

DRAFT
MINUTES
Town of Blowing Rock
Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting- June 10, 2014

A "Meet the Chief" reception was held prior to the meeting so that residents could meet Police Chief Tony Jones and welcome him to the community.

The Town of Blowing Rock Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, June 10, 2014 at 5:30 p.m. The meeting took place at Town Hall located at 1036 Main Street, Blowing Rock. Present were Mayor J.B. Lawrence, Commissioners Albert Yount, Dan Phillips, Sue Sweeting, Doug Matheson and Ray Pickett. Others in attendance were Town Manager Scott Fogleman, Town Attorney Allen Moseley, Town Engineer Doug Chapman, Planning Director Kevin Rothrock, Building Inspector John Warren, Police Chief Tony Jones, Public Works Director Mike Wilcox, Parks & Recreation Director Jennifer Brown, Emergency Services Director Kent Graham and Town Clerk Sharon Greene.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Lawrence called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS AND REPORTS

Swearing in of Police Chief Tony Jones

Police Chief Tony Jones was sworn by Town Clerk Greene.

Highway 321 Valley Boulevard Construction Update

Kipp Turner of Maymead Construction began his monthly update by stating that grading continued near the Skyland View Avenue portion of the Hwy. 321 Widening Project. He also updated everyone regarding underground utilities placement.

Mr. Turner stated that work continued on the retaining walls and advised a meeting was planned the following Thursday, June 12th between NCDOT representatives, Council and BRAAC members to discuss wall rock samples and stain colors.

Commissioner Phillips mentioned his concerns regarding erosion problems near the Norwood Circle entrance and wanted someone to investigate further.

Commissioner Yount expressed his concerns with the appearance of the walls near the Green Park Inn and the Blowing Rock Country Club and the need for uniformity in those areas.

Mayor Lawrence thanked Mr. Turner for his monthly update.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Sweeting asked that a correction be made to the minutes for the May 8, 2014 meeting. She stated that Blowing Rock Appearance Advisory Commission member Kurt Andrews had been present at the joint meeting between Council and BRAAC; however, his name had been omitted from the list of attendees in the minutes. With that correction, Commissioner Sweeting made a motion to approve minutes for the May 8th, 13th, 20th, 21st and 22nd meetings, seconded by Commissioner Pickett, unanimously approved.

CONSENT AGENDA

Town Manager Fogleman presented the following items on the Consent Agenda:

1. Blue Ridge Relay “Exchange Zone” Friday, September 5, 2014

The Blue Ridge Relay group has requested use of the Robbins Pool parking lot from 4:30 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. on Friday, September 5, 2014, with the highest concentration likely from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. This date would be after the pool closed on September 1. Mr. Fogleman commented that staff believed this could be accommodated by temporarily reserving the section of the parking lot nearest the pool and allowing access to the pool restroom facilities.

2. Pool Heater Replacement

Difficulties have been experienced over the past two years and again this year keeping the pool heater operating. The existing pool heater unit has been discontinued and the company that made the heater will not service it. In order to prevent there being an extended period of time without being able to heat the water, staff recommends appropriating \$16,000 of previously unrecognized fiscal year 2014 sales tax proceeds so that a new heater can be ordered and installed prior to complete failure of the existing heater.

Commissioner Sweeting made a motion that Item #1 Blue Ridge “Exchange Zone” Friday, September 5, 2014 be removed from the Consent Agenda in order for Council to further discuss the matter. Commissioner Phillips seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

Commissioner Phillips made a motion to approve item #2 of the Consent Agenda, seconded by Commissioner Sweeting. Unanimously approved.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

1. Ordinance Amendment to the Land Use Code – Sign Ordinance – Decorative Lighting

Planning Director Kevin Rothrock presented Council with proposed changes to the Town's sign ordinance regarding decorative lighting. He advised that in December 2013, Council amended the sign ordinance that identified the traditional holiday lighting period from November 15th to January 15th and extended the period to March 31st when

decorative lighting could be displayed. After ending in March, staff contacted several businesses where string lighting had been displayed beyond the deadline period and asked them to refrain from illuminating the string lights until the following holiday period began in November. The string lights could remain in place on roof eaves, etc; however, icicle-style lights had to be removed due to their visibility.

