

Town Council Meeting - Tuesday, October 12th, 2021 – Regular Meeting

The Town of Blowing Rock Town Council met for their regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, October 12, 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, Town Manager Shane Fox, Town Attorney Allen Moseley, Town Engineer Doug Chapman, Fire Chief Kent Graham, Parks and Recreation Director Jennifer Brown, Police Chief Aaron Miller, Planning Director Kevin Rothrock and Public Works Director Matt Blackburn, Finance Officer Nicole Norman and Town Clerk Hilari Hubner who recorded the minutes.

SUMMARY KEYWORDS

valley boulevard, town, traffic, hill, year, culvert, green, cars, road, radar, council, vehicles, number, speed, state, signs, petition, project, noise, area

SPEAKERS

Michael Karpinski, Matt Blackburn, Tim Gupton, David Harwood, Aaron Miller, Doug Matheson, Lynda Lassiter, Jennifer Brown, Lorry Mulhern, Evenlight Eagles, Sue Sweeting, Albert Yount, Shane Fox, Teresa Buckwalter, Charlie Sellers, Doug Chapman, Kevin Rothrock

Charlie Sellers

Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome to our Town Council meeting this October 12 2021. I'm going to do a roll call for attendance. Albert Yount - here, David Harwood - here, Sue Sweeting - here Doug Matheson -here. Okay, if you would, let's stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. Moving right along approval of minutes, September 7, 2021. Do I have a motion?

Sue Sweeting

So, moved.

Doug Matheson

Second.

Charlie Sellers

Any discussion? Albert, Yes, David Yes,

Sue Sweeting

Yes

Charlie Sellers

Unanimously approved.

Doug Matheson

Yes

MINUTE APPROVAL

Charlie Sellers

Approval of the minutes from September 14, 2021. Motion?

Sue Sweeting

I make a motion to approve with the following addition on page nine, when we were discussing the information on removal of restrictions based on data, I would like to add that Jennifer Greene, Watauga County Health Director, said that removal will be depend on change will depend on hospitalization numbers, levels of transmission and infection rate and that there's no way to predict until we see the data.

Charlie Sellers

Got that Hilari? We have a motion with changes.

David Harwood

Second.

Charlie Sellers

Do we have a second?

David Harwood

Second

Charlie Sellers

Any discussion? Okay

Albert Yount

Yes.

David Harwood

Yes.

Sue Sweeting

Yes.

Doug Matheson

Yes.

REGULAR AGENDA ADOPTION

Charlie Sellers

All in favor. Motion passes. All right. Got a motion to approve the regular agenda?

Doug Matheson

So moved.

Charlie Sellers

Do I have a second?

Sue Sweeting

Second

Charlie Sellers

Any discussion?

Albert Yount

Albert yes.

David Harwood

David Yes.

Sue Sweeting

Sue yes

Doug Matheson

Doug Yes

Charlie Sellers

All right. Consent Agenda, budget amendment. 2021 - 11. Do I have a motion?

Albert Yount

So moved

Charlie Sellers

Have a second

Albert Yount

Yes

David Harwood

Second Yes

Sue Sweeting

Yes

Doug Matheson

Yes

SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR

Charlie Sellers

All right now we're at the public comments section. If you would, please. Please keep it down to three minutes if it's all possible. Ms. Evenlight Eagles would you state your name and address for the record?

Evenlight Eagles

Evenlight Eagles - 612 ransom Street. So this deals with COVID. So I'm riding in the car when I was little me and my sister, we would always complain because our parents were smokers. And we would fuss. And we would, we would want them to roll down the windows and they wouldn't do it. And then we would pitch a fit in and they would. And so now if I mentioned this to my mom when it comes up to cringes because parents make mistakes, and so do government agencies like the CDC than the FDA. But one thing is it's different. When parents make a mistake in their family Policy, based on a lack of information or misinformation. It's a very different thing when a government agency makes public policy based on a lack of information or misinformation. And so there whether you hear it in the news or on social media in the hospital or from doctors or not. There is massive debate about the safety and efficacy of masks and the COVID injections. And there's fights both for and against and There's a reason for the Constitution, it is unethical for me or any government to force you to do something against your own medical will and it's against, you know, it's the same for you or the government to force me. So I don't know if we ask that that but I think you got my point. So the there's a reason that you're forbade in the constitution to make laws that infringe upon my or anybody else's rights to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. And so anybody, I see anybody who wears a mask, or at this point, anybody can get a, they can wear a mask, or they can get a vaccination at any point. There's nothing stopping anybody from doing that. So the mandates, by default, are aimed at forcing people who would not otherwise take that advice. So it is it is by default, unconstitutional. So to me, it's not a question of whether or not if it's unconstitutional, but why you think that it's okay to override the Constitution, and in order to stop people, you know, to stop people having that right. So and, again, as I preface before, I totally believe all of you are doing what you believe is best, but I believe this is a very important point. So the mandates have been passed pursuant to 166A, the North Carolina General statute 166A, a and the and the declared state of emergency. So I'm would like to formally petition the town council to provide specific justification for your declaration of the state of emergency. Now, I understand you rely heavily upon the CDC guidance and understanding rely upon Jennifer Greene and regional health care. But what I'm asking is for you to specifically explain your specific justifications at this point in time for that state of emergency. And then also, which, you know, and when it started, just what are your specific reasons for having started it and continuing with that? And then number two is I want the exact wording, I just have a second exact wording within the document of 166A that you believe gives you the right to even in a state of emergency to force someone to comply with medical advice, which with which they do not agree. Thank you. Yes, and this right, here is one for each of you. But you had a doctor last month, say that feeling Guillain-Barre Syndrome was not one of the side

effects today before she said that another one of the manufacturers was put forth by government agencies.

Charlie Sellers

Thank you, Ms. Eagles.

David Harwood

Quick clarifying question. Yes. mistake of when you say you are you referring to the collective or individually. Both Thank you.

Charlie Sellers

Thank you, Ms. Eagles. All right. Lorry Mulhern, is next. Lorry is spearheading along with many others on a petition that she would like to read. Thank you, Lorry. If you would name and address

Lorry Mulhern

9239 Valley Boulevard - I'm not actually going to read the petition. I can't do that in less than three minutes, four minutes and nine seconds short as I got it. So, I just have a little statement. Good evening, Mayor Council and Manager Fox, respectfully I'm here tonight to present to you a petition which now has 298 signatures seeking additional action regarding the noise and speeding along Highway 321 through Blowing Rock. So, if I might ask right now that this be entered into the minutes of this, is it the appropriate time.

Charlie Sellers

Would you like to hit highlights of the petition?

Lorry Mulhern

Well, if there's time when I finish this. Thank you. There's been some mention of the word respect in recent communications and in some media, so I would like to state unequivocally that the writers of this petition that among the writers, there is no lack of respect for town employees and staff. In fact, very first sentence of the petition states that the undersigned respectfully request, and we do so request action in that spirit. Much has also been discussed lately of unity as well. But respecting unity cannot be one way street. Just petition at its core is a compilation of suggested action that individuals have been offering to town government for years. We restructured the Bingham's letter to Council of August of 2020, which the writers were not aware of prior to the drafting of the petition, outline many of the same points as suggestions as petition that we wrote does in fact many more. However, Laura Bingham made a key point. In a recent local press interview, that when the town publishes its list of major issues to be addressed in the following year, in the upcoming year, the issue of noise, speeding and associated safety on highway 321 never seems to make the cut and a recent communication but seem to bear that out. I personally have said many times over the years to both members of town government privately and to the council publicly, that my worst nightmare is a four-year-old playing with ball with their grandparents, while they're unpacking the car for a weekend getaway in front of the Green Park and grandchild rolling a ball into 321 running after it, and a speeding car truck not being able to stop in time. The residents, taxpayers, business owners who have signed this petition of united behind it in the hope that some additional different action might be taken in order to address this matter.

The hope is the Blowing Rock town government will unite with us in this cause. Many stand ready to assist in any possible way just ask.

Charlie Sellers

Thank you, Lorry, and thank all those that were involved with the petition. I think it's very important that, you know, people do get involved. And people have a lot of good ideas. And so that being said, later on our Police Chief will address some of these issues moving forward. Tonight. Okay. Thank you. Hilari, Shane's going to have you enter that in the minutes. So, for future reference, okay. The petition and the explanation. All right. Linda Lasseter

Lynda Lassiter

Well, my name is Lynda Lassiter. And my husband and I live at 559 Morningside Drive we're permanent residents of Daytona Beach, and we'd like to refer to ourselves as sand fleas because when the sand gets hot, we flee, and we come to Blowing Rock. All I want to say is that I appreciate so much all that you do, and the hard work that you put in, it's just unbelievable. I can't imagine being in any of your positions. And thank you so much. And I just want to say that I love Blowing Rock.

PRESENTATIONS

Charlie Sellers

Thank you. Honestly, I think we all love Blowing Rock, and we want the best for. So, thank you. Okay, moving right along. Police Traffic Enforcement update Chief Aaron Miller here. Good evening, Chief.

Aaron Miller

Mayor and Council, I was asked to give a brief update on traffic and speeding on Valley Boulevard. So, I wanted to do that tonight. I have got just eight or nine slides, so it'll be very long. But the first slot here deals with what I believe is the philosophy of our police department in Blowing Rock, how we choose to use our manpower when our core functions are at the police department. So, I thought it would be helpful to talk about that for just a moment. I'd like to talk about this topic at length at some point maybe at the retreat, but for tonight you can see in the dark red, this is our committed time. This is the time that we don't get to choose how we spend it. If we get a call for service, we have to go, we have to do training, it's mandated by the state, we have to investigate crimes. And then we also have to deal with special events and other things that arise. So, in Blowing Rock, we broke it down into four core functions that for a committed time, right time that we don't control. The other blocks. Those are the things that we do with our uncommitted time. And in Blowing Rock. I believe we have four primary areas of focus. We have our residential areas that we have to focus on, we have our business areas which is community policing has to do with some of the efforts that we make toward making our tourist feel safe and welcoming. Here in Blowing Rock as well as programs and other things. And of course, traffic safety enforcement is one of those things. So those four things are where we spend our uncommitted time. So, when we're not on a call, we're not following up on a criminal investigation, or some of those things. This is where officers spend their uncommitted time. So, I thought it was important to show that first. This is our staffing levels, we have 13 full time people, I think a lot of people in town think that we're 100-man police department, we are not, we have 13, 10 of those are assigned to road patrol. Currently, 7 of those road patrol officers are certified to operate a radar. So that's not very many and 2 of those 7 are supervisors as well. Here's tracking numbers, this data came from the

