

# Town Council Meeting - Tuesday, August 9th, 2022

The Town of Blowing Rock Town Council met for their regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, August 9, 2022, at 6:00 p.m. The meeting took place at Town Hall located at 1036 Main Street Blowing Rock, NC. Present were Mayor Pro-Tem Doug Matheson and Council Members Albert Yount, David Harwood, Melissa Pickett and Pete Gherini. Others in attendance were Town Manager Shane Fox, Town Attorney Allen Moseley, Town Engineer Doug Chapman, Police Chief Aaron Miller, Planning Director Kevin Rothrock, Finance Officer Nicole Norman and Town Clerk Hilari Hubner who recorded the minutes.

Tue, 8/23 8:29AM • 1:00:11

## SUMMARY KEYWORDS

scenic byway, Pickett, parkway, town, property, sculpture, line, blowing, rock, John Muir, trucks, scenic byways, tonight, motion, state, designated, Lenoir, Maple Street, Sunset, Wilson

## SPEAKERS

Matt Blackburn, Lynda Lasseter, David Harwood, Aaron Miller, Doug Matheson, Clay McCreary, Linda Walker, Larry Pickett, Shane Fox, Jennifer Brown, Albert Yount, Brandon Walker, Melissa Pickett, Pete Gherini, Charlie Sellers, Kevin Rothrock

### **Doug Matheson** 02:43

Good evening, welcome to our Town Council meeting Tuesday, August 9, 2022. I'm calling this meeting to order. Roll call - All in attendance. Approval of minutes from the last meeting. Do I hear a motion?

### **David Harwood** 03:41

I did have one correction to the closed session minutes and I've already shared them with a Hilari.

### **Albert Yount** 04:04

Second with modifications

### **Doug Matheson** 04:08

Okay, consent agenda. Do I have a motion?

### **Melissa Pickett** 04:18

I make a motion to approve consent agenda and I would like to make two changes to the regular agenda please. I would like to have the waterline recap removed and the closed session removed please.

**Albert Yount** 04:30

Second

**Doug Matheson** 04:32

I have a first and I have a second. All in favor?

**Albert Yount** 04:34

Yes

**David Harwood** 04:34

Yes

**Melissa Pickett** 04:35

Yes

**Pete Gherini** 04:35

Yes

**Doug Matheson** 04:38

Do we have any Public Comments?

**Doug Matheson** 04:49

Moving right along to a presentation. Tonight, we have Mr. Clay McCreary here to do a presentation about the John Muir Scenic Byway. If you would step up the microphone and introduce yourself.

**Clay McCreary** 05:28

Well, I'm happy to do that. And thank you, Doug, for that introduction and look forward to being here with all of you tonight. I live down in Lenoir. My name is Clay McCreary. But I escaped up here to Blowing Rock every chance I get, because for one thing, it's a whole lot cooler up here. But all that being said, I want to get into tonight. And I want to start off by providing a quote. And it's a very famous quote by a pretty famous man. And that quote is this, "the mountains are calling and I must go". That quote is by John Muir, who is considered the father of the national parks. And you can almost say that quotes, probably synonymous with Blowing Rock, because you would hear it up here so much, that it is almost one in the same with this being such a magnificent mountain town. But one of the things that I really want to emphasize tonight is another quote by that same man, and that quote is one that is not so well known. And that quote, reads, "The drive from Roan Mountain to Lenoir, is I think, the finest in America of its kind". Same man made that quote, and he made that quote, whenever he was actually traveling through here, in Blowing Rock in 1898. And on that trip, it was basically a trip that was a botany trip to explore the Eastern forest, and a lot of the Eastern plant life that we have here, and we're so blessed to have here in our mountains. But what I really want to get into tonight is an opportunity that that quote presents us and it would present the town of Blowing Rock. And you as the Council Members have before you a copy of this sheet right here. And it is sort of a fact sheet that I'm going to be going over really quickly with y'all tonight. So I want to start off by saying the state of North Carolina

