

MINUTES
Town of Blowing Rock
Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting-August 10, 2010

The Town of Blowing Rock Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, August 10, 2010 at 7:00 p.m. Present were Mayor J.B. Lawrence, Commissioners Albert Yount, Phillip Pickett, Tommy Klutz, Douglas Matheson, and Jim Steele. Others attending were Town Manager Scott Hildebran, Town Attorney Allen Moseley, Town Engineer Andy Lovingood, Planning Director Kevin Rothrock, Police Chief Eric Brown, Public Works Director Mike Wilcox, Finance Director Nicole Norman, Emergency Services Director Kent Graham, Parks & Recreation Director Jennifer Brown, and Town Clerk Sharon Greene.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Lawrence called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Commissioner Pickett, seconded by Commissioner Klutz to approve the minutes for the July 13, 2010 meeting as written. Unanimously approved.

PUBLIC HEARING

1. Downtown Parking Standards (Ordinance #2010-16)

Planning Director Kevin Rothrock presented Ordinance #2010-16 Downtown Parking Standards for Council's approval. He advised that following the Council and Planning Board work session on downtown parking, staff revised the draft ordinance language based on comments they had received. A summary of the draft ordinance is as follows:

- Decreased the required parking for various land uses in Central Business and Town Center. For example: office and retail uses require 1 space per 400 sq ft compared to 1 space per 200 sq ft. Restaurant ratio is 1:250 as opposed to 1:100.
- No parking is required when changing from one existing use to another with the exception of restaurants with more than 12 seats, (indoor and/or outdoor).
- If change in use is to a restaurant with more than 12 seats only required to provide half of the net parking spaces.
- No parking required if addition is less than 250 sq ft and purpose is for a bathroom, storage, or equipment space.

Mr. Rothrock advised there were three options to satisfy parking requirements for new construction; paying into the Town's parking fund, creating space on-site, or satellite parking.

He also mentioned the Planning Board discussed the draft ordinance during their July regular meeting and recommended approval of the changes to the downtown parking requirements with a minor modification for clarification:

- Allowing a **one-time** addition less than 250 sq ft for bathrooms, storage, and equipment areas to be exempt from the parking requirements.

Commissioner Yount commented that he thought the revised ordinance was very "business friendly". Commissioner Klutz wanted to know if the Town would allow businesses who chose to pay into the parking fund to pay over an extended length of time. Town Manager Hildebran stated this issue would become part of their Conditional Use Permit and would need to be within a reasonable time-frame.

Mr. Rothrock gave a brief recap of the proposed changes. With no further comments or questions, Commissioner Pickett made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Commissioner Klutz. Unanimously approved.

Commissioner Klutz then made a motion to approve Ordinance 2010-16 as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pickett.

Commissioner Steele stated a former Council member had suggested there be no parking requirements in the Town Center District; the reason being there was no room for growth in the Town Center area and people should not be burdened with parking requirements. Commissioner Klutz stated several restaurants could move into the Town Center District and there would not be sufficient parking should this happen; he wished for his motion to remain as stated. Unanimously approved.

Downtown Parking Standard Ordinance #2010-16 – Exhibit A

NEW BUSINESS

1. Southern Breezes Carriage – Carriage Rides Permit

Town Manager Hildebran stated that Mr. Bridger Medlin, owner of Southern Breezes was requesting authorization to conduct carriage rides in the downtown area.

Based on Council's policy adopted in 1994, all carriage rides must be approved by Council. They must also include the following information:

1. Sponsoring party and/or company background
2. List of References
3. Valid certificate of insurance for the duration of license period with the Town to be named additional insured
4. Valid Town of Blowing Rock business license

5. Proposed Route, including Pick-up and Drop-off Locations
6. Days/Hours of Operation
7. Months of Operation
8. Inclement Weather Plan
9. Safety/Cleanliness Plan
10. Housing/Feeding Plan
11. Animal Treatment Plan
12. Rate Schedule

Mr. Medlin gave a background of Southern Breezes, a company he started in 2000. He stated that his company had been conducting carriage rides in the city of Charlotte for several years and his main concern was horse care and safety. He also advised that he had met all the criteria required by Council regarding this issue. Mr. Medlin reported the proposed pick-up and drop-off site was near the Pictorial Museum beside Memorial Park. The proposed route would be down Main Street, onto Laurel Lane, past Mayview Lake, up Clark Street, onto Hwy 221, back onto Main Street. He also spoke regarding the guidelines for dealing with traffic issues and that he had met with Chief Brown to discuss the proposed route as well as safety concerns. Next, Mr. Medlin talked about his animal treatment plan and rate schedule. He advised that he would be willing to pay a stipend to the town per carriage ride for the use of the pick-up/drop-off site.

