

Think Quality - Think Future

Blount County Planning Department

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TO: Blount County Planning Commission

FROM: John Lamb

DATE: August 17, 2011

SUBJECT: Public Hearing and possible action on proposed campground and recreation vehicle park regulations.

The Planning Commission voted at their November 23, 2010 regular meeting to recommend a set of revised regulations for commercial campgrounds and recreational vehicle parks. To address some issues of consistency for the record, the Planning Commission voted again to recommend at their February 24, 2011 regular meeting. The County Commission held public hearing at their April 12 agenda meeting. The item died for lack of a second to a motion to send on the full County Commission. The Chair noted that the item would go back to the Planning Commission for any further consideration. The Planning Commission called a public hearing for the August 2011 regular meeting to solicit comments from the public. Notice of public hearing was placed in the Daily Times as follows on May 23, 2011:

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING AND REQUEST FOR WRITTEN PUBLIC COMMENTS. The Blount County Planning Commission will hold public hearing on proposed regulations for commercial campground and recreational vehicle parks on August 25, 2011 at 5:30 PM in Room 430 of the Blount County Courthouse. The Planning Commission requests written public comment on the proposed regulations for commercial campground and recreational parks be sent or mailed to be received no later than Monday, August 15, 2011 to Blount County Planning Department, 327 Court Street, Maryville, TN 37804, or by e-mail to planning@blounttn.org. Copy of the proposed regulations may be accessed at www.blounttn.org/planning under the Planning Commission Meetings button, and at the new office location of the Planning Department at 1233 McArthur Road.

The Planning Commission also requested staff to summarize comments from the Public Hearing held by the County Commission April 12, 2011. Those comments were as follows: (2:59)

Larry Campbell: Concerned with standard for 18 foot minimum width of access road for development given that some recreation vehicles could be 9 feet in width, thus constraining passing of two vehicles. Concerned also with overhanging trees and rock outcropping given the height and width of recreation vehicles. Concerned also about allowing campgrounds on Old Tuckaleechee Road and Old Walland Highway given their constrained pavement width. Stated that Sevier County regulations limit campgrounds to the commercial zone on a 50 foot wide road with classification of collector street or at main intersections. Related personal experience with recreation vehicle he owned that was damaged by travel on a narrow road.

Carrol Ross: Concerned with Section 5.B.1 that allows campgrounds for Old Walland Highway and Old Tuckaleechee Road, and asks careful judgement whether these roads would be safe for recreational vehicles. Concerned also with Hwy 411 North and Hwy 129 North. Concerned with Section 2B concerning length of occupancy and suggests a limit of 30 continuous days with a total of 90 days in any year. Proposed 2 week limit for campground sites. Concerned with resident workers and suggests that they be required to live off site. Concerned with Section 5.B.4 and suggest that all RV parks be required to have deceleration lanes. Concerned with Section 5.J on noise compliance and suggests that the section wording should be mandatory. Concerned with Section 5.C.3 regarding erosion plan and suggests “and implemented before, during and after construction” should be added. Questions why there are different standards for setbacks from rivers for campground sites and RV sites as opposed to cabin sites. Notes typo in Section 5.B.2 concerning buffering.

Booty Miller: Camping is a good outdoor activity. The aim for adopting regulations for campgrounds should be promoting health, safety and welfare. References Tennessee Planning Commissioner’s Handbook page 18 for tests: has it been determined there would be no adverse impact on adjoining property, or that the benefit to public health, safety and welfare outweighs any adverse impact; has it been determined that no one property owner or group of owners will be benefited to the detriment of the general public; has it been determined that public facilities will not be adversely impacted. Concerned with definition of recreation vehicle and whether it could

encompass all terrain vehicles. Notes policy that all regulations should have basis in protecting the public health, safety and welfare, and stated concern with sex offenders operating in campgrounds. Concerned with policing of such matters as fire, floods and sewer regulations. Suggested that site plans should take careful consideration of impacts on neighboring properties, including provisions for vegetative buffers. Asked if there would be regulation of lighting and time of lighting. Asked if there would be regulation of noise from motorized vehicles. Asked if there would be regulation of stormwater and who would police the area. Concerned with Section 5.B.1 on the list of applicable roads and intersecting roads of up to 5,000 feet, and notes that this could open up a the Six Mile area of the county and other areas in the County for campgrounds and RV parks. Concerned setbacks from rivers and asked if this would protect the County's drinking water supply. Asked if there was a plan for flood situations in relation to septic facilities. Concerned with Section on duration of 270 days for occupancy, and notes that this could be an entire school term, possibly encouraging residency, and asked who would police this. Noted that campgrounds are commercial operations and asked if they would be taxed at commercial rates.

