

**Town of Blowing Rock
Town Council 2017 Annual Retreat
January 15-17, 2017**

The Town of Blowing Rock Town Council met for their annual retreat on Sunday, January 15, 2017 at 1:00 p.m. at the Doubletree Inn in Asheville, North Carolina. Present were Mayor J.B. Lawrence, Council Members Albert Yount, Jim Steele, Sue Sweeting, Doug Matheson and Ray Pickett. Also present were Town Manager Scott Fogleman, Finance Officer Nicole Norman, and Town Clerk Hilari Hubner.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Lawrence called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

OLD FIRE HOUSE

Graduate students from the University of North Carolina's School of Government Masters of Public Administration Program presented a study they performed last fall of potential options regarding the former Fire and Rescue Building.

Council Members discussed the EDC of the Chamber and the Village Foundation, as the funder, to take the next planning steps to determine what it would take to turn the old Fire House into a Cultural Center including:

-) Preliminary design
-) Construction estimate
-) Operational plan
-) Feasibility Analysis

Council decided to add the following stipulations:

The EDC of the Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce and the Village Foundation return to the Blowing Rock Town Council within 30 days with a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) containing the following:

1. 1.The EDC of the Chamber, along with the Village Foundation as the funder, to take the next steps to determine what it would take to turn the old Fire House into a Cultural Center including; preliminary design, construction estimate, operational plan, feasibility analysis. The plan should also include the performance of an engineering structural evaluation with a sample core drilling to determine the structural with a sample core drilling to determine the structural integrity of the area adjacent to the back wall and what, if any, corrective actions may be required to determine the long term stability of that area.

2. Under no circumstances is the Town willing to consider selling the land upon which the Old Fire House sits or the Old Fire House structure itself, so these actions should not be factored into the operational plan or feasibility analysis.
3. The design, operational plan and feasibility analysis should reflect as many uses as possible within the space that encourage year round activity and vitality in the space. For example, if one potential use of the space is as a movie theatre, the seats should be constructed such that they can be easily removed or collapsed to create other options for the floor space such as a community dance with a band playing on the stage. As another example, if the glass doors can be designed such that they can open to the outdoor space at grade to invite further functional flexibility, that would be encouraged.
4. From the time that the Council approves the MOA, which could happen at the March 14, 2017, Council meeting, the EDC of the Chamber and the Village Foundation would have twelve months to return to the Blowing Rock Town Council with the deliverables as specified in the Council approved MOA.
5. During the twelve months that the EDC and the Village Foundation are working on the deliverables as specified in the MOA, the Town of Blowing Rock would agree not to do anything with the Old Fire House property that would prevent its use as a multi-use Cultural Center as contemplated in the MOA deliverables.
6. Once the EDC of the Chamber and the Village Foundation return to the Blowing Rock Town Council at the end of the twelve months with the deliverables as specified in the MOA, there is no guarantee that the Blowing Rock Town Council will agree to move forward with the project.

VOLUNTEER BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Council discussed Volunteer Board appointments and decided on the following appointments/reappointments:

Planning Board – Wes Carter, David Harwood, Don Hubble

Board of Adjustment – Charles Davant III, Harrison Herbst, Laurin Carter (alternate) and Lance Campbell (alternate)

ABC Board – Susie Greene

TDA – Lance Campbell

BRAAC – Melissa Pickett (Council Member Pickett recused himself from the vote)

Council members discussed and decided to add language to each of the Boards and Commissions administrative mechanisms as follows:

Beginning with new member appointments that take effect in March, 2018, the individuals being appointed to that respective role may be limited to two terms of service. This does

not apply to Board and Commission members appointed for service to take effect in March, 2017, or those appointed in prior years.

This language shall be included in the Board and Commission member recruitment process that starts in December, 2017 and each year thereafter unless otherwise altered by the Blowing Rock Town Council.

Recycling – Council directed staff to ask the Post Office what the current status is on their collecting recyclable mail through their own system. Council further directed staff to ask the Post Office if they are willing to begin picking up the tab to have Republic collect the recyclable mail.

