**PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING**

Commission Chair Veno called the Planning Commission portion of the Meeting to order at 9:42 p.m.

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

**Case A26-0357 115 Beverly Heights Avenue – Conditional District Zoning Map Amendment**

LCD Acquisitions, LLC has submitted a Conditional District Zoning Map Amendment application to rezone property located on the corner of NC Hwy 105 Ext and Beverly Heights Ave (Watauga County PINs: 2910-36-7347-000, 2910-36-8089-000, 2910-46-0833-000, 2910-46-1791-000, 2910-46-2684-000, and 2910-46-3578-000) from B3 General Business/R3 Multiple-Family Residential/R1 Single Family Residential with Corridor District and Viewshed Protection District Overlays to Conditional District B3 General Business with Corridor District and Viewshed Protection District Overlays for Use 1.16 Multi-Family Dwelling in Mixed-Use (>100 Bedrooms) with a site-specific development plan for a 185 unit, 642 bedroom, residential community.

Commission Member King reiterated that the applicant should provide definitive answers on AppalCart logistics, noting that it's a valuable resource for the Town should be utilized. Commission Member Kight stated that he lives in a neighborhood that was also previously designated as an NCD, and empathizes with traffic concerns. He indicated that he believes a by-right project would create a level of traffic that was more manageable for the area than the current proposal. Commission Member Luther stated that he understands the need for housing supply in the town, especially affordable housing, but also sees the need for student housing and the economic development the University provides, and is not opposed to the right development at the proposed location. However, he echoed the mayor's previous sentiment of this proposal's lack of public good. He encouraged the applicant to work on a solution that would address the comments posed. Commission Member Paz-Miranda agreed with these statements and reiterated some of her previous remarks regarding traffic, density, and rental models. Commission Chair Veno expressed that he felt this proposal created a traffic issue that was too large to circumvent. He added that he would prefer to see a less-dense development created for professionals and families in this location, noting that he doesn't feel there is a lack of student-specific housing in Boone. Commission Chair Veno introduced Commission Member Myles Harrison, who was newly appointed as the Student Representative on the Planning Commission. Commission Member Harrison introduced himself and noted that he agreed with Chair Veno about student housing, providing a personal anecdote about his ease of obtaining housing as a student.

Commission Member Paz-Miranda inquired if the applicant understood that the University's enrollment was declining and if they were planning for that. Mr. Powell replied and said they were, and that they diligently track long and short-term trends of universities near all of their properties.

Commission Member King noted that he believed that this project could be beneficial as student housing, but in a different form that more adequately addresses the concerns brought forth in the hearing. The Commission discussed the desire to see an updated proposal and discussed what housing types would be ideal.

Planning Commission briefly discussed meeting recommendation logistics with Town Staff.

**Vote 1**

Commission Chair Veno 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:

Goals & Policies

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Goal 1.1: A sustainable built pattern: Boone's interwoven natural and built environments will promote social, environmental, and fiscal sustainability while aiming to reduce auto- dependence and the roots of traffic congestion. The town will be a leader of green building design and climate responsibility.

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 1.2.1: Build the Town for People: To the extent possible, the built environment should be human-scale and pedestrian oriented rather than large-scale and auto-oriented. There are urban design characteristics that transcend eras, styles, and typologies that help to explain why Boone's beloved downtown makes human beings comfortable. Human-scale development is not defined by density, but instead by urban design that makes human beings comfortable and happy navigating streets, activity centers, and neighborhoods on foot. Human-scale built environments might consider terminating vistas at the end of streets or the width and frontage of new buildings.

Goal 1.3: A preserved heritage: Boone's unique architectural and cultural history is celebrated. The town preserves historic buildings and encourages the design of new buildings and places that complement its architectural heritage.

Goal 2.4: Increase mobility through capacity & access management: Ensure Boone's street network supports safe, reliable transportation for all modes by addressing growth-related challenges with strategic roadway improvements beyond traditional widening.

The motion was seconded by Commission Member King.

**Vote:** Aye – 6

Nay – 0

The motion passed.

**Vote 2**

Commission Chair Veno made a motion, seconded by Commission Member King, that the Planning Commission recommends denial of Ordinance #A26-0357 within Staff Report Exhibit A, and denial is reasonable and in the public interest because there is a lack of commitment on the part of the developer and the application is not in keeping with the spirit of neighborhood conservation. There are too many unresolved issues and there is a lack of both community support and commitment to mixed-use housing.

**Vote:** Aye – 6

Nay – 0

The motion passed.

**Case A26-0448 Invasive Species – UDO Text Amendment**

A text amendment to UDO Articles 31 and Appendix C is proposed to update the Town of Boone Unified Development Ordinance to reflect the Town goals in relation to native plantings and removal of invasive species.

The Commission briefly discussed the invasive species UDO text amendment, communicating approval. Commission Chair Veno inquired with Town Staff as to whether identified invasive species on a property would be required to be removed by the owner. Mr. Wise clarified that the Town could not enforce removal of an existing invasive species on a private property, but this amendment would make it easier for the owner to do so and replant with a native species, waiving the permit application requirement.

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**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:

Policy 5.3.1: Protect Ecologically-Valuable Areas: Protect floodplains, steep hillsides, wetlands, and other ecologically valuable areas and corridors from development.

Policy 5.3.3: Plan for Wildlife: Plan for and manage the coexistence of nature and wildlife habitat through development standards that integrate habitat and wildlife migration throughout the town.

Policy 1.4.1: Protect Ecologically Valuable Areas and Corridors: Through regulations and development decisions, protect, restore, and connect ecologically valuable areas such as critical watersheds, stream buffers, wetlands, wildlife habitat, and hardwood forests. Prioritize conservation of lands adjacent and connected to existing protected areas.

Commission Chair Veno seconded the motion.

**VOTE:** Aye – 6

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 A26-0448 within Exhibit A with, and approval is reasonable and in the public interest because this amendment protects the native habitats that are integral to Boone's ecosystem and people.

**VOTE:** Aye – 6

Nay – 0

The motion passed.

**Other Matters**

Chair/Vice-Chair Application

Mr. Wise briefly explained that the Chair and Vice-Chair application was included in the pack for the Commission's review.

**Adjournment of Planning Commission**

Commission Member King made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:16 p.m. Commission Member Paz-Miranda seconded the motion.

**VOTE:** Aye – 6

Nay – 0

The motion passed.

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**Frank Veno, Planning Commission Chair** **David Pedersen, Board Clerk**

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