Town of Blowing Rock
Town Council 2015 Annual Retreat
January 18-20, 2015

The Town Council for the Town of Blowing Rock met for their annual retreat on Sunday, January 18, 2015 at 2:00 p.m. at the Doubletree Inn in Asheville, North Carolina. Present were Mayor J.B. Lawrence, Council Members Albert Yount, Sue Sweeting, Doug Matheson and Ray Pickett. Council Member Dan Phillips was out of the country and unable to attend. Also present were Town Manager Scott Fogleman, Finance Director Nicole Norman, and Town Clerk Sharon Greene.

Mayor Lawrence called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. Town Manager Fogleman reviewed the 2014 accomplishments.

American Legion

Town Manager Fogleman then presented a Change Order for the American Legion renovation project HVAC unit location change in the amount of approximately $4,500.Council consensus was to approve the change order as presented.

Town Manager Fogleman stated that bids would be received for the Public Works building on February 3, 2015, and hopefully construction would begin in March and be completed by the end of the calendar year.

Right-of-Way Clearing

Council then discussed right-of-way clearing and directed staff to proceed with conversations with property owners regarding the need to cut hedges that were interfering with traffic safety.

Gateway Project

The Gateway Project was then discussed, Council directed staff to speak with McGill Associates in order to get an estimated cost to design the project and provide construction costs for consideration in the upcoming budget.

Governing Body

After a brief discussion on the matter of a unified title for the Board, Council decided they would like to be referred as "Town Council" instead of "Board of Commissioners", and that as individuals they would be referred to as a "Council Member" rather than as a "Commissioner".

Volunteer Board Appointments

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

- **Planning Board** - Appointed: Kim Hartley and Jim Steele (to fill the unexpired term of Rich Schreuer), Reappointed: Natalie Bovino, (ETJ), Joe Papa (from BOA Alt.)
- **Board of Adjustment** – Reappointed: Jerry Starnes, Terry Story, (ETJ), Suzanne Wilson (from Alt. to full member to fill the unexpired term of Mark Klein)
- **Tourism Development Authority (TDA) -** Reappointed Dean Bullis and Doug Matheson
- **Blowing Rock Appearance Advisory Board (BRAAC)** - Reappointed: Debra McDowell, Anne Barnes and Curt Andrews (Also directed the Board be reduced from nine to seven members)
- **ABC Board** – Reappointed: David Greene

Agenda Development

Town Manager Fogleman began the discussion regarding Town Council Agenda Development and the procedure in which to ask that items be placed on or removed from the Consent Agenda during a meeting. It was the consensus of Council to use the following approach: a Council Member may, with the agreement of at least one other Council Member, ask to have an item added to the upcoming Council meeting agenda to determine if the full Council is interested in having staff move forward with research on the topic.

As for removing an item from the Consent Agenda, a Council Member, may with the agreement of at least one other Council Member, ask to have an item moved from the consent portion of the agenda to discussion, preferably this will be done prior to the agenda going online Friday afternoons at 4:00 p.m. If not, this may be accomplished prior to the Council meeting or at the Council table with a motion and a second (no vote required).

Social Media

Social media was then discussed. Council requested a tutorial session be scheduled. They also decided not to pursue social media as a tool for the Town but rather to focus on updates to the Town's website.

In closing the afternoon session, Council discussed a social gathering once the American Legion Renovation Project is completed for the public. Council agreed that it

would be appropriate to partner with the Blowing Rock Historical Society to help plan and host the event.

The meeting recessed at 5:10 p.m.

Technology

The meeting reconvened at 8:00 a.m. on Monday, January 19, 2015. Present were Mayor J.B. Lawrence, Council Members Albert Yount, Sue Sweeting, Doug Matheson and Ray Pickett. Others in attendance were Town Manager Scott Fogleman, Finance Director Nicole Norman, Fire Chief Kent Graham and Town Clerk Sharon Greene.

Hitstech representatives, Cyrus Hurley and Kent Greer were present to review ongoing technology efforts and future technology updates that are planned.

Public Safety Telecommunication

Fire Chief Graham stated that his department along with Public Works had recently cleaned the area on Green Hill where the water tank and telecommunications equipment/tower is located. He stated that a new telecommunication building is needed and hopefully a cost sharing plan could be pursued with other partners utilizing the building to have equipment such as the NC Highway Patrol, etc.

Chief Graham also discussed efforts being made to improve dispatch operations with the Watauga County Communications department and ways to improve after hours non-emergency service levels.

It was the consensus of Council to discuss these items with the Watauga County Manager regarding the E-911 communications operations.