Based on feedback received, some business owners wanted to continue with string lighting in their landscaping, trees, and bushes. Mr. Rothrock stated the current sign ordinance prohibited the display of string lighting in trees and landscaping between April 1st and November 14th as defined in Section 16-17.3.13.

During the most recent Planning Board meeting, a recommendation was made to allow landscape lighting year round. This would allow string lighting in trees, bushes, landscaped areas, and along fencing.

Greg Tarbutton commended Council for their decision to review the proposed changes to the Town Ordinance regarding decorative lighting. He commented that Chetola had lighting along their fence and without the lighting he had patrons who thought they were closed. He also stated that he frequented the Village Café in Town and without the lighting in trees in that area, the area would lose some of its ambiance.

Mr. Tarbutton also commended Council on their work with ASU regarding the Town gateways and preserving the character of Blowing Rock. He reiterated the need for decorative lighting and felt it would be an asset to the area.

Audience member Karyn Herterich also spoke in favor of decorative lighting, but felt the lighting should be limited to white lights only.

Business owner Mardi Sumrell also spoke in favor of allowing decorative lighting throughout the year, she felt it was charming and attractive.

Town resident John Aldridge also commended Council for further reviewing this matter and felt it was an asset to town businesses.

Planning Director Rothrock reiterated that decorative lighting was limited to landscaping, trees, bushes, fencing, and was not recommended to be allowable on building structures.

Commissioner Yount made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Commissioner Pickett. Unanimously approved.

Commissioner Phillips commented that he wasn't against allowing decorative lighting; however, he felt there was a need for uniformity and wanted to know what the goal was in allowing decorative lighting. He also questioned if all businesses would be encouraged to have decorative lighting.

Mayor Lawrence advised that decorative lighting would not be allowed on buildings year round; only on landscaping and not all businesses had landscaping.

Ms. Herterich also commented from the audience that some businesses had their lights displayed tastefully along Main Street and mentioned that financial support might be possible from BRAAC.

Commissioner Sweeting felt the Chamber of Commerce should be the ones to encourage businesses to have decorative lighting.

Ms. Sumrell commented that in her opinion, uniformity wasn't always good.

Commissioner Matheson also expressed that he didn't want Main Street to look like Christmas year round.

With no further comments, Commissioner Sweeting made a motion to approve the sign ordinance regarding decorative lighting as presented, seconded by Commissioner Matheson. Unanimously approved. **Ordinance Amendment to the Land Use Code – Decorative Lighting – Exhibit A**

2. Ordinance Amendment to the Land Use Code – Sign Ordinance – Sandwich Boards

Planning Director Rothrock commented that in the past, several businesses had requested that sandwich boards be allowed to display special sales and promotions. According to Mr. Rothrock, sandwich boards and temporary signs were not allowed by the Land Use Code except for public events such as Winterfest, Art in the Park, etc.

Based on review and consideration by the Planning Board during their March meeting, a recommendation was made to allow sandwich boards for businesses in the Town Center and Central Business zoning areas. Mr. Rothrock said that uniformity, size and public access needed to be discussed. He then presented an example of a wooden framed, black chalk board that could be utilized if approved.

Mr. Rothrock stated if sandwich boards were allowed, they should not be left outside overnight or block or impede a public sidewalk or a code-required exit.

Mayor Lawrence asked if any consideration had been given to allowing sandwich boards or temporary signage along Valley Boulevard. Mayor Lawrence stated with the road construction in that area more temporary signage was needed. Planning Director Rothrock stated temporary signage was allowed, consisting of a post with a sign attached.

