

DRAFT

**Town of Blowing Rock
Town Council Regular Meeting
February 10, 2015**

The Town of Blowing Rock Town Council met in regular session on Tuesday, February 10, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. The meeting took place at Town Hall located at 1036 Main Street, Blowing Rock. Present were Mayor J.B. Lawrence, Council members 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, Finance Officer Nicole Norman, Public Works Director Mike Wilcox, Parks & Recreation Director Jennifer Brown, Fire Chief Kent Graham and Town Clerk Sharon Greene.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Lawrence called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Council Member Sweeting made a motion to approve the minutes for the January 13, 2015 meeting, including Closed Session and the 2015 Retreat held January 18-20, 2015 as written, seconded by Council Member Pickett. Unanimously approved.

SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS AND REPORTS

Highway 321 Valley Boulevard Construction Update

Mr. Kipp Turner of Maymead Construction was unable to attend the meeting.

Town Manager Fogleman presented the following Consent Agenda items:

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Tax Releases and Refunds

Various property tax adjustments over time become apparent and present themselves in the form of requests for releases (adjustments) and refunds. Three tax releases totaling \$510.20 and two refunds totaling \$1,118.46 have been identified for Council approval. **Release #2016-06 – Attachment A - 1Release #2014-07 – A-2, Release 2014-08 – A-3, Release #2014-09 – A-4, Refund #2014-03 – A-5, & Refund #2014-04 –A-6**

2. Report of Uncollected Taxes and Approval to Publish Delinquent 2014 Real Property Owner List

Real property tax billed for the 2014 tax year (fiscal year 2014-2015) total \$3,376,209. Through February 2, 2014, \$3,216,929 or 95.3% has been collected. Consistent with the NC General Statute 105-369(b1), and following Council approval, staff will send an individual letter to each property owner and allow at least 30 days for payment prior to publishing the list of real property owners and amounts still unpaid as of that date (projected to April 9, 2015). **Report of Uncollected Taxes and Approval to Publish Delinquent 2014 Property Owner List – Attachment B**

3. Development of a Required Emergency Action Plan for the Town of Blowing Rock Dam

As required by the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Town must prepare an Emergency Action Plan for the water reservoir dam. It is to include

physical information about the dam, a list of possible emergency conditions and actions, emergency contact information, a list of facilities such as houses, business roads, recreational areas, etc. below the dam which could be affected by a dam failure, contact information for these facilities and a map showing the affected facilities. The plan is expected to cost \$9,300 to prepare and staff recommends this be funded by an appropriation from fund balance within the utility fund.

4. Mayview Madness Date of Saturday, September 19, 2015

The Blue Ridge Conservancy is requesting approval to hold the 16th Annual Mayview Madness 5k and Kids Fun Run on Saturday, September 19, 2015 in Blowing Rock. Now that the Wonderland Trail road repairs complete, the route is planned to return to its traditional route through the Mayview neighborhood. The kids' race will be the same route as 2014.

5. Hunter's Heros Date of June 6, 2015

The Hunter's Heros Memorial Race Committee is requesting approval to hold their 3rd annual 5k/10 mile run on Saturday, June 6, 2015. The 5k route will end at the Boone Police Department and the 10-mile route will end at the Blowing Rock Police Department.

6. Confirmation of Appointments to Boards and Commissions

Council appointments to the Board and Commissions was discussed and agreed to at the January Council Retreat. A summary of the new appointments and reappointments along with a listing of all the members on each Board had been prepared for formal Council confirmation. Newly appointed positions will begin their respective terms and meetings in the month of March. The ordinance amendment to reduce the number of members on the Blowing Rock Appearance Advisory Commission will be presented to the Planning Board in February and be forwarded to Council in March. **Summary of Appointments/Reappointments – Attachment C**

7. Funding Adjustment for the American Legion Building Project

Several items that are best addressed during the construction period have recently been identified for consideration. These items include credit for a metal picnic table not being ordered because the Boy Scouts are building them for us, reinforcing the subfloor under the foyer and restrooms for the tile, exterior lighting for the garage door entrance and flag pole, retaining walls for the pedestrian safety and landscaping, and increasing the insulation from R11 to R40. With recognition of a new \$1,000 donation and use of remaining contingency for the project, \$2,757.54 additional funding from fund balance in the general fund is needed.

Council Member Matheson made a motion to approve all items on the Consent Agenda as presented, seconded by Council Member Sweeting. Unanimously approved.

Prior to the public hearing, Mayor Lawrence stated that he realized upon reading an article written by David Rogers of Blowing Rock News that he should recuse himself from any discussion regarding the Appalachian Ski Mountain sign request due to his son being employed by Appalachian Ski Mountain on a part-time basis. Mayor Lawrence then asked to be recused during the following public hearing. Council Member Matheson made a motion to recuse Mayor Lawrence as requested, seconded by Council Member Sweeting. Unanimously approved.

PUBLIC HEARING

1. Appalachian Ski Mountain Related Sign Ordinance Amendment

Planning Director Rothrock explained that Town Council held a public hearing on January 13, 2015 to review and consider a draft ordinance that would have provided flexibility for Appalachian Ski Mountain to have a larger ground-mounted free-standing sign at the corner of Hwy 321 and Edmisten Road. After the public hearing, Council made a motion to send the draft ordinance back to the Planning Board for further study and consideration of an ordinance that would apply to a broader area of properties along Hwy. 321 where the posted speed limit is greater than 35 mph.