Brad Ansley: Chairman of the Raven Society, which believes that camping facilities are a wonderful recreation possibility, but has concerns with proposal. Concerned with how much of the area of the county would be affected, particularly with provision of one mile off intersection with major roads. Concerned that five acre minimum may be too small to accommodate a quality operation while protecting the quality of life of neighbors. Notes need to consider buffering of dumpsters and protection of garbage receptacles from bears. Asks if the County has the personnel to monitor campgrounds. Asks if the proposal is in keeping with the Hunter Growth Study to protect corridors from sprawl. Notes need to protect the quality of the major corridors as a gateway to the Smokys. Concerned that allowing a vehicle to remain in an RV park for 270 days is excessive and would be close to establishing a mobile home park and not a campground. Notes that it is not clear what the limits of stay are for cabins. Notes anecdotal evidence that long term RV parks can become hotbeds of criminal activities, including sex offenders. Asks what impact an RV park would have on the values of neighboring residential areas. Notes that tourism is our golden goose, but the negative impacts of the present proposal could outweigh the benefits.

The following is the proposed amendment to the zoning regulations for reference:

1. That the following definitions be added to Section 13 of the zoning regulations:

***Camping Cabin;** small cabins located within a campground that are intended for temporary shelter, and includes sleeping quarters, in some cases a bathroom, but no kitchens.*

***Campgrounds or Commercial Campground and Recreational Vehicle Parks:** the area or place (as a field or grove) used for a camp, for camping, or for a camp meeting, and is conducted as a commercial business, or associated with private groups, clubs or churches.*

2. That sections 9.1B, 9.2B, and 9.3B be amended to add campgrounds and recreational vehicle parks as special exceptions as follows:

9.1 B. Uses Permitted as Special Exceptions: multifamily dwellings including three or more of any dwelling units per lot (see also Section 7.6) and their associated sales or rental offices for the development, high density multifamily planned development (see also Subsections F and I below); family commercial enterprises (see Section 7.10), nursing homes, retirement homes, sanitariums, assisted care living facilities, and resident facilities with special services, treatment, or supervision; day care facilities commercial cemeteries not associated with a church or other place of worship; government and utility uses of a regional character necessary for providing service to the land and population within a broader region including the district; bed and breakfast accommodations; golf driving range; ***commercial campgrounds and recreational vehicle parks (see also section 7.18)***; and accessory structures customarily associated with the above uses.

9.2 B. Uses Permitted as Special Exceptions: multifamily dwellings including three or more of any dwelling units per lot (see also Section 7.6) and their associated sales or rental offices for the development, family commercial enterprises (see Section 7.10), nursing homes, retirement homes, sanitariums, assisted care living facilities, and resident facilities with special services, treatment, or supervision; day care facilities; commercial cemeteries not associated with a church or other place of worship; government and utility uses of a regional character necessary for providing service to the land and population within a broader region including the district; sawmills and associated lumberyards; bed and breakfast accommodations; golf driving range; vacation cabin rental (see also section 7.11); ***commercial campgrounds and recreational vehicle parks (see also section 7.18)***; and accessory structures customarily associated with the above uses.

9.3 B. Uses Permitted as Special Exceptions: multifamily dwellings including three or more of any dwelling units per lot, and their associated sales or rental offices

for the development(see also Section 7.6), family commercial enterprises (see Section 7.10), nursing homes, retirement homes, sanitariums, assisted care living facilities, and resident facilities with special services, treatment, or supervision; *vacation cabin rental (see also section 7.11)*, tourist accommodations, bed and breakfast accommodations, tourist oriented recreation facilities; day care facilities; commercial cemeteries not associated with a church or other place of worship; government and utility uses of a regional character necessary for providing service to the land and population within a broader region including the district; sawmills and associated lumber yards; ***commercial campgrounds and recreational vehicle parks (see also section 7.18)***; and accessory structures customarily associated with the above uses.