Commissioner Klutz mentioned concerns he had regarding traffic safety.

Mr. Earl Horne, a resident of Clark Street, stated that Council had been “down this road” twice already and decided that in-town carriage rides were not feasible in Blowing Rock. He also felt the residents along the proposed route needed to speak pertaining to the carriage ride issue and a decision should not be made until then.

Commissioner Steele voiced his discontent with the proposed location. He felt this area would be too crowded. He advised that he was not opposed to carriage rides, but did not feel this was the right place.

Town resident Ginny Stevens agreed with Mr. Steele stating the area near the Pictorial Museum was very congested and would not be a good location. She also suggested that Mr. Medlin speak with the Park Service about having carriage rides along the horse trails. Mr. Medlin replied that he had spoken with the Park Service and carriage rides were not allowed on Park Service property.

Ms. Sharon Moore, owner of the Martin House property on Main Street, mentioned that perhaps the pick-up/drop-off site could be in the parking lot at the Martin House. Ms. Moore felt carriage rides downtown would increase tourism.

Mr. Kent Tarbuton, owner of Chetola Resort, also thought that carriage rides downtown would aid with tourism to the area, but there were several issues that needed to be worked out first. He mentioned during the Christmas season Chetola offered carriage

rides around the lake and this event was very popular. He also advised that he would be willing to allow a launching site at Chetola.

Audience member Deana Antone stated she had lived in Blowing Rock for the past 36 years and she felt that carriage rides would only add to Blowing Rock's charm and would be something that people would enjoy doing. Her only concern was the proposed location.

Mr. Horne advised that he was not opposed to the carriage rides and felt it would be a tourist attraction, but reiterated that residents should have a voice in the matter.

Mr. Medlin agreed that residents should be heard and he wanted the blessings of residents, merchants, and town officials.

Commissioner Yount made a motion to deny the request and refund Mr. Medlin's business license fee. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Klutz. Unanimously approved.

2. Ambulance Base – Resolution (Res. #2010-12)

It was the consensus of Council to table this item and further discuss the issue with Watauga County Commissioners.

3. Parade Update

Different starting times for the 4th of July and Christmas Parades had been discussed after Council had received requests to review the matter. Council then requested that Parks & Recreation Director Jennifer Brown and Police Chief Eric Brown further review the issue and get back with them with their conclusion.

Council asked Ms. Brown what she and Chief Brown had concluded regarding this matter. Ms. Brown stated there were several pros and cons for each time mentioned and they had decided that either time would be sufficient.

With no further discussion, Commissioner Klutz made a motion to leave the 4th of July and Christmas Parade time at 2:00 p.m. Commissioner Pickett seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

4. Surplus – Vehicle (Res. #2010-13)

Town Manager Hildebran presented Council with Resolution #2010-13 declaring a retired 1961 fire truck as surplus property and authorizing its disposal.

Pursuant to N.C.G.S. 160A-270(c), Town Council is authorized to sell personal property by electronic auction upon adoption of a resolution authorizing a town official to dispose of property belonging to the town by public auction.

Commissioner Klutz voiced that he would like for the town to keep possession of the fire truck due to its antique value. Mr. Hildebran stated the town was already housing a

1926 fire truck for restoration purposes and did not have adequate room for this truck. Emergency Services Director Kent Graham as well as Commissioner Matheson concurred with Mr. Hildebran regarding this matter.

Commissioner Yount, seconded by Commissioner Pickett made a motion to approve Resolution #2010-13 as presented. In favor: Yount, Pickett, Matheson & Steele. Against: Klutz. Motion carried 4-1.

Resolution #2010-13 Surplus Property – Exhibit B

5. Clean Water State Revolving Fund Program (CWSRF) – Wastewater (Res #2010-14)

Mr. Hildebran presented Resolution #2010-14 -Authorizing the Filing of an Application for State Loan Assistance for Wastewater Improvements for Council's consideration.