A special Planning Board meeting was held on January 29, 2015 to study and consider free-standing sign alternatives within the corridor along Hwy. 321 with posted speed limits greater than 35 mph. Their recommendation was to make minor revisions to the original draft of Appalachian Ski Mountain sign design which included sign area space for a

visitor/tourism-related tenant. The Planning Board recommendation included an increase in the overall sign areas from 60 square feet to 70 square feet and to add more supporting language in the ordinance preamble recognizing the impact Appalachian Ski Mountain has on the local economy as a winter destination. Planning Director Rothrock stated the Planning Board recommendations also included clarification that the draft ordinance would not preclude other tourism-related tenants from utilizing the proposed welcome center on a year-round basis.

Planning Director Rothrock also advised that Appalachian Ski Mountain had agreed to lower their sign from 18 feet to 16 feet, and to reduce the length from 14 feet to 10 feet.

Mayor Pro-tem Yount asked for clarification from Attorney Moseley regarding his ability to make a motion or vote during the public hearing due to Mayor Lawrence being recused. Attorney Moseley advised he would be allowed to do both.

Mayor Pro-tem Yount commented that during the Chamber Awards Banquet held at the Green Park Inn, the Moretz family/Appalachian Ski Mountain had received special recognition due to their economic impact in the area. He offered his congratulations to the Moretz family for this distinction. Mayor Pro-tem Yount stated that according to Attorney Moseley, those wishing to speak during the public hearing did not have to be sworn in.

Mayor Pro-tem Yount also commented that he would like to clarify a myth that Council had turned the Appalachian Ski Mountain sign request down during their January meeting and advised that was not the case. He stated that Council had postponed making a decision until the Planning Board could further review the Town's ordinance pertaining to the ETJ area where the speed limit exceeded 35 mph.

Council Member Phillips stated he had received several text messages, calls and emails regarding this matter and stated that he was not against Appalachian Ski Mountain; he wanted what was best for the Town and felt there was a need to protect the 321 By-Pass in that area. With the cooperation of the Moretz family, and good conversations, Council Member Phillips stated that he planned to offer the following motion: "In recognizing the Moretz family efforts, and the latest ordinance amendment recommendations from the Planning Board, I will move to approve the Appalachian Ski Mountain sign request consistent with the most recent plan design to reduce the sign height from 18 feet to 16 feet". "In addition, I ask that the Planning Board continue their work in preparing an ordinance to address the areas in which the speed limit exceeds 35 mph and possibly the

need for larger signs in those areas, if needed; and recommend an ordinance that would equally apply to the remaining properties”.

Council Member Matheson extended his congratulations to the Moretz family and stated he would support the sign request as well.

Mayor Pro-tem Yount opened the floor for public comments. Blowing Rock citizen, Cullie Tarleton remarked that he appreciated the economic impact that Appalachian Ski Mountain brought to the area enabling citizens to enjoy year-round amenities they might not otherwise get to enjoy. He commented when he first saw the rendering of the proposed welcome center and sign, he thought they were very proportional to one another and very attractive, they looked as if they grew there. He voiced that he was disappointed with Council’s initial reaction to the sign request; however everyone had their own views. Mr. Tarleton urged Council to unanimously approve the most recent sign request and thanked them for their service to the Town.

Applicant Brad Moretz thanked Council for their time spent on this request and their valuable input regarding the sign. As suggested, the sign was reduced from 18 feet to 16 feet and Mr. Moretz maintained the lettering/logo actually looked more prominent and effective after the reduction. Mr. Moretz advised there would be 500 square feet of landscaping around the proposed sign instead of the 30 square feet required by the Town which would further enhance the look of the sign.

Mr. Moretz commented that High Country Host had approached them regarding the use of the welcome center year-round, due to the possibility of them losing their current location with the redevelopment of the K-Mart property in Boone. Mr. Moretz stated he thought this arrangement would be beneficial to everyone involved.

Mr. Moretz thanked Council for recognizing the positive effect Appalachian Ski Mountain had on Blowing Rock’s year-round economy. He closed by saying that he thought Council would be very proud of the collaborative efforts on this project once it was completed.

Kent Tarbuton, Ex-officio Chairman of the High Country Host Board, thanked Council for their consideration regarding this request. He emphasized that High County Host

consisted of members from five (5) different counties and all were in agreement about High Country Host having a location in Blowing Rock, especially so close to the Blue Ridge Parkway. He also confirmed that NCDOT had purchased their Boone location.

Citizen and friend to Appalachian Ski Mountain Stacy Eggers, IV commended Council on their excellent balance in maintaining the character and integrity of Blowing Rock while promoting the tourism industry. He advised that he had skied at App Ski Mountain for many years and each time he was there, he met new people from other states, countries, etc. Mr. Eggers thanked Council, Town Staff and the Planning Board for their efforts in allowing this tasteful and beautiful sign.

