

# MINUTES

## Blowing Rock Board of Commissioners

Tuesday, September 11, 2001

The Mayor and Board of Commissioners for the Town of Blowing Rock met in regular session on Tuesday, September 11, 2001 at 7:00 p.m. Present were Mayor J. B. Lawrence, Terry Lentz, Michael Sweeting, Charles Travis, and Rita Wiseman. Barbara Ball was out of town. Also present were Town Manager Don Holycross, Town Attorney Allen Moseley, Town Engineer Marion Rothrock and Town Clerk Barbara Beach. Other staff members attending the meeting were Assistant Director of Public Works Mike Wilcox, Police Chief Owen Tolbert, and Planning Director Kevin Rothrock.

Mayor Lawrence called the meeting to order and asked the assembly to observe a moment of silent prayer for the nation and for Americans who died today in terrorist attacks.

### Approval of Minutes

Mr. Travis made a motion that the minutes of August 14, 2001 meeting be adopted as submitted. Mr. Lentz seconded the motion, and it was approved unanimously.

### Old Business

#### 1. Update on Rusty Water Problems

Mr. Holycross reported on actions taken by staff since the August meeting to clear the rusty water problems that were experienced by Town residents. He explained that divers installed an additional intake valve at the reservoir, at a level of three feet below full pond. Since higher quality water is normally near the top of the water level, this will help assure that the best water is drawn from the reservoir. Also, the divers discovered a problem with the existing valves in that they were open when they were labeled as closed. This means that water was being drawn from all three valves instead of the upper valve. After the bottom valves were closed, the level of manganese in the raw water dropped dramatically.

Mr. Holycross noted that the connection of the 12-inch water main running from the Green Hill storage tank to the water plant was reconfigured, as well as the 10-inch water main that feeds the downtown area. This will reduce the amount of water that is drawn from the 10-inch line when filters are backwashed at the plant. Mr. Holycross commented that water quality is continuing to improve, with a minimal number of complaints since these modifications have been made.

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Mr. Holycross also reported that designs will be prepared for state approval to change the backwash process to use water from the clear well instead of the Green Hill tank. In addition, in early November, the Town will implement an extensive flushing of all the water lines to remove the build-up of iron and manganese in the lines.

## **2. Update on North Main Street Sidewalk**

Mr. Holycross related that Marion Rothrock has talked to R & G Construction, the low bidder on the North Main Street Sidewalk. They cannot begin the sidewalk project this fall because of other projects they are completing. Also, they will have to adjust their bid

due to expected increases in costs. Mr. Rothrock expects an increase of 8% - 10% and recommends that the project be bid in multiple contracts. He estimates savings of approximately \$60,000 to subcontract each part of the project, that is, a separate contract for the sidewalk, curb and gutter, retaining walls, finishing, etc.

Mr. Lentz asked why the bid has not yet been awarded for the project. He believes the cost should have been locked in with a contract. Mr. Rothrock and Mr. Holycross explained that this was delayed because the Council requested that they meet with NCDOT to obtain additional funding to cover the increased construction costs when the State mandated retaining walls, bridges, and other extras to the project.

Ms. Wiseman made motion that the project be re-bid immediately, and that the bids be awarded for an early Spring 2002 start. Mr. Travis seconded the motion, and Mayor Lawrence called for the vote. Ms. Wiseman and Mr. Travis voted in favor, and Mr. Lentz and Mr. Sweeting did not vote. The motion carried.

## **3. Highway 221 Sidewalk**

Mr. Holycross informed the Council that he had talked with NCDOT about moving the Route 221 sidewalk from the north side to the south side of the street and they have no objections to the change. NCDOT has allocated \$111,789 in federal funds for this project and any additional costs incurred would have to be absorbed by the Town. The deadline for submission of preliminary plans is October 10.

Mr. Rothrock presented revised estimates of the project: \$265,851 for construction on the south side of the street, and \$229,907 for the north side. These are based on his calculations to bid the project in multiple contracts.