Business owner Doug Beach also reiterated that businesses along Valley Boulevard needed more signage during the construction process.

Commissioner Sweeting expressed concerns with code enforcement regarding signage and outside display of merchandise. Planning Director Rothrock advised outside display of merchandise was not covered in the Town Code; however, in the past it had been allowed if sidewalks were not blocked and if the merchandise was within 18 inches of their store front. He also commented that in 2001, Council had proposed to do away with outside displays, however it was decided that allowing flexibility would be useful to businesses.

Commissioner Sweeting commented that less visible businesses needed sandwich boards.

Mr. Beach also mentioned that the entrance to his business changed periodically due to the road construction making it difficult to place a sign at his location.

It was the consensus of Council for this issue to be taken back to the Planning Board for further review along with the issue of outside display.

Mayor Lawrence expressed businesses along Valley Boulevard needed signage right away especially during the 4th of July holiday.

Commissioner Pickett asked Town Attorney Moseley if he knew of any provisions in the code allowing businesses on Valley Boulevard to install temporary signs while construction was in process. Mr. Moseley stated he wasn't prepared to answer that question and would discuss this matter with Planning Director Rothrock the following day.

Former Council Member Keith Tester stated he thought there was a provision in the Town Code that allowed temporary signage in special circumstances such as this.

Attorney Moseley advised this matter could possibly fall under general Police powers more than under the sign ordinance since this was for public benefit as well as public safety.

It was the consensus of Council for staff to further investigate this issue.

Mayor Lawrence asked of public comments regarding the proposed ordinance change allowing sandwich boards.

Ms. Herterich commented that nothing looked worse than bad handwriting on a poorly erased chalk board. She stated while driving through Town, she noticed there were less signs during the week than on weekends. She also felt if sandwich boards were allowed, there should be several designs to choose from and consistency was needed; however, she didn't think there would be a large proliferation of signs.

Executive Director of the Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce Charles Hardin asked if there had been any inquiries or demands regarding sandwich boards. Planning Director

Rothrock stated he had received numerous inquiries. Commissioner Sweeting stated she had received inquiries as well.

Mr. Tarbutton commented the Town of Blowing Rock was unique in part, due to the sign ordinance that was in place and suggested the Planning Board discuss framing ideas as well. He thought that Council should follow through with the success they had so far with the current sign ordinance.

Commissioner Phillips made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Commissioner Pickett. Unanimously approved.

Commissioner Matheson then made a motion to send this matter back to the Planning Board for further review in reference to uniformity, location, mandating whether to allow a sandwich board or not, etc. Commissioner Pickett seconded the motion and commented that he thought the Planning Board should also discuss the need for choices to choose from and if the sandwich boards should receive administrative approval prior to use. Mayor Lawrence suggested sandwich boards be discussed in conjunction with the outside display of merchandise by the Planning Board. Commissioner Sweeting also felt uniformity was needed and suggested that sandwich boards could be allowed for a period of 6 months then reviewed after that. It was the consensus of Council for the Planning Board to review these items further. Unanimously approved.

3. Ordinance Amendment to the Land Use Code – Commercial Design – Metal Roofing

Planning Director Rothrock stated that based on discussions and recommendations from the Planning Board at their March and May meetings, a proposed ordinance amendment regarding metal roofing was being presented to Council. Planning Director Rothrock stated the draft ordinance limited metal roofing on commercial buildings to not more than 25% of the total roof structure, unless approved specifically by Council on a case-by-case basis. The proposed ordinance would apply to all commercial buildings and single-family homes in the Town Center (TC) and Central Business (CB) zoning districts. The proposed ordinance would also limit metal roofing to dark colors (brown, dark gray, etc.)

Commissioner Phillips inquired as to what prompted this item to come before the Planning Board. Planning Director Rothrock stated he had requests from several builders, and Blowing Rock Country Club had a need to repair roofing on the club house.

