

MINUTES

Town of Blowing Rock

Board of Commissioners

Special Meeting- March 1, 2005

The Town of Blowing Rock Board of Commissioners held a special meeting on Tuesday March 1, 2005 at 4:00 p.m. Present at the meeting were Mayor Pro-tem Terry Lentz, Commissioners Bobby Ball, Rita Wiseman, David Wray and Keith Tester. Others present were Town Manager Scott Hildebran, Doug Chapman and Andy Lovingood from McGill Associates and Town Clerk Sharon Greene.

Call to Order

Mayor Pro-tem Lentz called the meeting to order. He stated that Mayor Lawrence was out of town and unable to attend.

Town Manager Hildebran then presented to Council a request for a N.C. General Assembly legislation to establish a fund for a downtown off-street parking fund. It was the consensus of Council to make a formal request to our local delegation for such authority.

Administration

Council met with Town Manager Hildebran and Finance Director Margaret Pierce to review the 2004 Administration Annual Report and Council's 2005 Retreat Priorities and Action Plan.

Administration/Finance – Retreat Priorities & Action Plan

- Obtain estimate on Rock Work – Sidewalk Entrance for FY 2005-06 budget process
- Obtain estimate on Painting – Interior for FY 2005-06 budget process
- Obtain estimate on replacement of Front Office Windows for FY 2005-06 budget process
- Evaluate Credit/Debit Cards Payment Option for Council formal consideration
- Initiate Payroll Processing Changes to improve efficiency of system
- Provide monthly financial report with written commentary for Council
- Develop Web-based Quarterly Newsletter
- Work toward placing TDA Agenda on web site
- Review placement and/or shielding of the Town Hall Flagpole light

- Obtain estimate on Meter Reading Handhelds/Software for FY 2005-06 budget

- Prepare cost study of electronic-read meters

Budgetary

- Prepare Comprehensive Town Financial Operating Policy w/ Fund Balance Policy (50%)
- Place Vacation/Sick Time Year-end Transfer Policy on agenda for Council consideration
- Place Travel Reimbursement – IRS Rates on agenda for Council consideration
- Encourage the set aside of monies for parking facility & streetlights in future TDA budgets

- Continue to maintain Debt Service Schedule
- Fleet Capital Replacement Schedule – don't pursue trade-in of tractor
- Minimize comp time in all departments whenever possible

Council directed Town Manager Hildebran to move forward with getting estimates for painting the interior of Town Hall, replacing front windows of the building, as well as repairing the rockwork on the entrance.

Town Manager Hildebran stated that a web-based quarterly newsletter was still in the developmental stages.

He also stated that estimates would be obtained for Meter Reading Handhelds/Software for the FY 2005-06 budget process.

Finance Director Pierce stated the budget amendments were proposed to close out several line items for the Emergency Services building and the appropriation of a new one. She also stated completed sidewalk projects and water/sewer projects needed closing out and new line items appropriated for future projects. She further explained this would not increase the overall budget, but would only re-appropriate funds.

A motion was made by Commissioner Wray, seconded by Commissioner Ball to accept the **Budget Amendments (Attachment #1)** as presented by the Finance Director. All members were in favor of the motion

Parks & Recreation/Town Beautification Issues

Due to the absence of a Recreation Director at this time, Council met with Town Manager Hildebran to review the 2004 Parks & Recreation Department's Annual Report and Council's 2005 Retreat Priorities and Action Plan.

Parks & Recreation/Town Beautification Issues – Retreat Priorities & Action Plan

- Begin P&R Master Plan Implementation
- Obtain estimate on Swimming Pool Engineering Study for FY 2005-06 budget process
- Obtain estimate on Gazebo at Broyhill Park renovation for FY 2005-06 budget process
- Obtain estimate on ADA improvements to Playground for FY 2005-06 budget process
- Obtain estimate on Playground surfacing material for FY 2005-06 budget process
- Continue to budget for Tennis Courts Renovation in FY 2005-06 budget process
- Work with McGill Associates to pursue a PARTF Grant in FY 2005-06
- Complete draft of Landscape Plan w/Tree Ordinance
- Continue to work with BRAAC in beautification of the Town
- Develop Tree Planting Plan for Main Street & Parks – (the simpler grate design preferred)
- Move Landscaping to P&R once director in place

He stated there were several candidates that would be interviewed beginning March 9, 2005 for the Recreation Director position.

Andy Lovingood of McGill Associates spoke to Council regarding adding amenities to the pool and surrounding area, such as playground equipment to help alleviate some of the traffic at Memorial Park on Main Street. They discussed the current condition of the pool and what would need to be done to update it. Council directed McGill Associates to proceed with an existing study.

Commissioner Wiseman stated she felt the town should provide more restrooms in the downtown area. Town Manager Hildebran stated there would be additional restroom facilities when the new Blowing Rock Arts & History Museum building was built.

Commissioner Wiseman inquired if McGill Associates had pursued a PARTF Grant for parks and recreation improvements, Mr. Lovingood stated the deadline had passed for this year, but they would be pursuing it for next year.

A Streetscape Plan for Main Street was also discussed. Commissioner Ball and Wiseman felt that larger trees should be planted along Main Street. All Council members agreed that a Streetscape Plan should be developed by McGill Associates. Council also agreed that the landscaping position should be moved under the direction of Parks and Recreation Director once the director position was filled.

The need for a sidewalk from Morris Street up to Chestnut Drive was discussed. Due to the topography of the land in that area, they felt this should be studied further.