currently has 62 scenic byways officially designated that allow motorists to experience a bit of the state's history, geography and the breathtaking scenery, while raising awareness for the protection and preservation of these treasures. Now also say the state does a lot to promote this program. This is a copy of the North Carolina State scenic byways guidebook. So this is something that the state really utilizes for tourism promotion in those local communities that the state Scenic Byway will go through. But I want to make it clear the North Carolina scenic byways, they are chosen by NCDOT and they are ultimately approved by the North Carolina Board of Transportation. But tonight is an important first step in that process because one of the things on my next point here that NCDOT looks at is local resolutions of support in favor of that state Scenic Byway designation and that's exactly the reason that I stand here before all of you tonight to present this idea to you as the Town Council of Blowing Rock. Couple other points I want to make real quick is North Carolina scenic byways costs local towns and counties absolutely nothing. They are already funded and maintained by NCDOT just as they are today. So that does not need to be a concern of the Council. Another thing that I've had a couple questions about and I want to clarify this as well. North Carolina Scenic Byway designations do not change any current roadway names or local designations that may apply to that roadway. So just to emphasize that point, if y'all were to come up and decide to present before the state an idea to honor a local individual, this would not prohibit y'all from doing that at all. You can still pursue that and it doesn't change anything that's currently already in place as far as that's concerned. A state Scenic Byway name is really more of a nickname to try to again promote that tourism, going through that stretch of scenic byway and applies specifically to the byway itself. The other key point that I want to make real quick, is that with this quote, what I think it does, is it presents an opportunity to use that stretch of road that John Muir traveled exactly and encourage others who are tourist to follow along US 321 and US 221 here in Blowing Rock, and it would be called the John Muir Parkway in honor of his historic travel and as I mentioned before it was part of an important botany tour of Eastern forests and plant life. But here's where I get into the meat of what I'm wanting to talk to y'all about tonight. So, two things that I think this could really do for Blowing Rock is this. The first one is the proposed John Muir Parkway could help to promote important existing recreational assets and Blowing Rock, you know, you guys are full of them. And that's a credit to you guys here on the Town Council and the important work that y'all have done. But just to highlight a couple of those, this scenic Parkway would actually go by the trailhead for the Middle Fork Greenway right there, where US 321 and US 221 meet. So that's an important area you can highlight as part of the Scenic Parkway. Another area is of course you have several parks here in Blowing Rock that you can utilize as well, including the Blowing Rock Park, or excuse me, the Broyhill Park that is going to be located directly adjacent to it on US 221. And of course there's Moses Cone Memorial Park, which we're already familiar with as part of the Blue Ridge Parkway, and what will also be part of this corridor with Bass Lake. But here's possibly the most important point I want to make tonight. The proposed John Muir Parkway would allow us to use Muir's travelled through the region to highlight local history. And you guys here in Blowing Rock you have a rich and beautiful history associated with your town. And just a couple of examples of some of that rich history is the Lenoir Blowing Rock turnpike that Muir himself traveled. That was an early version of US 321. So what you're looking at, there's the Lenoir Blowing Rock Turnpike. What a lot of people do not realize about it is it was established all the way back in the late 1800s. And even back then, it was considered the best route into and out of the Blue Ridge Mountains for its time. And there are articles in the Charlotte Observer all the way back in the late 1800s. That attest to that fact. And so I think that's something we could definitely highlight with this scenic byway. The historic Blowing Rock hotels like the

Watauga Hotel that used to stand here in Town in the Green Park Hotel that is still standing today. One of those hotels, this might be a good history project for somebody here, one of those hotels John Muir stayed at. Now I will be honest with you, I've dug as far as I can on that one, and I have not been able to determine which one it was. But he definitely stayed at one of those two hotels because he specifically references it in his journal. And the last point I want to make is the historic Yonahlossee Road. And that's of course, what 221 Is today. Muir also traveled along that and it was an important connection between Linville and Blowing Rock. As a matter of fact, you know, there was the Linville improvement company at the time, they kind of wanted to get a piece of the pie of what was going on here in Blowing Rock, quite frankly, because Linville wasn't even really a tourist town at that time. It was just getting ready to become one. So they wanted that connection to Blowing Rock and that's when they made the Yonahlossee Road. And that is the exact road that Muir himself traveled back in 1898. Final two points. The proposed John Muir Parkway would use Muir's title, as the "Father of our National Parks", and his well known status as a famous outdoorsman. In the National hiking and outdoor communities to encourage interest and traveling the stretch of roadway and visiting local communities along the way, like here in Blowing Rock. The proposed John Muir Parkway, but also use Muir's revered status as an icon in the US Department of the Interior and the National Park Service to further garner their interest for this area. Just to highlight that and to conclude with this one thing that can happen as a result of this right now, again, I said there's 62 scenic byways designated by the state of this town. There are only four in our entire state that are designated as federal scenic byways. The first step to becoming a Federal Scenic Byway is to first be a state Scenic Byway. And I happen to believe that if we get this designated as a state Scenic Byway that we can get this designated as the fifth federal Scenic Byway, because of the fact the National Park Service and the Department of the Interior already have such a vested interest in the legacy of John Muir as the father of our national park system. So I would like to see that ultimately happen that's kind of my end goal with this but tonight is again a first step to that so I'll end with this. The mountains are calling and I must go I'll say it one more time. Let's do one more thing to make that statement even more synonymous with Blowing Rock tonight. Thank you so much. And if you have any questions, I'll be happy to answer them as best as I can.

**Albert Yount** 15:03

What do we do?

**Clay McCreary** 15:07

Sure., so what I need y'all to do, and you should see it up here. This is the resolution. Doug, you can read it or I can read it whichever way. But the resolution basically states that you guys would support the North Carolina Department of Transportation and the North Carolina Board of Transportation, designating this as a state Scenic Byway. So you guys have the opportunity to vote on that tonight. What will then happen, I've already got a resolution of support from the City of Lenoir, from Caldwell County Board of Commissioners and the Town of Elk Park. with you guys on board as well, I'm going to submit all of those local resolutions to the state with a complete packet in regards to this and the history behind it, and the scenery behind it because we know the scenery is there. Once that happens, what will happen and play out is ultimately the state will meet the NCDOT Board of Transportation will meet in March. So this will play out until March of next year. And then they will vote on it themselves. But one of the key things they are going to be looking at is whether you got support here at the local level. So that's why this is so key tonight.