DOT website. You can read those numbers 11,000 cars on Valley Boulevard near Ransom Street. That's a daily average, that information is from 2019. I think we would probably all agree that those numbers have probably gone up based on the numbers, we're here for the TDA and some of things. So, 11,000 cars per day average on Valley Boulevard, that's 2,816,000 cars a year, traveling on Valley Boulevard between Main Street and Main Street. Of course, there's a few more cars on the end, because we know a number of those vehicles, turn onto Main Street and come through town and go out 221. So that's between the two Main Street entrances. That's the kind of traffic volume that we're talking about 321. So, when we're talking about speeding and traffic noise, 2,816,000 cars are going to make some noise. Right here this is this is sort of a hard number to come up with. So, we have, and we'll get into that in a second. But we sort of estimate, and it's a loose estimate, that probably 20% of the traffic is exceeding 35 miles per hour on Valley Boulevard. We know that from the data that we collect. So, if that is correct, then there's 2,200 cars a day that are on Valley Boulevard that are exceeding 35 miles per hour. So, I wanted you have that information. Here's what we've been doing about traffic this year so far, we've stopped 1,893 cars, that's a huge number. For a department that has seven officers that are certified to run radar. That's a huge number. I don't have comparative numbers today, because I was only asked about this last week, and we've reached out, but we did not get the information from other departments back in time for tonight. But trust me, that's a big number. We're on track to hit about the same number that we hit last year with us with our staffing levels, we hope for more but to get more that would depend on being fully staffed with all radar certified officers for 12-month period. That's the only way we get that number right. And of course, we rarely go through a 12-month period, we're fully staffed. So that's the problem is matter of fact, just to give you a little a little background this week, one of our newer officers was supposed to be in radar training, which is very difficult to get. We're competing for seats with officer from all over the state North Carolina. He was supposed to be in radar training this week, on Monday morning that he was about to get called the radar class have been canceled. Due to a paperwork glitch at the community college. So, I don't know when we'll get that officer back in radar training. It may be months, I'm not sure. The other thing we've been working on is installing two permanent mount radar signs that's been in the works for quite a while. We applied for a grant through Governor's Highway Safety that grant was approved. We have those signs in house the signpost has been ordered. We have met with Blue Ridge electric, and I've been working with Matt Blackburn and his department, Public Works Department, to try to get that underway. As soon as we can get that worked into the Blue Ridge electric schedule we have to go ahead and get those signs permanently mounted one on each of the Valley Boulevard. Hopefully that'll help remind some of the motorists that is the 35 mile an hour speed limit in Blowing Rock. So, I talked about getting traffic speed information. So, some of you may have seen this report so we have a radar sign that we can collect data. As a car passes that radar it logs every car that passes and their state. And I can print out a variety of different reports. I chose this report, because it just happened to be the most recent one that I could pull off the computer. But as you can see, this breaks it down into different categories. And every police department that I've ever worked for, that I'm familiar with, probably use it some type of similar report and data to make decisions about how to focus our resources. So, you've got the cars that were traveling, and these are, all these numbers on here are daily averages for that time period. Okay, daily averages. So, in the first column in the green column, you've got the cars that were actually going under 35 miles per hour. It's sort of hard to read and apologize for that. The yellow is the number of cars that are in the low-risk thresholds. Low Risk is typically between 35 miles per hour and 45 miles per hour, that's what we would consider low risk, then you got medium risk in orange,

which would be cars traveling between 45 miles per hour and 55 miles per hour, and then you have a higher risk, which is cars over 55 miles per hour. This particular report, let me just give a little explanation. This is just a snapshot in time. So that radar sound is battery operated, we can only leave it out for a certain period, the higher the traffic volume, the quicker the battery goes down. So, this is not every day, it may not be every day, it may not be an average of the whole year, but it's a snapshot in time. So, this particular period, there were zero, this was near the furniture store on Valley Boulevard where the radar sign collected this data. And it was pointing southbound. So, this will be traffic that's traveling up the hill toward the furniture store. There was no high risk. And I think that's great that we don't have any vehicles in the high-risk category. Some reports do this is just a snapshot in time, we only had an average of one vehicle per hour, I think you can scroll through, there's one vehicle per hour average, it's in the medium risk. So, an average of one vehicle per hour was traveling from 45 miles per hour to 55 miles per hour. You have the yellow the low risk you have some vehicles in the in the low risk category there 51 average per hour, this yellow category, the low risk is never going to completely go away, never. It really doesn't matter much what we do, you're always going to have some cars, that might be going 36, 37, 38 miles per hour, some of those cars may have been going 39 miles per hour. But that those are in the low-risk thresholds. And we're never going to eliminate the leverage threshold completely. So as a Police Chief, if I'm going to send my resources out to try to target what we're going to work on, we definitely want to make sure we don't have any high risk, which on this report we don't. Next thing we want to do is try to target the medium risk. So I've got a police officer sitting out on the median running radar, we're probably not going to want to spend our precious resources, stopping the car that's going 37 miles per hour and it's in the low risk category, we're probably going to want to try to target that vehicle that's going 45 to 55 miles per hour in that medium risk category. So that's how we get the data. This is what we do with the data. This is why our officers choose to stop the cars that they choose to stop. So I felt like that was important that you understand that. This is just another way to report the same identical information in a graph. The thing that was of interest to me and I really hadn't even noticed this until I was preparing this for tonight there is almost no red. There's almost no red in the high risk category. And I think that was pretty good. In this particular report, there's almost no medium risk on the ground. Very, very little medium risk. The last slide I had up here I want to talk about traffic crashes for a second. On Valley Boulevard, so far this year 2021 there's been 28 total traffic crashes. I even broke that down in a percentage just because I thought it was interesting, if you won't see the percentage of cars that they're involved in accidents to travel through our town. That's it .0000099%. So I would think that Valley Boulevard is a fairly safe highway to travel on. We have had 5 crashes at the Speedway, the reason I broke that out is we know we have a high crash area at the Speedway. That's something we're trying to work with DOT on, we have a lot of vehicles trying to make left turns trying to pull out of the Speedway. So I sort of wanted to break that out and separate it. 7 traffic accidents on Valley Boulevard speed was indicated as a factor in that accident. Only 7, there were only 3 persons transported to the hospital with injuries, and there were zero, life threatening injuries or fatalities. So that's our traffic crash data. That's important when we start talking about traffic safety and traffic calming measures, you know, the traffic engineers are going to want to see the data. And this is the data that I just presented to you. So that's all that I had to present. And I'll field any questions that you might have.

Sue Sweeting

Thank you for that information that is a well put presentation. I know that the staff you have is not enough to be out there. What other ways can we deal with not only speeding but noise.

Aaron Miller

So I'll talk about traffic safety first, we are working on a proposal to present to Council, which would be a cost sharing partnership with Governor's highway safety, for additional manpower just to work on traffic safety on Valley Boulevard. So that's in the works, I hope to have that ready to present have something to talk about that retreat in January. Because of the deadlines, we may have to bring it up a little sooner. Hopefully we'll have that too. You really seem to deliberate and look at. So that's one thing we're working on is just some additional resources to work on traffic safety. The noise issue is much, much tougher. I don't think that the noise issue is going to be solved by law enforcement intervention. The one thing we did do, we've reached out to the North Carolina Highway Patrol has a division that just concentrates on commercial vehicles motor carrier enforcement, I reached out to all the motor carrier enforcement agents here and that's here in Watauga County. And I asked a few questions and also talked with the supervisor that's over this district, with the motor fleet with motor carrier enforcement. And a few of the questions I asked were. How do you regulate truck noise? The answer from the North Carolina Highway Patrol was we don't. They explain to me the process. They say it's almost impossible. They don't have the equipment to do it. They've only done it. The supervisor told me he only knew at one time it was done and they lost that case. So his answer to me was we don't. We also talked a little bit about trucks traveling up and down 321 beyond the town limits. They do do some enforcement in that area. Both of them told me that was a very difficult place to do truck enforcement because there's no place safely for trucks to stop. It's very difficult for them stop on the hill. So typically they they said more often they would follow the truck into Blowing Rock and maybe stop it at the Outback parking lot or something like that, where it's safe to do so. So one question I asked the supervisor, I said what I'm trying to find out. Is there something that we're not doing as far as truck noise on Valley Boulevard that we could be doing? And he's answer to me was no. And that's from the North Carolina Highway Patrol. So I don't think that the noise issue is something that we're going to be able from a law enforcement perspective to eliminate when we have 2,000,800 and some thousand cars a year traveling Valley Boulevard that's going to generate traffic noise. So that's where we're at with the with the noise enforcement. The other issue that we're looking at within our department and Representative Pickett's here he may have heard some about this. The governor established a commission to look at law enforcement in the state of North Carolina. That commission made a report. One of the things on that report was looking at police agencies. De-emphasizing regulatory stops specifically mentioned on that de-emphasizing regulatory stops with vehicle noise. So the government's own Crime Commission is recommending the law enforcement agencies not stop cars for vehicle noise. Now we haven't adopted a policy like that, and I don't think we will. But just to give you an idea in the law enforcement community that some of the things that have been talked about and some of the things that are going around.

Sue Sweeting

What about motorcycles? Do we have any signs that say, motorcycles can't have adjusted mufflers?

Aaron Miller

I don't think we have any signs that deal with motorcycles.

Sue Sweeting

I know we have a noise ordinance that talks about motorcycles. But would that be something that you would recommend to help the motorcycle noise?

Aaron Miller

I don't know. It's something we can look at. I don't know if signage will help. I don't know. The answer to that. But it's certainly something we can explore take a look at, we'll see if we can find some other jurisdiction that maybe that have tried something like that.

David Harwood

So I sit about 40 yards from 321 days, five days a week, eight hours a day. And I've had this thought that speed doesn't necessarily equal noise on 321. And that's kind of what I'm hearing. And when I hear a loud vehicle and look up out of my window, it's not the speed necessarily, as it is modified exhaust system, J braking. And I would say it's not even necessarily the majority is motorcycles, modified exhaust with all sorts of cars. And so would you say, I mean, based on what you're telling us, is that we have, speeding cars, but definitely in the minority, if you look at 2.8 million cars a year. And that, from that data, speeding cards is not necessarily what is causing a noise problem, that it is other factors associated with the particular vehicle. Am I drawing that correct conclusion?

Aaron Miller

I think that's a fair conclusion. I do know that we have stopped some cars for altered exhaust systems. Like I say we can we be out there and try to stop those. When we see them. The most of our noise traffic noise complaints come from the area near Rock Road, Gideon Ridge in that area. Most of that traffic noise in that area is being generated by vehicles, if you are beyond Rock Road, those vehicles are no longer in the city limits of Blowing Rock. So often, we have some requests to do j brake enforcement in that area. Number one, I think it's a terrible, terrible safety risk for us to tell truckers to turn the Jake brakes off while they go down that mountain where we know there's a history of traffic fatalities due to truck crashes. So that's a huge safety issue. Second of all, where the noise starts being generated, the most is already outside the city limits, which is not within where we typically commit our resources to patrol.

David Harwood

If we're talking about noise with a particular vehicle? What tools do you have available to you to even deal with that.

Aaron Miller

There is a state law that requires that your exhaust system be according to the manufacturer's original, the way the way the manufacturer originally created is supposed to be maintained that way. So if it's an obvious something obvious, we could site them for that as far as the trucks goes, it's a little more complicated, because they fall under some federal laws about interstate commerce. And the motor carrier enforcement. People told me that they had to actually measure the amount of noise that was coming with a with an instrument, then they have to figure out when the truck was manufactured and

found out what the standard was at the time the truck was manufactured. And compare that and see if it's outside the standard. They told me they did not have the instruments to measure the sound,

David Harwood

What the humidity was, all that.

Aaron Miller

Yeah, yeah, so the interstate commerce stuff. There are some federal laws that apply there. That would probably superseding state laws, but as far as a car out here on the highway, that somebody just decided to cut the muffler off and run without it, that is violation of North Carolina law. And we have stopped cars for that. I can't tell you off the top of my head how many, but that is something we can stop for and sight.