Mr. Hildebran explained that per the Town's Water & Sewer Capital Improvements Plan, the Town would be requesting \$600,000 for miscellaneous wastewater improvements including the installation of a new emergency generator, aeration basin diffusers and air piping, as well as treatment basin handrails.

The Clean Water State Revolving Fund Program (CWSRF) provides states with grant funding to establish revolving loan programs to assist in the funding of wastewater treatment facilities and projects associated with estuary and nonpoint source programs. The states are required to provide 20% matching funds. In North Carolina, these funds are made available to units of local government at one-half (1/2) of the market rate for a period of up to twenty (20) years. According to Mr. Hildebran, the current rate is 2.2 percent with a twenty year term.

Commissioner Klutz made a motion for approval of Resolution 2010-14 as presented by Mr. Hildebran. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Matheson. Unanimously approved.

(CWSRF) Wastewater Resolution #2010-14-Exhibit C

6. Budget Amendment (Ordinance #2010-17)

Council received Budget Amendment Ordinance #2010-17 for fiscal year 2010-2011 for their consideration.

Mr. Hildebran reviewed each section affected by the budget amendment. He advised that Section 1 (General Fund) was to allocate donated funds received for a bench in Memorial Park as well as allocate funds received by the Department of Health and Human Services to reimburse the Town for the salary of a seasonal staff member employed by the Town through participation in the NC Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services program.

Section 1 (General Capital Fund) was to complete the appropriation of prior year funds from the E.S. Building Project Reserve as well as Parking Reserve – Other, as approved in the FY 2010-2011 Budget Ordinance.

With no further discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Steele, seconded by Commissioner Klutz to approve Ordinance #2010-17 as presented. Unanimously approved.

Budget Amendment Ordinance #2010-17- Exhibit D

SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR

None

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

Commissioner Steele inquired about the status of Robbins Pool at Broyhill Lake. Parks & Recreation Director Brown stated the pool was doing extremely well. Mr. Steele requested that Ms. Brown compile a revenue report for Council's review. Mr. Hildebran stated it would be best to wait until the end of the season which would be Labor Day in order to get a complete report. He advised that staff would be happy to compile the information for Council's review at that time.

Mr. Steele also spoke regarding a parking issue on Hill Street. He stated that some people were in favor of allowing parking near Knights on Main and some were not. He felt the Town needed to take a stance and either enforce no parking or else allow parking; but it needed to be decided upon.

Commissioner Klutz mentioned that people attending the area churches were allowed to park in the streets and he did not see how this was different. Mr. Klutz also inquired if Chief Brown had received any calls regarding this issue. Chief Brown mentioned that he had received a number of calls.

Hill Street resident, Jane Fonvielle stated that she had to deal with this issue each day and that she had an accident because of having to cross the yellow line to miss the cars that were parked in the street. Commissioner Klutz suggested that Hill Street be made into a one-way street. Mr. Steele commented that he thought the fire department might have an issue with the street being one way. Emergency Services Director Kent Graham stated the fire department did not have an opinion on the issue.

Mayor Lawrence suggested that signage be installed in the area.

Ms. Carol Aldridge, also a resident of Hill Street, agreed that signage was needed in the area.

Council's consensus was to install "No Parking" signs on Hill Street and for the Police Department to enforce the ordinance.

Mr. Hildebran also mentioned that 15-minute parking signs had been reinstalled in front of Town Hall to accommodate customers.

Commissioner Klutz also asked that drainage problems on Morris Street near the Trexler residence be addressed. Mr. Hildebran advised that \$25,000 had been spent in that area approximately 4 years ago to help alleviate drainage problems, but Town Staff would review the matter further with the Town Engineer.

Commissioner Klutz also asked if a directional sign could be erected at the end of Green Street for Village Hardware. Mr. Hildebran advised that town staff would review the request.

ADJOURN

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

MAYOR _____
J.B. Lawrence

ATTEST _____
Sharon Greene, Town Clerk

ATTACHMENTS (8-10-10)

- Downtown Parking Standards Ordinance #2010-16-Exhibit A
- Surplus Property Resolution #2010-13 -Exhibit B
- CWSRF Wastewater Resolution #2010-14-Exhibit C
- Budget Amendment Ordinance #2010-17-Exhibit D