Council requested a background report including the number of total customers being billed for recycling, generally how many customers put out containers each collection cycle in the summer vs. the winter. Council asked staff to include in the report estimated Town cost savings for recycling material collected by Republic that the Town does not have to pay tipping fees for.

Council directed staff to investigate whether or not Churches in Town are currently receiving recycling services and whether or not they are currently being billed \$4 each month. Council further advised staff to sample selected rental unit accounts on Main Street to determine whether or not a recycling fee is being charged and if so, who is paying the fee: the tenant or the property owner.

Parking Enforcement – Council directed staff to continue with the “first offense warning” approach to over time parking in downtown. Council asked that a registered letter be sent to commercial vehicle owners known to occasionally park on Town owned lots overnight informing them of the current ordinance and the Town’s intent to strictly enforce the ordinance.

Planning Board Related – Council advised staff to summarize what areas of the Town’s sign code need to be studied and/or changed due to recent changes in State law and what the anticipated work plan is to accomplish the work.

The meeting was recessed at 5:25 p.m.

On Monday, January 18th at 8:00 a.m., the meeting was reconvened. Those present were Mayor J.B. Lawrence, Mayor Pro tem Albert Yount, Council Members Sue Sweeting, Jim Steele, Doug Matheson and Ray Pickett. Staff present were Town Manager Scott Fogleman, Finance Officer Nicole Norman and Town Clerk Hilari Hubner.

Public Works Related – Council asked that staff apply asphalt patching at the Chestnut Drive, Chestnut Circle intersection to help make the area smoother during the next few months while demolition takes place, prior to the resurfacing work. Council advised staff to develop a comprehensive restriping plan to ensure all roads are refreshed on a regular

rotation at least once a year, more frequently if necessary. Council requested fresh yellow paint be applied to all the speed bumps on Sunset.

NCDOT – Council directed staff to consult with NCDOT regarding the entrance onto Country Club Drive and determine an easier way to see how to enter Country Club Drive from HWY 321.

Council advised staff to follow up with NCDOT regarding the request to put additional 35 mile per hour speed limit signs on 321 and to ask their permission for the Town to do so.

Parking Property Research – Council directed the Town Manager to approach one or more landowners who currently own property that may be utilized for Town parking at some point in the future to determine their willingness to consider a variety of property sale arrangements including the following:

-) Interested in selling all of your property?
-) Interested in selling a portion of your property?
-) If not now, perhaps an option to have the first right of refusal in the future should the property be considered for sale.
-) Discuss a possible “three appraisal approach” where the property would be appraised by three different appraisers at the time of the sale, and the sale value would be the middle value of the three appraisals.

Garbage Collection – Council asked that staff follow up with property owners and/or tenants on Main Street regarding their putting trash bags out on Main Street to be picked up.

CUP Process – Council advised staff to research whether or not it is possible to no longer have the Conditional Use Permit as a development approval process. Should that be a possibility, the Town Council may consider eliminating it as an option and only utilize the Conditional Zoning Process.

Parade Timing – Council requested that following the 2017 Winterfest Parade, staff is to assess the pros and cons of holding the 2017 Winterfest Parade at 5:30 p.m. on Friday versus the typical parade time of 2:00 p.m. on Saturday.

Legacy Garden Maintenance Costs – Council directed staff to determine the most recent contractual costs associated with maintaining the Legacy Garden and compare it with the anticipated annual costs included in the budget.

American Legion Building – Council asked staff to add to the rental agreement the location of cleaning supplies as well as that the key is to remain in the lock box. Council requested if the exterior lights have not yet been repaired, put some type of temporary outdoor lighting.

Leaf Collection – Council advised an arrangement be made with Estate Maintenance to determine options for the 2017 leaf pick up season that are not solely based on the zone approach.

Winter Lighting/Memorial Park – Council would like to see if the Village Foundation would be willing to consider funding tree replacement in Memorial Park. Council determined the FY 2017-2018 budget needs to include replacing eight (8) Maple trees deemed dangerous in Memorial Park with large caliper trees.