Sue Sweeting

I can tell you I was in on a deck on Clawson Drive, so away from going out of Town and the motorcycles were so deafening that we had to quit talking. And you know, there's no wall there, you could see how high that is. So I don't know if they are revving up before they get to the parkway. And I can be at my house on Chestnut Drive and walk my dog at 6:30 to 7:30. In the morning, I can hear the trucks aren't going that way they're going this way, going into town. So it's not just going down the hill. But I'm hearing that is a problem. Is there another avenue? I am sure that other towns have the same issues. Is there a way that that y'all can band together and go talk to somebody about hey, this is a problem, we've got residents.

Aaron Miller

A lot of towns have the same complaints and issues think most towns, most chiefs that I've spoken with, implement the same things they prohibit Jake brakes in certain areas and put up signage, I haven't talked to very many chiefs where that was tremendously effective. I wouldn't think Jake brakes would be an issue coming into town. Maybe coming up with a traffic light or something maybe but not generally, they wouldn't be on the break too much coming through town, but it's just a matter of resources and, where we're going to focus our limited resources. And that's why we're looking at maybe.

Sue Sweeting

Do they put the brakes on if they're going slow.

Aaron Miller

The way engine exhaust brake works, if it's engaged and you let off the gas pedal, it's going to try to muffle limit that exhaust and that's what makes the noise. That's what makes the noise so they let off the gas pedal, it's going to make that noise. If it's a proper exhaust system, it probably shouldn't be very noisy, you're still going to hear some but it shouldn't be overly noisy. But again, that depends on the regulations that were in place. When the vehicles was manufactured and that kind of thing.

Sue Sweeting

That's the noise.

David Harwood

So there's about 2,000 traffic stops a year if I remember the number correctly.

Aaron Miller

I think last year, we were around 2,400 for all of last year, and we're on track probably to be around there again this year.

David Harwood

So what? This, this may not be a fair question off the top of your head, but what kind of resources would it take to get that to 4,000.

Aaron Miller

So going back to the very first slide, where we had the the functions of our police department and the different things, the only way we can commit more resources to traffic safety is to pull resources from doing other things. So it becomes a matter of what do we want to cut out with the manpower we have? Do we want to cut out neighborhood patrols, do we want to cut out, you know, patrols on Main Street? What do we want to cut out to focus more on resources? So the only way I know to increase the resources that we use there are to have additional resources that are specific for that purpose, to get to 4,000? That's actually an excellent question and one that we had some conversation with the officers that collectively had a brainstorming session of the other day, because I was curious, if we had a committed traffic safety officer, how many vehicle stops would be fair to expect, the number that we kind of came up with was maybe 10 a day. If that was that person's only responsibility. Now obviously we can do some math and figure out how many that is. During the course of the year, you know, an employee would have been off some for vacation and most of our officers have at least one day a month they have to go to court, which is another resource drain. So for all these cars, we stop, we have more court dates to go to. So you know, I was sort of thinking that maybe 250 or probably 240 days a year maybe they would be out there. So that would be about 2,400 traffic stops for one person. I think that's probably too high. I think that's probably too high of an estimate. The other issue you run into is I will use yesterday as an example close to where the Mayor was a routine traffic stop was a stolen vehicle. So there is hours. You know last night, a routine traffic stop ends up being a drug arrest and a subject tried to flee from the police. You know now we've got two officers tied up for several hours, so sometimes these simple traffic stops are very simple and are time consuming. But I think it's a safe assumption that one officer whose time was dedicated to just that could probably easily, easily do 1,000 traffic stops in a year. I would think. Again, that's sort of a not much science.

Charlie Sellers

Okay to take David's question a little step further, you had mentioned that there's this opportunity to go through the state for additional police, or enforcement? How many could you get? Just hypothetically? And how many could you see put on traffic enforcement?

Aaron Miller

The minimum number we would like to see is two, three would probably be good. We're still trying to figure out how many, if we should apply for more and hope we get the middle. We're still gathering

some information. But basically, that's the Governor's Highway Safety Grant. And it's a shared cost. The Governor's Highway Safety pays 100%, the first year 75%, the second year, and so forth through a five year, the fifth year of the town will pay 100%. So it's called shared grants. So we're still trying to gather some information on there.

Charlie Sellers

So this is something you're going to bring the council

Aaron Miller

Oh, yeah, absolutely, the Council would have to approve it before we submit an application.

David Harwood

But my fear is, we can catch more speeders. But that doesn't necessarily equate to a quieter 321

Aaron Miller

I don't, I don't think it's going to necessarily be quieter, we can stop some more noise related, or some, you know, improperly muffled vehicles. But when you're talking about 2,000,800 cars a year, we can't be there every minute all the time.

Sue Sweeting

The presence makes a difference. Like what they do with the motorcycles.

Aaron Miller

Also back to talking about how we use our radars and how we use our resources. You know, there's times of the day three o'clock in the morning, there's not going to be a lot of speed enforcement on 321 because there's not any cars. So, you know, there's some times during the day that there's too many cars to be speed enforcement. Because the way a radar unit works, it sends out a sound wave, that sound wave bounces off of an object back to the radar unit and calculates speed. The report that I had up there a little while ago, there's some periods of time during the day there might be 400 cars and in hour average traveling. It's almost impossible with our radar equipment, it is impossible it's not almost it's impossible their radar equipment to do speed enforcement. Because when that signal bounces back and it may say 55 miles an hour, but we may not be able to figure out which vehicle it was because traffic is too.

Albert Yount

That explains some of the low figures from your radar unit.

Aaron Miller

Well, the radar unit supposedly records every car

Albert Yount

I don't know how it can.

Aaron Miller

I don't know I don't know I'm just in theory it records every car our radar units. If you're sitting in a police car and you've got a radar sitting there, it may bounce back a multitude of speeds so it may capture several speeds, but the officer has to try to figure out which one of those vehicles was actually going 55 and which one was going 45 and that's impossible to do with most of our radar equipment. There's some new technology we have one typically referred to as a LIDAR to laser shoots a laser beam, it's more targeted, we can use it in heavier traffic conditions. We only have one officer certified to use it.

Albert Yount

When does it reset?

Aaron Miller

The radar?

Albert Yount

The one you are going to put up out there?

Aaron Miller

Instantly. It doesn't lock in a speed, it's recording it and it keeps recording the next speed so it should instantaneously update every time a car passes.

Albert Yount

Well let me just say that I live with a golf course between me and 321 and number four, the sound bounces off that retaining wall. I knew that was going to happen.

Aaron Miller

Yeah, I think that's a huge problem when they widened the highway

Albert Yount

What makes the noise are these things called pocket rockets. You know what I am talking about. Big pickup trucks usually three quarter ton with knobby tires and gutted mufflers that's what's doing it.

Aaron Miller

Mufflers we can definitely stop, the knobby tires we probably can't do a whole lot about.

Albert Yount

I have protection against self incrimination Mr. Attorney and I will deny saying this. But I come to town two to four times a day every day and I have started setting my radar control on my car at 43 miles an hour and everything passes me, everything. So I have problem machine that you're referring to.

Aaron Miller

Well as I said I can show you different reports in different places that definitely show more cars in the medium risk. That was just the most recent one but I have another one with me that the numbers are substantially higher and that's why I wanted to let you know that's just a snapshot.

Albert Yount

My personal experiences is having a problem with that radar that you are using. That's not accusatory to you personally or any of your policeman. But it is a huge difference, when I pull out of Green Hill Road and turn north to come to town you better get because those cars coming up that road, you better get it. I am thinking about trading for a BMW six cylinder.

Charlie Sellers

Got that in the minutes?

Albert Yount

I'm being honest.

Aaron Miller

And I understand. I'm just saying this is the best data we have, the best equipment that we have to gather that data I don't know how to get anything better than what we have

Sue Sweeting

Are you going to place one of the permanent down so that he can pull out slower or below him? Do you know where you're going to place some them?

Aaron Miller

Where we are planning to place it right now is just past Green Park Inn before the Country Club, before the beginning of the retaining wall. It's been very difficult to find a location for that one on that end as well.

Albert Yount

I will shut up after this, but I've driven 30,000 miles this year in eastern America. From Canada, Vermont down to here and speeding is everywhere. I mean literally everywhere. Speed Limit on I40 is 85 now.

Aaron Miller

Well, you know and never deny that there speeders on Valley Boulevard. I'm totally aware that are speeders. We try to give you the best information that we possibly can. We're trying to combat that the best way we know how we're stopping a lot of cars. Even the yearly total that we stopped though, was probably not equal to the daily average of speeders on 321. So that's kind of the volume that we're up against.

Sue Sweeting

So when can the residents expect those radars because they are effective.

Aaron Miller

We are just currently waiting on the Blue Ridge electric schedule to come and help us put in some power so we can get those.

David Harwood

A very good report. Thank you.

Aaron Miller

Thank you.

Charlie Sellers

Thanks, Chief. Moving right along here Green Hill traffic study. This will be presented by Ramey Kemp and Associates, is that correct?

Shane Fox

That is correct.

Michael Karpinski

Hey, can you guys hear me?

Shane Fox

We can.

Michael Karpinski

Excellent well good evening Council Members. My name is Michael Karpinski I am with Ramey Kemp and Associates, and our team at Ramey Kemp has prepared the traffic study for Green Hill Road. The purpose of the study was to evaluate and determine potential roadway improvements to address safety concerns along Green Hill Road including speeding and cut thru traffic. I do not have a formal presentation prepared with slides. However, I will share my screen Shane and I have the capability here to open areas or any specific questions we can hone in on specific location and go from there. Okay, so you should be seeing the Google Maps area as points. So the first step in our traffic study was to gather all available data for Green Hill Road, including traffic count data at each end of Green Hill Road at 321, and the Blue Ridge Parkway, as well as feed and craft data from the Blowing Rock police department. They also held a one month online public comment period to gather input from town residents regarding specific concerns of Green Hill Road. I'll go through a quick summary of the data that was gathered from along Green Hill Road. As I mentioned, path account data was collected over a 13 hour period at each intersection at the end of Greenville Road, 321 the Blue Ridge Parkway. And we did run a quick analysis based on this traffic count data. And these intersections do not currently or projected to meet the necessary signal warrants from the manual inform traffic control devices to warrant signalization primarily due to the residential nature of Green Hill Road and the district peak traffic periods in the morning and afternoon peak times when you'd expect residential traffic could be traveling to or from their home and work. So the second kind of data we collected was working with the Blowing Rock police department. It provides the crash data from March of 2013 through December of 2020 along Green Hill Road. And based on this graph data there were 12 total crashes over this eight year period. Majority of the reported crashes on Green Hill Road were likely due to a combination of vehicles driving too fast for the conditions, the horizontal curvature of Green Hill Road and the narrow travel lanes that exists out there currently. I also worked with Bowling Rock police department they provide us with speed data along Green Hill Road, Heather Ridge Lane and Edge Hill Lane. This is

