

MINUTES
Town of Blowing Rock
Town Council Meeting
December 8, 2015

The Town of Blowing Rock Town Council met in regular session on Tuesday, December 8, 2015 at 6:00 p.m. The meeting took place at Town Hall located at 1036 Main Street, Blowing Rock, N.C. Present were Mayor J.B. Lawrence, Mayor Pro-tem Albert Yount and Council Members 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, Finance Officer Nicole Norman, Public Works and Utilities Director Mike Wilcox, Police Chief Tony Jones, Building Inspector John Warren, Parks & Recreation Director Jennifer Brown 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 November 10, 2015, meeting minutes as written, seconded by Council Member Pickett. Unanimously approved.

SPECIAL RECOGNITIONS AND REPORTS

Recognition of Outgoing Council Member Dan Phillips

Mayor Lawrence presented outgoing Council Member Phillips with a plaque in appreciation of the four years that he served on Town Council. Mayor Lawrence thanked Mr. Phillips for his service.

Swearing in of New Council Members

Mayor Lawrence was sworn in by Town Clerk Greene. Council Members Albert Yount and Jim Steele were then sworn in by Mayor Lawrence.

Selection of Mayor Pro Tem

Mayor Lawrence opened the floor for Mayor Pro Tem nominations. Council Member Matheson nominated Council Member Albert Yount for Mayor Pro Tem, seconded by Council Member Pickett. Unanimously approved.

Highway 321 Report Valley Boulevard Construction Update

Due to Kipp Turner being unable to attend the meeting, Planning Director Kevin Rothrock read the Highway 321 Valley Boulevard construction update provided via email by Mr. Turner.

- After today, all of the base layers on 321 will be completed between Sunset Drive and South Main, which means the new road is up to proper elevation for pouring the remaining curb and gutter through this section

- A number of concrete driveway aprons have already been poured, but over the next couple of weeks there will be a heavy focus on pouring the remaining concrete aprons at businesses. NCDOT has been in contact with property owners about specific details of construction and will continue to be as this work progresses. Access will be affected but will be maintained. For instance, no **two** driveways to the same business will be closed at the same time. In drives with single access or where geometry does not allow the contractor to completely close the entire access, the concrete apron will be poured in 2 halves so there will be access for at least a single vehicle at all times.
- Concrete curb and gutter will continue to also be placed along the side streets in the next couple of weeks including Church Street and Sunset Drive.
- Wall construction continues below the road on the side opposite of Samaritan's Purse. Expectations are for this wall to be completed within 2 to 2.5 weeks.
- Once this wall is completed, the underground ductbank can be completed up to Food Lion.
- Available areas to pave will be pursued right behind the work for the ductbank, which must be installed prior to paving.
- Construction of West Cornish Drive has begun this week and paving in this intersection will begin towards the end of this week and first of next. As with the paving operations on Sunset Drive, motorists will be asked to use alternate routes while paving.
- Construction of the southern drive at the Holiday Inn is also expected to be completed over the next week.
- In an effort to improve communication about work progressing in the business areas, NCDOT will begin including notes about paving and concrete work around businesses in their morning email and twitter feeds. An informational handout has also been developed that further describes the driveway construction process. This information is being shared with property owners and is available for anyone with questions about driveway construction.

Mayor Lawrence thanked Planning Director Rothrock for reading Mr. Turner's email.

Resolution to Recommend Naming of the New Chestnut Ridge Facility Bridge

Mayor Lawrence read a resolution in support of naming the bridge at the entrance of The Foley Center at Chestnut Ridge, a post-acute care facility, the "Reba S. and D. Grady Moretz, Jr. Bridge".