Automated Meter Infrastructure (AMI) – Finance Officer Nicole Norman presented a plan to implement automated water meters throughout Town. Council discussed and determined to plan to fully fund AMI in the upcoming FY 2017-2018 budget process. Council requested that staff have multiple educational meetings for the public to attend and learn about how the system works, the benefits of it and payment options.

New Website – Council approved the new website going live on January 20, 2017. Finance Officer Nicole Norman will present an introduction to the new website at the Council meeting in February.

Metal Roof Review and Approval Process – Council decided to provide a specific list of colors as well as reference to the accepted Town color chart in the draft text amendment. Council requests the text amendment go before Planning Board for review and consideration at their next meeting and then back to Council for approval.

Sidewalk Settling Issues – Council requested that staff look at the capital equipment cost to purchase machinery for staff versus hiring Precision Safe Sidewalks to repair sidewalk sections that have settled to reduce tripping hazards. Upon completion of the cost comparison, Council will decide which approach to proceed with.

Laurel Lane Median Project – Council approved conceptually a limited number of plaques to be installed in the sidewalk/paver areas. Prior to final approval, Council requests to see exactly what they will look like and know specifically where they will be installed. Council requests planting plans for the median area that was presented at the January BRAAC meeting go to Council for approval.

Rock Wall Maintenance – Council determined site specific letters be mailed to respective property owners with stone walls that are in need of repair. The letter should remind property owners that the walls are their property and their responsibility to maintain and a timeline for maintenance to be completed. Main Street is the primary focus area, but other areas may be needed.

Audit RFP – Council directed staff to move forward the plan to issue the RFP to Accounting firms within a 50 mile radius of the Town of Blowing Rock. Council will be presented with the results for consideration at the March Council meeting.

Pool – Council discussed several options for the pool such as expanding the pool season, evaluating the scheduling impacts of offering the pool for public vs. private rental. Council decided to wait and discuss further during the annual departmental meeting.

Vendors - Council would like staff to look into the ten year pricing history of Ford vs. Chevy for Police vehicle availability.

Public Works Site – Council decided to move forward with an enclosure to get some of the equipment out of the weather. Council advised the site be cleaned up and things that are not in use be removed. Council directed once the site is cleaned up, that it be kept clean.

Economic Development Public Meeting – Council advised to move forward with planning a public meeting event for economic development with Hilary Greenberg as the guest speaker. Council would like to partner with the Blowing Rock Chamber and/or the Blowing Rock Village Foundation to split the costs of the event.

The meeting was recessed at 11:45 a.m. for lunch.

The meeting reconvened at 1:00 p.m.

Public Art Public Meeting – Council advised to move forward with planning a public meeting event to cover best practices within the field of public art with Jean Greer as the guest speaker.

Town Hall Office Allocation – Council directed staff move forward with the option to move the kitchen to the back corner office area, make the current kitchen an office, and construct a new office located outside the Manager's and Finance Officer's area.

The meeting was recessed at 3:00 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 3:00 p.m. Council Member Sweeting made a motion to go into Closed Session, seconded by Council Member Pickett. Unanimously approved.

Following Executive Session, Council re-entered the regular meeting, the meeting was recessed at 5:00 p.m.

The meeting reconvened on Tuesday, January 17th at 8:00 a.m. Present were Mayor J.B. Lawrence, Mayor Pro Tem Albert Yount, and Council Members Sue Sweeting, Jim Steele, Doug Matheson and Ray Pickett. Staff present were Town Manager Scott Fogleman, Finance Officer Nicole Norman and Planning Director Kevin Rothrock, and Town Clerk Hilari Hubner.

SUNSET DRIVE STREETScape

Eric Woolridge and Teresa Buckwalter from Destination by Design presented a concept plan for streetscape on Sunset Drive.

Council asked they adjust the concept plans per their direction. Destination by Design will present the concept plans for Sunset Drive at the March Council meeting.

Destination by Design will conduct a drop in meeting with Sunset Drive property owners (stakeholders) in April. They will conduct a drop in meeting for members of the general public in May.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 10:35 a.m.

MAYOR _____

ATTEST _____

J.B. Lawrence

Hilari Hubner, Town Clerk