Athens, Georgia resident, Mitch Davis began by saying that people didn't take the time to thank others enough for things that they do. He continued to say that he had skied at App Ski Mountain since he was 10 years old, then he was later employed by the Moretz family. He had been a member of the French Swiss Ski Patrol for 27 years, so he had a good understanding of the mountains. Mr. Davis thanked Council for the work they did and for their consideration on this project.

Charlie Sellers, proprietor of the Blowing Rock Attraction, stated he had known the Moretz family for many years and he was proud of all that they had done for the community. He advised that during the Martin Luther King holiday, they had counted 500 people that visited "The Rock" who had App Ski Mountain lift tickets. Mr. Sellers continued to thank Council for making the best decision for the community.

Mayor Pro-tem Yount then asked TDA Director Tracy Brown to come forward to give everyone a better understanding regarding the High Country Host and to clear up a myth that High Country Host was a Boone-based operation. Mr. Brown explained the High Country Host had been in Boone for 30+ years and was funded in part by NCDOT which would continue after they moved. He further explained that High Country Host was a regional marketing organization that helped promote tourism for the five-county region. Mr. Brown advised that he was on the High Country Host board along with several other Blowing Rock residents. Mayor Pro-tem Yount asked Mr. Brown if it would be beneficial to Blowing Rock to have High Country Host located here. Mr. Brown assured him it would be.

Council Member Phillips asked if High Country Host paid for ads in magazines that promoted the area. Mr. Brown responded that they did.

With no further comments, Council Member Matheson made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Council Member Sweeting. Unanimously approved.

Mayor Pro-tem Yount then made a motion to approve the Appalachian Ski Mountain sign request as presented, with a reduction in height from 18 feet to 16 feet. Also, for the Planning Board to continue to study the ordinance pertaining to the ETJ area where the speed limit exceeded 35 mph. The motion received a second from Council Member Sweeting. Unanimously approved. **Appalachian Ski Mountain Related Sign Ordinance Amendment #2015-01 – Attachment D**

DISCUSSION AGENDA

1. Application Being Made for Governor's Highway Safety Grant for Police

Chief Tony Jones reviewed three priority items that his department had submitted grant requests to the Governor's Highway Safety Committee.

He stated their number one priority was a Custom Signals Radar Trailer due to ongoing concerns regarding speeding in Town. Chief Jones gave further details regarding this piece of equipment by saying this speed measuring device was mounted on a small trailer making it easily mobile. He explained the unit also had a 50-watt solar panel instead of batteries and was equipped with a Traffic Data Recording System to analyze speed and traffic flow in the area where it is located. The cost of the item would be approximately \$11,488.00.

Chief Jones then described the next priority item, a ProLaser Lidar Unit which also related to speeding. He explained this was a handheld version of the Car Mounted Radar units currently being used. The price of this item would be \$2,493.00.

The next priority item was a Wacker Neuson Light Tower that could be used in a variety of situations, including accidents, crime scenes, traffic checking station, etc. Chief Jones also expressed the light tower would be useful to other Town departments such as Public Works and Parks & Recreation. The cost of this item is \$7,410.00.

Chief Jones expressed the items discussed would be helpful in making areas of concern safer.

Mayor Pro-tem Yount asked Chief Jones if his department was now fully staffed. Chief Jones advised that for the first time in quite a while his department was fully staffed. Mayor Pro-tem Yount also asked if each officer had a body camera. Chief Jones stated that every officer did not have a body camera and he would be looking into future grant funding for that as well.

Council Member Matheson stated he was in favor of trying to get grant funding to help employees with their jobs and help them to remain safe. He then made a motion for Chief Jones to proceed with grant funding opportunities as presented, seconded by Council Member Pickett. Unanimously approved.

2. Bid Award Consideration for Public Works Building Project

Town Engineer Doug Chapman stated that discussion had begun regarding the need for a new Public Works building as far back as 2010. He then showed renderings of the Public Works Facility as it is currently, and how the project would look once it was completed. Mr. Chapman went into detail regarding the amenities that were planned, the site plan, etc.

Mr. Chapman advised that the Town had received bids for the Public Works Building Project on February 3, 2015 with Enterline & Russell being the low bidder at \$1,450,880.00.

Town Manager Fogleman explained a Conditional Bid Award would be needed on this project since it exceeded \$1 million dollars. He further explained a finance package, as well as a resolution would be sent to the NC Local Government Commission for approval.

He felt it would take at least 45 days to complete this package which would then come back before Council during their March meeting when a public hearing would also be held.

Council Member Pickett made a motion to approve Enterline & Russell's bid for the Public Works Building Project as presented, seconded by Council Member Sweeting. Unanimously approved.

SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR

None

At 7:10 p.m. Council Member Sweeting made a motion to enter into closed session pursuant to NCGS 143.318-11(a)(3), seconded by Council Member Pickett. Unanimously approved.

ADJOURN

At 7:35 p.m. Council reentered their regular meeting and with no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.