Council Member Pickett made a motion to approve the resolution as presented, seconded by Council Member Sweeting. Unanimously approved. **Resolution to Recommend Naming of the New Chestnut Ridge Facility Bridge- Attachment A**

Upcoming Board and Commission Appointment Process

Town Manager Fogleman stated the Town was beginning its annual appointment process to fill vacancies on Town Volunteer Boards beginning in March 2016. He advised there are 10 vacancies on the various boards and asked anyone interested in serving on one

of these important boards to send a letter of interest and any pertinent work history or volunteer experience to the Town Clerk by Tuesday, January 5, 2016.

Town Manager Fogleman presented the following Consent Agenda items.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Budget Ordinance Amendment to Account for Various Items

Several budget ordinance amendments have been consolidated to account for various items including donations to the Town from the Blowing Rock Community Foundation (\$3,000) for the purchase of a Golf Cart for the Police Department, and from the Village Foundation of Blowing Rock (\$2,500) and the Blowing Rock Community Library (\$500) to support the Christmas and winter lighting programs. **Budget Amendment Ordinance #2015-15 – Attachment B**

2. Surplus Equipment Resolution

From time to time there are various pieces of equipment or office furniture that are no longer needed. Council is authorized to sell personal property by electronic auction upon adoption of a resolution. At this time, the 58 chairs formerly used in the Council Chambers have been identified as surplus. **Resolution Declaring Surplus Property & Authorizing Disposal #2015-13 – Attachment C**

3. CUP 2015-04 Moody Building Renovation – Parking Update

The originally approved Conditional Use Permit required that two of the newly built parking spaces on the project site be reserved as public parking, given that two public spaces on Sunset Drive were being removed to provide access to the site. This specific provision was not discussed in detail during the Planning Board meeting or the Council meeting in which it was approved. Given that a total of 21 new spaces are being constructed with the project and that this total is providing 14 more spaces than required by the Town Code. The requirement of having two of them be reserved for public parking has been identified for removal.

Mayor Pro Tem Yount made a motion that Item #3 of the consent agenda be removed for discussion, seconded by Council Member Sweeting. Unanimously approved.

Council Member Pickett made a motion to approve Items 1 & 2 of the Consent Agenda as presented, seconded by Council Member Sweeting. Unanimously approved.

Mayor Pro-tem Yount stated that he had several questions regarding the Moody Building parking and asked what had transpired.

Town Manager Fogleman stated the Moody Building Renovation CUP had evolved over the past 1 ½ to 2 years and while discussing ingress and egress options, the original thought was that four (4) public parking spaces would need to be removed from Sunset Drive to provide access to the site. After further discussions, it was decided that patrons of the Moody Building project business would exit onto the public lot on Maple Street and enter one way from Sunset Drive so that only two public spaces would need to be

removed from Sunset Drive. Town Manager Fogleman further explained this item was documented in the CUP; however it was not discussed in detail at the Planning Board meeting, nor at the Council meeting. While signing the CUP document, the developer had concerns regarding the two spaces designated as public parking in the Moody Building lot because he was providing 14 more parking spaces than required by the Town Code.

Council Member Sweeting asked if the Moody Building lot once the project was complete, could make this parking lot a private lot for patrons of the business/businesses leasing the building. Town Manager Fogleman stated this was not the preference of the developer; however the tenant of the building would have that option.

Council Member Sweeting asked where other business owners/employees located on Sunset Drive parked. Planning Director Rothrock explained that some of them were parking in the gravel lot next to the Moody building and some were probably parking on the street or perhaps in the Maple Street parking lot. Council Member Sweeting then asked how other members of Council felt regarding this issue and how this issue could be rectified.

Council Member Pickett stated that he was fine with removing the two (2) designated public parking spaces requirement from the CUP.

Town Manager Fogleman stated that time is of the essence for the developer as he wishes to move forward with this project as soon as possible. Town staff felt since the original CUP document had been approved by Council, they should be presented with the requested change as well.

