He added that minor modifications to the site plan were needed to meet the UDO requirements under the amended language. Ms. Meade offered that the Council could direct staff to approve the zoning permit based on this evening's conversation and the Council's commitment to approve the amendment. Council members agreed with

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this suggestion and directed Planning staff to finish the review of the zoning permit and move forward with issuance of the permit.

Case A26-0073/A26-0074 Town of Boone – Annexation & Conditional District Zoning Map Amendment

In conjunction with a voluntary satellite annexation request, the Town of Boone has submitted a Conditional District Zoning Map Amendment application for property located on US Hwy 421 S (Watauga County PIN: 2921-90-1402-000) to zone the property Conditional District B3 General Business with a site-specific development plan for Use 5.16 Government Facility and Use 5.13 Town Utility Facility for a new Town of Boone Public Works facility.

Mr. Wise introduced the request. He outlined the requested deviations, including delaying or potentially forgoing the installation of sidewalks, depending on NCDOT approval, having the primary facade and main building entry not face the primary public way, not installing a sidewalk from the primary public way to the main building entrance, not having 10% of ground floor windows, and having the roof pitch be 2:12 rather than 4:12.

Council Member Plaag asked if there were any existing nonconformities on the site. Mr. Wise replied that this was an undeveloped site with no nonconformities.

Bill Dixon, with Appalachian Architecture, introduced Michael Trew with Municipal Engineering. Mr. Dixon stated that the Town desperately needed a new Public Works facility. This property was a 15 1/2-acre tract of land on Hwy 421 across from Food Lion. Mr. Dixon noted that they would be disturbing approximately 10 1/2 acres. The site contained some wetlands, steep banks, and a small partial view shed, none of which would be touched.

Mr. Dixon stated that DOT had not yet made a determination on whether sidewalks could be installed in that area along Hwy 421, so they had requested a delay or deferral of the installation until DOT made that determination. He noted that the property contained three plateau areas and the building would be about the size of a football field. Because of the site's topography and access, it would be nearly impossible to have the building face Hwy 421; it would face the roadway leading up to the building and present a public face to people coming and going. Mr. Dixon stated that the building would be approximately 150 feet away from the highway and about 35 feet above the road.

Mr. Dixon noted that, due to the nature of the use, there would be snowplows, dump trucks, and other heavy equipment, making a 10% glass façade unreasonable. He noted that this would be a metal building and that the required 4:12 roof pitch would add unnecessary height and increase heating and cooling costs.

Council Member Plaag asked if the driveway up to the building would eventually become a Town street. Mr. Moody replied that he did not anticipate it being a Town street. Council Member Plaag felt it was unreasonable to install a sidewalk along Hwy 421 or down to 421 when there was no plan for a sidewalk along the highway. He stated he would be willing to grant both deviations with the understanding that if, at some point in the future, DOT provided pedestrian access along Hwy 421, the Town would commit to installing a sidewalk from the building down to that DOT sidewalk.

Commission Member Paz-Miranda stated that the current Public Works building was not aesthetically pleasing.

Mayor George invited public comment, but there was none.

Council Member Roseman agreed with Council Member Plaag's comments regarding the sidewalks.

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Michael Trew stated that the proposed access was the only possible location due to the cut slope along Hwy 421, unless they got an easement from the housing complex property to the east. Access to the property dictated how the building would be oriented. Mr. Trew noted that orienting the building to the access met the intent of the ordinance.

Council Member Plaag asked whether the applicant would agree to a condition requiring the installation of a sidewalk from the building to Hwy 421 if a sidewalk were ever installed along 421. Mr. Moody deferred to Dale Presnell, Interim Town Manager. Mr. Presnell agreed to the condition.

Adjournment of Town Council

Council Member Plaag made a motion to adjourn the Town Council at 9:42 p.m. The motion was seconded by Council Member Roseman.