more towards the Blue Ridge Parkway side of Green Hill Road here. Right along this section here are the 1500 block Green Hill Road has a posted speed limit of 25 miles per hour. And the speed data that was collected in May, in June of 2021 indicated that motorists on Green Hill Road were traveling an average of 25 miles per hour, with an 85th percentile speed of 34 miles per hour. And the 85th percentile speed is the speed at which 85% of drivers travel at or below. So based on a review of the data that was gathered, collaboration with town staff, as well as our own independent data collection, the following speeding countermeasures, cut thru traffic countermeasures and intersection improvements at Green Hill Road and Green Hill Circle were considered. I'm going to go through these pretty quickly just to give the highlights of them as there are a fair number of these. After I get through these I will circle back and kind of dig into some of the finer details of the specific recommendations or countermeasures rather. So the first one we have is always stop control. And as Council and the public are aware, Green Hill Circle and Green Hill Road is a prime example of this traffic control device with stop signs on all approaches at the intersection. The next speeding countermeasure we evaluate the speed humps which are vertical, which create vertical deflection designed to reduce vehicle speeds these are typically laid perpendicular to your traveling across the roadway. The next speeding countermeasure we evaluated was enhanced curb delineation. So this includes improved striping and signing upcoming changes in horizontal alignment to alert drivers to conditions that may call for reduction in speed or an action and interest of safety. So some examples of warning signs and warning signs include turn or curb ahead signs, winding road or like an S turn. Chevron's which are the big rectangular arrows pointing in the direction of the horizontal curvature and a combination of horizontal alignment intersection signs. These would include a right hand turn or left hand turn that shows an intersecting roadway along the path of that turn to bring awareness to motorists of an oncoming intersection within that horizontal curve. In addition the warning signs some of the pavement markings would include retro reflective yellow center lines, white lane line pavement markings, as well as yellow reflective centerline markings. These would include the actual pavement markings themselves, I believe out there currently, they may just be painted yellow and white lane lines to delineate the travel lanes along Green Hill Road. There is the resources or capability to upgrade those to be retro reflective or thermoplastic. So they're a little bit more reflective, especially in the evening hours when vehicles use their headlights. And the yellow reflective center line markings are basically lane lines, the layers that they shine back to the user driving along road reflected from the headlights as they travel along roadways. And finally the last speeding countermeasure we evaluated for Green Hill Road, the speed feedback signs, as the chief talked about earlier, these are portable interactive signs that display of vehicles current speed remind drivers to slow down. So next we evaluated two cut through traffic countermeasures. The first is Google Maps, and I'm going to expand on this just a little bit as the title of it is a little bit misleading or doesn't provide the full picture of that particular countermeasure. So Google Maps GPS, of course, everyone has used it before to travel to it from a destination. So Google Maps, may recommend Green Hill Road as alternate route, an alternative route for tourists visiting town, when the Blue Ridge Parkway is open. If there's congestion, or lane closures or construction on the surrounding roadways, during a certain time of day or a certain day of the week, again, Google Maps may route Green Hill Road as an alternative to some of the other routes in the area. To get the user to that point as a as in the fastest route possible in the personal example, from Raleigh, North Carolina. And when I when I came to do a field visit in Green Hill Road, I put in the Green Park Inn as my final destination down at 321. And once I got into town, it took me through Blue Ridge Parkway, and then down Green Hill Road to Green Park Inn instead of for example, continue either along Blue Ridge Parkway all the way over all of our 321 or

go further up. Rather than going down the Blue Ridge Parkway. Continuing along 421 getting into Perkinsville and further into Boone and down through 421 that way. That was just kind of a personal example I wanted to share with you depending ultimately on the origin and destination of a vehicle trip, whether they're coming from out of town or from within town limits. And Google Maps may recommend Green Hill Road is the fastest route to reach that drivers destination. So our recommendation regarding this is for town staff to work with Google Maps to remove Green Hill Road as a routing alternative to reduce the cut thru traffic between US 321 and the Blue Ridge Parkway. And these algorithms that Google uses are very intricate. Of course, you know when I say removing Green Hill Road as a routing alternative, I would not remove destinations along Green Hill Road or the for the roads otherwise, essentially removed Green Hill Road as a possibility as a route between two points. And if you're still hoping to reach the destination along Green Hill Road or the on the intersections or roads that are along Green Hill Road that would still be a possibility. Just this is a practice that has been implemented here in Raleigh. We're working with them on kind of the process and procedural lineups of ours how the town can best coordinate with them to work with them on removing that, but it has been implemented and has been effective. So the second cut thru traffic measures that we evaluated was selective exclusion signs. And these signs provide notice to roadway users that either state or local statutes or ordinances exclude designated types of traffic using a particular roadway or facility. Currently, as drivers enter Green Hill Road from US 321 or the Blue Ridge Parkway, there is existing signing, indicating no trucks over two axles. However these signs may not necessarily be visible to commercial vehicles, and truck traffic until they have already entered and started their path down Green Hill Road. In which case would be very challenging for those types of vehicles to reverse course. So our recommendation in this particular case is enhancing signage along Green Hill Road, US 321 and the Parkway to improve and just provide better notice for motorists of the restricted access along Green Hill Road pertaining to commercial vehicles and vehicles larger than the two axles. Finally, we did look at the Green Hill Road and Green Hill Circle intersection for potential safety improvements in that particular location. And our recommendations there included an addition to the always stop control traffic control that is up there currently. There are advanced stop ahead signs prior to actually reaching a destination in both directions on Green Hill Road. However, traveling the corridors and unclear how far away from the intersection you are when you come into contact with those stop ahead signs so one of our recommendations was to add supplemental distance plaques to those stop ahead signs that currently exist on Green Hill Road to provide the motorists and roadway users a quantitative distance of when they can expect to arrive at the intersection down the street. And then the second recommendation we had was transverse rumble strips on Green Hill Road as of the Green Hill Circle intersection again, just to bring awareness to motorists of the intersection and the upcoming stop control at the intersection of Green Hill Road and Green Hill Circle. So with that, I will pause for any questions from Council and happy to expand on any items that I touched on. Briefly.

Charlie Sellers

Council

Albert Yount

I think I missed, I heard yellow center line. What do you call it updating and what did you say about the size of signage or painted on the sides of the road? Did you say something about that?

Michael Karpinski

Yes, sir. So that was part of the enhanced kind of curb delineation. And so as far as hitting upgrades to the pavement markings, there is a specific type of material related to lane lines, that's kind of what's known as retro reflective or thermoplastic. Essentially, what that is, is it's more reflective, it bounces light off of the paint itself in low light conditions and kind of evening hours. Just to bring more awareness of the actual the lane lines themselves, both the yellow centerline and the white edge lines for builders to just to for them to know where their lane line is where they're currently in downstream as their headlights project light

Albert Yount

I've seen those, and they also contain a rumble strip. Have you seen that?

Michael Karpinski

I have, Yes. That's actually something we did consider. And I personally wouldn't recommend that in this application. One that the lanes are fairly narrow. So imagine how it says fairly frequent that as roadway users are looking downstream and traversing the curbs that you know their tires would go over the rumble strips on these lane lines. Think that would produce additional noise for the residents along Green Hill Road.

Albert Yount

Well it forces you back toward the center line.

Michael Karpinski

Yes, sir.

Doug Matheson

Did you suggest any other all way stops other than the one at Green Hill Circle,

Michael Karpinski

So not as a part of our recommendations, let me flip back to that section of the report. And the reason for that is specific to evaluating speeding countermeasures. So the manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices, I am going to call it MUTCD for short since it's a little bit of a mouthful. It's an industry standard that's used by folks in the consulting world, engineering world. You miss it municipalities and state level city level town level as well as at the federal level. They provide just general guidance on how to uniform application of traffic control devices across the country and they provide guidance that says that yield or stop signs should not be used for speed control. And they also provide guidance as far as you know minimum volume criteria for intersections that would apply or will be applicable for always consideration and based on just the existing volumes along Green Hill Road is it's unlikely that these additional intersections along Green Hill Road would meet the minimum volume criteria for all way stop consideration. Expand that a little bit. The addition of always stop along Green Hill Road at intersections with minimal traffic on the side streets may result in stop signs that would be added or they always stop on Green Hill Road to effectively operate under ideal conditions or drivers ignoring apical altogether view the low volumes on the side streets. And to give you an example to zoom in and take a look at let's look at Edge Hill Lane for example. Just counting the rooftops here I see four, five,

maybe six homes along Edge Hill Lane. So the introducing of all way stop control at this particular intersection. For the purposes here, I personally would not recommend again given the guidance from me MUTCD and part of the thought there is Edge Hill Lane doesn't really have a significant level of traffic volume and promoters that are traveling past this intersection on Green Hill Road and they can see that there's no one on the Edge Hill Lane approach and when waiting to enter the intersection, it's very likely that we either perform a rolling stop or just continue to operate on through without even having to brake. Now that being said, you know circling back to Green Hill Road and Green Hill Circle, all way stop control can be ambient standpoint, if there's insufficient line of sight or there's great changes or occurs, foliage, limbs and trees that are blocking the path or in this case of again, this intersection here you have the significant horizontal curve of both Green Hill Circle and Green Hill Road approaching this intersection. So all way stop control can certainly be implemented from a safety standpoint and reviewing this area I think a prime candidate for consideration that I would recommend for all way stop control. The intersection here of Green Hill Road and Fairway 11 Court it's similar in type and application to Green Hill Road and Green Hill Circle. And that this intersection is along a horizontal curve and in this particular applications is 90 degree turn driving this area, whether you're coming from either direction, there is limited line of sight. One or more of the vehicles that are sitting on Fairway 11 Court wishing to turn on Green Hill Circle and vice versa for folks traveling through this intersection on Green Hill Road passing Fairway 11 Court in both directions. So that's certainly something you know a consideration we would add to the town similar to the Green Hill Road and Green Hill Circle improvement that was done just down the road there. That would be my recommendation for all way stop control from a safety standpoint.

David Harwood

Can you give me some clarification on the rumble strips at Green Hill Road and Green Hill Circle intersection? It looks like you're recommending those but then there's the MUTCD that indicates that they should not be placed on a sharp horizontal or vertical curve.

Michael Karpinski

Sure, yes, you're absolutely right. In that the MUTCD does provide guidance that they should not be placed on a sharp curve. So they will just need to be placed in a similar location to where the top of head signs are either forward or behind those particular locations along a section that is not a sharp horizontal curve. Just be you know if we would need to do a little more evaluation on where those particular rumble strips would be implemented in each direction on Green Hill Road.

David Harwood

Alright, thank you

Albert Yount

Who goes to war against Google?

Charlie Sellers

We will do that.

Michael Karpinski

The Town does that. As I mentioned before, we're going to help Shane out in that battle, if he's the one taking that to Google, as I mentioned, I'm personally aware of a case in Raleigh here where the city did work with Google to remove a particular road in this application was a private Street. But it is possible it just it holds a lot more weight coming from municipality versus a private citizen, of course, and ultimately, the town has ownership of a Green Hill Circle, or at least a large portion of it. So it is something that will happen from the municipal level.

Doug Matheson

Could you elaborate again, for me a little more on why they do not recommend a stop sign for speed control.

Michael Karpinski

The thought is the typical application of all way stop or at least the warrants that MUTCD has are always up there needs to be sufficient volume on all approaches for that particular intersection to meet the criteria. They want to have a constant flow of traffic on all approaches and not have a uniform distribution of traffic on the main line without a lot of traffic on the minor street approaches or the side side street approaches. Essentially just from a safety standpoint, they don't want to create a condition for folks running stop signs in the chance that becomes a pattern if there aren't a lot of traffic on the side streets.

Charlie Sellers

So you essentially recommended three way stop on Green Hill and Fairway Court is that correct?

Michael Karpinski

It wasn't in the traffic study that we did just because we were specifically looking at speeding and cut thru traffic countermeasures but from a safety standpoint certainly I would recommend that the Green Hill Road and Fairway 11 Court is a prime candidate for consideration. Just given the horizontal curvature of Green Hill Road going through that intersection and the limited sight distance on all the approaches.