**Doug Matheson** 16:18

I can read the resolution if everybody would like it me too or if you would rather?

**David Harwood** 16:27

We may have all read it already.

**Doug Matheson** 16:29

Ok if you have all already read it.

**Albert Yount** 16:32

One more question. This does not affect Highway 221, which is already designated.

**Clay McCreary** 16:41

Yes so I have talked to Kyle Cooper. He is over the North Carolina scenic byways program about that. So you're correct. 221 currently between Linville and Blowing Rock is currently designated as the little Parkway. That's the only name that it has attached to. What would essentially happen is the state would then have a choice, they could go ahead and designate the entirety of the route as the John Muir Parkway and leave it at that. Or they could go ahead and make the designation as both the smaller section being the little Parkway, which is what I would assume they'd be most apt to do. And then the larger segment being referred to as the John Muir Parkway, but it would not affect it and since it would remain the same, it's still going to be a scenic byway, it's going to be treated the same way that it is today.

**Doug Matheson** 17:25

Yeah, I think Clay that they have had a couple of times where they put names with like the little Parkway, they join two together.

**Clay McCreary** 17:39

Sure and let me go to give you one good example real quick. So and I forgot to mention this in my presentation. A good example of what this would be similar to is out east, there's actually a scenic byway called the Lafayette's Tour and that's actually referring to the tour the General Marquis de Lafayette made in his 1825 trip to the USA. And basically, you know, General Marquis de Lafayette as some of us may remember, he was a close confidant of President George Washington. So much the same way this John Muir Parkway would do that same thing. It's going to follow Muir's travel, just as that one follows Lafayette's travel. And again, I think the key point here is John Muir is such a revered figure by the National Park Service. This is the way to possibly get this designated to the federal level. This presents that opportunity under the current standing I don't think it's going to present that opportunity in my opinion.

**Lynda Lasseter** 18:46

Can I ask a question?

**Doug Matheson** 18:47

Go right ahead.

**Lynda Lasseter** 18:47

Just wondering in view of this area's proximity to the Blue Ridge Parkway is there any consideration given to naming the John Muir Scenic Byway?

**Clay McCreary** 19:01

And that will be a decision that the state will have to make ultimately they are in charge of the naming of it. The reason that so far that the resolutions that have been adopted have chosen Parkway it's quite frankly, because of all the Parklands that do actually join it. Parkway tends to stand out a little bit more in the public mindset and the National Park Service's mindset. So that's the reason that so far we've chosen to use that term, but ultimately the state will make that decision that is for them to make they will decide what it is actually named called.

**Doug Matheson** 19:37

Okay, Council.

**Pete Gherini** 19:40

I think we've all read it. And so I'll pose a motion to approve the John Muir Scenic Byway.

**Doug Matheson** 19:50

Okay, do I have a second.

**Albert Yount** 19:51

Second. Pete is probably more familiar with John Muir than us. Cause John Muir was in you're right neck of the woods.

**Pete Gherini** 20:04

Redwoods right.

**Doug Matheson** 20:08

We have a motion and we have a second. Any more discussion.

**David Harwood** 20:12

I just want to say thank you for all your personal work on this. I know you've invested countless hours. And I think it's a very worthwhile endeavor. So I appreciate that.

**Clay McCreary** 20:25

I appreciate you saying that.

**Doug Matheson** 20:28

It perks one's interest when you read all of it.

**Clay McCreary** 20:36

Yes, it does.

**Doug Matheson** 20:37

Okay, we have had a motion and second. How do you vote? Motion passes. Next, we have our skipped over the regular agenda to be past. So I need a motion for the regular agenda.

**Albert Yount** 20:42

Yes

**David Harwood** 20:43

Yes

**Melissa Pickett** 20:43

Yes

**David Harwood** 20:45

So moved.

**Pete Gherini** 20:45

Yes

**Albert Yount** 21:01

Second. Yes

**Doug Matheson** 21:05

All in favor?

**David Harwood** 21:05

Yes

**Melissa Pickett** 21:05

Yes

**Pete Gherini** 21:05

Yes

**Doug Matheson** 21:09

Moving along, we have Chief Aaron Miller here to talk about Maple Street and one way.

**Aaron Miller** 21:16

A few months ago if you recall, we discussed possibly making Maple Street one way. We really didn't come to any final resolution to that. So we've been asked to speak about that again. And see if the Council wants to move forward with making that a one way street or leave things as they are. I did have the opportunity to have another conversation with the owners of the Ragged Garden with Lisa and

Rob. And they told me and I've watched some cars, some normal cars turn into their entrance but basically, they have about 20 deliveries per week that come onto the property that can fit into their driveway. But the only way that those 20 deliveries a week can come onto the property is by turning up Maple Street from Sunset Drive. As you know the driveways at a slight angle so it's impossible for trucks to come down Maple Street and make the left turn, so the only way is to come from Sunset. So from the Police Department standpoint, it would probably be important if we did make that a one way to make an exception for those delivery vehicles and trash pickup collection vehicles, that is the only way that they can get onto the property into the dumpsters there on Maple Street. So I guess I'm asking Council if they want to move forward with making that a one way with exemptions or one way was no exceptions or leave the street as is.