After a brief discussion, Commissioner Sweeting made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Commissioner Pickett. Commissioner Sweeting then made a motion to approve the ordinance amendment as written, seconded by Commissioner Pickett. Unanimously approved. **Ordinance Amendment to the Land Use Code – Commercial Design-Metal Roofing – Exhibit B**

4. Public Hearing on the Recommended Budget for Fiscal year 2015

Town Manager Fogleman stated the Fiscal Year 2015 Budget was presented to Council during their meeting held on May 13, 2014 and posted online and a copy was available for review at Town Hall. After three separate Council work sessions, several changes were made to the Recommended Budget. Town Manager Fogleman then summarized the following list of changes:

- No Change to Schedule B License Fee Rates
- Administration and Finance Intern Removed
- Information Technology Project Support Changes to Contracted Services
- Classification and Pay Program Implementation and Pay Adjustments for Staff
- Classification and Pay Program Implementation Adjustment for Council
- Fire Department Contribution to Debt Service for Fire Station
- Reallocation of TDA Funding to Contribute \$25,000 For Pursuit of Middle Fork Greenway
- Tax Rate Change to 31.0 Cents

Town Manager Fogleman explained with these changes to the 2015 Fiscal Year Budget, there would be approximately \$109,783 that would be contributed to the repaving of Town streets. Mr. Fogleman advised that every Town road typically needs to be repaved every 10 years which would be an annual cost of \$350,000 and with the addition of these funds to the \$71,000 already appropriated to repaving streets, the total for street repaving would be \$180,783 in Fiscal Year 2015.

Mayor Lawrence then opened the public hearing for comments. Ms. Karyn Herterich commended Mr. Fogleman and Town staff for their good work in preparing the budget.

Mayor Lawrence also extended his appreciation to Mr. Fogleman and Town staff for their hard work in preparing the Fiscal Year 2015 Budget. Commissioner Pickett made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Commissioner Yount. Unanimously approved.

Commissioner Phillips made a motion to accept the Recommended Fiscal Year 2015 Budget with the above mentioned changes, seconded by Commissioner Pickett. Commissioner Yount commented there were things in the budget that he liked and some that had caused him concern; however, he was in support of the Recommended Budget. Unanimously approved. **Recommended Budget for Fiscal Year 2015 – Exhibit C**

DISCUSSION AGENDA

1. Budget for Fiscal Year 2015

After the official presentation of the Recommended Fiscal Year 2015 Budget with changes discussed during three budget work sessions, the Fiscal Year 2015 Budget was accepted following the public hearing as documented above in the Public Hearing section of the minutes.

2. Designated Parking for Model T Club Friday, July 18th from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Planning Director Rothrock stated the Model T Ford Club International would be holding their annual car and fashion show in Boone from July 13th through July 18th. According to Mr. Rothrock, the group would be traveling to nearby towns in the area to display their cars and visit the communities. On Friday, July 18th, the Model T Club would be traveling to Blowing Rock between the hours of 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. The Town was asked by representatives of the club to reserve parking spaces for the Model T Ford Club to allow their vehicles to be displayed to the public. The vehicle owners would frequent shops and restaurants while in Town.

Planning Director Rothrock advised that staff had considered reserving all parking on Park Avenue, the American Legion parking and the top deck of the American Legion parking deck for the club. However, Park Avenue would not be closed and all other parking would remain open to the public.

There were several concerns with the event being on a busy day such as the Friday before Art-in the-Park.

Police Chief Tony Jones also mentioned that he had spoken with residents along Park Avenue regarding the event and had received positive comments as long as the road stayed open to the public.

Council expressed they would like for the club to visit Blowing Rock, but another day other than Friday, July 18th might be better. Planning Director Rothrock stated he would be in contact with Steve Bumgarner, Executive Director of Model T Ford Club International to see if another day would be feasible.