3. That the following new Section 7.18 be added to the Zoning Resolution:

Section 7.18 – Commercial Campground and Recreational Vehicle Parks

The purpose of this section is to provide opportunities for quality designed commercial campgrounds and recreational vehicle parks that are properly located in the community where street access and capacity and other infrastructure are favorable for higher density development. In order to create a desirable recreational environment and protect the public health, safety, and welfare, site plans are required for all new commercial campgrounds and recreational vehicle parks. A commercial campground and recreational vehicle park shall meet the following regulations:

1. Minimum lot size requirement: The minimum development site for a commercial campground and recreational vehicle park shall be five (5) acres.
2. Permitted uses and activities: The following uses, vehicles and activities shall be permitted in all commercial campgrounds and recreational vehicle parks.
 - A. Recreational vehicles, travel trailers, pick-up coaches, motor homes, camping trailers, *camping cabins* (not to exceed 25% of the total camp sites), and tents suitable for temporary habitation and used for travel, vacation and recreation purposes provided:
 - 1) Underpinning or the removal of wheels, except for the temporary purpose of repair or stabilizing is prohibited.
 - 2) External structures permanently attached to the ground such as carports, or cabanas associated with individual campsites, shall not be permitted.
 - B. A recreational vehicle shall not remain in a recreational vehicle park for more than two hundred-seventy (270) days in any three-hundred-sixty-five (365) day period except:

- 1) Vehicles owned and operated by seasonal camp workers shall be exempt from this requirement.
 - 2) Storage of unoccupied recreational vehicles may be allowed in a designated storage area, with number of stored vehicles not to exceed 40% of total number of campsites, and shall not encroach on primary subsurface sewage disposal system, and shall be visually buffered from and public road, and shall be set back from lot lines by the required principle structure setbacks for the zone.
- C. Camp Workers: Each commercial campground or recreational vehicle park may have campsites available for camp workers directly employed by the campground.
3. Accessory Uses: Management headquarters, toilets, dumping stations, showers, coin-operated laundry facilities, commercial uses exclusive to the park that cater to camp patrons only, and structures which are customarily incidental and subordinate to the operation of a commercial campground or recreational vehicle park are permitted as accessory uses to the park, subject to the following restrictions:
 - A. Such establishments and parking areas primarily related to their operations shall not occupy more than five (5) percent of the gross area of the park.
 4. Prohibited uses and structures:
 - A. Mobile homes and mobile home parks,
 - B. Permanent residences, excluding the accessory use of a resident management structure.
 5. Design standards for recreational vehicle parks and campgrounds. All commercial campgrounds and recreational vehicle parks shall meet the following requirements in addition to other requirements in specific zones.
 - A. Density. The maximum number of campsites shall be controlled through this section and environmental health department approval.
 - B. Access and location criteria:
 - 1) Commercial campgrounds and recreational vehicle parks (campgrounds) shall be limited to specific areas deemed significant to tourism, generally the Highway 411 North corridor leading to Maryville, Highway 321 corridor leading to Townsend, and the Highway 129 corridor leading to Tallassee. With exceptions specified below, campgrounds will be limited to direct access on the following arterial and collector status roads: Highway 411 North from the Maryville city limits to the Blount/Sevier county line, Lamar Alexander Parkway (Highway 321) from Maryville city

limits to the city limits of Townsend, Highway 321 from the Townsend city limits to the Blount/Sevier county line, Old Tuckaleechee Road around the southern boundary of Townsend, Old Walland Highway from intersection with Ellejoy Road to intersection with Six Mile Road to intersection with Happy Valley Road. For roads directly intersecting the above listed arterial and collector status roads, commercial campgrounds and recreational vehicle parks (campgrounds) may be permitted if direct access on such roads is within (see alternatives below) feet of direct intersection with the arterial and collector status roads, and such roads meet standards of subsection 2 below.

(Alternatives forwarded from Planning Commission for County Commission choice are 2500 feet and 5000 feet distance along intersecting roads).