VOTE: Aye – 5
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

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Dalton George, Mayor **Brenda Henson, Board Clerk**

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Frank Veno, Planning Commission Chair

PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING

Chair Veno called a break in the meeting from 9:42 pm until 9:53 pm.

Discussion and Recommendation on Case(s) Heard at the Public Hearing

Case A26-0066 Wynnefield Forward, LLC – Conditional District Zoning Map Amendment

Wynnefield Forward, LLC has submitted a Conditional District Zoning Map Amendment application for property located on Chestnut Drive and New Market Boulevard (Watauga County PINs: 2910-39-9335-000, 2910-39-9610-000, and 2910-49-2369-000) to rezone the property from Conditional District R5 55+ Housing to Conditional District R5 55+ with a site-specific development plan for Use 1.17 Adult Living Community.

Mr. Wise explained that the previously approved site-specific plan had been altered by the applicant, requiring a new application and approval of the revised plan.

Commission Member Mileski stated that the building was not oriented correctly and the R5 zoning was not fitting for this area. Mr. Wise explained that the original Conditional District approval on May 8, 2024, rezoned the property from R1 and B3 to Conditional District R5, and that zoning designation would not change under the current request. He added that the original approval would expire two years from the date of issuance.

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Chair Veno mentioned the tree removal that was done without a permit. Mr. Wise clarified that geotechnical analysis of the ground was allowed without permits. However, that typically did not involve a bulldozer plowing into a site, as happened in this case. Mr. Wise stated that a stop-work order was issued for the site, and the applicant was advised to replant the vegetation they had removed.

Chair Veno asked what would happen to the site if this Conditional District Zoning Map Amendment were denied. Mr. Wise replied that the property would remain zoned Conditional District R5, and the applicant would have until May 8, 2026, to get their permits to construct what was approved under the original CD approval in 2024. If The Villas at South Fork were not constructed, any other proposed development would have to seek a Conditional District Zoning Map Amendment.

Commission Member Paz-Miranda stated that she did not like the proposed development.

Commission Member Mileski felt that the proposed project was overdeveloped for the area. He stated that reducing the building height to one or two stories would be a better scale.

Commission Member King stated that he did not have a strong stance against the proposal. He noted that conditioning the buffering could provide a middle ground between what the neighborhood wanted and what was expressed in the comp plan and the UDO. Commission Member King acknowledged the strong public opposition to the project, while also noting the need for 55+ housing. He stated he would be in favor of approving this request with conditions.

Commission Member Kight stated he stood with the neighborhood. He noted that this project was not a walkable mixed-use, human-scale development that Boone Next called for. He added that the renderings did a good job of not highlighting those issues.

Commission Member Paz-Miranda felt that placing a senior community in an area with steep slopes was not reasonable. She stated that the building would be an eyesore that would damage the viewshed, adding that the Pinnacle Storage building was a monolith in the middle of the neighborhood.

Commission Member King felt it was important to note that by denying this request, they would delay development the community needed.

Chair Veno stated that he voted in favor of the original CD request. After tonight's public comment and thoughtful consideration of neighborhood concerns, he was on the fence. Chair Veno noted the surrounding developments, Pinnacle Storage, Sheetz, and Woods Masonry, and felt that the proposed senior housing would be the least obtrusive of these.

Commission Member Kight asked if New Market Boulevard was considered the primary public way for this project. Mr. Wise replied that it was. Chair Veno stated that he often traveled on New Market Boulevard and that there was heavy traffic there. He did not believe it would be safe for seniors to walk across New Market Boulevard to reach the shopping center and movie theater.

Vote 1

Commission Member Mileski made a motion that the proposed amendment to the Town's zoning map is not consistent with the Town's current comprehensive plan and any other adopted plan(s) of the Town that are applicable because of the following from Boone Next:

Planning Principle 7: Support the town's established neighborhoods and new residential developments through neighborhood-level engagement and planning.

