

MINUTES

Town of Blowing Rock

Board of Commissioners

Special Meeting-February 13, 2006

The Town of Blowing Rock Board of Commissioners held a special meeting on Monday, February 13, 2006. Attending were Mayor J.B. Lawrence and Commissioners Bobby Ball, Rita Wiseman, Keith Tester, Terry Lentz and Tommy Klutz. Others in attendance were Town Manager Scott Hildebran, and Town Clerk Sharon Greene.

Call to Order

Mayor Lawrence called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

Planning Issues

Council met with Planning Director Kevin Rothrock discuss his department's 2005 accomplishments and priority list.

Planning & Zoning Retreat Priorities & Action Plan

- Develop Big Box regulations for Council consideration
- Prepare Landscape/Tree Ordinance Revisions for Council consideration
- Review Downtown Parking Requirements and make recommendations to Council
- Review Parking Study and make recommendations on future parking planning to Council
- Consider CUP Tracking Database Software in FY 2006-07 budget process

- Review and Maintain Town Comprehensive Plan
- Review Outside Dining Regulations/Outside Display of Merchandise and make recommendations to Council
- Continue GIS layer development
- Move forward with Gideon Ridge Annexation Process and refer to Planning Board for next step

Some departmental accomplishments for 2005 mentioned by Mr. Rothrock were numerous conditional use permits, rezoning issues, completed building projects, code clarifications, etc.

Mr. Rothrock stated that a draft of the “Big Box Ordinance” would go before the Planning Board at their next meeting and would be on the March agenda for their review.

Landscape and Tree Ordinance revisions were discussed briefly. Mr. Rothrock stated this would be the next big project for his department. Other items scheduled for review by the Planning Department were clarifications of the land use code and the fee schedule for conditional use permits.

Commissioner Tester felt an annual review of the Town Comprehensive Plan was needed to insure that priority items were being addressed consistently with the Comprehensive Plan. Mr. Rothrock stated that a planning sub-committee was in the process of reviewing the Comprehensive Plan to insure that the main priorities were being addressed.

Commissioner Tester also suggested that Mr. Rothrock periodically review the Town Code so that appropriate updates could be done. Mr. Hildebran concurred and recommended that the town utilize outside assistance, possibly the Council of Government (COG) or a planning consultant.

Council commended Mr. Rothrock for his department for their hard work and accomplishments.

Infrastructure Issues (Public Works/Water/Wastewater)

Council met with Public Works Director Johnny Lentz and WTP/WWTP Director Tom McRary to discuss their 2005 department accomplishments and priority lists.

Public Works Retreat Priorities & Action Plan

- Continue Street Pavement Plan Implementation (Green Hill Circle/West Green Hill Drive)
- Continue sidewalk repair/maintenance (Sunset Street/Main Street)
- Proceed with BREMCO on Streetlight Pole Replacement Project
- Consider Part-time position upgrade to Full-time in 2006-07 budget process
- Consider Equipment Replacement in 2006-07 budget process (Snow Plows/Spreaders)
- Continue to pursue NC Clean Water Management Trust Fund Grant for a Storm Water Study and complete the remainder of Sunset Drive Storm Water Improvements
- Work with McGill Associates to develop Main Street Streetscape Plan
- Consider contracting of trucks for asphalt paving by Town Crew
- Solicit additional vendors for paving project bids

Water/Sewer

- Continue to pursue land exchange with U.S. Park Service for Town Reservoir property
- Place 2006 Water/Sewer Capital Improvements Plan on agenda for Council consideration
- Prepare financing package to implement Capital Improvements Plan

Mr. Lentz stated that various streets within town limits were in need of re-paving. He stated this was one of the larger expenses in his department. Commissioner Tester inquired if the street department was able to keep up with the street-paving plan. Mr. Lentz stated they were unable to stay current with re-paving needs and that more funds were needed. It was consensus of Council to contract street paving out, and for the town crew to continue doing the street patching.

Another main focus for his department would be sidewalk and curb repair along Sunset Drive and Main Street.

Road stripping would also be a top priority along with ditch and right-of-way clean up.

