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SHALLOTTE BOARD OF ALDERMEN

REGULAR MEETING

March 4, 2025

5:15 P.M.

The Shallotte Board of Aldermen met for a regular meeting on March 4, 2025 at 5:15 p.m. in the meeting chambers located at 110 Cheers Street with Mayor Walt Eccard presiding.

Aldermen present: Larry Harrelson, Gene Vasile, Jimmy Bellamy, Karmen Custer and Bobby Williamson

Staff present: Mimi Gaither, Robert Waring, Brandon Eaton, Natalie Goins, Isaac Norris, Adam Stanley, Robert Gravino, Paul Dunwell, Dan Formyduval and Attorney Laura Thompson.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Eccard called the meeting to order. A motion was made by Jimmy Bellamy seconded by Gene Vasile to open the meeting. Motion carried 5 yes 0 no.

II. INVOCATION & PLEDGE

Matt Farabow, Pastor from Seaside United Methodist Church, gave the Invocation followed by the Board and audience reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

Mayor Eccard asked if any member of the Board had a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest with regard to any item on the agenda. None stated.

IV. AGENDA AMENDMENTS & APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A motion was made by Bobby Williamson seconded by Gene Vasile to approve the agenda as submitted. Motion carried 5 yes 0 no.

V. PUBLIC COMMENTS

David Cypher, 843 Village Point Road, expressed gratitude to Mayor Eccard for his help with an animal-related issue.

VI. DEPARTMENT REPORTS

1. Police

2. Fire

3. Planning

Planning Director Robert Waring extended thanks to the Board of Adjustment for a job well done during the February 27, 2025 meeting.

The Collector Street Committee will host a drop-in meeting for public feedback on March 20, 2025 at 5:00 p.m.

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The Board was asked to consider if there would be any interest in the annexation of Rutledge Phase 3. It was the consensus of the Board to place this item on the March 18, 2025 Work Session agenda.

4. Public Utilities
5. Finance
6. Media & Events
7. Administration
8. Mayors Monthly Activities

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Gene Vasile seconded by Bobby Williamson to approve the following consent agenda items:

- A. January 28, 2025 Work Session minutes
- B. February 4, 2025 Regular Meeting minutes
- C. February 18, 2025 Work Session minutes

Motion carried 5 yes 0 no.

VIII. PUBLIC HEARINGS

1) SPECIAL USE PERMIT PARCEL IDs # 2132B00101, 2132B001, 2141A001, 2141A092, & 2132A038 (BRIERWOOD GOLF COURSE)

Blum Investment Group Golf has submitted a request for consideration of a Special Use Permit (SUP) so as to develop a 9-hole golf course, clubhouse and restaurant, and other recreational amenities at the parcel/address listed above. The property is zoned Residential (R-15).

Mayor Eccard explained the quasi-judicial process and reviewed the Board statement regarding standing in a quasi-judicial hearing.

1. A motion was made by Karmen Custer seconded by Gene Vasile to open the Public Hearing.
Motion carried 5 yes 0 no.

2. Town Clerk Natalie Goins administered the Oath to the following:

- Robert Waring – Town Planning Director
- Brandon Eaton – Town Planner
- Gregory Coffey – 5009 Pender Road
- Tammy Underwood – 5011 Pender Road
- Kevin Blum – Applicant, Blum Investment Group Golf LLC
- Elizabeth Nelson – ELI Engineering
- Steve Collins – 18 Fairway Drive
- Eileen Brennan
- Annmarie Cozzi – 111 Country Club Drive
- Joanne Weller – 11 Stratford Place

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- Peter Heuschneider – 34 Queens Grant

Town Planner Brandon Eaton gave a power point presentation, first reviewing quasi-judicial hearings and special use permits, followed by an overview of SUP 24-12. The applicant, Blum Investments Golf, submitted an application to develop a 9-hole golf course, consisting of +/- 76.5 acres, across several parcels within the Brierwood residential community. In addition to the golf course, the applicant also intends to rehabilitate the former clubhouse, adding a restaurant, and will also develop additional recreational amenities. The zoning for the subject parcels is RA-15 and will remain as such. He also reviewed permitted uses within the RA-15 zoning.