Mayor Pro Tem Yount stated he was not opposed to the project and that theoretically the Town would be losing two (2) public parking spaces. He stated that he would like to see this issue rectified and the request resolved easier in the future. Mayor Pro-tem Yount then made a motion to approve the removal of Item #6 and adjusting the number of public parking spaces in Item #7 of CUP #2015-04 as presented, seconded by Council Member Pickett.

Newly elected Council Member Steele commented that he was not allowed to vote on this issue.

In favor of the motion for approval were Yount, Sweeting, Matheson, and Pickett. Abstention: Steele. Motion carried.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

None

DISCUSSION AGENDA

1. Presentation of the Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Audit

Finance Director Nicole Norman stated that Fiscal Year 2014-2015 audited financial statements for the Town were completed and had been approved by the North Carolina Local Government Commission. She introduced Jason Carpenter of the Town's auditing accounting firm Combs, Tennant, and Carpenter, P.C. to present the final audit to Council.

Mr. Carpenter stated that based on their opinion of the Town's financial statements, no issues were found and the Town's financial statements were in conformity with the generally accepted accounting principles as required by the State of North Carolina. Mr. Carpenter commended the Town staff on their hard work.

Mr. Carpenter then reviewed several aspects of the Town's audit and stated that \$3,395,966 or 98.8% of the Town's total tax levy of \$3,435,155 had been collected.

Council Member Matheson asked if the audit showed any problems with the Town's debt ratio and if adequate funds are available to take care of the bond referendum debt. Mr. Carpenter assured Council the Town's debt ratio was below the legal limit and funds appeared to be in line with debt service needs associated with the bonds. Mr. Carpenter also explained there were new reporting requirements for retiree pension obligations that changed the way these liabilities and contributions are presented in the financial statements. He also noted a General Fund transfer affecting fund balance and upon receipt of the funds would bring fund balance levels back in line. **Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Audit – Attachment D**

2. Landscape Buffer Width Considerations

Planning Director Rothrock stated that Council had recently asked that the landscape screening standards in the Land Use Code be evaluated for possible modification. The Planning Board had reviewed the screening standards using two recent cases that requested waivers of the standards. After their review, the Planning Board recommended the existing standards remain and any further waiver requests continue to be reviewed on a case by case basis. Planning Director Rothrock stated that Planning Board Chair David Harwood was present to give the Planning Board's perspective on the issue.

Mr. Harwood stated the Planning Board unanimously agreed that no action should be taken regarding the Town's landscape screening standards and any further waiver requests should be reviewed on an individual basis. Mr. Harwood thanked Mr. Rothrock and the Planning Staff for their research regarding this issue.

3. Sidewalk to Bass Lake Federal Grant Process Approval for Next Steps

Town Manager Fogleman stated the Town had been notified that the Federal Lands Access Program grant associated with constructing the sidewalk from Main Street along the north side of Highway 221 to Bass Lake had been selected to move forward to the next step in the approval process. Town Manager Fogleman stated the grant, if approved, would provide 80.98% of the overall cost of the \$1.2 million dollars. The next step would

be the completion of a Memorandum of Agreement. Once the agreement was completed and reviewed by all parties, it would be brought back before Council for their approval.

Mayor Pro Tem Yount asked what the timeframe would be. Town Manager Fogleman responded the Memorandum of Agreement should be finalized and back before Council at their January or February meeting. He also explained this project had been proposed in Phase III of the Bond Referendum, however it possibly would need to be moved to Phase I or 2.

Town Manager Fogleman was commended on his hard work regarding this project by Council.

SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR

None

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

MAYOR _____
J.B. Lawrence

ATTEST _____
Sharon Greene, Town Clerk

ATTACHMENTS

- [Resolution to Recommend Naming of the New Chestnut Ridge Facility Bridge-Attachment A](#)
- [Budget Amendment Ordinance #2015-15 – Attachment B](#)
- [Resolution Declaring Surplus Property & Authorizing Disposal #2015-13 – Attachment C](#)
- [Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Audit – Attachment D](#)