**Pete Gherini** 22:55

Aaron for the most part, don't those big trucks hang out on Sunset? I've never seen them on Maple there for the most part.

**Aaron Miller** 23:04

The larger trucks do the food trucks a lot of those are tractor trailers. So they have to sit out on Sunset Drive. Some of the smaller delivery trucks, one specific example was the seafood truck that delivers two or three times a week, the linen service and some of those trucks are smaller and they are able to come onto the property if they come up Maple Street.

**Melissa Pickett** 23:28

Aaron has any of the parking that was brought up for like Maple Street and along, coming down from First Citizens was any changes discussed for that? Or is it strictly changing to one way?

**Aaron Miller** 23:42

From the conversation that I had with them and from watching some vehicles. I watched just even a regular pickup truck trying to go in there one day. Even if we eliminate parking spaces on Sunset Drive those larger box trucks will not fit through their Rock columns. I watched a dual wheel pickup truck come through the rock columns one day and it was just all it would do to fit. So even if we eliminate parking spaces, they still would not be able to come on the property.

**Albert Yount** 24:09

They were made for T-Model Ford's.

**Aaron Miller** 24:11

They were.

**Doug Matheson** 24:12

I'd like to see us, and I've brought this up before and I know we've talked about it in our parking meeting. I would like to see something over there at the school get designated as a loading zone. Because that trucks got to go, he pulls right up there to the entrance of Maple Street and coming out of Maple Street now will be just one way so everybody's gonna be coming out of there. You can't see by him looking down.



**Aaron Miller** 24:43

As far as the traffic that's coming out of Maple Street I don't think it would change the street would still be one way from the beginning the top entrance of the parking lot except all the way to the bottom, so I'm not sure that it would be an increase in traffic coming out. Some traffic would still be able to go back toward Main Street out of the Maple Street parking lot.

**Doug Matheson** 25:12

But it still is a danger trying to see past that tractor trailer when he stopped right even with Maple Street, to unload there. If we get him on the other side of the road into a parking space or loading zone would make it better.

**Aaron Miller** 25:30

I don't disagree. And I think that perhaps as we move forward with our parking conversations, we can talk about loading zone areas and that kind of thing and how we will designate that.

**David Harwood** 25:42

Chief, do you have a recommendation?

**Aaron Miller** 25:43

I don't. I look back historically at the number of traffic accidents we've had at that intersection and there's been two and 20 years so I don't particularly have a recommendation either way.

**Albert Yount** 25:59

Where that Ford Explorer's parked is almost at the intersection.

**Aaron Miller** 26:06

It is.

**Albert Yount** 26:07

And the occupants of, I guess it's a townhouse to the left. They're gonna have to go around and come in the other way.

**Aaron Miller** 26:21

Yes.

**Albert Yount** 26:21

Have you talked to them about that?

**Aaron Miller** 26:25

No I haven't. Linda Walker owns the first townhouse there. In full disclosure, she has her own parking space on Sunset so I am not sure she turns in there. That's the back townhouses and the Rhodes Apartments will also have to come around.

**Kevin Rothrock** 26:56

Where do the other units park? I know Linda where you have a place, but where do the other units park? Yeah.

**Aaron Miller** 27:01

They have their own designated parking spots around, Rhodes Apartments, has some dedicated parking spots in the alleyway between Rhodes Apartments and the townhomes. There's some dedicated parking spots around there.

**Doug Matheson** 27:09

And I think there's one dedicated parking space for Henry's place.

**Aaron Miller** 27:19

Yeah, that's right.

**David Harwood** 27:22

Is there a particular time of day these box trucks come and go?

**Aaron Miller** 27:27

Most of them are in the morning hours. But I wouldn't say that all of them are. Most of their food deliveries are in the morning.

**Albert Yount** 27:42

Linda?

**Linda Walker** 27:43

Sir.

**Albert Yount** 27:44

Are you brave enough to tell us your thoughts? Because instead of hearing at Sonny Rock.

**Linda Walker** 27:53

Well, my thought is I think it would be safer one way, I don't care if it's coming out or going in. Because tourist, I've watched tourists go down. They don't turn through the parking lot. They just go straight. So from that standpoint, I don't really care but I'd like to see it one way, either other way.

**Albert Yount** 28:14

Thank you.

**Brandon Walker** 28:15

And if it was one way from Sunset wouldn't the Best Cellar wouldn't they still be able to pull in that way, pull in the parking lot, leave the parking lot, and leave and go up to Main Street that way?

**Aaron Miller** 28:31

That's true. One of the reasons for having traffic come in from Main Street is access to the post office that way and also to keep from dumping all the traffic back out on already congested Main Street. Those were just our considerations from the parking lot. And one thing I did fail to mention is we have already removed the parking Wayfinding sign that's at Sunset and Maple. So we're trying to discourage through the Wayfinding for visitors to find the parking lot the other way.