MAYOR _____ **ATTEST** _____

J.B. Lawrence Sharon Greene, Town Clerk

ATTACHMENTS (Feb. 10, 2015)

[Release #2016-06 – Attachment A- 1, Release #2014-07 – A-2, Release 2014-08 – A-3, Release #2014-09 – A-4, Refund #2014-03 – A-5, & Refund #2014-04 –A-6](#)

SEE BELOW

[Report of Uncollected Taxes and Approval to Publish Delinquent 2014 Property Owner List – Attachment B](#)

SEE BELOW

[Summary of Appointments/Reappointments – Attachment C](#)

SEE BELOW

[Appalachian Ski Mountain Related Sign Ordinance Amendment #2015-01 – Attachment D](#)

SEE BELOW



TOWN OF BLOWING ROCK

1036 Main Street • Post Office Box 47 • Blowing Rock, NC 28605

**Town of Blowing Rock
Release Request
No: 2014-06**

Property Owner: Town of Blowing Rock

Address: PO Box 47 Blowing Rock, NC 28605

Parcel Number: 2807-59-8177-000 Request Date: February 1, 2015

I Hereby Request Release of Tax Under G.S. 105-381 for the Following Year(s):

Assessment	Tax	Interest	Total	Tax Year
\$48,300	\$152.72	\$4.11	\$156.83	2014

Account Number: 000001028737

County: Watauga

Date of Council Meeting: _____

Release Amount: \$156.83

Specific Reason for Release

Billing Error- Property exempt.

Approved By: _____ Date: _____



TOWN OF BLOWING ROCK

1036 Main Street • Post Office Box 47 • Blowing Rock, NC 28605

Town of Blowing Rock Release Request No: 2014-07

Property Owner: Ernest C. Williams, Jr

Address: 30101 Brandy Sta SE Atlanta, GA 30339-4407

Parcel Number: 2807-85-6836-000

Request Date: February 1, 2015

I Hereby Request Release of Tax Under G.S. 105-381 for the Following Year(s):

Assessment	Tax	Interest	Total	Tax Year
\$16,300	\$ 45.64		\$ 45.64	2013
\$16,300	\$ 45.64		\$ 45.64	2012
\$16,300	\$ 45.64		\$ 45.64	2011
\$16,300	\$ 45.64		\$ 45.64	2010

Account Number: 000001642067

County: Watauga

Date of Council Meeting: _____

Release Amount: \$182.56

Specific Reason for Release

Property owned by Town of Blowing Rock until 2014, when sold to Mr. Williams. Should have been exempt for years 2010 – 2013. Mistakenly billed to Mr. Williams. Taxes were paid in full.

Approved By: _____ Date: _____



TOWN OF BLOWING ROCK

1036 Main Street • Post Office Box 47 • Blowing Rock, NC 28605

TOWN OF BLOWING ROCK TAX DEPARTMENT

Refund Request No 2014-03

Refund Request pursuant to NC General Statute 105-381 For Year 2014

<u>Year</u>	<u>Tax</u>	<u>Int/Penalties</u>	<u>Total Paid</u>	<u>Refund</u>
2013	\$ 45.64		\$ 45.64	\$ 45.64
2012	\$ 45.64		\$ 45.64	\$ 45.64
2011	\$ 45.64		\$ 45.64	\$ 45.64
2010	\$ 45.64		\$ 45.64	\$ 45.64
Total	\$182.56		\$182.56	\$182.56

Specific Reason for Refund: Property owned by Town of Blowing Rock until 2014, when sold to Mr. Williams. – Should have been exempt for 2010 – 2013 taxes. Mistakenly billed to Mr. Williams. Taxes were paid in full.

Person Receiving Refund: Ernest C. Williams Jr. 3101 Brandy Sta. SE Atlanta GA 30339-4407

Total Amount Refunded: _____ Date Approved: _____



TOWN OF BLOWING ROCK

1036 Main Street • Post Office Box 47 • Blowing Rock, NC 28605

Town of Blowing Rock Release Request No: 2014-08

Property Owner: Kenneth C. West

Address: PO Box 4063 Emerald Isle, NC 28594

Parcel Number: 2818-00-8501-002 Request Date: February 1, 2015

I Hereby Request Release of Tax Under G.S. 105-381 for the Following Year(s):

Assessment	Tax	Interest	Total	Tax Year
\$55,100	\$170.81		\$170.81	2014

Account Number: 000001748081

County: Watauga

Date of Council Meeting: _____

Release Amount: \$170.81

Specific Reason for Release

Per Watauga County owner appealed to the Property Tax Commission and property value was decreased from \$179,700 to \$124,600 (reduction in value of \$55,100).

Approved By: _____ Date: _____



TOWN OF BLOWING ROCK

1036 Main Street • Post Office Box 47 • Blowing Rock, NC 28605

TOWN OF BLOWING ROCK TAX DEPARTMENT

Refund Request No 2014-04

Refund Request pursuant to NC General Statute 105-381 For Year 2014

<u>Year</u>	<u>Tax</u>	<u>Int/Penalties</u>	<u>Total Paid</u>	<u>Refund</u>
2014	\$557.07		\$557.07	\$170.81

Specific Reason for Refund: Per Watauga County owner appealed to the Property Tax Commission and property value was decreased from \$179,700 to \$124,600 (reduction in value of \$55,100).