Audience member Karyn Herterich commented that she didn't see any economic benefit from this event and felt strongly that reserving parking spaces was a bad precedent.

Commissioner Phillips stated he thought the event would be good for the community.

Council directed Town staff to contact Mr. Bumgarner of the Model T Club about coming to Blowing Rock on Tuesday or Wednesday of that week.

3. Blowing Rock Historical Society Donation of \$25,000 for the American Legion Renovation Project

Town Manager Fogleman advised that the Blowing Rock Historical Society had agreed to donate \$25,000 to help with the renovation of the American Legion Building. According to Mr. Fogleman, they had also agreed to assist with fundraising efforts by calling selected individuals to encourage personal donations. The Historical Society had also suggested that donors be provided with the following naming opportunities:

\$200,000 Entire building with "The American Legion" as part of the name

- \$100,000 Two opportunities at this level: the Fitness Room and the Multi-Purpose Room
- \$25,000 Entry foyer – Requested by the Blowing Rock Historical Society in recognition of their \$25,000 donation
- \$25,000 Kitchen rehabilitation and appliances
- \$10,000 Two opportunities at this level: the Women’s and Men’s Restrooms
- \$50,000 Outdoor Deck around all three sides

Mr. Fogleman stated staff recommended that Council accept the Blowing Rock Historical Society \$25,000 donation and the suggested naming approach.

Town Manager Fogleman then proceeded to give a background summary regarding the American Legion Building Renovation Project. He also presented conceptual drawings of the building.

Mr. Fogleman also mentioned the Blowing Rock Appearance Advisory Commission (BRAAC) had recently pledged \$5,000 toward landscaping at the American Legion Building.

Commissioner Sweeting thanked the Blowing Rock Historical Society and BRAAC for their donations. Commissioner Sweeting then made a motion to accept the \$25,000 donation and donor naming approach for the project, seconded by Commissioner Pickett. Unanimously approved.

At this time, the item removed from the Consent Agenda was discussed.

Blue Ridge Relay “Exchange Zone” Friday, September 5, 2014

Parks and Recreation Director Jennifer Brown stated the Blue Ridge Relay group had requested the use of the Robbins Pool parking lot from 4:30 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. on Friday, September 5, 2014. She advised that Robbins Pool would be closed for the season as of September 1, 2014 and that this event wouldn’t conflict with pool parking needs. She also expressed the pool restrooms would be available for use.

Commissioner Phillips inquired about other restroom accommodations being available. Chamber Executive Director Charles Hardin stated that portable bathroom trailers could be costly. Commissioner Matheson asked if the Town would be in charge of maintaining the restrooms during this time. Ms. Brown stated her department would be cleaning the restrooms; however, they would be reimbursed by the Blue Ridge Relay group.

Council asked if Chief Jones anticipated any traffic problems. Chief Jones responded that he didn’t have any concerns and the event is not expected to warrant additional officers.

Commissioner Sweeting made a motion to allow the Blue Ridge Relay “Exchange Zone” use of the Robbins Pools parking lot and restrooms as presented, seconded by Commissioner Yount. Unanimously approved.

SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR

None

UPDATES

Planning Director Rothrock announced there would be a public drop-in session regarding the Town's Comprehensive Plan on Thursday, June 19, 2014 from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 pm.

A meeting between Council, BRAAC members and NCDOT is planned for Thursday, June 12th at 2:00 p.m. to discuss retaining wall stone formation, color, etc. for the Hwy 321 Widening Project.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 p.m.

MAYOR _____
J.B. Lawrence

ATTEST _____
Sharon Greene, Town Clerk

ATTACHMENTS (06-10-14)

Ordinance Amendment to the Land Use Code: Decorative Lighting – Exhibit A
Ordinance Amendment to the Land Use Code: Commercial Design-Metal Roofing
– Exhibit B
Recommended Budget for Fiscal Year 2015 – Exhibit C