Goals & Policies

Policy 1.2.1: Support Income-Restricted Housing: Support permanently affordable housing for low- and middle-income residents geographically located throughout the town. Prioritize permanent affordability,

particularly for those at or below 60 percent of the area median income, through community land trusts, nonprofit ownership and management, the Housing Authority, town ownership, and restricted deeds and covenants. Consider programs that fund home improvements for low income homeowners in exchange for right of first refusal to purchase homes for affordable housing partners.

Policy 1.2.5: Use Appropriate Transitions Between Different Scales and Intensities: Use appropriate transitions between different building uses and intensities by stepping down building heights and scale from areas allowing taller buildings to primarily residential neighborhoods.

Commission Member Kight wished to amend the motion to add:

Planning Principle 7: Support the town's established neighborhoods and new residential developments through neighborhood-level engagement and planning.

Commission Member Mileski accepted the amendment. The motion was seconded by Commission Member Paz-Miranda.

Vote: Aye – 3
Nay – 1 (King)
Abstention – 1 (Veno)

The motion passed.

Vote 2

Commission Member Kight made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Paz-Miranda, that the Planning Commission recommends denial of Ordinance #A26-0066 within Exhibit A and denial is reasonable and in the public interest because the proposed development is not consistent with the Boone Next plan and is not cohesive with the neighboring R1 zoning.

Vote: Aye – 3
Nay – 1 (King)
Abstention – 1 (Veno)

The motion passed.

Case A26-0067 Taft-Mills Group, LLC – Conditional District Zoning Map Amendment

Taft-Mills Group, LLC has submitted a Conditional District Zoning Map Amendment application to rezone property located on the corner of US Hwy 421 S and Yosef Drive (Watauga County PINs: 2911-70-9321-000, 2911-80-0228-000, and 2911-80-2433-000) from B3 General Business to Conditional District R3 Multiple-Family Residential with a site-specific development plan for Use 1.13 Multi-Family Dwelling (>100 bedrooms).

The public hearing for this case was continued until Wednesday, April 8, 2026, at 9:00 a.m. in Town Council Chambers.

Case A26-0123 Signs, Phasing & Nonconformities – UDO Text Amendment

Modification of UDO Articles 4, 7, and 26 to adopt standards for the phasing of development construction, create a single-family nonconformity exemption, and remove master sign plan regulations.

Vote 1

Commission Member King made a motion that the proposed amendment to the Town's Unified Development Ordinance is consistent with the Town's current comprehensive plan and any other adopted plan(s) of the Town that are applicable because of the following from Boone Next:

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Planning Principle 7: Support the town's established neighborhoods and new residential developments through neighborhood-level engagement and planning.

Planning Principle 10: Encourage appropriate development to meet the town's urgent need for housing or other specific community needs by means of density bonuses or other mechanisms.

Goals & Policies

Goal 1.2: Development True To Boone's Vision: Boone's development and redevelopment will enhance the best of the town's existing built environment and reinforce the vision set forth in this plan.

Policy 1.2.2: Infill Development Enhances the Town: Infill development is important because it directs growth away from natural areas, but it must be done well. Infill development shall enhance and not detract from the building character of the town by replicating key elements of Boone's cherished historic design features (like building scale, proportion, setbacks, character) with high quality, pedestrian-oriented design and providing public goods like plazas, wide sidewalks, public art, and affordable spaces for living, artists, and small businesses. Rules for new development should avoid financially incentivizing displacement of vulnerable populations.

The motion was seconded by Commission Member Kight.

Vote: Aye – 5
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Vote 2

Commission Member King made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Kight, that the Planning Commission recommends approval of Ordinance #A26-0123 within Exhibit A and approval is reasonable and in the public interest because this amendment corrects the UDO to have its intended language and benefit neighborhood communities that may have a unique land use case or unique property case.