Blowing Rock Ambulance Base

Chief Graham reviewed call volumes in Watauga County for ambulance services in 2014. He indicated the plan being pursued by Watauga County is to locate a 12 hour ambulance base in Blowing Rock after the Cove Creek location, currently under construction is operational. It was decided to continue emphasizing the importance of this need with the Watauga County Board of Commissioners.

At 12:25 p.m., the meeting recessed for lunch.

Sidewalk – Main Street to Bass Lake

At 1:35 p.m. the meeting reconvened and Town Engineer Doug Chapman was present to begin discussion regarding a planned sidewalk from Main Street to Bass Lake. Mr.

Chapman showed Council a power point presentation depicting plans for a sidewalk. After the presentation, Council directed staff to meet with NCDOT to further discuss which side of Hwy. 221 is preferred and options regarding pedestrian crossings.

Staff was also to meet with the National Park Service staff with a goal of getting their support for the federal grant application to help support construction of the sidewalk. The grant would offer an 80% match or approximately $960K of the $1.2M project.

Utility Plant Operations

Utility Plant operations were discussed, with Council directing staff to advertise for additional staff including part-time and or full-time depending upon which specific applicants are best suited for the Town's needs.

Also, Council decided to consider changing the Utility Plant Supervisor position from non-exempt to exempt with input from the Class and Pay Study Consultant regarding appropriate salary levels.

Sewer

Council briefly discussed the feasibility of extending sewer in the Laurel Park area and based upon failures and/or new development to gather cost estimates if needed.

Town sewer on Chestnut Drive was also discussed; staff was directed to further review this issue and bring forward a recommendation as part of the upcoming budget process.

Gazebo

Council reviewed plans regarding the construction of a larger gazebo in Memorial Park that would replace the current gazebo and be located in the same area. Mr. Fogleman was asked to confirm the donation of materials from New River Building Supply and to move forward with planning of construction and to proceed with getting estimates for site work such as sidewalks, paving around the gazebo, etc.

Sewer

Sewer installation along Hwy. 321 near the Chestnut Ridge project was briefly discussed with Council directing staff to make contact with major property owners in that area to discuss their willingness to provide right-of-way, etc. in order to consider moving the location of the pump station planned in that area. Council also directed staff to make contact with the granting agencies to determine if they have any concerns with the potential new location.

Greenway Court Storm Water

Town Manager Fogleman stated that he had been approached regarding a storm water issue on Greenway Court. It was decided that the actual limits of the Greenway Court right-of-way needed to be known and an estimate was needed regarding the detention system portion of the project was needed. Staff was also to speak with property owners in the area regarding the estimated costs and their willingness to participate in the costs for a solution to the problem.

The meeting recessed at 5:25 p.m.

On Tuesday, January 20th, the meeting reconvened at 8:00 a.m. Present were Mayor J.B. Lawrence, Town Council members Albert Yount, Sue Sweeting, Doug Matheson and Ray Pickett. Others in attendance were Town Manager Scott Fogleman, Finance Director Nicole Norman, Planning Director Kevin Rothrock, and Town Clerk Sharon Greene.

Additional Parking

Planning Director Rothrock presented Council with information regarding public and private parking lots located in Town. It was the consensus of Council to speak with private lot owners about establishing an agreement for public use after business hours and related signage agreements.

Council also requested that staff investigate trolley service alternatives with the Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce, the TDA and the Applecart.

Accessory Apartments in R-15 Zoning District

Resident and citizen apartment housing was discussed with direction to staff to move forward with a proposal to bring forward through the Planning Board.

Country Club Drive Left Turn Lane

A request for the Town to pay for construction of a left turn lane exiting Country Club Drive was discussed with Council deciding not to pay for the construction.

Miscellaneous

Before adjourning the meeting, Town Manager Fogleman gave a recap of the discussion items during the retreat and reviewed the following miscellaneous items with Council:

- Planning Board items for review confirmed with the movement of Sunset Drive Streetscape being moved to the number one goal after combining it with the Valley Blvd. Gateway enhancements.
- Evaluate fast food possible locations and perhaps additional locations being allowed for drive thru businesses in areas other than Valley Blvd.

- Move forward with recycling research on Main Street as part of the FY 2015-2016 Budget and to investigate whether tops can be procured that fit current cans.
- BRAAC initiatives approved, but coordinate with Streetscape work in the future and coordinate with Planning Board
- Christmas lighting - Continue to slowly expand and do two large Maple trees inside stone walls in middle of Memorial Park for the 2015-2016 winter lighting season.

Adjourn

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 12:10 p.m.

MAYOR _____ **ATTEST** _____

J.B. Lawrence **Sharon Greene, Town Clerk**