Attorney James E. McNeil, on behalf of the applicant, Blum Investment Group Golf, LLC addressed the six special use standards:

- *That the use will not materially endanger the public safety and health.* The Brierwood Golf Club and restaurant have operated in the past without public safety or health issues. The applicant will obtain liability insurance policies and implement standard golf course and restaurant amenity safety precautions through staff training and quality assurance programs. Reasonable safety protocols as dictated by insurers and management staff will be established by the applicant in order to address health and safety concerns of the golf course and restaurant guests.
- *That the use will not substantially injure the value of adjoining or abutting property.* Within golf course communities, golf course lots have a higher value than interior lots. The applicant retained Mike Powell Appraisal Group to perform an analysis to determine if there is a difference in values based on the location of the lots. Mike Powell was not in attendance. Mr. McNeil presented questions to the applicant, Kevin Blum, regarding Mr. Powell's report. Of the twelve lots evaluated in Bricklanding, six golf course lots and six interior lots, Mr. Blum responded that Mr. Powell found the golf course lots to be more valuable. Mr. McNeil noted that the report indicated an \$8,000 difference between golf course and non-golf course lots. When asked about Brierwood, Mr. Blum answered that Mr. Powell was of the opinion that reopening the Brierwood golf course would increase property values of lots in Brierwood. Entered into the record were two exhibits: Ext. A (also Ext. 1) Packet dated February 21, 2025 from Mike Powell Appraisal Group and Ext. B (also Ext. 2) Letter dated February 27, 2025 from Mike Powell Appraisal Group.
- *That the use will be in harmony with the area in which it is to be located.* The Brierwood golf course was opened in the 1960s and Brierwood has been recognized as a golf course community for over 50 years.
- *That the use will be in general conformity with the Land Use Plan, Thoroughfare Plan or other plans officially adopted by the Board of Aldermen.* The applicant's submission for the special use permit presents a plan of development that is consistent with and meets the Town's Land Use and Thoroughfare standards.
- *That the use will have adequate facilities to provide ingress and egress designed to minimize traffic congestion on public streets and also have adequate utilities, access roads, drainage, sanitation or other necessary infrastructure.* The Brierwood neighborhood roads will not be negatively impacted by the golf course and restaurant reopening. There will be peak traffic times but it is not expected to impair the safety and health of the neighborhood.
- *That the use meets all required conditions and specifications established by the Board of Aldermen.* The applicant has worked with the Town and staff as well as Elizabeth Nelson, Eli Engineering, to address conditions and specifications in the facility's reopening process.

3. Public Comments/Questions

- Gregory Coffey voiced concerns with noise from the proposed pickleball courts planned to be adjacent to his back yard, which he considers his sanctuary. He referred to, and submitted into

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record, a study titled "Pickleball Noise Impact Assessment and Abatement Planning" prepared by Spendiarian & Willis Acoustics & Noise Control LLC. Mr. Coffey shared from the report that the sharp popping sound, classified as highly impulsive, can be heard hundreds of feet from the courts. Noise abatement, setbacks, and hours of operation were also of concern.

- Tammy Underwood stated that she found properties next to pickleball courts experience a decrease in value. As someone who works from home, she values the current quiet of the neighborhood and worries that the pickleball courts will introduce distractions from people, noise and lights. Ms. Underwood submitted into record an article from International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health titled " Association between Noise Annoyance and Mental Health Outcomes: A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis, as well as a letter from her medical provider. She asked for consideration of removing pickleball from the proposal.
- Steve Collins, on behalf of the Facebook members of Brierwood, voiced five concerns: 1) Are there any plans for improving Wendy Lane? 2) Are there any plans for the golf course irrigation system which is in a state of disrepair? 3) Plans for stormwater runoff, potholes and cart paths on the fairway? 4) Who is eligible for membership? 5) Timelines for project; when will first phase be completed?
- Eileen Brennan requested further clarification on what the special use permit allows and restricts. Ms. Brennan stated that since the closing of the golf course, the residents of Brierwood have invested their time, money and equipment to maintain the fairways.
- Annmarie Cozzi asked if the numerous trees that have grown since the closing of the golf course will be removed with the reopening. She also inquired about a phase that would include a pool.
- Elizabeth Nelson responded to some of the question and concerns. She noted that Phase III has been removed from the application. There is no pool proposed. Existing tennis courts will be resurfaced to be used as pickleball courts.
- Joanne Weller would like assurance that the section of Claremont Drive believed to be owned by the golf course will be repaired and maintained.
- Kevin Blum responded, indicating that Claremont Drive is not owned by the golf course.
- Peter Heuschneider has concerns with increased traffic on Village Road and questioned if a traffic study would be conducted.