Vote: Aye – 5
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Case A26-0073/A26-0074 Town of Boone – Annexation & Conditional District Zoning Map Amendment

In conjunction with a voluntary satellite annexation request, the Town of Boone has submitted a Conditional District Zoning Map Amendment application for property located on US Hwy 421 S (Watauga County PIN: 2921-90-1402-000) to zone the property Conditional District B3 General Business with a site-specific development plan for Use 5.16 Government Facility and Use 5.13 Town Utility Facility for a new Town of Boone Public Works facility.

Vote 1

Commission Member Mileski made a motion that the proposed amendment to the Town's zoning map is consistent with the Town's current comprehensive plan and any other adopted plan(s) of the Town that are applicable because of the following from Boone Next:

Goals & Policies

Policy 1.1.1: Use the Future Land Use Map: Use the Future Land Use Map to guide development, growth, and conservation decisions. Additionally, use the Focus Area Plans for more detailed policy direction within each of those areas.

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Policy 1.5.1: Manage Growth to Balance Protection of Community Character and Natural Areas While Directing Desired Growth to Identified Centers: The town will manage growth in a manner that balances the protection of community character and natural lands while accommodating future population. Change in the community will be carefully managed to protect critical natural lands, provide a variety of housing options for a diversity of households, support economic development, support fiscal balance, ensure adequate public safety services, and utilize growth patterns that support regional and local transit services. Lands within the town's current corporate limits are priorities for infill and redevelopment. New development areas contiguous with the town and in identified activity centers should be secondary priorities for development and ahead of areas outside centers.

Policy 1.5.2: Guide Utility Service Extensions and Annexations Using the Utility Service and Annexation Criteria: Use the Utility Service and Annexation Criteria of this chapter to evaluate applications for annexation of lands into the town and extension of public utilities to new areas. These criteria serve as the primary guide for making annexation and utility extension decisions. The criteria provide a framework for ensuring decisions are made consistently and in accordance with the Comprehensive Plan. They are complemented by the Growth Management Tiers Map.

Goal 4.2: High Quality Public Services and Facilities: Boone will provide high quality public services and facilities that meet the needs of all Boone residents.

Policy 4.2.1: Maintain and Improve Levels of Service: As the population grows, ensure high quality services and infrastructure are maintained or improved. Support improvements especially within areas of need through strategic planning, community benefits agreements, bonds, and the capital improvements program.

Chair Veno wished to amend the motion to include:

Planning Principle 1: Prioritize thoughtfully designed development of underutilized land within the town's existing built-upon areas over development of undeveloped land on the town's outer limits.

Planning Principle 2: Emphasize quality design to create an attractive, inspiring public and private realm-architecture, streetscape, corridors, gateways, and edges-that is uniquely Boone.

Planning Principle 3: Encourage compact, human-scale development that integrates a vertical mix of uses (residential, commercial, office, institutional, civic, etc.) and connects with existing developed areas.

Chair Veno stated that this request also aligned with the Growth Management Tiers Map.

Commission Member Mileski accepted the amendment.

The motion was seconded by Chair Veno.

Chair Veno offered another amendment to the motion to add the following condition:

1. The Town shall install a sidewalk from the building to Hwy 421 when pedestrian infrastructure along 421 exists.

Commission Member Mileski accepted the amendment.

Vote: Aye – 5
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Vote 2

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Chair Veno made a motion, seconded by Commission Member Kight, that the Planning Commission recommends approval of Ordinance #A26-0074 within Staff Report Exhibit C and approval is reasonable and in the public interest because this project is sorely needed and overdue as the current facility has outlived its usefulness and practicality and is an aesthetically unpleasing edifice on King Street. The recommendation is subject to the following conditions agreed upon by the applicant:

1. The Town shall install a sidewalk from the building to Hwy 421 when pedestrian infrastructure along 421 exists.

Vote: Aye – 5
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

Other Matters

There were no other matters discussed.

Adjournment of Planning Commission

Commission Member Kight made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:28 pm. Commission Member Paz-Miranda seconded the motion.

Vote: Aye – 5
Nay – 0

The motion passed.

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Frank Veno, Planning Commission Chair **Brenda Henson, Board Clerk**

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