**Doug Matheson** 29:08

So you're going to make it one way from Main Street or you're gonna make it one way from where you turn out from the Post Office?

**Aaron Miller** 29:15

From where it starts one way now which is at the entrance to the post office and the remainder of the way to Sunset.

**David Harwood** 29:23

Will there be a do not enter somewhere?

**Aaron Miller** 29:24

Right, a Do Not Enter sign will be here. It might be a little caption underneath if the Council so chooses that says delivery vehicles only or delivery trucks only maybe if that's the route you want to go or if you don't want to go that route then just Do not enter.

**David Harwood** 29:43

I have not seen any, at least stanging up there, for the last 20 years but it seems like most of what truck traffic that is coming to the post office is coming from Main Street. Not this way.

**Aaron Miller** 29:58

Right, yeah the right Post Office trucks. Not really consideration. It's really just the delivery trucks going into the Ragged Garden Inn and the trash pickup vehicles that have to go in behind the townhomes. I don't know if they'll put a restaurant back in there again, or what will happen, but there's trash collection vehicles and probably if it's a restaurant, they will probably have a grease collection vehicle that has to go in.

**Albert Yount** 30:27

Well, if we don't like it we can always change it.

**Doug Matheson** 30:30

Do I hear a motion either way?

**David Harwood** 30:34

I'll make a motion to reorder this one way from Main Street. I don't know how we want to handle the delivery trucks if that's just something that's understood with your department chief or we need signage to that effect. But I think that's more an administrative thing.

**Aaron Miller** 30:57

Yeah, sure. One way all the way from Main Street.

**Melissa Pickett** 31:00

Yeah, I was gonna say clarification on that.

**Aaron Miller** 31:02

The second entrance of the post office?

**David Harwood** 31:05

Yep.

**Aaron Miller** 31:06

Okay.

**Kevin Rothrock** 31:08

At Janice Burnes house?

**David Harwood** 31:10

Yes, right above Janice Burnes house.

**Aaron Miller** 31:12

And you are right, I do see a lot of vehicles that turn in and continue to go the wrong way all the way up that is true.

**Pete Gherini** 31:22

I'll second David's motion.

**Doug Matheson** 31:25

Okay, you may want while we're in discussion, you may think about adding in the trucks because you'll probably get a lot of calls people saying hey, I got traffic coming the wrong way. You may want to put some type of explanation there.

**Aaron Miller** 31:45

We can talk to them at the Ragged Garden and try to make those, see if they can make those deliveries happen earlier. The earlier the better when there's not much traffic in and out of there.

**David Harwood** 31:54

Maybe our signage says exceptions for truck deliveries to the Ragged Garden. I mean be that explicit.

**Aaron Miller** 32:01

Okay, sure.

**Doug Matheson** 32:02

Okay Council. How do you vote?

**Albert Yount** 32:07

Yes

**David Harwood** 32:07

Yes

**Doug Matheson** 32:07

Yes

**Melissa Pickett** 32:07

Yes

**Pete Gherini** 32:08

Yes

**Doug Matheson** 32:09

Okay, motion passes. We will have Maple Street as a one way. Okay, next Chetola Public Art, and Parks and Rec director Ms. Jennifer Brown.

**Jennifer Brown** 32:28

Good evening. Chetola Resort and Spa hosted a sculpture walk in 2019. During this event, a sculpture was approved by Town Council to install on Main Street near Chetola for a year until the next Sculpture Walk event. Due to COVID, Chetola cancel their 2020 Sculpture Walk Artwalk. Chetola is now requesting to change the current sculpture with a new sculpture. BRAAC reviewed and approved the proposed new sculpture. And I believe you have the public art application and the picture of the new proposed art. Any questions?

**Doug Matheson** 33:08

Okay, questions for Jennifer?

**Melissa Pickett** 33:10

Is this going to be another temporary piece? Is this a permanent leave?

**Jennifer Brown** 33:15

I believe it's for another year is the goal, is a year.

**David Harwood** 33:32

Help clarify this for me, because I was always under the understanding that this was Town property. But that's not the case. Is it Town maintain property?

**Doug Matheson** 33:42

The sidewalk is.

**Jennifer Brown** 33:45

But this would be their responsibility not ours.

**David Harwood** 33:48

So I recall when the other sculpture was going to be removed they were going to repair the sidewalk there from the bolt holes. So is that going to be taken care of? Or is there going to be more bolt holes in it? How is that going to work?

**Jennifer Brown** 34:07

For my understanding, it's just going to go in the same location where it is now. So I guess if there is they will repair?

**Melissa Pickett** 34:12

It will fill in the same base that the current one is on?

**Jennifer Brown** 34:16

That is a good question. What I can do is, I mean it's up to you guys, but I can always reach out to them and tell them that if there's holes that are existing that don't fit with this current base that they're going to be responsible for repairing.

**Doug Matheson** 34:40

Right

**Albert Yount** 34:42

We're talking about this because it's public art vice Town property.

**Jennifer Brown** 34:50

Yes

**Doug Matheson** 34:56

How does Council feel on this? Do I hear a motion?

**David Harwood** 35:18

So this will be in place for how long?

