

MINUTES
Town of Blowing Rock
Town Council Meeting
April 13, 2021

The Town of Blowing Rock Town Council met for their regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, April 13, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. The meeting took place at Town Hall located at 1036 Main Street Blowing Rock, NC. Present were Mayor Charlie Sellers, Mayor Pro-Tem Sue Sweeting and Council Members Albert Yount, David Harwood, Doug Matheson, Virginia Powell, Town Manager Shane Fox, Town Attorney Allen Moseley, Town Engineer Doug Chapman, Public Works and Utilities Director Matt Blackburn, Planning and Inspections Director Kevin Rothrock, Police Chief Aaron Miller, Parks and Recreation Director Jennifer Brown, Fire Chief Kent Graham and Town Clerk Hilari Hubner who recorded the minutes. Others in attendance via Zoom virtual/phone session were Finance Officer Nicole Norman.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Sellers called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone. Mayor verified attendance via roll call.

THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

MINUTE APPROVAL

Mayor Pro-Tem Sweeting made a motion to approve the regular and closed session minutes from the March 9, 2021, seconded by Council Member Harwood. Unanimously approved.

Council Member Matheson made a motion to approve the special meeting minutes from the March 22, 2021 meeting, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Sweeting. Unanimously approved.

REGULAR AGENDA ADOPTION

Mayor Pro-Tem Sweeting advised she would like to pull the High Country Half Marathon off Consent Agenda and move to Business for discussion, seconded by Council Member Powell. Unanimously approved.

Council Member Matheson advised he would like to add the approval of the Special Meeting Minutes that was held at 5:00 P.M. prior to the regular meeting, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Sweeting. Unanimously approved.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Audit Contract 2021 Approval

Approval of the 2021 Audit Contract. **Audit Contract 2021 – Attachment A**

Mayor Pro-Tem Sweeting made a motion to approve the revised Consent Agenda, seconded by Council Member Matheson. Unanimously approved.

SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR

Mr. Rick Parsons 1577 Green Hill Road advised this was the third time in as many years he had come before Council requesting the issue be addressed of chronic speeding on Green Hill Road. He further advised he understands the Town has engaged in a traffic study on Green Hill Road and he thought that was a fantastic idea. Mr. Parsons explained he would like to propose the study answer the following questions:

- What measures can be used to reduce speeding traffic on Greenhill (speed bumps, stop signs or a combination of the two).
- What measures can assist in the ingress and egress into the neighborhoods fronting Greenhill Road. He suggested the use of three-way stops as Council had done previously in other problematic areas.
- What measures can be used to reduce the noise that comes from speeding cars and trucks (reducing speed, reducing the vehicle size). Also the suggestion that the Town consider the use of “quiet pavement” as that can reduce those noises up to seven decibels.

Mr. Parsons advised he felt all of these could be used to address the problems on Greenhill Road. Mr. Parsons commented he had met with Manager Fox to discuss the proposed traffic study and the option of using quiet pavement. He explained they had a very productive discussion. In the meantime, Mr. Parsons invited any Council Members to come up to his area on Greenhill and listen to the noise he is experiencing. He further advised just doing a study isn't enough until a permanent solution is implemented and enforced.

Mayor Sellers read a letter from Lorry Mulhern regarding the Greenhill Road green space preservation. **Citizen Letters – Attachment B**

Mayor Sellers thanked Mr. Parsons and Ms. Mulhern for their input.

PUBLIC HEARING

1. Highway 321 Visioning Code Amendment – Phase 1

Planning Director Kevin Rothrock reported the Town Council established an Ad Hoc Committee in 2019 to study Valley Blvd for past development patterns and to work toward a desired vision for the corridor. Benchmark Planning was hired to assist the public involvement process and a Valley Boulevard Study was completed by January 2020. The study identified 19 Implementation Strategies consisting of 11 Design Modifications (DSR), 2 Procedural Modifications (PM), 1 Permitted Use Modification (PU), and 5 Supplementary Recommendations (SR) to help achieve the Vision for Valley Boulevard.

The Planning Board created a Valley Blvd subcommittee to dig deeper into the implementation strategies and how they could be codified in the Land Use Ordinance if needed to support the Vision.

The entire Planning Board reviewed the proposed updates from the Valley Blvd subcommittee at their December 2020 meeting and forwarded the draft recommendations to Council at the 2021 Retreat. In March, the Planning Board approved the final draft ordinance (Ord No. 2021-05) which is attached for review and consideration.

- The draft ordinance reduces the maximum building height in General Business zoning district from 50 feet to 35 feet with the standard 20-foot street setback and 8-foot side set-back. Building height may go up to 50 feet with a 40-foot street setback and 16-foot side setback.
- The draft ordinance removes brick as an available building material but still allows stucco to be used on the sides of buildings not facing a street.
- Some permissive language has been removed from the landscaping section of the commercial design standards.
- Four (4) colors have been removed from the approved colors list.