It was consensus of Council to contract ditch maintenance out. Council also expressed the need for right-of-way trimming in areas around town, such as Sunset Drive and Morris Street. Another concern was business owners raking leaves onto public sidewalks blocking pedestrian traffic.

Mr. Lentz requested that Council allow him to upgrade a part-time position to a full-time position. He felt this would help alleviate some of his staffing shortage in the peak months of the year. Also, the use of seasonal staffing was discussed.

Council commended Mr. Lentz for the great job that his department was doing and how appreciative they were for all their hard work.

Water/Wastewater

Council met with Tom McRary Director of the Water/Wastewater Treatment Facilities. Mr. McRary updated Council on projects completed within his department in the past year.

Mr. McRary advised the installation of the new control panel was nearing completion. He also stated that one of the water pumps had been rebuilt; and one waste pump was in need of repairs.

Town Manager Hildebran stated the Capital Improvements Plan would address most of the concerns at the Water/Wastewater Treatment Facilities.

Council also thanked Mr. McRary and his staff for their hard work.

Fiscal Management Administration/Budgetary Issues

Council met with Town Manager Hildebran and Finance Director Margaret Pierce to discuss their department's 2005 accomplishments and priority list.

Administration/Finance – Retreat Priorities & Action Plan

- Consider Town Hall Roof Repair in FY 2006-07 budget process
- Consider Computer Hardware/Software Upgrades in FY 2006-07 budget process
- Consider Cleaning/Janitorial contract position upgrade to full-time position in FY 2006-07 budget process (consider including Park Restrooms and TDA building in cleaning)
- Consider Meter Reading Handheld Units/Software Replacement in FY 2006-07 budget process.

Budgetary

- Evaluate Electronic Payment Acceptance and provide options for Council consideration
- Acquire Software (DreamWeaver/Front Page) for web-based quarterly town newsletter (include TDA information) and distribute at Town Hall/Post Office and develop mailing list
- Place increase in travel reimbursements for meals on agenda for consideration
- Monitor impacts of Watauga County Property Revaluation
- Place Tax Releases/Refunds Policy (delegation up to \$100 to staff) on agenda for consideration
- Continue to monitor the need for flood insurance
- Proceed with Emergency Services Building Debt Funding Plan and segregate debt cost on tax bill – estimated at \$.03 per \$100
- Continue to maintain and fund debt service schedule
- Continue to maintain and fund Fleet Capital Replacement Schedule (FY 2006-07 includes 3 police vehicles and PW truck)
- Continue TDA set aside of 1/3 monies for town and monitor as TDA budget grows (continue to place emphasis on beautification and maintenance)
- Perform Enterprise System Rate Study in concert with Water/Sewer Capital Improvements
- Send 2005 Town Accomplishments to newspapers

Mr. Hildebran updated Council regarding the major needs listed above and what was being done at the present time. It was consensus of Council to move forward with the requests.

Budgetary issues were discussed with Finance Director Margaret Pierce and a financial spreadsheet and monthly financial summary report was reviewed.

Other

Town Manager Hildebran presented Council with a request from the Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce requesting permission to conduct special events on Saturday, April 8, 2006 during the Blue Ridge Wine Festival. Council agreed to the request if specific conditions were adhered to. The conditions were:

- Live music only allowed in Memorial park gazebo
- Grape stomping Activity only allowed in designated non-grass area behind park gazebo
- Artistic Demonstrations only allowed on south side of Park Avenue adjacent to the Community Club

Council also received a request from the Blowing Rock Historical Society for approval of proposed language for the Daniel Boone Trail Marker #26, to be erected at the Pictorial Museum. It was consensus of Council to approve the proposed plaque language.

Proposed plaque language Attachment A

Council also agreed to make a request to the state legislative delegation for sponsorship of a local bill to exempt the Town from bidding requirements for the parking facility and for the Blowing Rock Art & History Museum to construct it. Council also requested that the Town Engineer assist in the coordination and inspection oversight of the project.

Council also agreed to place the proposed Garden Club sculpture on the agenda for the regular meeting in March for consideration.

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 6:10 p.m.

Mayor _____
J.B. Lawrence

Attest: _____
Sharon H. Greene, CMC