David Harwood

The all way stop at the intersection of Green Hill Road and Green Hill Circle. There was not a traffic study done when that the stop signs were put in. And the impetus for that was an adjacent school bus stop too. Was there any consideration that maybe that those stop signs should be removed?

Michael Karpinski

We did not consider removing those. In my opinion, the all way stop control at Green Hill Road and Green Hill Circle is the appropriate application at that location given the horizontal curvature and the sight distance and the changing grade on all approaches of that particular intersection.

David Harwood

Okay, good. Thank you,

Charlie Sellers

Council. Okay. Thank you so very much.

Michael Karpinski

You're welcome.

Charlie Sellers

Have a good evening.

David Harwood

Thank you.

Michael Karpinski

Thank you. You too.

Charlie Sellers

You're waving me to give a thought on that Doug.

Doug Matheson

I have got a couple of ideas that I'm looking at, and I'm waiting to get back some answers, a couple of them are from the state and I would rather just wait and in November bring a couple of them forward.

Charlie Sellers

All right. Moving right along here stormwater quality Mosaic Inc.

Teresa Buckwalter

Good evening.

Charlie Sellers

Welcome.

Teresa Buckwalter

Thank you. I'm Teresa Buckwalter, I'm with Mosaic Civic Studio. We're based in Boone, but we've done work in Blowing Rock and I live in Kevin's neighborhood, some de facto a Blowing Rock resident. My business partner is Taylor Broyhill and she's the planner. So she looked through some of your ordinances looking at water quality from that standpoint, she couldn't be here tonight. But she also is a de facto Blowing Rock person because she got her start as a planner here. Okay, so we're gonna start with the presentation. Do you mind if I look over your shoulder?

Shane Fox

Sure.

Teresa Buckwalter

That's going to help me. Great. Okay, so we were hired by the Civic Association really to have. One of the projects that we have worked on with you all is the trailhead, for the Middle Fork Greenway. So we

are the lead design on that working with you all and working with the Department of Transportation. And that project just received in North Carolina American Planning Association Award for the great Healthy Places. So congratulations to you all into the Middle Fork Greenway. So thinking of the Middle Fork Greenway in that regard, and working with Tim Gupton, he hired us, Civic Association hired, us to look at, is there a way that we can continue the Middle Fork Greenway, and maybe it could look different? But how do we look at that. And so from there, the purpose of the study was really to look at two things once we got kind of looking at the Middle Fork Greenway there at the, at the creek, we also we did a drone flight over there last year. And so right through that area we looked at, man, there could be some significant kind of water quality improvements through that area. And so those these two things could go hand in hand. And so we looked at both of those options, and so with the drone footage, the two purposes of the study were to evaluate the potential of the Middle Fork Recreation and the aesthetic amenity. This came directly from the valley vision plan. And then also what are some things that we could do to to improve the health of the water in the water quality. There are some sweet little spots along the creek. That we also discovered that looking at this from a 20,000 foot standpoint, your watershed, of course, this is your district. And then looking at the two different types of the water supply watershed that since the green one, so this is a high more highly developed part of your watershed. And of course, the purple is the less highly developed. But that's kind of looking at this from a 20,000 foot standpoint. And we'll go in and zoom in a little closer here. With the drone footage, we sort of did this analysis specifically, our geographic scope was really Main Street coming here. And then this is the entrance to Chetola, the Gem Store is here and the creek I highlighted here, just so you all can see it a little bit better on the aerial photos, it kind of gets lost, because there's a lot of vegetation, some of its invasive, and some of its good. But anyway, so I like that to kind of coming down through here, this is Cornish Street, and then coming down to Sunset. And then we actually continued looking at this area all the way near the ABC store all the way to where the Main branch crosses over at the fire station. So some of our geographic scope we didn't really go beyond that we just kind of wanted to look at what are some opportunities here? What are some constraints? And so what are some of the issues here, this particular section has been noted as an impaired by DWQ, the Department of Environment Product Quality. So why did this get this impaired designation, and that's for thermal pollution, so too warm. And then that's also for erosion. So if you get sedimentation and erosion, and thermal pollution, so I just showed one of the ponds, you know, the ponds or something that used to be a treatment that people would use often. But they actually contribute to the thermal pollution. Because of you know, you have the large area of surface area of the pond. And the sun headset, there's very little vegetation there. And so then that kind of goes back into the creek and causes more thermal pollution, the fish are less happy as well. There's some other things going on here. I didn't highlight everything, but they're definitely you know, some the lack of buffer. Now your ordinance does have a 30 foot buffer, which is great. But these are, you know, probably older, and you've got the parking lots that there's approximately 30 feet, but it's actually in total, it really should be three feet from the street over to the parking lot. So it's really in some places, it's pretty tight, like maybe 10 or 15 foot vegetated buffer. And that vegetated buffer. As you all probably know, this is what you want to see in terms of taking up some of those pollutants coming off of the parking lot. And also any kind of rainwater that's coming in, gives it a little more time to absorb into the ground before it goes into the creek and causes pollution and heating it up. And then just smaller things that kind of add up like down here that there's quite a bit you know, nobody's fault of course, but just a lot of invasive plant species that come in. And so if there's a way that there could be some restoration of getting rid of the

invasives, even though they're kind of shading the creek, if you looked at if you could get underneath there and look, they're really they're not holding the bank in place, it's really eroding. And so did the Japanese knotweed is the worst. That's it's a real problem with a lot of places. And just some other areas. But some opportunities that we have for improvements in this area are really to regrade the stream banks so that they're a little more gentle so that you don't have this really sharp western banks to replace ponds with maybe stormwater wetlands. And even though we say a wetland, it doesn't have to look ugly, it can it can have very nice plant species in it. And you can even incorporate like up in the upper left, you can incorporate stormwater measures right into the streetscape and or permeable pavers. I worked on a project in the Town of Boone with permeable pavers. It really helps to again sort of take up pollutants before they get into the creek and so it stores water and it also prevents water from rushing from parking lots right into this creek. Right it sort of holds that water for a while and that's what we want. We love to see this which is more of this which the culverts having the actual stream bottom, so that stream bottom makes it possible for those aquatic invertebrates to go up and down the stream. And then the fish are happy because they've got more things to eat. So there's a lot of places where the culverts, there's a drop, so that stormwater culvert kind of drops the water, maybe half a foot that really disconnects your watershed. So we'd love to see more of that. So I'm looking at the opportunities here. This is a fun one. And thinking about the Middle Fork Greenway you can imagine really a 10 foot wide paved path in the way that it is in other places, right. So in this area, because it's tight through their small tracts of land, it could be more of a natural surface or even if that's sort of hardened in some way that maybe just a three foot wide five foot wide trail walking paths that could really connect that the Blowing Rock trailhead for the Middle Fork Greenway, which eventually as y'all continue on, then that really kind of bring a line sidewalk cover crossing, and then have, of course, it has to be with, you know, the consent of landowners and easements and things like that, but potentially a trail that is unobtrusive along the Middle Fork. And it's actually less than a mile from the trailhead to downtown. And so you can have a walking path that really could provide a great user experience. And then kind of taking a page from other communities, you could really kind of incentivize new development kind of facing almost like trail-oriented development, right? So, you could have new commercial, you could incentivize, you know, bike parking, having a facade of the building, kind of also facing the creek, as opposed to the creek having and the trail having just the backside of buildings. And so really kind of screening, seeding and murals, kind of incentivizing these items, and even the types of uses that are really appropriate for a trail. So retail, entertainment, bars and restaurants. Here's an example from the Swamp Rabbit Trail, it's really just a hardware store, which is great. And cars very frequently will park in the parking lot. But they also kind of face the trail. And so they understand that people could jump off and use their the hardware store, they also have an ice cream place. But really the the parking for bicycles, the landscaping, the signage really addresses the trail. And so then trail just really integrates business into the trail use and promotes that in a nice way. So we'd like that this is kind of gets more into this sort of planning details. And Tim and I were going to share the full, we presented this to the planning board. And we'll share with you all the very full slides that show all of those recommendations, but I wanted to kind of shorten it for tonight. But we can provide that to you. One of the kind of main recommendations here is to potentially look at an overlay district that has somewhat, really emphasizes water quality in this area, kind of between Ransom and Valley Boulevard. And it's not not a huge area, but there could be kind of different looking at different ordinances. And so I'll kind of hit the highlights of those. We can skip that one and go to the next. So this is the final slide kind of the takeaways and kind of looking at specific ordinances of yours to really kind of get to the nitty

gritty of what we're talking about in terms of promoting trail use, but also water quality, looking at amending 16.4 to allow trails and parks within the 30 foot buffer, amending 16 13.3 to require all new developments to provide easements for trails identified in town plans. And so if it's been identified in a town plan, it's been adopted and orientation of the principal building facade that we talked about earlier. And establishment of the Middle Fork overlay district. So the point of this would be stream and stormwater standards for that particular area. And also just requiring non conforming structures and to comply with this district standards when redeveloping. So understandably, a lot of these tracts of land these parcels right along the Middle Fork, in the past buildings were very close to the actual Creek, right so that presents a challenge for water quality and the creek stabilization. So establish a lower erosion sediment control threshold. Right now, developers will hit that threshold at half an acre. So if you all could, for this particular area, reduce that so that these smaller parcels, if you're doing something that's maybe a quarter acre, you also have to go through that original sediment control review process, because that's really going to help with your water quality. And then ensure the code enforcement of course of pollution and water shed ordinances and even new stormwater programs and funding. And then the last one, this is really sort of the takeaway message is that there because it's an impaired stream, so that's not a great thing. But it also sets you into this position of being able to get greater grant money, so better grant funding for from DEQ. So for impaired streams, and so this could be a couple of different grants, sources. Of course, this would have to be in conjunction with the landowners, but you could really get money that you do stream restoration at the same pond as you do throughout development. And so it could be this really comprehensive kind of project that could also include some grant funding. And those grant funding cycles tend to be in the springtime. So that's the one of the that's the presentation kind of condensed down, that we'd love to have your questions and see what we can do.

Sue Sweeting

Could you give us some, I brought up permeable pavers, and there's been negative in the literature about it, can you give us an update of has that changed?

Teresa Buckwalter

You know, I mean, they have to be really maintained. So if they get full of sediment, that's not a good thing. So they'd have to essentially be vacuum. And so if you get somebody who, a contractor who's put these in, and who also would maintain it, that's, that's a really key thing. You know, there's, I'm not sure of the other negative, like, it's still very much sort of NC State has their stormwater kind of engineering department that they do. They do a lot of education to consultants and, and other folks, they're still very much, you know, in favor of permeable pavers. I think that the key is to keep the maintenance up, the project that we did in Boone was with NC State. And so we looked at, we essentially took out the bituminous pavement there in a parking lot, and put in underground cells that were of different depths and different materials to do the research on, which actually takes up pollutants better before it went into the creek in Boone. And so NC State has some data on kind of which is the best treatment underground. But on top, it looks the same. It's it's you know, looks like the brick pavers. So it's a really nice application you know, if you want it to look at, you know, one of the downsides would be that it's more expensive, of course, then than other treatments. But there are, like I said, there are other that particular project was grant funded through Clean Water Management Trust Fund, as a demonstration project. And Clean Water Management Trust Fund doesn't always get tapped into when

it comes to innovative stormwater programs. And so they've got the other programs that really get tapped into that that one is a little bit less used. So I think that there's there are opportunities for sure.

Albert Yount

Have you looked at the update United Community did to the feeder into the New River on their property?

