

Town of Blowing Rock

Board of Commissioners

Minutes – October 2, 2007

The Town of Blowing Rock Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Tuesday, October 2, 2007 at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall Council Chambers. Present were Mayor JB Lawrence, Commissioners Keith Tester, Terry Lentz, Rita Wiseman, and Tommy Klutz. Commissioner Bobby Ball was out of town. Others in attendance were Town Manager Scott Hildebran, Finance Officer Nicole Norman, Town Attorney Allen Moseley, Police Chief Eric Brown, Emergency Services Director Kent Graham, Parks and Recreation Director Jennifer Brown, Town Engineer Doug Chapman, Building Inspector Jesse Horner, Planning and Inspection Director Kevin Rothrock, Public Works Director Johnny Lentz, TDA Director Tracy Brown, and Payroll Administrator Alicia Kellam.

Call to Order

Mayor Lawrence called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes

Upon a motion received from Commissioner Wiseman, seconded by Commissioner Klutz, the minutes for the September 10 & 11, 2007 meeting were approved as written. Unanimously approved.

Public Hearings

1. CUP #2007-09 – Blue Ridge Electric Substation

Mayor Lawrence recused himself from the public hearing due to his membership of the Blue Ridge Electric Board.

Planning Director Rothrock presented Council with a conditional use permit request from Blue Ridge Electric to construct a new electrical substation on the former Best Cellar property behind Food Lion. The substation will replace the existing substation off Possum Hollow Road and will serve the future energy needs for the Blowing Rock area. There were no questions or comments from Council.

Mike High, the Director of Engineering Services with BREMCO, and Dwight Hollifield President of Facilities of Planning and Sighting spoke in detail about the plans for the substation in Blowing Rock.

Mr. High stated that based on an electrical engineering consultant review; there is a need to construct a new electric substation to serve the future energy needs for the Blowing Rock area. The current substation located at Possum Hollow will reach or exceed its capacity by the year 2010. Expansion to the Possum Hollow substation is not possible because of the road and natural barriers.

The proposed substation site is a 1.73 acre lot formerly occupied by the Best Cellar restaurant. The project is planned for three phases. Phase I includes demolition and/or removal of existing structures, site grading and stabilization, screening wall installation, and site landscaping. Phase II includes substation construction, equipment and underground utility installation. Phase III is demolition and removal of the existing substation located off Possum Hollow Road, including fine grading, seeding and landscaping of the existing substation site.

Dwight Hollifield of Facilities of Planning and Sighting discussed view points from different locations to illustrate how unobtrusive the BREMCO substation would be using actual and computer generated photos with the substation superimposed. Hollifield also assured that the electromagnetic field levels would not be a problem and the noise produced from the substation, with background noise would be barely audible.

Commissioner Tester questioned whether the power lines would be above or below ground and the impact it would have on vegetation.

High stated the lines would be below ground and any damage to the vegetation would be replaced.

Mr. Tom Banks expressed his concern and opposition with the construction of the BREMCO substation.

With no further discussion a motion to close the public hearing was made by Commissioner Wiseman, seconded by Commissioner Klutz. Unanimously approved. A motion to approve CUP #2007-09 was made by Commissioner Tester, seconded by Commissioner Klutz. Unanimously approved. **(Exhibit A)**

2. CUP #2007-10 – Town Parking Facility

Mayor Lawrence rejoined the meeting.

Planning Director Rothrock presented Council with a conditional use permit request from the Town of Blowing Rock to expand the existing public parking at the American Legion building by constructing a parking facility. The proposed parking facility would add a second level of parking above the existing lower surface lot on the south side of the American Legion building. The comprehensive parking plan in the American Legion area, including fire and rescue relocation, would net 69 additional parking spaces.

Commissioner Klutz asked Mr. Rothrock if residential traffic flow would be affected or changed to one way. Mr. Rothrock stated the direction would remain the same except for entering and exiting of the American Legion parking area.

Town Engineer Doug Chapman stated parking had been a problem for a long time and Council, at their retreat, discussed addressing parking and the feasibility of providing a modest size parking facility.

The proposed facility would be approximately sixty-four (64) feet wide and approximately two-hundred (200) feet long over the top of the existing parking lot. Access to the upper level would be at grade and the exit drive leaving the American Legion would be close to the same grade. The impervious surfaces would be reduced; therefore storm water detention would not be required. The proposed parking structure would be a pre-cast concrete structure, where columns and supports will be brought in by truck. The concrete structure would be covered with cultured stone to fit the character and nature of Blowing Rock. Landscaping would be added around the facility for enhancement and screening.