Person Receiving Refund: Kenneth C. West PO Box 4063 Emerald Isle, NC 28594

Total Amount Refunded: _____ **Date Approved:** _____



TOWN OF BLOWING ROCK

1036 Main Street • Post Office Box 47 • Blowing Rock, NC 28605

Town of Blowing Rock Release Request No: 2014-09

Property Owner: Samaritan's Purse

Address: 801 Bamboo Road, Boone NC 28607

Parcel Number: 2817-18-3480-000 Request Date: February 1, 2015

I Hereby Request Release of Tax Under G.S. 105-381 for the Following Year(s):

Assessment	Tax	Interest	Total	Tax Year
\$240,200	\$744.62	\$20.47	\$765.09	2014

Account Number: 000001377803

County: Watauga

Date of Council Meeting: _____

Release Amount: \$765.09

Specific Reason for Release
Billing Error- Property exempt.

Approved By: _____ Date: _____



TOWN OF BLOWING ROCK

1036 Main Street • Post Office Box 47 • Blowing Rock, NC 28605

February 2, 2015

Mayor and Board of Commissioners
Town of Blowing Rock
Blowing Rock, NC 28605

Pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 105-369(a), I herein submit the following report under oath.

The total 2014 real property tax levy billed is \$3,376,209; as of January 31 2014, \$3,216,929 or 95.3% of the total net levy has been collected. Releases total \$1,404. Unpaid taxes for the current fiscal year; that are liens on real property are in the amount of \$157,876.

Unless otherwise directed, I will begin advertisement of 2014 past due taxes beginning April 9, 2015.

Following Council approval to advertise the tax liens outstanding per North Carolina General Statutes 105-369(b1) each property owner will be notified by first class mail on or before February 28, 2015 to allow 30 days for payment (until at least March 31, 2015) prior to publishing the real property owner names and amounts outstanding at that time.

Sharon H. Greene
Tax Collector



TOWN OF BLOWING ROCK

1036 Main Street • Post Office Box 47 • Blowing Rock, NC 28605

TO: Mayor Lawrence and Members of the Town Council
FROM: Scott Fogleman, Town Manager
SUBJECT: Appointments to Boards and Commissions
DATE: February 10, 2015

During the 2015 Council Retreat, discussions were held regarding prospective appointments to various volunteer boards. Based upon those discussions, the following volunteer board appointments were proposed for 2015:

- **Planning Board: (Appointments effective March 2015 Meeting)**

Joe Papa (appoint to a 3-year term ending in March 2018)
Kim Hartley (appoint to a 3-year term ending in March 2018)
Jim Steele (appoint to a 1-year unexpired term ending in March 2016)
Natalie Bovino (ETJ) (reappointed to a 3-year term ending in March 2018)

- **Board of Adjustment: (Appointments effective March 2015 Meeting)**

Jerry Starnes (reappoint to a 3-year term ending in March 2018)
Terry Story (ETJ) (reappoint to a 3-year term ending in March 2018)
Suzanne Wilson (from Alt. to a Full Member 1-year unexpired term ending March 2016)

- **ABC Board:(Appointments effective March 2014 Meeting)**

David Greene (reappoint to a 3-year term ending in 2018)

- **TDA (Appointment effective March 2014 Meeting)**

Dean Bullis (reappoint to a 3-year term ending March 2018)
Doug Matheson (reappoint to a 3-year term ending March, 2018)

- **BRAAC (Appointments effective May 2014 Meeting)**

Debra McDowell (reappoint to a 3-year term ending March 2018)
Curt Andrews (reappoint to a 3-year term ending March 2018)
Anne Barnes (reappoint to a 3-year term ending March 2018)

All prospective appointments have been notified by staff of their appointment.

2015 Town of Blowing Rock Board Membership

Town Council

Member	Term Expires	Date Term Began
JB Lawrence, Mayor	2015	December, 1997
Albert Yount	2015	December, 2007
Doug Matheson	2017	December, 2009
Dan Phillips	2015	December, 2011
Ray Pickett	2017	December, 2013
Sue Sweeting	2017	December, 2013

Planning Board

Member	Term Expires	Date Appointed
Kim Hartley	2018	March, 2015
David Laughter	2016	March, 2010
David Harwood, Vice Chair	2017	March, 2011
Lisa Stripling	2017	March, 2011
Jim Steele	2016	March, 2015
Natalie Bovino- ETJ*	2018	March, 2015
Joe Papa	2018	March, 2015
Genie Starnes	2016	March, 2014
Wes Carter	2017	March, 2014

* The Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) representative is appointed by the County Commissioners.

Board of Adjustment

Member	Term Expires	Date Appointed
Full Members		
Suzanne Wilson	2016 (Moved from Alt. to Full Member March 2015)	March, 2013
Jerry Starnes	2018	March, 2004
Ron Oberle	2017	March, 2004
Annie Whatley, Vice Chair	2016	March, 2005
Charles Davant, III	2017	May, 2009
Terry Storey- ETJ*	2018	March, 2015
Alternate Members		
Laurin Carter	2017	March, 2014

* The Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) representative is appointed by the County Commissioners.

