

Think Quality - Think Future

Blount County Planning Department

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TO: Blount County Planning Commission

FROM: John Lamb

DATE: November 17, 2009

SUBJECT: Continuation of discussions on issues involved with proposed campground regulations.

At the last regular meeting in October, the Commission discussed several issues and concerns about the proposed campground regulations that have been subject of discussions over the last several months. The Commission came to a consensus to continue discussion at the November meeting, and to specifically address use of road classification criteria in allowance for campgrounds and the possibility of constructing a tourist overlay district to limit allowance in the larger R-1 zone. See attached separate memo by Roger Fields from the October meeting as reference to present regulation wording.

The issues raised last month were varied, and ranged from concern with size limitations on camping cabins, to appropriate setback from rivers, to provision for sewer processing, to limitations on location of campgrounds in general. This memo addresses only avenues to limit location of campgrounds. The other issues were not sufficiently defined for staff to address, and need further guidance from the Planning Commission. This memo was prepared in consultation with Roger Fields.

At the last meeting, the question was raised whether or not road classifications could be a basis for limiting location of campgrounds. This is a possibility, and has been used for several other commercial types of activities in the County. Generally, a use can be specifically limited in general zoning text to a certain classification of road as defined in a registered Major Road Plan (refer to proposed revised Major Road Plan map in October meeting packet). Often, more impactful

uses, especially those involving high traffic or specific types of traffic, are limited to arterial classified roads. Other uses that may have less, but still substantial impact could be limited to both arterial and collector classified roads. In addition, the regulations have set a general standard of minimum 18 feet of pavement width and two foot shoulders as a requirement precedent to substantial commercial development regardless of road classification.

Another alternative discussed at the last meeting is an overlay zone specific to tourist activities in those areas of the County that show greatest demand for tourism development. Two areas were discussed. One was the Townsend and Tuckaleechee cove area, extending possibly along Hwy 321 past Walland Gap toward Maryville as a gateway to the GSMNP. The other was the Tallassee area extending along Calderwood Highway (Hwy 129) from about Six Mile Road to the Dragon. Both areas have existing campground facilities and have shown recent demand for expansion or new facilities.

Of the two alternatives above, the designation of specific roads by appropriate classification would be the simplest and most straightforward to implement, involving only the amendment of zoning text. This option could also be specific to campgrounds and placed within the proposed regulation wording. The second option of an overlay zone would require amendment of the zoning map, which requires special notification process (both in paper and by letter to affected properties) and longer time for accommodating two public hearings (Planning Commission and County Commission). The second option would also require development of regulation text specific to the overlay zone.

Staff requests guidance on the alternative to pursue, and guidance on either specific roads to designate for allowance of campgrounds, or specific areas to designate as an overlay zone.

This item is also open to further discussion and guidance to staff on the other issues raised at the last meeting.