**Jennifer Brown** 35:26

A year.

**David Harwood** 35:27

Then we'll revisit this again.

**Jennifer Brown** 35:29

Yes, sir.

**Melissa Pickett** 35:31

So I do have one question. The original setup to this, if I recall was that they were placing a sculpture every year along with the sculpture walk event that was being held. Which I know, got postponed due to COVID. But I've not heard plans for a sculpture walk this year. So are there no future plans for a Sculpture Walk and they're just going to ask to have a sculpture replaced every year?

**Jennifer Brown** 36:02

That's a good question that was not in their application.

**Doug Matheson** 36:04

I thought that when I talk with them, they hope to get that started back, the Sculpture Walk because you're working with the Rosen Center and another one over there with this art is that not true?

**Jennifer Brown** 36:24

I'm not sure who they're working with. I do know that the current sculpture that is there is a loan, it's not owned by them. So I think the artists is like, I need my sculpture back kind of thing. So it's probably why this is come up now without a sculpture walk, I would assume.

**Melissa Pickett** 36:47

Personally, I have no issue with the art being there. I just know that was the premise this started on, that relationship to an event.

**Doug Matheson** 36:59

I've said my taste in art before, I don't have one.

**Melissa Pickett** 37:13

We'll be honest with you. I actually bought a piece from this artist, the first Sculpture Walk if that answers your question.

**Doug Matheson** 37:24

Okay, I'll entertain a motion.

**Albert Yount** 37:28

Move to approve.

**Doug Matheson** 37:30

Okay do I have a second.

**Melissa Pickett** 37:32

I'll make a second but I would like to add to the fact that if there does need to be repairs made to the different base sizes that they are responsible for that.

**Albert Yount** 37:43

Okay. I will modify my motion.

**Doug Matheson 37:49**

Council how do you vote?

**Albert Yount 37:55**

Yes

**David Harwood 37:58**

Yes

**Melissa Pickett 38:00**

Yes

**Doug Matheson 38:01**

Yes

**Kevin Rothrock 38:15**

Thank you, sir. Mr. Larry Pickett. He's here tonight. And he is requesting a water connection on an existing private land at his property located off Rocky Knob Road in Caldwell County. This private line is connected to public line that serves the Blowing Rock Attractions and then through a private line that serves the Peaky Top, which is owned by the Wilson family, and then follows down the mountain to Rocky Knob where two other properties are currently connected. Mr. Pickett is preparing to build a house on his property on Rocky Knob and would like access to the Town water since the line currently runs through his property. Homes on each side of Mr. Pickett's property are currently connected to town water and pay double rates. Neither of these properties nor the Peaky Top home are within the Town's corporate limits, but they all pay double rates. Mr. Pickett is willing to pay the double standard water rate if afforded the ability to make a connection to his system. A little history, it's been the Town's policy for at least the last 25 years. For properties to be required to annex into the town in order to receive utility services. There are still properties that are on the Town's system that are not in the corporate limits and those pay double rates. Mr. Pickett's property is a fair distance from Town and the only access is through Rocky Knob Road. And this makes providing Town garbage collection other services a bit more difficult if he were to annex. Mr. Pickett is willing to annex into the Town if required in this unique situation. Some other factors that's going on. The Dell Wilson family who owns the Peaky Top home, has had discussions with Town staff on the past possibility of upgrading existing private water line from The Rock to their property to a public line. And if the Town participates in the cost of the upgrade, annexation for that property and others might be a consideration. If annexation is required for those waterline improvements, Mr. Pickett is willing to also annex his property at that time. So to summarize, it has been the town's policy that properties that want water connection, or sewer or any type of utilities annex into the Town. This is a little unique being that so far away and an existing private line is there on his property with Town water in it. So he's asking, there's a letter Mr. Pickett provided in your packet. And he's asking, at this time, if he can just make a connection and pay with double rates. Mr. Pickett's is here to answer questions if you'd like. And I'll try to answer any if I can.



**Pete Gherini** 41:06

Can we hear from Mr. Pickett?

**Larry Pickett** 41:16

So as mentioned, you know, my understanding of the policy, I think my neighbors were grandfathered in because their connection was made to this private line many years ago outside of the 25 years. So I understand the policy has changed. And I'm willing to, you know, be annexed into the town if necessary. But, you know, regardless one way or the other, perfectly willing to both pay the double rates for the water fees, as well as any repairs to the line. And both of my neighbors have a water easement agreement that specifies that makes it very clear, and I would have the same agreement along the way, as well. So just asking for, I guess I would, the first ask would just be for an exemption, I'd be able to access the line and pay the double rates. But if you feel it's necessary to be annexed I am willing to do that, as well. Regardless, I'm hoping to get started, you know, in the next month or so, with construction, so I kind of need to get the issue resolved. So would just appreciate your consideration of the request.

**David Harwood** 42:31

What is the, so you mentioned Peaky Top potentially being annexed and improvements to that line? Can you elaborate any more about that?

