

MINUTES
Town of Blowing Rock
Board of Commissioners
Special Work Session-September 4, 2012

The Town of Blowing Rock Board of Commissioners held a special work session on Tuesday, September 4, 2012 at the Blowing Rock Fire and Rescue building located at 8001 Valley Blvd. Blowing Rock, NC. Present were Mayor Pro-tem Albert Yount, Commissioners Tommy Klutz, Dan Phillips, Doug Matheson, and Jim Steele. Mayor J.B. Lawrence was out of town and unable to attend. Others in attendance were Town Manager Scott Hildebran, Planning Director Kevin Rothrock and Town Clerk Sharon Greene. Various members from the Blowing Rock Appearance Advisory Commission were also in attendance.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Pro-tem Yount called the work session to order at 4:00 p.m.

DISCUSSION ITEM

Mayor Pro-tem Yount said the work session was called to discuss samples of retaining wall material to be used during the Hwy 321 road widening project taking place from the Green Park Inn to Shoppes on the Parkway. He stated that during the work session, input from members of Council as well as audience members would be received but a final decision would not be made.

Planning Director Rothrock advised that NCDOT Regional Engineer Doug Eller and NCDOT District Engineer Ivan Dishman were present to answer questions regarding the project. Mr. Rothrock further explained where retaining walls would be located along the widening project. He stated there were two samples in which to choose; the Vista dry-stack or a retaining wall as located at the ASU Convocation Center in Boone. He stated on the ASU wall sample, a stain had been applied, but if another color was preferred it could be changed.

Mr. Rothrock continued to explain that the NCDOT was working with the Blowing Rock Country Club regarding the retaining wall near the #4 hole as part of their right-of-way agreement.

Mayor Pro-tem Yount stated that he thought there had been some type of misconception regarding the retaining wall samples available. He commented that Council had not chosen the samples and that he understood that NCDOT had already ordered some of the ASU wall samples thinking that was what the Town preferred. Mr. Rothrock responded that he had chosen the ASU wall to create a custom form liner sample and in order to do so, a wall needed to have sufficient size and the ASU wall met that need.

Several Council members expressed their dismay with the samples given and stated they did not understand why the work session was being held since a decision seemed to already have been made without their input.

Town Manager Hildebran also commented that it was his understanding there would be several options for approval.

Commissioner Klutz stated that he was not in favor of the ASU wall sample and voiced his concern that it was too late to change. Commissioner Phillips also asked about the cost that would be incurred if a change was made. Mr. Eller explained that cost would be incurred by the contractor Taylor and Murphy if the wall samples were changed at this point since they were abiding by the contract between the Taylor and Murphy Construction and the NCDOT.

Mr. Rothrock explained that the color and the depth of the grout between the rock formations could be changed if Council chose. Mr. Eller also explained how the wall panels would be installed. Commissioner Steele recommended that a scale rendering be done showing what the wall would look like.

Commissioner Klutz also asked if the wall would have a cap at the top. Mr. Eller stated the project plans did not call for a cap.

Audience member Deborah Wysor stated that she did not care for the wall samples that were shown because Blowing Rock deserved better. Mr. Rothrock stated that he wouldn't recommend anything for Blowing Rock that would not be complimentary to the Town.

Commissioner Phillips stated Blowing Rock was a special place and the widening project needed to be done correctly because ultimately it was the Council who had to answer to the citizens. Commissioner Klutz voiced that he would like to see the retaining walls be made from real stone. Mr. Rothrock stated the cost would be exceedingly higher and the Memorandum of Understanding did not require rock walls.

Commissioner Steele was concerned that NCDOT would continue with the retaining walls if the Town didn't make a decision soon. Mr. Eller explained the retaining wall installation process in which the contractor would begin work on three portions of retaining walls at once and work was scheduled to commence in the fall.

Mr. Dishman stated that he would speak with representatives from the NCDOT to try and get answers to the questions and concerns discussed and respond back to the Town in the next few days, so that discussion could continue at the next regular Council meeting. Mayor Pro-tem Yount expressed the need for answers post-haste.

Commissioner Steele commented that he would not be able to attend the next Council meeting and if a decision regarding the two samples viewed during the work session

and with the lack of answers to several concerns that he had, he was not in favor of either of the samples at this point.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, Commissioner Steele made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Matheson. Unanimously approved.

**MAYOR
PRO-TEM**

Albert Yount

ATTEST

Sharon Greene, Town Clerk