

MINUTES

Town of Blowing Rock Board of Commissioners Work Session-May 25, 2010

The Town of Blowing Rock Board of Commissioners held a special work session on Tuesday, May 25, 2010 at 5:00 p.m. The work session took place in the Town Council Chambers at 1036 Main Street Blowing Rock. Present were Mayor J.B. Lawrence, Commissioners Albert Yount, Phillip Pickett, Tommy Klutz, Doug Matheson and Jim Steele. Others in attendance were Town Manager Scott Hildebran, Town Attorney Allen Moseley, Town Engineer Doug Chapman, Police Chief Eric Brown, Parks & Recreation Director Jennifer Brown, Planning Director Kevin Rothrock and Town Clerk Sharon Greene.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Lawrence called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Parades

Town Manager Hildebran advised that Commissioner Steele had discussed some concerns regarding Town parades with Parks & Recreation Director Brown and Police Chief Brown. Commissioner Steele stated he had received complaints from several merchants on Main Street with regard to spectators parking on Main Street for several hours on parade days and customers being unable to shop downtown. Mr. Steele also said he had concerns with children jumping into the parade path to retrieve candy that was being thrown by parade participants. Parks & Recreation Director Brown stated it had been suggested to her that no parking be allowed on Main Street from 12:00 Noon to 3:00 p.m. and she did not think this would work. She also stated the Christmas parade would be held at 10:00 a.m. which would help alleviate the parking issue and if the 4th of July needed to be changed after this year's parade, it could also commence at 10:00 a.m. Chief Eric Brown suggested the July 4th parade proceed as usual and flyers be handed out to participants regarding candy throwing.

Commissioner Steele recommended a public hearing be held regarding the parking issue during parades so that merchants could be heard.

Commissioner Klutz spoke against no parking on Main Street during parade times.

It was consensus of Council that Chief Brown and Parks & Recreation Director Brown observe these concerns during the July 4th parade and add this to the August Council meeting agenda to be further discussed.

2. BR Commons Update

Planning Director Rothrock and Town Engineer Chapman presented an update from Blowing Rock Commons to Council. Mr. Rothrock stated a conditional grading permit had been issued recently. He also mentioned that BR Commons planned to do the project in two phases beginning with the portion that is in the highest demand. The proposed hotel would be the final phase of the project. Council had several questions regarding the sidewalk planned for Hill Street. Mr. Rothrock advised the CUP would need to be followed and any significant changes would have to come before Council.

Infrastructure for the project was also briefly discussed. Mr. Chapman advised the infrastructure would depend on what was built.

Mr. Chapman also stated a bond would be in place so the property could be restored to its original state should the project not be completed.

3. BRAHM Update

Mr. Hildebran presented Council with an update from BRAHM. The update gave a progress report on the construction and stated since the weather had improved, progress on the project had increased substantially. Also, a fundraising consultant firm had been hired to help with the capital campaign for the \$1.5 million that was needed to complete the project debt-free. Commissioner Yount wanted assurance that the outside of the museum building would be completed if there were to be a shortfall of funds. Mr. Hildebran assured Council that BRAHM representatives had stated the outside would not be left unfinished.

4. FEMA Update

Mr. Hildebran stated the contractors for the storm debris pick-up would finish grinding the debris and the project would be completed soon. All other storm debris would be picked up by the Town and needed to be out near the roadways by June 1st. He advised a notice would be placed in the newspaper, on the town website, and on various bulletin boards around town.

5. Facilities Feasibility Study and Master Plan – Engineering Agreement

Council received a proposal for a facilities feasibility study and engineering agreement by McGill Associates for their review. The study would consider improvements to the police station, parks and recreation building and public works warehouse. Mr. Hildebran stated the cost was \$29,000 and available from reserve funds to complete the study.

The feasibility study would consist of McGill Associates evaluating the existing buildings and making improvement recommendations, floor plans of the buildings, meeting with Town Staff to receive any input they had regarding their needs and expectations. A 3-D model of the proposed updates and improvements would be presented for Council's review. Mr. Chapman stated this would be approximately a 3-month process.

A motion was given by Commissioner Klutz to approve an agreement to conduct a Facilities Feasibility Study and Master Plan, seconded by Commissioner Matheson. Unanimously approved.

Facilities Feasibility Study and Master Plan- Engineering Agreement – Exhibit A

6. Follow-up Items

Mr. Hildebran stated the Planning Department had spoken with businesses that were leaving their cardboard on Main Street after 5:00 p.m. He also mentioned that Town Staff were continuing to check on prices for dome lids for the trash receptacles.

The Davant Field restrooms are scheduled to be painted after the Pool opened in order to free-up employees to begin painting.

An update was given to Council regarding various NCDOT projects. According to the update, NCDOT was in the process of acquiring right-of-ways and construction would begin in March of 2011 on the 321 By-Pass widening project.

7. Planning Board Joint Meeting

Mr. Hildebran advised the Planning Board would like to have a joint meeting with Council on June 17, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. Items to be discussed during this meeting were downtown parking ratios and the proposed Town Center District.

It was consensus of Council to have a work session before the joint meeting with the Planning Board.

Commissioner Yount thanked Town Manager Hildebran for the great job he had done with regard to the budget. He asked Mr. Hildebran to further elaborate on the proposed budget. Mr. Hildebran stated the Town had a very frugal budget and historically funds were not spent from Fund Balance; but this year that could be a possibility. He stated the Fund Balance had doubled since the year 2000 and was just above 50%. He also stated that the Town Comprehensive Plan and Master Plans have aided in overall financial planning. He mentioned how other towns were affected by the loss of industry in their area. According to Mr. Hildebran, the Town's biggest source of income was from property taxes and the tax collection rate remained around 98 percent. He further stated that due to securing grant funding on projects such as Robbins Pool, Blowing Rock's budget wasn't cut quite as severely as in other surrounding areas. He also advised that if needed, there was approximately \$100,000 that could be held back in the Town's Water Fund and General Fund.

Next, Council briefly discussed the Streetscape Plan and the bulb-out that was placed near Maple Street.

ADJOURN

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

MAYOR _____

J.B. Lawrence

ATTEST _____
Sharon Greene, Town Clerk

ATTACHMENTS (05-25-10)
Facilities Feasibility Study and Master Plan- Engineering Agreement – Exhibit A