**Kevin Rothrock** 42:43

Not much, there's just been additional discussion from the Wilson family and the Town with Matt and other town staff. I guess maybe Shane's discussed it about the Town participating in upgrading that line from The Rock down to that property to public line standard with a hydrant. Currently, that property and the two beside Mr. Pickett, the meters are read or the meter for that is read up at The Rock. That's where the last meter connection is. And then Mr. Wilson disseminates the bill amongst the properties. And so he's trying to, as I understand get out of the water business.

**David Harwood** 43:30

So there's one meter for

**Kevin Rothrock** 43:32

One meter for three homes as I understand it, and they figure up who owes what. What he would want to do is have that line, if I understand correctly, that line extended to a public condition. Eight inch I would say, minimum six inch ductile iron with hydrogen and then meters placed down there. So they can be read by Town crews and then Matt might chip in. I don't know if I've misstated. But that process is separate from Mr. Pickett's.

**David Harwood** 44:15

Yeah, I'm just trying to understand the landscape.

**Kevin Rothrock** 44:17

But if one consideration is if the Town decides in the future to participate in that project, the annexation at that time would be probably appropriate. Given the cost of that and figuring out.

**Melissa Pickett** 44:34

So that annexation process if we did that would be actually for four?

**Kevin Rothrock** 44:40

It could be for more

**Melissa Pickett** 44:41

In the future, but currently for four properties.

**Kevin Rothrock** 44:45

Minimum yes.

**David Harwood** 44:46

No, that's not the issue.

**Albert Yount** 44:48

Who installs, who makes a tap and gives him a meter. You?

**Larry Pickett** 44:56

Yeah, my builder would have to do that. And there are meters that both of my neighbors read, and so on based on their usage of the water. But as he stated Mr. Wilson is one that sends a bill out and people pay their pro rated share.

**Albert Yount** 45:17

So you have to buy the meter.

**Larry Pickett** 45:19

Yeah, I would have to get the line. You know, it goes right across the property, but just connected and put in a meter there so that I can read for my usage as well.

**Albert Yount** 45:30

Just your meter, our meter?

**Larry Pickett** 45:33

It's a private meter.

**Matt Blackburn** 45:35

Yes, it's done that way. So we've had an estimate done on upgrading that line the entire way out to a six inch adding hydrogens. I think that came in just shy of \$200,000. There will probably another piece of that upgrading it all the way to Pinnacle Drive. That adds more to that. But the number has been out there. I don't know where it's gone from there. But it has been looked at upgrading.

**Kevin Rothrock** 46:05

That's just a little more of the backstory of what else is going on. But his request is separate from that.

**David Harwood** 46:12

I understand that.

**Albert Yount** 46:13

I have no problem with his request.

**Doug Matheson** 46:23

Ok, is that a motion?

**Albert Yount** 46:24

Yeah

**Doug Matheson** 46:26

Do I have a second?

**David Harwood** 46:30

Second, for discussion. So I understand the issue you're asking for so I'm trying to approach it a different way. So the Wilson property is directly adjacent to Town limits.

**Kevin Rothrock** 46:48

Yes

**David Harwood** 46:49

Your property is adjacent to the Wilson property, or is there a gap between there?

**Larry Pickett** 46:55

No, there's a gap.

**David Harwood** 46:56

It's the other two houses?

**Larry Pickett** 46:57

Yeah. The other two houses. There's one on either side of me that, you know, gets the water today. And then there's mine. And then from the upper one that connects the way the line goes is to the Wilson property.

**David Harwood** 47:10

So if Wilson is annexed is there assurance that the other three properties are annexed?

**Doug Matheson** 47:18

Well, I think there that would be up to Council to ask for the you know whether you just want the one.

**David Harwood** 47:32

The reason I am bringing all this up is you had brought it up that Mr. Pickett would be willing to do that.

**Kevin Rothrock** 47:40

Right

**David Harwood** 47:41

To be annexed so I was just thinking down the line?

**Kevin Rothrock** 47:45

Yeah

**Larry Pickett** 47:45

Informally, I've discussed it with, and I'm not speaking for my two neighbors. But I think they would be open to it. Based on my discussions with them, even recently, over the last couple of weeks,

**David Harwood** 48:00

Thank you for the clarification.

**Doug Matheson** 48:03

Pete

**Pete Gherini** 48:04

Kevin, how many potential lots are there in the area that could possibly down the road be looking at this kind of request?

**Kevin Rothrock** 48:17

Shane, if your on can you can use Zoom in where the properties will show the tax map.

**Shane Fox** 48:32

Caldwell right.

**Kevin Rothrock** 48:33

I'm sorry.

**Shane Fox** 48:34

Will I have to go into Caldwell?

**Kevin Rothrock** 48:34

No, you can. You can zoom into this. It will show. So this is Mr. Pickett's right here. There's a lot above him, and one below him. These two are connected. The line runs up the mountain up there, and I'll pull that down.

**David Harwood** 49:13

Oh, okay.

**Kevin Rothrock** 49:14

So there's Peaky Top there. So that strange shaped piece is the same, it's owned by the Wilson family as well. This one is that is not and then that's the one that the house is on. So those three and then the very next one is Mr. Picketts neighbor Creviston. So there's some potential there.

**Pete Gherini** 49:54

So how many did you come up with?