ABC Board

Member	Term Expires	Date Appointed
David Greene	2018	July, 2000
Susie Greene	2017	February, 2005
Robert "Bob" Miller, Chair	2016	February, 2006

TDA Board

Member	Affiliation	Term Expires	Date Appointed
Kent Tarbutton, Chair	Lodging - 2	2016	March, 2004
Dean Bullis	Business/Tourism-Related - 1	2018	April, 2009
Rob Dyer	Lodging - 1	2016	February, 2009
Lianne Mattar	At-large Member	2017	April, 2011
Doug Matheson	Town Council Representative	2018	April, 2012

Blowing Rock Appearance Advisory Commission

Member	Term Expires	Date Appointed
Reduced members from Nine to Seven in March 2015		
Debra McDowell	2018	March, 2014
Curtis Andrews	2018	March, 2014
Anne Barnes	2018	March, 2014
Bo Henderson	2016	March, 2014
Myra Scoggins	2016	March, 2014
Melissa Pickett	2017	March, 2014
Barbara Wright	Honorary Member	

MEMORANDUM

To: Mayor J.B. Lawrence and Blowing Rock Town Council

From: Kevin Rothrock, Planning Director

SUBJECT: Amendment to Sign Ordinance - App Ski Mtn Welcome Center Sign

DATE: February 4, 2015

BACKGROUND

Town Council held a public hearing on January 13, 2015 to review and consider a draft ordinance that would have provided flexibility for Appalachian Ski Mtn to have a larger ground-mounted free-standing sign at the corner of Hwy 321 and Edmisten Road. After the public hearing, the Council made a motion to send the draft ordinance back to Planning Board for further study and consideration of an ordinance that would apply to broader area of properties along Hwy 321 where the posted speed limit is greater than 35 mph.

The Planning Board held a special meeting on January 29th to study and consider free-standing sign alternatives within the corridor along 321 with posted speed limits greater than 35 mph. Planning Staff prepared a staff report and powerpoint presentation that included a table highlighting current Land Use Code sign dimensional standards and regulations from Watauga County's sign ordinance. This table also lists the proposed dimensions of the App Ski Mtn sign previously submitted and designs received during the week of the Planning Board meeting. (see below)

Freestanding Sign Summary				
	Sign Area		Sign Structure	
	Size	Height	Height	Length
Watauga County	50 sq ft	N/A	35	N/A
Blowing Rock Ground Sign greater than 35 MPH	35 sq ft	6	8	10
	45 sq ft	6		
Blowing Rock Column Sign greater than 35 MPH	45 sq ft	10	12	N/A
	60 sq ft	10	12	N/A
App Ski Sign				
Previous Plan	53 sq ft	17.5	18	16.5
Current Plan	65.3 sq ft	17.5	18	16.5

STUDY AREA

The area under consideration for freestanding sign options in the area with a speed limit greater than 35 mph is mainly from the northern edge of the current corporate limits extending north along Hwy 321 through the ETJ. There are a few properties along this stretch that are in the Town's corporate limits including Roots Restaurant, the former New River Inn property, and satellite annexed properties owned by Appalachian Regional Healthcare Services (ARHS). The remaining properties are zoned GB, General Business, but are in the ETJ. A large portion of this area is controlled by the National Park Service and Blue Ridge Parkway. Note also that the blue dashed line represents the part of Hwy 321 with posted speed limit over 35 mph and within the Town's jurisdiction. (See attached pdf map – separate document)

CURRENT CODE AND OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

As presented at the Planning Board special meeting, the following table lists some possible flexibility considerations for ground-mounted and column signs. The columns show what is currently allowed for sign structure height and sign area height in the General Business zoning district. The additional columns to the right list 50% percentage increases in sign structure and sign area height.

		100% (current)	150%	200%	250%	300%
Ground-Mounted Sign	Sign Area Height	6	9	12	15	18
	Structure Height	8	12	16	20	24
Column Sign	Sign Area Height	10	15	20	25	30
	Sign Structure Height	12	18	24	30	36

PLANNING BOARD RECOMMENDATION

Upon review of the information presented at the January 29th special meeting, the Planning Board made a recommendation to make minor revisions to the original draft ordinance that was presented to Town Council in January. Based on review of the most recent App Ski Mtn sign design which included sign area space for a visitor/tourism-related tenant, the Planning Board recommendation now includes increasing the overall sign area from 60 square feet to 70 square feet. The Planning Board is further recommending adding more supporting language in the ordinance preamble recognizing the impact App Ski Mtn has on the local economy as a winter vacation destination. Finally, the recommendation includes clarification that the draft ordinance would not preclude other tourism-related tenants from utilizing the proposed welcome center on a year-round basis.

The Planning Board initiated some conversation on amending the sign ordinance related to multiple occupancy buildings. There was discussion that additional study and clarification could be taken up at the February meeting.

ATTACHMENTS

- Revised draft ordinance (highlighted) for App Ski Mtn Welcome Center Signage
- Map of study area along Hwy 321 with posted speed limit over 35 mph
- Most recent sign design from App Ski Mtn – received February 3, 2015

If you have any questions, please email me at krothrock@townofblowingrock.com or call me at 295-5240.