The Commissioners addressed the problem of turning around or exiting the parking facility when the lot was full. Engineer Chapman and Planning Director Rothrock offered options to provide a turn around for vehicles when the lot was full.

Sara Gilley and Ginny Stevens suggest council further study the proposed facility and expressed their concerns with the construction of the proposed parking facility.

With no further discussion a motion to close the public hearing was made by Commissioner Wiseman, seconded by Commissioner Lentz. Unanimously approved. A motion to approve CUP #2007-10 with the addition of correcting the exit/turn-around problem was made by Commissioner Wiseman, seconded by Commissioner Lentz. Unanimously approved. **(Exhibit B)**

3. CUP #2007-11 – Hartley Interiors

Planning Director Rothrock presented Council with a conditional use permit request from Gwyn and Clara Hartley of Hartley's Interiors to make significant exterior modifications to the front of their building located at 916 Main Street. The plans indicate new windows and siding, new paint scheme, and architectural trim details.

Gwyn Hartley stated he felt it was time for an update to his building.

With no comments from Council a motion to close the public hearing was made by Commissioner Wiseman, seconded by Commissioner Lentz. Unanimously approved. A motion to approve CUP #2007-11 was made by Commissioner Lentz, seconded by Commissioner Klutz. Unanimously approved. **(Exhibit C)**

Old Business

1. Storm Water Master Plan (Resolution #2007-12)

Town Manager Scott Hildebran presented Council with Resolution #2007-12 for consideration to adopt the 2007 Storm Water Master Plan.

Town Engineer Doug Chapman discussed Town storm water and stated a draft had been presented during the August 7th meeting which included the following: an inventory of the existing storm water infrastructure, hydraulic modeling, and pipe sizing in main infrastructures in the downtown central business area. McGill prepared a list of specific projects identifying issues of collection and conveyance of storm water, specifically in the downtown area, to improve the ability of collecting the storm water and getting it into the pipes and then to the river.

Commissioner Tester commented on how impressed he was with the amount of work that could be completed compared to the amount of funds being spent.

Council agreed to discuss the proposed ordinance modifications at their planning retreat in January.

With no further discussion a motion to adopt Resolution #2007-12 was made by Commissioner Tester, seconded by Commission Wiseman. Unanimously approved. **(Exhibit D)**

2. Quail Hollow Sewer – Update

Town Manager Scott Hildebran presented Council with an update on Granville Petrie’s request to extend public sewer to Quail Hollow Drive located below Laurel Park Road which would provide sewer access to 13 vacant parcels owned by Mr. Petrie.

Mr. Petrie submitted plans for the project for the town engineer’s review. The proposed system would serve Mr. Petrie’s properties as well as provide an initial step to the overall sewerage for the Laurel Park area. Mr. Petrie also requested the Town assist with bidding the project to prospective utility contractors and consider some nominal contribution toward the project in the future. The Town would incur some expense due to repair of the water line.

Commissioner Wiseman questioned the feelings of the individuals in Laurel Park. Town Manager Hildebran stated this project would be a step to providing sewer access for those in Laurel Park and several neighboring residents had contacted the Town about possible connections to the proposed system.

New Business

1. Reverse 911 – Code Red Intergovernmental Agreement

Town Manager Scott Hildebran presented an interlocal agreement between Watauga County, the Town of Boone and the Town of Blowing Rock for the purchase of a license for use of an Emergency Communications Network system known as “CodeRED”. ASU currently has a reverse 911 system in place on campus.

Watauga County, the Town of Boone and the Town of Blowing Rock are working jointly to provide “reverse 911” capabilities for the benefit of our citizens. “Reverse 911” technology is an emergency telephone messaging system which provides 911 centers with the technology to deliver customized, pre-recorded voice emergency messages to citizens. These messages are targeted to specific audiences depending on geographic location and the type of emergency.

Watauga County has agreed to cover the contract cost for the first year (\$15,000) and agreed to proportionally share future costs. After the first year the Town of Blowing Rock costs would be in the \$1,500 - \$5,000 range depending on the per capita sales tax revenues ration. Police Chief Eric Brown and Director of Emergency Services Kent Graham both agreed it is a great program and could be used for public announcements not necessarily emergencies.

A motion to approve the Reverse 911 system was made by Commissioner Lentz, seconded by Commissioner Tester. Unanimously approved. **(Exhibit E)**

2. NCDOT Bridge Inspection Agreement (Resolution #2007-13)

Town Manager Scott Hildebran presented Resolution #2007-13 to Council for their consideration. The resolution if approved will execute an agreement with the NC Department of Transportation for bridge inspections for both Sunset Drive and Cornish Road.