Planning & Zoning

Council met with Planning Director Kevin Rothrock to review the 2004 Planning Department Annual Report and Council's 2005 Retreat Priorities and Action Plan.

Planning & Zoning – Retreat Priorities & Action Plan

- Council Satellite Parking Requirements - Seek parking impact fee legislation
 - Continue Parking Plan implementation
- Central Business District – Amend code to require CUP's for all exterior changes (exc. paint)
- Central Business - Amend code to prohibit Metal Roofs on all structures in CB district
 - Draft letter to merchants regarding Outdoor Display concerns
- Begin process of ETJ Extension in the Green Hill Road/Goforth Road area
- Prepare annexation study for the Gideon Ridge/Rock area for Council consideration

Council requested staff to develop a Corridor Plan for U.S. Hwy. 321 By-pass prior to the construction of the four-lane. It was consensus of Council that it was important for the town to have a vision of how the By-pass should look since it would be an introduction into town. A "big box" ordinance was also discussed.

Commissioner Tester voiced his concerns regarding the vacant lot on Morris Street and the debris that had accumulated on the lot.

Council decided they should invite the County Commissioners to dinner to discuss various items.

Infrastructure Issues (Public Works/Water/Wastewater)

Water/Wastewater

Council met with WTP/WWTP Director Tom McRary to review the 2004 WTP/WWTP Annual Report and Council's 2005 Retreat Priorities and Action Plan.

Water/Sewer – Retreat Priorities & Action Plan

- Sewer Connection Policy – Develop updated installation plan to inform citizens
- Initiate Smoke Testing of Sewer lines
- Water Supply & Land Exchange (Payne Branch Intake, Water Tank & Reservoir)
- Obtain estimate on Holding Basin – Water Plant for FY 2005-06 budget process
- Obtain estimate on Wastewater Plant Improvements for FY 2005-06 budget process
- Obtain estimate on Lift Station Improvements for FY 2005-06 budget process

- Proceed with Greenhill Road/Greenhill Circle Sewer Project

Proceed with Park Bathroom/Goforth Road @ Oak Street/Hillwinds Lot Sewer

Replacement

- Follow-up on North White Pine Water line- re: Community Arts Center
- Automated Meter Reading & Handhelds-Prepare cost study of electronic-read meters
- Develop a Water/Sewer Extension Plan
- Work with McGill Associates to update Water/Sewer Capital Improvements Plan

Mr. McRary stated that a new 100,000 gallon holding basin was needed. He said at the present time, the WWTP would get overloaded and another holding basin would alleviate the problem.

Andy Lovingood from McGill Associates stated that electrical problems at the WTP needed to be addressed and would be a large expense for the town. He recommended that a Capital Improvement Plan be developed to prioritize issues of importance.

Commissioner Tester felt that the town's water/sewer system should be updated to the 21st century and a study should be done to see what would be needed to accomplish this. He also felt there were certain things that needed immediate attention.

Public Works

Council met with Public Works Director Johnny Lentz to review the 2004 Public Works Department's Annual Report and Council's 2005 Retreat Priorities and Action Plan.

Public Works – Retreat Priorities & Action Plan

- Pursue Fleet Maintenance/Mechanic Service Contract with vendor
- Work with McGill Associates to pursue a grant for a Storm Water Study
- Repair street drop-offs at Main Street/Hill Street and Watson/Rankin
- Proceed with Garden Circle Storm Water Project
- Proceed with BREMCO to begin Streetlight Pole Replacement (February Agenda)
- Implement Street Pavement Plan
- Woodlawn Cemetery -Place directional signage

-Prohibit new head stones

-Consider mausoleum plots on individual basis & price

high enough to discourage use

-Seek additional land, if available

- Amend code to limit street grade to 14/15% range
- Deter # personnel riding in garbage truck to Boone

Mr. Lentz informed Council that bids would be received on Thursday, March 3, 2005 for the water/sewer project on Green Hill.

He stated that a deadline of April 1, 2005 was set for restaurants in town to comply with the FOG ordinance.

Mr. Lentz stated the storm water project on Garden Circle was still scheduled for early spring.

Mr. Lentz also told Council that the street pavement plan approved last year would be implemented. He said that Laurel Park, Lakeside Drive and Goforth Road were on his priority list to be resurfaced. He also stated the street drop-offs in need of repair would be done in the near future.

Mr. Lentz informed Council that he was in the process of working out a contract with Randall Silver to do some of the town's mechanic work, but they were not in total agreement on all the details yet.

Tourism Issues

Council discussed the following Tourism Issues.

- Schedule annual meeting with TDA to review Annual Report (March 2)
- Develop lease for Visitors Center with TDA
- Work with TDA to begin fund for Downtown Parking Facility
- Move ahead with Master Signage Plan, with Town taking the lead role
- Investigate extension of Occupancy Tax District to include 3 adjacent hotel/motel properties
- Continue to monitor tourism impacts on the community and the construction of the Blowing Rock Art and History Museum & Community Arts Center
- Follow-up on Edgewood Cottage Preservation/Restoration-150 days expires in March 2005

Other

- Pursue dialogue with American Legion on building use and/or acquisition
- Monitor Assembly Grounds area and pursue ETJ extension

There being no further business to discuss, the work session was adjourned at 6:15 p.m.

Mayor Pro-tem_____

Terry D. Lentz

Attest: _____

Sharon H. Greene, Town Clerk