Council discussed his estimates. Mr. Travis made motion that the Town begin the process of negotiation with the two property owners who are adjacent to the proposed south route of the sidewalk to build retaining walls and pave their parking spaces.

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## **Highway 221 Sidewalk Continued**

Ms. Wiseman seconded the motion. Voting in favor of the motion: Travis, Wiseman, and Lentz. Voting against the motion: Sweeting. The motion was approved. Mayor Lawrence asked if the Council wanted to propose an alternate motion in case the property owners do not agree to the proposal. Council agreed by consensus that if they do not respond, the Council will meet again to consider the matter.

## **New Business**

## **1. Parking/Loading Spaces at Timberlake Gallery**

Council discussed the merits of allocating an additional parking space or a loading zone at the Timberlake Gallery. Mr. Travis moved that a loading zone only be marked at this location. Mr. Sweeting seconded it, and all the Council members voted in favor of the motion.

## **2. Speed Humps**

Mr. Lloyd Smith asked Council to review the process by which speed humps are approved. He particularly objected to the one on Sunset Drive near Possum Hollow Road. Mr. Holycross explained that after the Town receives a request for a speed hump on a particular street, Johnny Lentz and Owen Tolbert go out to examine the area. Chief Tolbert confirmed that warning tickets had not achieved the goal of slowing speeding traffic on the street.

Council members agreed that though speed humps are not attractive, they are somewhat effective in slowing traffic, and that it is the responsibility of the Town to create a safer environment for our citizens. Mr. Lentz asked that the staff proceed cautiously before constructing additional speed humps.

## **3. Silver Request for Rezoning/Text Amendment**

Mr. and Mrs. Leon Silver submitted two requests: 1) that their two parcels of land located on Morris Place and adjacent to Blowing Rock School be rezoned from R-10S, Single family residential, to R-6M, Multi-Family Residential, or 2) that the Land Use Ordinance be amended to reincorporate Bed and Breakfast Overlay Districts.

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Council members agreed that they do not wish to reinstate the bed and breakfast use because it is an intense commercial use for a residential neighborhood. Then, Mrs. Silver informed the Council that the home had been used as a multi-family dwelling until July 5, 2001. Mr. Sweeting explained that it could continue as multi-family if this usage does not lapse for 180 days. Since the potential buyers for the property want to use it as multi-family, the grandfathered use will not lapse and no violation of the Code will occur. Mr. and Mrs. Silver agreed that this would serve their needs, and by motion of Mr. Sweeting, second by Mr. Lentz, Council voted unanimously to deny both requests.

## **4. Draft Ordinance to Amend Land Use Ordinance**

Mr. Holycross presented a draft ordinance that would allow the Council authority to decide variances for properties subject to an applicable conditional use permit. Under the current Code, all variances are to be

reviewed by the Board of Adjustment. However, it is possible that a variance could be granted contrary to the terms of a conditional use permit. Mr. Sweeting made motion that the draft be sent to Planning Board for their consideration. Mr. Lentz seconded the motion, and all members voted in favor of the action.

**5. Selection of Paint Color for Clear Well at Water Plant**

Mr. Holycross reported that the clear well at the water plant would be repaired and repainted as part of the maintenance contract for Town water tanks. He recommended that it be repainted the original concrete gray and has contacted Blue Ridge Parkway representatives for their input on the color. Council members agreed that it must be a nature blending color and they had no opposition to this plan.

**6. Rotary Club Fundraising to Benefit Town Parks**

Jim West asked to be recognized concerning fundraising efforts by the Rotary Club. They plan to use these monies to upgrade existing structures in the Town parks, specifically Broyhill Park gazebo, etc. Council members expressed appreciation for the idea, and asked that Mr. West present plans for implementing their project.

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**Adjournment**

There was no further business, and Mayor Lawrence adjourned the meeting at 8:45 p.m.

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J. B. Lawrence,  
Mayor

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Barbara G. Beach, Town Clerk