**Kevin Rothrock** 50:01

Four plus the other three, if they're all in play, so seven could be checked this one here could be this one too, eight. I mean, that's the slope going down to 321. If you're looking at that, six, seven or eight, something like that

**Pete Gherini** 50:23

Would there need to be talk about a bigger pipe construction down the road for other housing?

**Kevin Rothrock** 50:30

No I think that would serve all that eight inch line?

**Matt Blackburn** 50:31

No six inch line

**Kevin Rothrock** 50:35

Six inch live would serve all of that?

**Matt Blackburn** 50:39

Potentially

**Kevin Rothrock** 50:42

I understand that the public line would only run to there from there and would remain private. The upgrade discussion was only down to here.

**Pete Gherini** 51:00

Thank you.

**Doug Matheson** 51:03

Any more questions? Ok we have had a motion and second. How do you vote?

**David Harwood** 51:11

Yes

**Albert Yount** 51:11

Yes

**Melissa Pickett** 51:14

Yes

**Pete Gherini** 51:18

Yes

**David Harwood** 51:19

Good luck with your project.

**Doug Matheson** 51:22

Okay, that finishes the regular agenda for tonight. One thing I'd like to say is stepping in tonight. It's hard shoes to fill. I just want to thank all the town staff. This has been one heck of a month that will all remember and I think everybody has stepped up and done a wonderful job. I'd like to thank them. Hope we don't have to do that anytime again soon.

**Albert Yount** 52:01

I can't think of anything I need to yack about.

**David Harwood** 52:06

I would just echo your comments. Thank you very much.

**Melissa Pickett** 52:10

The same thing, just proud of our Town staff. They did an amazing job during a horrible situation. Very proud of them.

**Pete Gherini** 52:21

I did talk to Shane a couple of weeks ago and ask that he talked with the Department of Transportation to look at the timing at the light at Sunset and Main because there's not enough time and the traffic backs up especially if you're trying to make a turn. So he's requested that somebody from the Department come up on a weekend and take a good look at that. So thank you.

**Doug Matheson** 53:00

Mr. Mayor, your own here anything you'd like to say? Can you hear me

**Charlie Sellers** 53:07

Okay. First of all I want to say thank you Council you have done a great job. I have had some inquires about the Post Office parking and I want to let the citizens know that the Town doesn't have any say over that parking lot, it a private lot. So it's up to the Post Office to determine how to enforce that, it is not for the Town to do so. Secondly there are a few roads that have potholes that need to be repaired and I know that Manager Fox is looking into that. Lastly I would like to reiterate what Mr. Matheson said. Thank you to all of our employees and our citizens for the help and patients with the water issues that transpired in the last month. Thank you all for a great job tonight.

**Shane Fox** 55:56

I'll start by saying I do not believe that the Mayor is responsible for me being out tonight with COVID so squish those rumors before they get started. So I don't think I contracted COVID from the from the Mayor but who knows in todays world but I am unfortunately not there tonight because of testing positive yesterday's. I'll be out of the office for the next few days working. I got a few updates. Calendar update State of the Town is next Thursday, the 18th at 5pm. That's at the American Legion. So next Thursday, the 18th at 5pm at American Legion, that'll be myself and Mayor Sellers along with Charles Hardin and Tracy Brown as well speaking and giving updates on all things Town related. I will confirm what Mr. Gherini mentioned earlier about the timing of the light at Sunset and Main. The DOT Engineers at Division 11 with Traffic Services Unit. Will plan on being here soon to take some timing observations and report back to us on what those results show hope on a weekend would be would be nice, if not at least a Friday, our ice house which is located on Maple Street, so little brick house or rock house, I should say down just across from the entrance to the post office is town owned. And we do bid out the annual lease for that building. And that will be coming up. starting later this week. We'll advertise bids for a few weeks and bring something to Council in September. That is something that we customarily do, like I said annually so that's the time for that is coming back up. So we'll be soliciting bids for anyone interested in potentially renting or leasing the Ice House again, like located on Maple Street. And you know, finally, I will present a more comprehensive update on the water main break that took place on the 18th of July in September. I was planning on doing that tonight but felt like it was better to wait to be in person. But my hat's off to the entire staff, the Town Council, everyone pitched in. Truly everyone pitched in from all 70 plus full time employees to the Town Council all were out actively searching looking and helping in so many different ways. And I'll give a much more comprehensive update in September of the timeline and transfer the how the events transpired that day. But be glad to try to answer any questions you have. If I can

**Doug Matheson** 58:44

Questions? Okay, thank you Mr. Fox. Before we adjourn, take a motion to adjourn. I will remind everybody we do have a special meeting next Tuesday the 16th, Closed Session meeting so remind everybody on that at six o'clock. Okay, do I here, motion to adjourn.

**Pete Gherini** 59:15

So moved.

**Albert Yount** 59:18

Second

**MAYOR** \_\_\_\_\_

**Charlie Sellers**

**ATTEST** \_\_\_\_\_

**Hilari Hubner, Town Clerk**

**ATTACHMENTS:**

**John Muir Scenic Byway Resolution – Attachment A**