ORDINANCE NO. 2015-01**AN ORDINANCE TO MODIFY SIGN REGULATIONS SPECIFIC TO THE
APPALACHIAN SKI MOUNTAIN WELCOME CENTER**

WHEREAS, the Article 17 of the Land Use Ordinance provides sign regulations within the Town of Blowing Rock's planning and zoning jurisdiction; and

WHEREAS, Appalachian Ski Mountain has been a unique tourism partner with Town of Blowing Rock and the overall Blowing Rock and High Country community for over 50 years, helping to identify the area as a winter vacation destination; and

WHEREAS, Appalachian Ski Mountain has displayed a directional billboard across from the Hwy 321/Edmisten Road intersection for over 40 years; and

WHEREAS, with the pending removal of the billboard triggered by bridge construction for an access road, Appalachian Ski Mountain will lose an effective directional sign that cannot be replaced due to a federal law protecting scenic byways (Blue Ridge Parkway); and

WHEREAS, Appalachian Ski Mountain is authorized to construct a welcome center on the corner of Edmisten Road and Hwy 321; and

WHEREAS, Appalachian Ski Mountain draws thousands of visitors to the area and many of those visitors are traveling at night, needing clearly recognizable signs and landmarks; and

WHEREAS, the Town of Blowing Rock Land Use Ordinance limits the overall height of an on-premise ground mounted sign and limits sign face separation; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board and Town Council find there should be exceptions to the sign ordinance limitations based on the historic and unique tourism benefits associated with Appalachian Ski Mountain; and

WHEREAS, the Planning Board and Town Council confirm that the regulation of directional signage is consistent with the 2014 Comprehensive Plan Update.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Commissioners of the Town of Blowing Rock, North Carolina, that:

Section 1. Section 16-17.12.3 of the Land Use Ordinance is hereby added and will read as follows:

"Section 16-17.12.3 Appalachian Ski Mountain/Tourism-Related Welcome Center Sign. Due to its unique tourism/directional-related significance based on skier traffic

volume and nightly activities, the Appalachian Ski Mountain Welcome Center, or other visitor/tourism information entity, shall be allowed to construct a ground-mounted freestanding sign up to 18 feet from the ground. The overall length of the sign shall not exceed 17 feet. The sign face shall be limited to 60 70 square feet per side based on the posted speed limit exceeding 35 mph, similar to allowances in Section 16-17.12.2.2. The sign faces shall not be separated by more than 10 feet. All sides of the base of the sign shall be landscaped to a height not less than 3 feet above grade.

Unless otherwise specified herein, this sign shall meet the size, style, height, materials, and design criteria in Section 16-17.12 and shall be located outside the NCDOT designated right-of-way. The sign colors are regulated by Conditional Use Permit No. 2014-04, approved on December 9, 2014.

The sign shall meet all requirements of this Article with regard to lighting, maintenance and safety."

Section 2. Severability; Conflict of Laws. If this ordinance or application thereof to any person or circumstance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect other provisions or applications of the ordinance which can be given separate effect and to that end, the provisions of this ordinance are declared to be severable. All ordinances or parts of ordinances in conflict with this ordinance are hereby repealed.

Section 3. Effective Date. This ordinance shall be effective upon adoption.

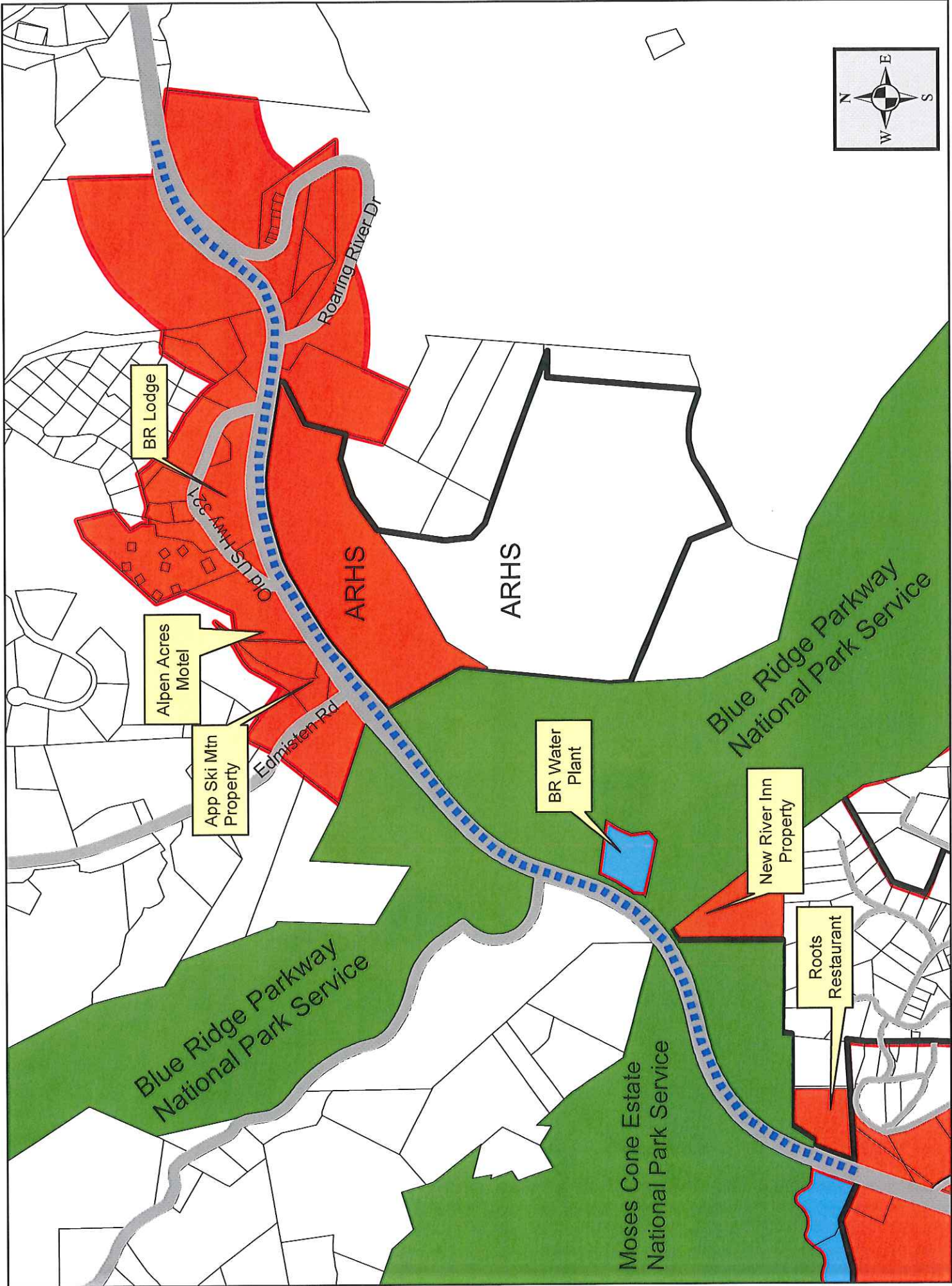
Adopted this the ____ day of _____, 2015