Teresa Buckwalter

No I have not seen that's just a little bit outside of our study area. And like I said, we kind of flew that down a year ago, but I haven't seen. Tell me more about that.

Albert Yount

It's a huge plus. A lot of sediment went into the New River right there.

Teresa Buckwalter

Yeah. So as you get more and more things like that, that can because you know, the pollution, the water quality issues really come from, it's like very small, like, it adds up, right? It's like all these little small things that adds up nonpoint source pollution. So it's those little measures that you can take all along your watershed are really key.

David Harwood

I'm aware of there's two ponds. But it appears to me that the stream bypasses those ponds, is it feeding off of them and then getting put back into them.

Teresa Buckwalter

I don't know I mean, we didn't sort of look underneath but generally speaking upon would be on online pond, which it fills up because of the water coming in, and then it comes back out into the creek usually. But those specific ones, whether or not they're I mean, I would think that they would have to be online meaning that it's connected to the Middle Fork.

David Harwood

Well it must be underground.

Teresa Buckwalter

Yeah. Yep. It's usually okay. Yeah. But I mean, despite that, I mean that we're kind of we kind of are looking at a couple things of both thermal pollution as well as habitat. So upon really has very little kind of wildlife habitat.

Charlie Sellers

Thank you so very much. Thank you for coming. I want to thank BRCA and Tim.

David Harwood

That was a very nice presentation.

Doug Matheson

Moving forward. Since BRCA has pushed us along it might be interesting to look at you guys may be addressing this on a sectional, bring it back, doing it in sections. Just a thought because it needs to be cleaned up, it does, so thank you.

Charlie Sellers

We will take a 10 minute break before we go into the next section.

PUBLIC HEARING - S**Kevin Rothrock**

Mayor and Council, before you I've got a draft ordinance to review downtown residential density for our Central Business and Town Center District. Back in September on the 14 the planning board subcommittee Chairman Pete Gherini, Bill McCarter and Sam Glover and I discussed the residential density limits in downtown area, specifically Town Center and Central Business. We spoke about some existing residential properties downtown and the applicable densities. And we discussed some recent projects and proposals that we reviewed. There was consideration of the 2014 Comprehensive Plan that recommends increasing residential density in downtown to at least eight units per acre. Discussion led the group to evaluate multiple possible residential density such as eight units per acre 12,16 and 20 units per acre. If you would call both of Steve Hetherington projects, Main and Pine, and what he had originally proposed at Pine and Laurel were 20 units per acre project. The two residential projects originally proposed on the Barker property up behind Speckled Trout were one was 17 units per acre and one was 13 units per acre respectively. And then for reference Village Green on Main Street is 20 units per acre and then The Gable across the street is 17 units per acre. After much consideration of all other limiting develop regulations, such as building height, setbacks, impervious limits, and parking. The subcommittee proposed that residential density not be a limiting factor in the central business or town centers, zoning districts. So in other words, the subcommittee recommended no limit on residential density in the form of maximum dwelling units per acre. This was presented to the planning board at their September meeting, they approve this draft text to amend our ordinance unanimously. So that draft ordinance is simply, there is a section in our ordinance that deals with residential density throughout town, R6, R15, R10 and additionally, there's other sections that refer back to that table. And this section here 16-12.2.3 specifies lots in our RMH which is mobile home central business general business and HMC zoning districts where residential developments are permissible maybe developed if you go to multifamily at the R6N district ratio which is five units per acre. So what has been proposed is that properties and central business and town center would not be subject to those residential density limits. I included the draft ordinance for your review and this comes from a recommendation from the planning board from last month this is what you asked us to look at and so this is a recommendation that has been forwarded to you. I will be glad to answer questions and Chairman Gherini is here as well on behalf of the planning board.

Sue Sweeting

Did you also look at parking?

Kevin Rothrock

We did not, we were asked to just look at density at this time.

Sue Sweeting

Okay and you're going to have to explain this to me because I'm not, so how would this change affect the 1150 Main. I know it's already done so it's not we're not talking about anything that wouldn't but how could this change it could they increase the inside as far as more rooms inside?

Kevin Rothrock

The way that that was developed, no, it wouldn't change. Their residential density was capped at 20 that's what the number came out to be with the development they that they proposed and there are four units in the front building I think to at least two or one bedroom units and there are I think two bedroom units and then the building behind is just two units and they're both two bedroom. Wouldn't have changed that one but that wouldn't have been an issue they said this is what we're proposing the building height restricts us to this number 35 feet I think it was. The setbacks forces in on both Main Street and Pine Street parking they provided the parking that they needed so all those other limiting factors dictated how big that building was going to be. If they stuck to five units per acre residential they would have had two dwelling units on that property

Sue Sweeting

Two more than they have?

Kevin Rothrock

No, just two total so they would have to have been creative and done more retail space and parking and then just two units and that you know those would have been three or four bedrooms but that's really not what people are looking for in a downtown residence, not a three and four bedroom that's really not what the markets aimed at. More one and two is probably the what the market is geared towards it in the downtown area.

Sue Sweeting

So when are you going to look at parking?

Kevin Rothrock

I don't know.

Sue Sweeting

I think the confusing thing is grandfathering in and that needs to be because that's from what 2010 that they changed that, the Council then.

Kevin Rothrock

We came back in August, and we were asked to look at density we came back said do you want us just to focus on density or he wants to look at other things including parking. And the board said we want to look at density so we did we can we certainly we know we need to look at the rest of it including, the west side, east side of Main Street, both of those are different and how they're developed and we need to craft our ordinance to reflect that. And then we need to look at the rest of central business, and maybe there needs to be some increased building height or reduced. We need to look at all of that.

Sue Sweeting

And parking

Kevin Rothrock

And parking.

Charlie Sellers

Kevin, how would this affect the the Rainy Lodge or would it have had any impact at all

Kevin Rothrock

On the hotel itself, none, but the previous projects one, the condos. As I mentioned one was a 16 unit is just under an acre. So, it's, the ratio is about 17 units per acre. And then the next one that came back, the planning board was 12 units. Without the density cap that would have gone through.

Doug Matheson

Because it looks like regardless of the density, you're still having to develop to the code of setback, height and parking, which is going to regulate whether you have five or whether you have 10.

Kevin Rothrock

Right? All those limiting factors setback building height buffers. With it's in the watershed, which is everything from here down towards Sunset down Sunset. Those are also limited by impervious maximum, you know, especially if it's a vacant lot, you can only armor or pave over and build on 36% and sometimes allow it to go up to 70. So those are other limiting factors. In addition to density.

Charlie Sellers

Would anyone from the public like to speak? Yes. Would you come up, state your name, address.

Tim Gupton

Thank you, Mayor, and Council Members, Town Manager Fox. I attended the planning board meeting that Kevin referred to. And I understand the logic of removing the density from the criteria because in reality, all the other factors govern the structure and the size, when you really look at setback, high green space, and especially parking on site for short term rental and hotel units. Those are the key factors that are important, in our opinion. So, we think this approval tonight is really only a first step in the process. And we've indicated in the past that we'd like to see the Council instruct planning board to look at the Downtown Land Use Code for each section of town, east and west and, and further toward Valley, because they're distinctly different. And in particular, we really would like to see a focus on West Main Street, because the Comprehensive Plan indicates that we as a town believe that should be preserved. That's the heart and soul of our community. It is it represents the authenticity of Blowing Rock, as Roger Brooks mentioned. So, focusing on things like setback, using 1150 Main, for example, you know, it's only 15 feet from the sidewalk and the variance was 45% or 75% green space when you basically was in any green space anyway. So that's really the fundamental request is that the Council would move forward to look at the detailed Land Use Code areas that are that really govern what things look like and with an eye toward preserving the authenticity of West Main Street, as I think we all love,

Blowing Rock, you know, we're unified in that, in that opinion. And just we just believe that that's right now is the same as everything else in central business and Town Center. But it's distinctly different and needs to be addressed separately.

Charlie Sellers

Thank you, Tim.

Tim Gupton

Please include on your winter retreat agenda.

Charlie Sellers

Would anyone else in the public like to speak? Okay. Kevin, do you have any more questions for Kevin?

Doug Matheson

I would like to make a statement regarding what Tim said I know that and it's something that we do need to look at as a 2014 Comprehensive Plan asked, we update and do our architectural design regulations, you know, to differentiate between east side and the west side to try and keep the historic nature and character of Blowing Rock, you know, not having them both look the same.

Charlie Sellers

Okay, make note if you would Shane winter retreat. Motion to close the public hearing.

Albert Yount

Motion to close the public hearing

Sue Sweeting

Second

Charlie Sellers

Okay. All those in favor.

Albert Yount

Yes

David Harwood

Yes

Sue Sweeting

Yes

Doug Matheson

Yes

Charlie Sellers

Public Hearing closed

Albert Yount

Motion to approve.

Charlie Sellers

Albert, made a motion to approve. Do we have a second?

Doug Matheson

Second.

Charlie Sellers

Further discussion

Albert Yount

The reason it is redundant and confusing. And we have other safeguards to take care of.

Charlie Sellers

Okay. Any further discussion?

Sue Sweeting

The only other thing I'd like to maybe add to the winter retreat would be to ask planning board to be looking at the other building height setbacks, parking, east and west side and greenspace.

Charlie Sellers

For the winter retreat. Okay, we have a motion we have a second Any further discussion. I'd like

David Harwood

I would like to say this feel like deja vu all over and there are members of this board that sent me home with my tail between my legs over this issue, so I'm really glad that it's come back around and it's being considered and that there is a good understanding of the other factors such as setbacks, greenspace, parking requirements, impervious area that limit that so I am all in favor of this. Thank you to the planning board.

Charlie Sellers

How do you vote?

David Harwood

Yes

Sue Sweeting

Yes

Doug Matheson

Yes

Albert Yount

Yes

Charlie Sellers

Okay, so Motion passes. All right, next is Memorial Park Bathrooms.

PARTF UPDATE AND MEMORIAL PARK BATHROOMS

Jennifer Brown

Good evening, Mayor and Council. During the town council retreat in January, the park strategy committee presented a drawing of park improvement needs to Town Council. Town Council encourage the park strategy committee to pursue applying for Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Grant. The Park strategy committee worked with McGill and Associates and the High Country Council of Governments and submitted a PARTF Grant application by the end of April. The total projected cost is \$1.285 million. The town has approximately \$430,000 in bond money, and if PARTF awarded the grant that would be \$500,000. The \$355,000 difference would be provided with ABC and TDA funds. During the March 9th Town Council Meeting, a discussion about the part of grant point system took place it was explained that the proposed renovation and expansion of the restrooms in Memorial Park would not help or our request for PARTF money. It was decided that if we did not receive the part of grant, we could move forward with the renovation and expansion of restrooms in Memorial Park with the TDA and ABC money as the funding source. The Parks and Recreation Authority Board met on September 24 and reviewed 55 PARTF application statewide. Out of 55 applications. Blowing Rock's application was ranked first. But unfortunately, our project did not get funded. There are seven criteria that is considered when deciding on funding and ranking is only one of those. There is still a possibility that our project could get funded if the governor passes the budget that has been presented. In the proposed budget, there's additional funding for PARTF projects and if passed, the part of Authority Board will fund more projects this year. We're requesting to move forward with the design, engineering and bidding on renovating and adding restrooms to Memorial Park while we wait on the approved budget, and possible PARTF funding. As stated earlier, moving forward with renovation and addition of restrooms will not affect our PARTF scoring or funding because no points were given for the restroom facilities. The \$355,000 that TDA and ABC would be providing would cover the restroom costs. And the PARTF funding and current bond money would cover the other park improvements and our grant request. And Doug Chapman with McGill is here to provide details on the cost design, engineering and fitting of the restrooms.