Brandon Eaton read the following imposed special conditions into record:

1. A full site and landscape plan application must be submitted; and
2. Plans must include a landscape plan including any required project boundary buffering in accordance with Shallotte UDO Section 17-14; and
3. Parking must be clearly detailed on submitted plans, specifically in Phase 2; and
4. Parking lot for Phase 2 and maintenance building must consist of impervious pavement; and
5. Building elevation shall be submitted detailing required screening; and
6. A lighting plan must be submitted, particularly detailing the areas of expanded recreation; and
7. Stormwater drainage crossings for proposed course needs to be surveyed and repaired, if necessary, with a copy of the survey provided to the Town; and
8. All required fees shall be paid prior to final zoning approval; and
9. Per Sec. 12-12, all required site improvements shall commence within 12 months of SUP approval date or applicant shall request an extension of up to six months from the Shallotte Board of Aldermen; and
10. All required local, state, and federal permits shall be obtained and copies provided prior to final zoning approval; and
11. The site be maintained in accordance with the approved site plans.

Brandon Eaton also recommended adding a condition that sidewalks be included to access the areas of pickleball if they are approved.

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- The Board asked for more details and information regarding the pickleball facilities including hours of operation and lighting. Attorney McNeil responded that the top priority is reopening the golf course and restaurant, noting that pickleball plans are still in the preliminary stages.

A motion was made by Larry Harrelson seconded by Gene Vasile at 6:35 p.m. to take a ten minute recess. Motion carried 5 yes 0 no.

A motion was made by Karmen Custer seconded by Gene Vasile to resume open session at 6:45 p.m. Motion carried 5 yes 0 no.

- Annmarie Cozzi asked if Mr. Blum would be maintaining the golf course during within the SUP's 12 month timeframe for required site improvements and questioned why 9 holes instead of 18?
- Attorney McNeil stated that after discussing with Mr. Blum, it was established that there will be no lighting for the proposed pickleball courts, as it will be a daytime operation.
- Kevin Blum stated that pickleball is an amenity he would like to see included in the project, but without community support, he doesn't have to move forward with that portion. He reiterated that the golf course and restaurant are his priorities.

4. A motion was made by Jimmy Bellamy seconded by Bobby Williamson to close the public hearing. Motion carried 5 yes 0 no.

5. Board Comments/Questions

6. A motion was made by Larry Harrelson seconded by Karmen Custer to approve the Specific Findings of Fact. Motion carried 5 yes 0 no.

7. A motion was made by Gene Vasile seconded by Jimmy Bellamy to approve SUP 24-12, with the following special conditions imposed:

- 1) A full site and landscape plan application must be submitted; and
- 2) Plans must include a landscape plan including any required project boundary buffering in accordance with Shallotte UDO Section 17-14; and
- 3) Parking must be clearly detailed on submitted plans, specifically in Phase 2; and
- 4) Building elevation shall be submitted detailing required screening; and
- 5) A lighting plan must be submitted, particularly detailing the areas of expanded recreation; and
- 6) Stormwater drainage crossings for proposed course needs to be surveyed and repaired, if necessary, with a copy of the survey provided to the Town; and
- 7) All required fees shall be paid prior to final zoning approval; and
- 8) Per Sec. 12-12, all required site improvements shall commence within 12 months of SUP approval date or applicant shall request an extension of up to six month from the Shallotte Board of Aldermen; and
- 9) All required local, state, and federal permits shall be obtained and copies provided prior to final zoning approval; and
- 10) The site be maintained in accordance with the approved site plans.
- 11) Conditions specific to Phase II:

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- There shall be no outdoor lighting in the recreation area of Phase II; and
- Sidewalks shall be installed to provide access to Phase II from the clubhouse parking lot, in accordance with UDO standards, and must be included on submitted plans; and
- The required project boundary buffer must be installed between Phase II recreation and adjacent residential properties; and
- These items must be shown on the site and landscape plan.

The applicant, Kevin Blum, agreed to the imposed conditions.

2) SPECIAL USE PERMIT PARCEL IDs # 1670006004 (HARDWICK OFFICE & YARD)

Norris & Bland Consulting Engineers, P.C., on behalf of S&H Investment Group, LLC, has submitted a request for consideration of a Special Use Permit (SUP) so as to develop a sales office and warehouse for a metal fabrication business-- with no fabrication occurring on-site, at the parcel/address listed. The property is zoned Business 2 (B-2).

1. A motion was made by Jimmy Bellamy seconded by Karmen Custer to open the public hearing. Motion carried 5 yes 0 no.
2. A motion was made by Gene Vasile seconded by Karmen Custer to continue the public hearing to the April 1, 2025 Board of Aldermen meeting. Motion carried 5 yes 0 no.

IX. DISCUSSION

X. ADJOURN

A motion was made by Bobby Williamson seconded by Karmen Custer to adjourn the meeting at 7:16 p.m. Motion carried 5 yes 0 no.

Respectfully submitted,

Natalie Goins
Town Clerk