The US Surface Transportation Assistance Act requires that municipal bridges be inspected every two years. NCDOT, through the Federal Highway Administration, will cover 80% of the costs of the inspections, leaving the remaining cost to the Town of \$2,600.

A motion to contract with the State for the Sunset Drive and Cornish Road bridge inspections was made by Commissioner Wiseman, seconded by Commissioner Tester. Unanimously approved. **(Exhibit F)**

3. Watauga County Emergency Medical Services Advisory Board – Appointment

Town Manager Scott Hildebran presented a request to Council to appoint a representative from the Town to serve on the Watauga County Emergency Medical Services Advisory Board Consolidated Dispatch Operations Task Force. The Town has two appointments, Director of Emergency Services Kent Graham for the rescue squad, and Dispatcher Carol Bolick for the Blowing Rock telecommunicators. Mr. Hildebran recommended Chief Eric Brown to be the third representative for this task force.

A motion to appoint Chief Eric Brown to the Watauga County Emergency Medical Services Advisory Board Consolidated Dispatch Operations Task force was made by Commissioner Wiseman, seconded by Commissioner Tester. Unanimously approved.

4. U.S. 321 Edmisten Road Traffic Signal – Resolution of Support (Resolution #2007-14)

Town Manager Scott Hildebran, pursuant to a request from State Representative Cullie Tarleton, presented Resolution #2007-14 to Council for their consideration. The resolution supports the NC Department of Transportation funding of a traffic signal on US 321 at Edmisten Road.

The Town has received numerous requests recently about the need for a year-round traffic signal along US 321 at Edmisten Road. This area is located in our extraterritorial planning jurisdiction. Due to increased year-round traffic, safety concerns during signal absence and the annual costs of installing/removing the temporary signal, a year-round signal is requested.

A motion to approve the Resolution of Support (Resolution #2007-14) was made by Commissioner Lentz, seconded by Commissioner Klutz. Unanimously approved. **(Exhibit G)**

5. Tax Releases/Refunds

Town Manager Scott Hildebran presented Council with the Tax Release/Refund #2007-01 for consideration. The refund totals - \$628.48. Town Manager Hildebran stated it met all requirements of the general statutes for approval.

A motion to approve the Tax Release/Refund #2007-01 was made by Commissioner Tester, seconded by Commissioner Wiseman. Unanimously approved. **(Attachment #10)**

Speakers From the Floor

Carol Horne expressed her concern regarding the crosswalk at the intersection of 221 and Main Street. She requested the Town contact the NCDOT to re-stripe the crosswalk. She also expressed concern with safety on Sunset and Cornish because there was no painted center line and suggested that placement of a center line on these roads be explored.

Departmental Reports

Town Manager Hildebran introduced the new Finance Officer Nicole Norman and requested Council formally approve her to be on the signature card for the Town account.

A motion to approve adding Finance Officer Nicole Norman to the Town signature card was made by Commissioner Lentz, seconded by Commissioner Tester. Unanimously approved.

Town Manager Hildebran thanked the staff for Mitford Days and announced clean-up week for October 15-19.

Mayor Lawrence discussed the status of the water. Mr. Hildebran stated the conservation put into place has worked although; the reservoir is still down approximately 5 feet and discussed the consideration of going to Stage III Conservation.

Mayor Lawrence publicly thanked the Blowing Rock Country Club for using paper and plastic to contribute to conservation. He also felt it was necessary to go to Stage III before peak leaf tourist season. Discussion was held on finding alternative sources for water. Mr. Hildebran stated short-term there are no solutions unless there is dramatic rainfall. Tester and Lentz both agreed the Town should move to Stage III and to be strict when writing tickets for violations. Mayor Lawrence and Council decided to move from Stage II to Stage III effective Monday, October 8, 2007.

Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

JB Lawrence, Mayor

Sharon Greene, CMC

Exhibits:

A – CUP #2007-09 Blue Ridge Electric Membership Substation

B – CUP #2007-10 Town of Blowing Rock Facility

C – CUP #2007-11 Hartley’s Interiors

D – Resolution #2007-12 Storm Water Master Plan

E – Code Red Intergovernmental Agreement

F – Resolution #2007-13 NCDOT Bridge Inspection Agreement

G – Resolution #2007-14 Resolution of Support

H – Tax Releases/Refunds #2007-01