Sue Sweeting

Is there research on how many bathrooms and toilets you need? Yes, do we have enough for all the people were seeing?

Jennifer Brown

Absolutely not. And even adding the current ones still will not provide enough.

Sue Sweeting

What would it take? You can always do, for festivals and stuff, you can always do the porta-jons. What is it if we have a normal weekend?

Shane Fox

I think the best guidance we have is similar to when there are festivals, concerts or things of that nature and it's over 100 for the number of folks that we have here.

Jennifer Brown

Now days normal is a lot even. We can't give you any numbers currently, our system that we were normally pinging cell phones and stuff that is no longer able to provide numbers of people who are in our parks. But I can tell you that this past weekend with rain on Saturday, it was the park was packed. I had staff who would make around and by the time they would get back the trash can was three feet tall over and that is clean and bathrooms empty and trash cans. There are just people, there's lots of people, there's more people even then probably last year at this time, and we thought we couldn't get any busier. So, I mean, we can't provide probably enough restrooms ever to be sufficient for the number of people here. But we can offer more. What we have now is not nearly enough.

Sue Sweeting

Do we need to increase what you're what you're recommending is what I was wondering? It didn't seem like a whole lot. I mean, we've got two at BRAHM.

Jennifer Brown

We have ideas for restrooms and other places that our park strategy committee has talked about, we're kind of in that process of evaluating each one of our parks. And we are all kind of getting together, Mr. Harwood has put together really good evaluation sheets on each park. And so, we're going through all of those and addressing the things we're doing well, the things we could improve on, our current needs, long term and short-term goals. And so, kind of our plan with all of that is to get all that together and really come to Council at retreat and say here's our plan. And here's what know we need. This is kind of a first step because Memorial Park is probably the busiest park we have obviously in town and the most people that come here, and the fact that it's one of the few public restrooms that we have. You know that makes the most sense right now.

Sue Sweeting

Is the pool open. The pool, bathroom open?

Jennifer Brown

They are open until we winterize them, but we will be winterizing them probably in Novemberish. We also winterize Davant Field because there's no heat in those as well. So then, once that happens, we only have Memorial Park and two restrooms at BRAHM.

Sue Sweeting

I went in there one day and only one of the toilets in the women's bathroom was working. Has that been fixed?

Jennifer Brown

Yes. We have a plumber that has been here for the past couple of weeks working on. And I mean that's the other part we he's here probably every other week fixing our restroom facilities.

Doug Matheson

I don't know, I'm glad y'all looked at other places other than just the park because BRAHM especially with me living right there. The line starts about 11 o'clock and there is a line continuously from 11 to three o'clock, usually every Saturday, waiting to get because it's just one in each bathroom. There's always a huge line there.

Charlie Sellers

Any more thoughts?

Albert Yount

How many bathrooms, water closets, urinals are you're talking about here?

Jennifer Brown

So, what we're currently proposing is that we mimic what we currently have in the park, there's a sort of a foyer that you walk into. So, taking the wall there opening that up and building another set. And it would be men's and women's both. That way, we could shut down half and clean men's and women's on one half, and people can still use the other half. I had staff this weekend who said that they had never been treated that way by people trying to get in to clean the restroom and provide toilet paper and stuff for them. I mean, like people were just nasty. So, we really want to just in more ways than one I tell you, but we want to make it to where we can still, you know, have restroom facilities available for people when we have to close them down to clean or do maintenance.

Shane Fox

How many do we currently have?

Jennifer Brown

So there are six women's stalls? And then there are two men's stalls with three urinals.

Charlie Sellers

So you want to double that number?

Jennifer Brown

Yes.

Charlie Sellers

What do you think Council?

Sue Sweeting

Well, I commend you because the bathrooms have greatly improved.

Jennifer Brown

We try

Sue Sweeting

Keeping them clean and toilet paper. So you've done a really good job with that.

Doug Matheson

And I think the good thing about going forward with this is, like we talked about this is that it's still in the PARTF even though it may not be next year, we'll still be recouping our money back, hopefully, but it's still a project that is in dire need to go forward with.

Shane Fox

If I may, I think our timeline so our ask tonight for action is to allow for McGill to move forward with the design and engineering and then the bidding and award phase. So, we will be coming back to Council with the results of those bids. December to January time frame from a bid result. Is that fair to say?

Doug Matheson

Probably in January

Shane Fox

Which would allow us to potentially start construction obviously, when the weather breaks with an expectation potentially having bathrooms late summer, early fall.

David Harwood

Just to know that this will not adversely affect our chances for PARTF when the state budget is approved.

Sue Sweeting

I think we talked about it if it didn't come, we wanted to do this because this was such a critical role

David Harwood

In March this was our plan B strategy.

Sue Sweeting

Do you want to talk or go ahead and approve?

Charlie Sellers

Or make a motion?

Sue Sweeting

I make a motion we approve the request as presented.

Albert Yount

Second

Charlie Sellers

Any further discussion? How do you vote?

Albert Yount

Yes

David Harwood

Yes

Sue Sweeting

Yes

Doug Matheson

Yes

Charlie Sellers

Motion passes

Shane Fox

If I may, as I pull this up, just say thank you for to the Park Strategy Group and High-Country Council of Governments and McGill for putting together the highest ranked project in the entire state for this past year.

Charlie Sellers

An excellent job they did

Sue Sweeting

Did they give money

David Harwood

There were 14 projects that were awarded out of the 55, \$5 million was distributed among 14 projects

WASTEWATER ROAD CULVERT REPAIR

Matt Blackburn

Good evening, Mayor and Council. The culvert into the wastewater plant. That access is provided to us with 284 inch for seven-foot culverts and it's the only access we have to our wastewater plant into the reservoir. About a year ago, after one of the heavy rains we had, we noticed the slope on the other side of that culvert starting to fail and deteriorate so we went in and armored that with riprap and had a small sinkhole kind of open at the top and then repaired it. Early the summer noticed the sinkhole was back. So, we kind of watched it and had a couple bigger rains and noticed things starting to get a little bit larger. So, we contacted McGill had them help us investigate it a little bit more determined that the bottom of the culvert was starting to rust out. And then there was a couple joints that it opened up

allowing water to infiltrate past the culvert and which we believe is causing the sinkhole. Kind of talk about whether we want to replace it or look at it, look at doing something different determine the spin casting was probably going to be the safest bet. I talked to Ben Barnes. When he did that, when he was still Blowing Rock spin cast over and had great success with it. So we went down that road now that kind of tell what we found out from them and the processes behind them.

Doug Chapman

Thank you, Matt. We looked at a couple of different routes. Just so you'll know the reason we're not tight because there was a discussion earlier about storm water and open bottom culverts. One of the reasons we are proposing not to completely replace this culvert, as Matt mentioned, only access into the plant currently and the reservoir. But we have three main lines that cross that culvert, the raw water line going to the water plant, the water line coming back from the plant, and then the wasteline coming back from the plant. So, it would be very expensive and difficult to build back what's there if we had to replace it. So, we solicited pricing, we felt like the spin cast was the best fit for this application. While you see there, there's some rough it's rough resting right on the edge of the waterline. But generally speaking, the pops in good condition, it's not buckling in the top, even though there's a little bit of joint separation that you can sort of see in the photo, a joint separation like that it's enough to wash mud out, but it's not too much that we can't fix it. So, the spin casting will solidify that pipe and carry it into the future. It also gives a little bit smaller area, but it's a smoother flow pattern. So, it can still carry more water. So, we solicited several prices, the best price that we received was from JW Hampton, with a sub that they have that really does the pipe work. They'll just do the surface repairs, repairing the road above. And the price for that construction is \$92,000. We're still recommending that we have some level of contingency, probably \$10,000. I don't think we'll need that. But if there's a little bit more material that they need to make the repairs, there'll be an extra cost to that. But it does include all the work to divert the string from one culvert to the next. We've asked the agencies and we can go past the trout moratorium and have October 15 to make these repairs. We've already got that clearance. And we're planning on if everything goes well tonight, and schedules work to start that work next week, hopefully so that we can get it done before the winter. That's our game plan right now, instead of waiting until next spring, when we get past April 15.

Sue Sweeting

How many more culverts look like this? Do we know is this what happened to Valley View?

Doug Chapman

Valley Views of a different situation.

Matt Blackburn

Those are 15-inch culverts, these are 7 inch culverts

Doug Chapman

Yeah, it's the Valley View. Part of the problem that happened there was the slope failed because water was running across the slope here. You're settling is basically going straight down in the culvert. So, we didn't lose a slope. They protected it enough to make sure the slope didn't wash away. This hasn't been a catastrophic failure. But just to think about the painful difficulties, you remember how long they

worked in front of Chetola. These culverts are just downstream from there same stream. So we don't want to get into that type of repair.

Sue Sweeting

So this is something you're going to look at all over town.

Doug Chapman

When we did the bond project, we looked at what we knew about this. The town doesn't have a lot of large culverts across the town because there's not a lot of large streams. So we don't expect this problem to happen. I mean, it could I mean, there will be circumstances that bring themselves up but I don't I don't see this being a widespread thing.

Shane Fox

If I may, stormwater is already on the agenda for January retreat to quality, quantity, and number of other things as well. So we're planning on presenting a fairly in depth overview of stormwater with concerns that we've had for the last number of years. That is already on the agenda.

Charlie Sellers

Thoughts?

David Harwood

I think that the spin cast is a great solution. Just out of curiosity. Do you have any idea how, how that extends the life back of that culvert?

Doug Chapman

There's, not documentation on that. But it improved, I mean, you have the structural integrity of the pipe, but that increases the structural integrity of the pipe. So you know, it would be difficult to say that that extends the life 20 years, 30 years, anything like that.

Charlie Sellers

That being said, do they offer any guarantee or warranty time on their workmanship?

Doug Chapman

One year, which would be typical, just a typical construction and one year warranty.

Charlie Sellers

What do you think, guys?

Albert Yount

I make a motion to approve.

Sue Sweeting

Second.

Charlie Sellers

We have a first and we have a second. Any further discussion? How do you vote?

Albert Yount

Yes

David Harwood

Yes

Sue Sweeting

Yes

Doug Matheson

Yes

Charlie Sellers

Motion passes.

Shane Fox

Once again, if I might add, the budget amendment was included in the packet. So you approve that amendment as well as a part of this.

PRVS AND ARP

Charlie Sellers

Moving right along. PRV's and ARP's.

Matt Blackburn

So, if you remember in January, at the retreat, we talked about the PRV's. And looking to getting those replaced and installing new vaults with everything. Worked with McGill and created a priority listing for those PRV's I think there's 20 something of those in town. The number one, PRV we wanted to look at replacing was one at the intersection of Green Street and 221 right across from Wallingford. So that line feeds off of the 10-inch cross to 21 down Wallingford, and then kind of feeds back into Main Street. Obviously not the only feed for Main Street since we're getting ready to replace on Main Street line. But that line being tide off the 10 inch controls the pressure from Main Street, and Sunset areas seems to be more than any of the others. I know in the past, we've had issues where that PRV's has gotten stuck wide open and then jacks pressures up. And we've had multiple leaks on Sunset and Main Street at the same time. So it's, it is the direct effect on Main Street, and the pressures. Like I said that was our top priority to fix. And then with the Bass Lake sidewalk, we have the opportunity to get that PRV out of the road. And behind the sidewalk, where it's not in the travel lane. We've had issues in the past with that manhole lid coming off. I know a couple years ago, a van hit it, the manhole lid came off and it pretty much took the rear end off from out behind the van. So good opportunity to get out of the road and get it you know, behind the sidewalk where we can actually work on it. Again, Doug's looked at that we've had contractors out there to take a look at it, and I'll let Mr. Chapman explain where we're where we're at with it.

