

# **MINUTES**

## **Town of Blowing Rock**

### **Board of Commissioners**

**August 10, 2006**

The Town of Blowing Rock Board of Commissioners reconvened their meeting of August 8, 2006 at 9:00 a.m. on August 10, 2006. Present were Mayor J.B. Lawrence, Commissioners Bobby Ball, Keith Tester, Rita Wiseman and Tommy Klutz. Commissioner Lentz was unable to attend. Others in attendance were Town Manager Scott Hildebran and Town Clerk Sharon Greene.

#### **Call To Order**

Mayor Lawrence called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance.

#### **Presentation-Community Service Award**

Mayor Lawrence presented a Community Service Award to Lowell and Inega Thomas for their countless hours of hard work and dedication in the beautification of the Historical Trail located on South Main Street. On behalf of the citizens and visitors of the area, Mayor Lawrence thanked Mr. & Mrs. Thomas for their contributions towards this project.

Upon accepting the award, Mr. Thomas spoke of his and Mrs. Thomas' appreciation to the Town for their support and to the community for their interest and involvement in restoring the trail, for the enjoyment of citizens of Blowing Rock as well as visitors to the area. Mr. Thomas spoke of what a difference there was in the trail and what an asset it was to the town.

#### **Presentation- Globe Project- Lamar Marshall, Wild South**

Mr. Lamar Marshall, area landowner gave a presentation in opposition of the "Globe Project". The "Globe Project" being a timber-harvest plan proposed by the U.S. Forestry Service for an area approximately 11 miles north of Blowing Rock, known as the Globe area. The timber-harvesting plan would consist of 18 parcels containing 231 acres in the proposed area.

Mr. Marshall spoke of his initial interest regarding this issue began with his purchase of property in the International Forest which was surrounded by public land and various things that started happening that were not good for the land, lively-hood, and outdoor business that he had.

He spoke of the magnificent Appalachian forest and how it had been cut in the early part of the century but was now recovering and the forestry's plans to convert all the national forest except for protected areas as part of their timber-harvesting plan.

Mr. Marshall stated there were 30 times more revenues from the natural forest from recreation and tourism than would be prospered by cutting the forest down.

At this time, Mr. Marshall advised that he would like to share a power point presentation with everyone regarding this issue. The power point showed the damage done to other areas where the forest had been cut.

After a power point presentation, the floor was opened to questions from the audience. A member of the audience asked if there was a way to keep this from ever happening to this area again. Mr. Marshall advised that a special designation to prohibit these cuts from happening could be granted, but it would first have to go through Congress. He spoke of special designations to exempt areas from being a part of the timber base, such as a scenic view shed as well as botanical areas, canyon areas, and cultural heritage areas. Mr. Marshall stated there were many types of special designations that could be used to exempt this area.

Commissioner Ball stated that many North Carolina elected officials had been contacted regarding this and while there was an interest, the process should be started towards getting a special designation for this area. Commissioner Ball stated that approximately 15 years ago, the forest service had made two small cuts near the Globe area and the Viaduct and at that time, had promised they would not return to the upper Globe section again to make any cuts. She also spoke of her dissatisfaction with the Forestry Service for not giving residents of this area proper notice of their plans.

Mr. Bob Hartnett, a resident of Twin Springs Road advised Council that a Resolution opposing this action should be adopted by Council that included a statement stating proper notice should be given to any governing body within a 20 mile radius of the proposed area to be cut.

Commissioner Ball maintained that the tentative resolution already written should be upgraded to incorporate some of Mr. Hartnett's suggestions.

Commissioner Tester stated that his concern with the resolution as written strongly opposing the project, but it did not specifically state what Council wanted done. Commissioner Tester suggested that at the end of the Resolution, a statement specifically stating that the Town of Blowing Rock requests that the Forestry Service select the "No Action" option. He stated that his understanding was, if the "No Action" option were chosen, the Forestry Service would have to begin the process all over again, which would allow for more time.

Mr. Marshall also suggested that Council add a special designation be given to the Globe and Blowing Rock areas exempting them from this type of activity.

Commissioner Klutz stated he would like to add that a habitat study be done on this area regarding endangered species and what the soil erosion was doing to the streams.

Commissioner Wiseman made a motion to accept the Resolution Opposing the Forestry Service Project and to also incorporate some of Mr. Hartnett's comments as well as Mr. Tester's and send out as soon as possible to the Forestry Service office. Commissioner Ball seconded the motion. Commissioner Tester suggested the motion be modified to include a cover letter be added to the Resolution from the Town of Blowing Rock and the Watauga County Commissioner then sent to all the congressional delegates requesting their support in preserving the area. Commissioner Wiseman accepted these modifications to her motion and Commissioner Ball seconded the motion. Unanimously approved.

Mayor recessed the meeting at 10:00 a.m. for approximately 45 minutes in order for Town Manager Hildebran to draft a Resolution.

The meeting reconvened at 10: 45 a.m.

Commissioner Wiseman entertained a motion to accept Resolution #2006-10 Opposing the USDA Forest Service "Globe Project", seconded by Commissioner Ball. Unanimously approved. **Resolution #2006-10 Resolution Opposing the USDA Forest Service "Globe Project" Attached as Exhibit A**

**Mayor** \_\_\_\_\_

**J.B. Lawrence**

**Attest:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sharon H. Greene, CMC**