- 2) Location of campgrounds shall be limited to off site roads with at least 18 foot wide pavement with 2 foot shoulders.
- 3) Entrances and exits to the campgrounds shall be designed for safe and convenient movement of traffic into and out of the park and to minimize traffic conflict and facilitate free movement of traffic on adjacent streets. All traffic into and out of the park shall be thru such entrances and exits. No entrance or exit shall require a turn at an acute angle for vehicles moving in the direction intended. Curb radii, driveway cut and placement at intersections shall have a **minimum of** fifty (50) feet turning radius and exits shall be designed to allow ingress and egress simultaneously.
- 4) A deceleration lane may be required to entrance of the campground if recommended by the Blount County Highway Department or the Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT). When a deceleration lane is proposed to be located off a state right-of-way, the deceleration lane is subject to review and approval by the Tennessee Department of Transportation. When a deceleration land is proposed to be located off a county maintained right-of-way, the deceleration lane is subject to review and approval by the Blount County Highway Department.

C. Internal Roadways. All internal roadways shall meet the following requirements:

- 1) Internal roadways shall be maintained so emergency vehicles can safely access all areas of the site.
- 2) All interior roadways shall be constructed with an adequate, well-drained base and be surfaced with a minimum four (4) inches of

gravel. Roadway grades shall not exceed ten (10) percent for gravel roads and thirteen (13) percent for paved roads.

- 3) An erosion control plan shall also be required.
- 4) All internal roadways shall have a minimum width of no less than fourteen (14) feet for one-way traffic and no less than eighteen (18) feet for two-way traffic.

- D. Check-in Facility. Designate on the site plan a central vehicle check-in facility with the queuing capacity for a minimum of three (3) recreational vehicles, to insure check-in does not become congested.
 - E. Parking for workers and guests. Parking spaces shall be provided for the manager and camp workers. A minimum of one (1) guest parking space shall be provided for every five (5) campsites.
 - F. Sewage Disposal. All campgrounds will be required to be connected to a public sewer system or have a subsurface sewage disposal system approved by the Blount County Environmental Health Department.
 - G. Any site plan shall address provision for fire service with fire hydrants and adequate access for emergency vehicles within the development.
 - H. Any site plan shall address garbage service, particularly if common receptacles are used in which case screening of receptacles shall be required.
 - I. Fire Pits. Campfires shall only be permitted in designated fire pits.
 - J. Lighting and Noise. All campgrounds shall be designed to meet the current outdoor lighting standards found in section 7.15-D. All campgrounds should conduct business in accordance to any existing noise laws within the county.
6. Design Requirements for Recreational Vehicle Campsites and Tent Campsites.
- A. Recreational Vehicle Campsite.
 - 1) All recreational vehicle campsites shall have a minimum of 1,400 square feet.
 - 2) A recreational vehicle campsite shall be designed so there is a minimum of ten (10) feet between recreational vehicles.
 - 3) Each campsite shall contain a stabilized vehicular parking pad.
 - 4) No building or storage sheds are permitted on individual recreational vehicle campsites.

- 5) Recreational vehicle campsites shall include a minimum of one (1) automobile vehicle parking space with minimum dimensions of ten (10) feet by twenty (20) feet.
- 6) Each campsite shall abut at least one internal roadway within the boundaries of the Recreational Vehicle Park and campground. Ingress and egress to the campsite shall be limited to an internal roadway.
- 7) Recreational vehicle campsites shall be set back at least fifteen (15) feet from any river bank or stream bank.

B. Tent Campsite.

- 1) All tent campsites shall have a minimum area of 1,400 square feet.
- 2) Tent campsites shall include a minimum of one (1) automobile parking space with minimum dimensions of ten (10) feet by twenty (20) feet.
- 3) Each campsite shall abut at least one internal roadway within the boundaries of the Recreational Vehicle Park and campground. Ingress and egress to the campsite shall be limited to an internal roadway.
- 4) Tent campsites shall be set back at least fifteen (15) feet from any river bank or stream bank.

C. Camping Cabin sites.

- 1) All camping cabin sites shall have a minimum area of 1,400 square feet.
- 2) A camping cabin site must be designed so there is a minimum of twenty (20) feet between camping cabins.
- 3) No storage sheds are permitted on an individual camping cabin site.
- 4) Camping cabin sites shall include a minimum of one (1) automobile vehicle parking space with minimum dimensions of ten (10) feet by twenty (20) feet.
- 5) Each campsite shall abut at least one internal roadway within the boundaries of the Recreational Vehicle Park and Campground. Ingress and egress to the campsite shall be limited to an internal roadway.

- 6) Camping cabin sites shall be set back at least twenty-five (25) feet from any stream bank, and at least fifty (50) feet from the bank of the Little River.

D. All campsites shall be designed in conformity with the Floodplain Regulations if within a flood zone.