Mayor Pro-Tem Sweeting thanked Mr. Rothrock for including communication with property owners on 321 Valley Boulevard.

Council Member Matheson asked if Mr. Rothrock was able to address all of the property owners' concerns. Mr. Rothrock confirmed and gave a brief overview of some of the questions of the property owners.

Council Member Harwood made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Sweeting. Unanimously approved.

Council Member Harwood advised he would like to thank Mr. Rothrock for all his hard work on this project and Mayor Pro-Tem Sweeting for her leadership "getting the ball running two years ago". Mr. Rothrock reminded this is phase 1 only and work will continue.

Council Member Powell made a motion to approve the Hwy 321 Visioning Code Amendment Phase 1, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Sweeting. Unanimously approved.

BUSINESS MATTERS

1. Minutes Approval – April 13, 2021 Special Meeting

Manager Fox advised a Special Meeting was held at 5:00 prior to this meeting to adopt four (4) resolutions for the Parks and Recreation PRTF Grant.

Mayor Pro-Tem Sweeting made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Council Member Matheson. Unanimously approved.

2. 2021 High Country Half Marathon Request

Parks and Recreation Director Jennifer Brown advised the High Country Triple Crown has requested to hold their 10th annual High Country Half Marathon that will begin at Kidd Brewer Stadium at ASU and end at Davant Field.

The route through Blowing Rock will go from 221 to Laurel Lane, up Wonderland Trail, back to Laurel Lane, and end at Davant Field.

They will coordinate activities with Parks & Recreation, Blowing Rock Fire & Rescue, and the Blowing Rock Police Department.

Mayor Pro-Tem Sweeting advised she felt this was a great event. The event is usually held in August, so given it will be held during “leaf season” she wanted to know why the change had happened. Ms. Brown explained that due to COVID they have had to push all their dates back later than normal causing this one to fall in October. Ms. Brown further noted she didn’t anticipate the date being held in October going forward.

Mayor Pro-Tem Sweeting asked about the police help request and advised if they did indeed need the assistance, she felt they should pay an off duty officer as that will be a busy time in Town.

Council Member Powell commented this is a fund raiser for Girls on the Run, she had once sat on the board and felt this was a great program. Mayor Pro-Tem Sweeting agreed this was a great program.

Mayor Pro-Tem Sweeting advised there was a large pothole that needed addressing on the race route, prior to this race so someone didn’t get hurt. Manager Fox advised that had recently been brought to his attention and he’s in the process of looking into that. She also inquired about the need for extra bathrooms (porta johns). Ms. Brown advised she would discuss the need with the applicant.

Mayor Pro-Tem Sweeting made a motion to approve, seconded by Council Member Powell. Unanimously approved.

OTHER BUSINESS

- Mayor Sellers – Advised he continues to be impressed with the way the Department Heads, Council and citizens dealt with 2020 and so far into 2021. He advised he is glad to be moving back to some sort of normal. He also thanked Manager Fox for his leadership.
- Council Member Yount – Gave an update on the Status of the American Legion numbers and he was happy to say the traditional Memorial service should be on for this year.
- Council Member Harwood – Reiterated his appreciation to the Parks and Recreation advisory committee and Council for their support of the PARTF Grant application approval. He thanked McGill and Associates, Cory Osborne with the

High Country Council of Governments for his hard work as well. He advised briefly on next steps.

- Mayor Pro-Tem Sweeting – Thanked Council Member Harwood for his hard work on the Parks Strategy Committee as well as Mr. Rothrock for his hard work on the Ad Hoc Committee.
- Council Member Matheson – advised the High Country Council of Governments Directors Meeting was just held, and the NC League Conference starts next week.
- Council Member Powell – Thanked the police for the internet safety talk that was held with elementary school students. She further commented it's nice to have all the kids back in school four days a week.
- Manager Fox – Gave an update on house bill 401 Senate Bill 3049. ABC sales are up 37% over the last year, TDA had a 61% increase over last year. Gave an update on the Bass Lake Sidewalk as well as the crosswalks. He advised the budget process is well underway and Arbor Day will be held on April 30th at 1:30 P.M. and two trees will be planted.

Council took a 15 minute recess before going into closed session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 7:00 p.m. Council Member Harwood made a motion to go into executive session *NCGS 143-318.11. (a)(3) – Attorney/Client update on current litigation*, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Sweeting. Unanimously approved.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business Council Member Matheson made a motion to adjourn at 9:50 p.m., seconded by Council Member Yount. Unanimously approved.

MAYOR _____
Charlie Sellers

ATTEST _____
Hilari Hubner, Town Clerk

Attachments

Citizen Letters – Attachments A
Audit Contract – Attachment B