

MINUTES

Town of Blowing Rock

Board of Commissioners

Special Meeting– December 6, 2007

The Town of Blowing Rock Board of Commissioner held a special meeting on Thursday, December 6, 2007 at 9:00 a.m. in the conference room at Town Hall. Present were Mayor J.B. Lawrence, Commissioners Bobby Ball, Terry Lentz, Rita Wiseman, Keith Tester and Tommy Klutz. Commissioner elect Albert Yount was also in attendance. Others present were Town Manager Scott Hildebran, Finance Director Nicole Norman, and Town Clerk Sharon Greene.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. FY 2006-07 Audit

Town Auditors Billy Combs and Jason Carpenter presented Council with the FY 2006-07 Audit. Mr. Combs advised the audit was completed in accordance with the Government Accounting Standards Board with no adverse findings. He proceeded to give a “clean opinion” of the audit and commended the Town staff on their work. Mr. Combs briefly discussed Fund Balance stating it had increased over the past several years and was where it should be.

With no further discussion, a motion was made by Commissioner Lentz, seconded by Commissioner Ball to accept the FY 2006-07 Audit as presented. Unanimously approved. **FY 2006-07 Audit Exhibit A**

2. Blue Ridge Electric-Easement Agreement

Town Manager Scott Hildebran advised that a new easement between the Town of Blowing Rock and Blue Ridge Electric for property formally known as The Best Cellar, now owned by BREMCO was needed.

Mayor Lawrence asked to be excused from this item due to his membership on the Blue Ridge Electric Board of Directors.

Commissioner Wiseman made a motion to move forward with the new easement as requested by BREMCO, seconded by Commissioner Ball. **Womble, Carlyle, Sandridge & Rice Letter Exhibit B**

At this time the meeting was moved into the Town Hall Board Room. Commissioner elect Phil Pickett joined the meeting.

3. NCDOT Update on Hwy 321 Widening Project

Ms. Missy Dickins, Mr. Greg Brew, and Mr. Trent Beaver representing NCDOT were present to give an update to Council and citizens on the Hwy. 321 Widening Project. Ms. Dickins stated the project was at the 25% right of way design stage and they were present to answer any questions Council or citizens of Blowing Rock have. She stated the plans had changed very little since the initial plans were completed. She advised that a vibration sensitivity test would be done possibly in the spring in areas where blasting was proposed and Council would be given the information found from the test. She stated that NCDOT was in the process of hiring a consultant for this portion of the project.

Design Project Engineer Mr. Brew stated at this point in the project they were beginning to look at retaining walls, not necessarily the aesthetics of the walls, but their height and location. After the completion of the plans they would be sent to the geotechnical division. He noted that the current 25% plan had omitted a portion of sidewalk. Mr. Brew advised that sidewalks could be added up to 3 to 6 months from the completion of the plans and the omitted portion would be added to the plan. He also advised that NCDOT was working on the hydraulic designs at the present time and were approximately 2 months from being finished and the designs would have significant effect on the easements that would be needed for sidewalks.

Mr. Brew stated during the 50% completion phase of the plan; piping, drainage design, excavation, drainage ditches, etc. would be done, then easements and right of ways would be added. He also advised the Town would receive a copy of each phase of the design plans.

Ms. Dickins advised that several plans would be forthcoming such as a sign plan, landscape plan etc. but would be later in the project phase.

Several citizens had questions regarding the project. Ms. Sue Glenn expressed her concern regarding the Gideon Ridge area where a major rock slide had occurred. She inquired if NCDOT would make any changes to that area. Mr. Brew stated their geotechnical division would be assessing the area. Ms. Dickins advised she would follow up with the geologist for this area.

Mr. O. Wayne Green asked if digital copies of the plans could be obtained and recommended that NCDOT put the plans in projection form. Mr. Brew stated that digital copies could be provided.

Mr. John Pirtle stated during the hearing process a Letter of Final Decision was supposed to be sent and inquired why it had not been done. Ms. Dickins responded the letter would be issued in the next week and a copy would be provided. Mr. Pirtle also inquired after the hydraulic study was completed, would any change near the Historic District specifically the retaining wall near Hole No.4 of the Blowing Rock Golf Course anticipated and if so the design of the golf course would have to be changed which would be a major process. NCDOT stated they did not see any changes to that area at the present time.

Commissioner elect Albert Yount asked what options the town had in regard to materials used for the proposed retaining walls. Ms. Dickins advised that formed concrete was used with liners that provided texture to look like brick, stone etc. then a surface treatment of color would be added and this was the most commonly used. Mr. Yount also asked if photographs would be provided showing the different options. Commissioner Ball conveyed this had been discussed in the preliminary planning process and that walls similar to those on U.S. Hwy 421 at the Parkway were not acceptable. Ms. Dickins stated that according to the M.O.U., Council would have input on the final decision selection. She mentioned several projects in the Raleigh area. Mr. Yount requested photograph examples be provided.

Mr. Pirtle had other questions regarding right of way acquisition and funds to complete the project. Mr. Brew stated that right of way acquisition would commence by June 2008 and further explained the process following the acquisitions. He also stated that funds were in the NCDOT budget for this project.

Several other concerns were discussed such as access to the Blowing Rock Country Club and why a turn lane was not proposed for that area or a stop light. Ms. Dickins responded that studies had been done and the traffic number in that particular area did not warrant a turn lane or stop light.

Another concern was the use of Green Hill Road and the Blue Ridge Parkway as a cut-thru during the project process and if NCDOT could restrict these areas from being used. Ms. Dickins stated that NCDOT would not be restricting roads from being used as a cut thru.

With no further discussion Mayor Lawrence thanked the representatives from NCDOT for their presentation.

Council then proceeded to the conference room for the remainder of their meeting. After a brief discussion on the job performance of the Town Manager, a motion was made by Commissioner

Wiseman seconded by Commissioner Ball to give Town Manager Hidebran a \$5,000 bonus above and beyond his longevity pay. Unanimously approved.

At 10:50 a.m. Commissioner Tester made a motion to enter into executive session to discuss a personnel matter by authority of North Carolina General Statutes 143-318.11(6) seconded by Commissioner Ball.

ADJOURNMENT

At 11:50 a.m. the regular meeting reconvened and with no further business to discuss the meeting was adjourned.

MAYOR _____

J.B. Lawrence

Attest: _____

Sharon Green, Town Clerk

Attachments

FY 2006-07 Audit Exhibit A

BREMCO Easement Agreement Exhibit B