Doug Chapman

We've gotten all the permits that we need. We work with DOT, really in concert with sidewalk project. Because we talked with the DOT Rep, we were meeting out on the sidewalk project one day looking at some other issues. And I told him I said we were going to have to put a PRV in here and I am going to need your help getting it approved. So that kind of expedited approval. So we've gotten everything in place. And we took two bids, the lowest bid with from Iron Mountain construction company for \$136,385. And that is going to take care of putting in the new PRV and tying back in Green Street and tying in Wallingford. We have to bore under 221 to connect to Wallingford because the line comes across 221 then goes down the bank and out Wallingford.

Doug Matheson

All I can say is as somebody who's working inside vaults all over campus. I would love to see a lot of these vaults get improved over here that we're sending people down inside of right now. This is a much-needed project, one of a much needed projects.

Doug Chapman

Not only that, but if you look the existing vault is here, right in the middle of the travel line. And it's not a vault, it's a manhole.

Doug Matheson

It's a hole. And only Stirling is about the only one that fits in it.

Doug Chapman

Yeah and the term manhole is a name that's not because of me and fits in it. But this will be a vault that Mr. Blackburn and the staff can get in and work on, and this will be out in the side, and just as a point of reference, this area behind the sidewalk, that is now all asphalt will be grass, when that project's done.

Charlie Sellers

Thoughts, motion?

David Harwood

Kudos to you guys for recognizing and coordinating that sidewalk, it's a great opportunity.

Sue Sweeting

And this was the one when we had a fire, that PRV failed, is that what happened with that?

Matt Blackburn

I'm trying to remember what happened, I feel like that was something to do with a fire hydrant.

Sue Sweeting

It was also cold .

Albert Yount

There was no water in it

Shane Fox

As I said, that's it's convenient for him. To do that. The one thing I was going to add that we did not know about obviously in January, we put together McGill help helped us put together a list of one through 24, I think about 24 PRV. This being the most crucial of all the most expensive of all as well, considerably. For instance, a price of the one I think over at Possum Hollow was under \$20,000. So this is obviously a very expensive one. And by far the number one. And then with the time that we discussed this in January, the ARPA money that has now been awarded COVID, money essentially, was unknown. And so, if you recall, I think I sent some information to you this summer, that the Town of Blowing Rock will receive a little bit more than \$400,000. And I call it COVID money, but ARPA money, that money can be used for COVID expenses. It also can be used for water and sewer infrastructure expenses. And so, as we kind of looked at our top five, we believed the ARPA money would cover those top five. So, we're starting with number one here. And the budget amendment that you have in your packet is utilizing the first payment of the ARPA money that we've already received a little more than \$200,000. So obviously not utilizing all of it, but starting the process with number one, starting the thought process and working our way down from one down with utilizing the ARPA money.

Albert Yount

Made a motion to approve.

Charlie Sellers

We have a motion. Do we have a second?

Doug Matheson

Second

OFFICIALS REPORTS & COMMENTS

Charlie Sellers

Any further discussion council? All in favor Ladies and gentlemen, I want to say that those who are here, please vote on November 2. And those listening in November 2 is Election Day. Also, I want to thank those that put together the petition for 321 Valley Boulevard. I think just everybody loves Blowing Rock and everything we can do to make it better and safer is very important to all of us. I'd like to welcome Brian Johnson to Planning and Zoning, Welcome on-board Brian. Anything I can do, or the council can do, we're at your beck and call. But we will defer to Shane Fox.

Albert Yount

Well, I've said this before, but I could say it every meeting. It would be hard for our town to survive all of its travail without McGill and Doug Chapman. So, thank you Mr. Chapman, because I've been here when we did all this stuff by ear. And we did some things we shouldn't have done and paid good money for it. We don't do that. So, thanks once again to McGill.

David Harwood

As we mentioned before, with the PARTF I'm really proud of the Advisory Committee and the work they're doing and really proud of where our ranking was. With our PARTF application, and I still have my fingers crossed, I think the group came together and in a short amount of time, and did a fantastic job and the High Country Council of Governments, everybody that was involved in that. I know Melissa was here. Pete is here this evening. I want to thank everybody that's on that and we're meeting tomorrow. And we're moving on.

Sue Sweeting

I think we are going to get the money.

Charlie Sellers

We have that in the minutes.

Albert Yount

You personally guarantee

Sue Sweeting

Yeah

Doug Matheson

Two weeks left of the shuttle, and regardless of whether I'm here or not over the winter, I hope that will be one of the next councils, top things to talk about also during the retreat. Not going to take anything away from Shane, I think you're going to mention the two officers and Amanda, and your comments. So, I'll just hold off on the mentioning that.

Shane Fox

I have a few updates here. Start with a couple projects we talked about tonight. Bass Lake sidewalk is getting ever so close to being finished. So, we're hopeful in the next few weeks, I believe that we should see that project hopefully come to a close. They're working feverishly out there to finish up, but we should have a sidewalk open before winter. Met today with the Green Construction who was our bid award winner for the crosswalks we had a pre-construction meeting today. The only real hold up there to getting construction started like with everything is getting supplies here so that signals themselves have about a 10 to 12 weekish turnaround time and so we met with him today. That puts us into the winter work can began in the winters we did decide that some of the demo are work and conduit and etc. can happen during the winter months, which would allow for soon as the weather breaks for the concrete to go down the flat work which is not a tremendous amount of flat work and so that work will be completed over the winter and early spring is our timeline that we discussed today for the crosswalks so by the time that folks come back and warmer weather will have four new crosswalks two at Sunset, one at 221 and the other down at Chestnut Drive. Sunset Drive landscaping finished up on the Sunset side on both sides of Sunset just a few weeks ago. So, I'm sure you've all had a chance to get through and see the beautiful landscaping, rock etc. Over 400 tons of rock were put into that. And over 500 plants between the two sides were part of that project. The firehouse shouldn't be in just any day now with the similar look of boulders, plantings etc. with the flagpole being the centerpiece. I also mentioned to you all during the updates. Due to the fact that we're able to save substantially on the

original budget, we're able to move forward with the replacement of the Legion steps as well as part of that project. So the stairs going down Legion Hill will be able to be replaced in the current location which they're in right now. I had a chance to participate virtually with the ICMA annual conference this past week. So that was held in Portland, or my office or my home for me. And that was a fantastic opportunity to hear kind of how things have changed in the last couple of years. The last time we all got together. And this again is a worldwide administrative group was pretty good, essentially. So, it was interesting to hear how COVID has changed the world literally the world as we know it in so many different ways. And most of the classes were COVID related somehow some way how it's made us a whole look at things a little bit differently. Speaking of COVID give an update since our last meeting on the 14th at that time we 89 active cases we have 71 now 66 and quarantine from the 14th of September in the county in the county. 73 now versus the 66 back then so quarantine numbers are a few more, active numbers are a few less. Weekly testing began three weeks ago. We're in the fourth week of that the second week of the mandatory testing. And we've had 100% compliance at this point from the employees that are not vaccinated. So, no issues there which I'm happy to report. Voting you did mention on November 2 is here at Town Hall. In this room, so just for all those that may be aware of that, that is a Tuesday. So that fits within hours one day, just one day. Early voting is at the courthouse and the Student Union, starting October 14th. I do want to mention, so every now and then we receive, some uplifting emails. And I'm not sure if Chief Miller is still here. He may be better suited to respond to this. We had an unfortunate situation. Chief do you mind giving a brief update on the email you received with Lance and Caleb.

Aaron Miller

There was a golf cart incident somebody was trying to haul their trash cans to the curb and the golf cart turned over. Lance and Caleb respond, and I believe there was a little injury involved that somebody sent us a nice email thanking them for the quick response and how helpful they were. They even rode the golf cart to get it home. Gave a ride to one of the parties to the hospital and back home. It's not uncommon that we get these types of letters and emails.

Charlie Sellers

Chief it's good, it's not uncommon, that says you're doing a good job.

Shane Fox

Amanda, two weeks ago, on a national award for her position at the TDA. It was in the tattler. I believe in the chamber put out something not mistaken. We don't have the name of the organization. It's a national organization that essentially puts her up there. I am happy to answer any questions update any projects.

Albert Yount

Question, I need clarification on the crosswalk at Rumble and Saint Mary's, is it going to modify or eliminate those parking places that you and I talk about on the south side, the North side and the East side.

Shane Fox

So, as we discussed during the approval process for those crosswalks is eliminating the two parking spaces on the north and south side of the chestnut east side of Main Street, that is correct.

Albert Yount

That is going to be a great help

Shane Fox

And again, that's not a signalized crosswalk the reason for that simply is the fact there's not a signal there to signalize so it's simply going to have a safety island and on the west side coming out from Rumble that will go across shorten the length of space there, it'll be marked, we'll have signage etc. type of thing. There's not one there currently, we discussed maybe a flashing sign the difficulty there is your own sidewalk, both sides so we'll just have additional signage coming to north and south within that, so yes, the parking spaces will be eliminated as part of that project. The two projects are the two other intersections and 221 and Sunset will be obviously the major makeover with an addition of a second crosswalk that doesn't exist right now on the south side versus the one that's on the north side. So, we'll have two signalized crosswalks there and remember the signals are coming down so the traffic signals will become pedestal signals versus overhead signals as well. And then 221 is just a signalized crosswalk traffic signals stay up.

Charlie Sellers

Ladies and gentlemen, we're going to go into closed session. Thank you for coming this evening. Motion to go into closed session.

EXECUTIVE SESSION – 8:35 P.M

Albert Yount

I make a motion to go into closed session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11.(a)(5) Discussion of potential Property acquisition.

David Harwood

Second

Albert Yount

Yes

David Harwood

Yes

Sue Sweeting

Yes

Doug Matheson

Yes

At 8:45 p.m. Council returned to open session.

David Harwood

I make a motion to approve the purchase of the Valley Boulevard as presented by Dr. Berry Buxton and for Mayor Sellers to execute the said document.

Doug Matheson

Second

Charlie Sellers

We have a first and we have a second. All in favor?

Albert Yount

Yes

David Harwood

Yes

Sue Sweeting

Yes

Doug Matheson

Yes

ADJOURNMENT - 8:50 p.m.

Charlie Sellers

Motion passes. Motion to adjourn.

Doug Matheson

So moved.

Sue Sweeting

Second

Albert Yount

Yes

David Harwood

Yes

Sue Sweeting

Yes

Doug Matheson

MAYOR _____

Charlie Sellers

ATTEST _____

Hilari Hubner, Town Clerk

Attachments

The Vaccine Reaction – Guillain-Barre Syndrome Article – Attachment A

Hwy 321 Speeding Petition – Attachment B

Downtown Density - #2021-12 – Attachment C

Memorial Park Bathrooms Budget Amendment #2021-11 – Attachment D

Wastewater Road Culvert Repair Budget Amendment #2021-12 – Attachment E

PRV's and ARP Budget Amendment #2021-13 – Attachment F