

MINUTES
Town of Blowing Rock
Town Council Meeting
January 14, 2020

The Town of Blowing Rock Town Council met in regular session on Tuesday, January 14, 2020, at 6:00 p.m. The meeting took place at Town Hall located at 1036 Main Street, Blowing Rock, N.C. Present were Mayor Charlie Sellers, Mayor Pro-Tem Sue Sweeting and Council Members David Harwood, Albert Yount, Doug Matheson and Virginia Powell. Others in attendance were Town Manager Shane Fox, Town Attorney Allen Moseley, Town Engineer Doug Chapman from McGill Associates, Public Works and Utilities Director Matt Blackburn, Planning Director Kevin Rothrock, Fire Chief Kent Graham, Parks and Recreation Director Jennifer Brown, Finance Officer Nicole Norman and Town Clerk Hilari Hubner who recorded the minutes.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Sellers called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. and welcomed everyone.

THE PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

AGENDA ADOPTION

Mayor Pro-Tem Sweeting made a motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Council Member Harwood. Unanimously approved.

MINUTE APPROVAL

Council Member Matheson made a motion to approve the minutes from the December 10, 2019 Regular Council Meeting open session, seconded by Council Member Powell. Unanimously approved.

SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR

Pam Lowry, 389 Fairway 11 Court, spoke regarding the speeding on Greenhill Road. Ms. Lowry advised from October of 2019 thru now she has sent numerous emails to Town Officials about the continued Public Safety concern at the intersection of Fairway 11 Court and Greenhill Road. Ms. Lowry further advised her husband had previously spoken with the Town Manager, Police Chief and the Public Works Director. She explained their request was a three-way stop be put at Fairway 11 Court and Greenhill Road, along with two (2) "Warning" signs making the request a total of five (5) signs. Ms. Lowry explained the danger of this intersection and some "near misses" she had personally experienced. Ms. Lowry stated on October 14th she came very close to having an accident with another vehicle and began working diligently on a getting a solution to the problem. After writing numerous emails to DOT a traffic study was finally done but was done during the months of September to November. Ms. Lowry stated, in her opinion, the traffic study was flawed because it was done during the off-season. She further explained the speeding issue exists daily and seems to help slow people down when the stand-alone monitors are out. According to DOT and Town Officials there have been no accidents. Ms. Lowry stated

she would like to ask Council to be pro-active rather than reactive. She further explained the Village is growing and Green Hill is used as a cut-through. More houses are being constructed in and around the area causing even more traffic to an already busy Green Hill. Ms. Lowry advised she had spoken with Mayor Sellers and it was suggested getting a petition together from the neighbors, which she stated some of them had already emailed Council, but they are working on the petition as well. Ms. Lowry thanked Council for their time.

Rick Parsons, 1577 Greenhill Road, spoke regarding the speeding on Greenhill Road. He presented a short Power Point which echoed some of the same points Ms. Lowry had previously stated. Those items included:

- Speeding is a problem on Green Hill Road
- Highest speeds, in excess of 50 Miles per Hour, have been recorded at numerous times of the day of the straight sections of Green Hill Road
- Unless enforcement is 7 days a week and 24 hours per day enforcement alone will not mitigate the problem
- If speed Humps are no longer being installed, then Stop Signs are the only permanent solution
- Town Council has utilized Stops to control speed in parts of the Town. (i.e. Intersection of Possum Hollow & Sunset)
- At a minimum Stop Signs are needed at the following intersections with Green Hill Road: Wonderland, Heather Ridge and Fairway Court
- The Town should address the problems along the entire length of Green Hill Road

Mr. Parsons advised he would like to come back at a later date and have this be an item on the agenda to discuss deeper in detail rather than a short “band-aid” on a real issue in Town.

Lee Rocamora, 412 Laurel Park Road, spoke about the Town Council Retreat. Mr. Rocamora congratulated Council on an informative and successful Retreat. Additionally, expressed his appreciation to Council for making it accessible this year for him and other citizens to be able to be a part of.

PRESENTATIONS:

1. 2020 Retreat Recap

Town Manager Shane Fox presented via PowerPoint a summary recap of the 2020 Town Council Retreat. Manager Fox advised Council spent three (3) days, a total of twenty-five (25) hours on twenty-five (25) topics. **Retreat Priorities List – Attachment A**

2. Ad Hoc – 321 Visioning Process

Planning Director Kevin Rothrock advised the Land Use Ad Hoc Committee has completed its study of Hwy 321/Valley Blvd with the assistance of Benchmark Planning Consultants and is presenting the attached final report and implementation strategies for creating a vision for the corridor. Town Council has the opportunity to review the

recommendations and provide further direction to the Ad Hoc Committee and/or provide direction to the Planning Board for further action.

Mr. Jason Epley from Benchmark presented a summary report via PowerPoint presentation.

Council thanked Mr. Epley as well as the Ad Hoc committee for their hard work with the whole process.

The consensus of Council was the next step is to send to Planning Board for review and their recommendation. **Ad Hoc – 321 Visioning – Attachment B**

OTHER BUSINESS

- Mayor Sellers – Thanked Senator Deanna Ballard and Council Member Virginia Powell for their hard work, the lines are finally being removed on Hwy 321/Valley Blvd and Blue Ridge Electric will be removing the poles within the week.
- Council Member Yount – Commented he felt that one of the better things to come out of the retreat was doing a “parking study” to see what the Town’s inventory is, because we may think we know where our inventory is, but nobody truly knows. He further commented that he hears about parking just about more than anything else.
- Council Member Harwood – Thanked staff for their hard work preparing and executing the Council Retreat. He stated it was very “in lighting” to him as it was his first Council Retreat. He further stated that by his notes Council covered about 140 items with 25 topics. He stated your Town Council worked very hard and he is very excited about the direction Town Council is going for the year
- Mayor Pro-Tem Sweeting – Thanked Manager Fox and staff for a well-executed Retreat. One of the reasons she liked having it at BRAHM was that if they had a question during the meetings staff was available to ask questions which was helpful as well as saved time waiting for an answer.
- Doug Matheson- Thanked staff as well for the hard work with the Retreat as well as thanked BRAHM staff. He is still working with AppalCart to finalize a route for the shuttle for the upcoming season.
- Council Member Powell – Was pleased to hold the Retreat in Town this year and thanked the rest of Council for giving it a change for this year. Thanked staff for their hard work. Very excited to have Council Member Harwood on board, a path mapped out and people on board to all work together moving forward.
- Manager Fox – Reminded of the following upcoming dates:
 - Planning Board meeting is January 16th at 7:00 p.m.
 - Board of Adjustment meeting is January 23rd at 5:30 p.m.
 - Winter Fest is January 23rd-26th

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 7:15 p.m. Council Member Matheson made a motion to go into executive session NCGS 143-318.11. (6) – *to consider the qualifications, competence, character, fitness,*

conditions of appointment, or conditions of initials public officer or employee, seconded by Council Member Powell. Unanimously approved.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:30 p.m. Council returned to open session. Council Member Matheson made a motion to give Manager Fox the 1% employee increase with an additional 5% pay increase, making the total a 6% salary increase, as well as a \$250 per month vehicle allowance, seconded by Council Member Harwood. Unanimously approved. There being no further business to discuss, Mayor Pro-Tem Sweeting made a motion to adjourn at 8:35 p.m., seconded by Council Member Powell. Unanimously approved.

MAYOR _____
Charlie Sellers

ATTEST _____
Hilari Hubner, Town Clerk

ATTACHMENTS

Retreat Priorities List – Attachment A
Ad Hoc – 321 Visioning – Attachment B