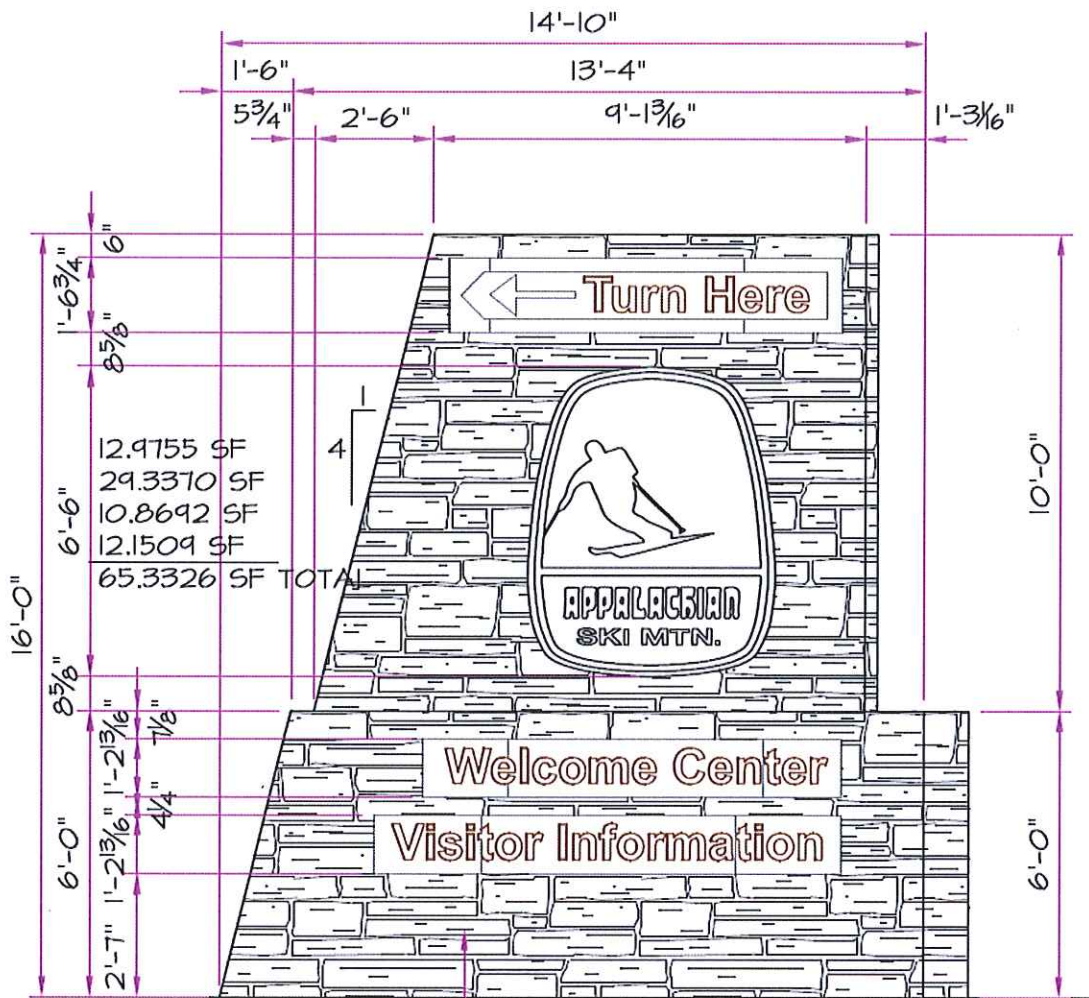
TOWN OF BLOWING ROCK

J.B. Lawrence, Mayor

ATTEST: _____
Sharon H. Greene, Town Clerk

Hwy 321 Corridor
Speed Limit over 35 MPH





ELK STONE