

**Town of Montreat
Board of Commissioners
Town Council Meeting
October 9, 2014
Walkup Building**

Commissioners present: Mayor Letta Jean Taylor
Mayor Pro Tem Mary Standaert
Commissioner Martha Campbell
Commissioner Tim Helms
Commissioner Jack McCaskill
Commissioner Ann Vinson

Town staff present: Ron Nalley, Town Administrator
Susan Taylor Rash, Town Attorney
Misty R. Gedlinske, Town Clerk
Steve Freeman, Public Works Director
Barry Creasman, Senior Water Operator
Jack Staggs, Chief of Police
Justyn Whitson, Police Officer
Stefan Stackhouse, Finance Officer
David Currie, Building Inspector/Code Administrator

Approximately 140 members of the public were also present. Mayor Taylor called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., gave the invocation, and led the group in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Agenda Approval

Mayor Taylor reviewed the additions and revisions to the meeting agenda since last week's Agenda Meeting. Commissioner Vinson moved to adopt the meeting agenda as amended. Commissioner Campbell seconded and the motion carried 5/0.

Public Hearing

Revised Preliminary Assessment Resolution – Upper Kentucky Road Phase 1 Resident Utility Assessment: Mayor Taylor declared the public hearing open at 7:01 p.m. Mr. Nalley explained that the Eckard family's pending purchase of adjacent property owned by the Mountain Retreat Association has reduced the scope of the water and sewer line extensions to a length similar to what was proposed in the original Preliminary Assessment Resolution adopted on August 8, 2013. Hearing no comments from the public, Mayor Taylor declared the public hearing closed at 7:03 p.m.

Presentation to Council

Town Hall Exterior Conceptual Design Plan: Mike Cox of Architectural Design Studios presented preliminary exterior conceptual design display boards for the Town Hall project. The stair tower

has been redesigned with smaller windows, less glass and a lower exterior height, giving the building a more residential form and scale. He also provided sample images of various window styles and exterior finishes from other buildings comparable to the new facility. During brief discussion, Mr. Cox reviewed the location and size of the building's covered entryway, as well as the landscaping features proposed to help blend the building into the surrounding viewscape. He also explained the degree to which the current building design and floor plan would need to change to accommodate each of the other proposed Town Hall sites. The Board will have an opportunity to discuss the exterior conceptual design further under Old Business, and ADS staff will be available after the meeting to answer any additional questions from the public.

Mayor's Communications

Mayor Taylor reminded the public to respect the Board's proceedings by holding their applause and by conducting any side conversations outside of the meeting room.

Review of the Consent Agenda

With the adoption of the Consent Agenda, the Board approved the following items:

- August 14, 2014 Town Council Meeting Minutes Adoption;
- August 27, 2014 Special Meeting Minutes Adoption;
- September 4, 2014 Agenda Meeting Minutes Adoption;
- Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Budget Amendment #1 Adoption.

Town Administrator's Communications

- Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Budget Amendment #1 was approved to account for the receipt of approximately \$81,000 in reimbursement grant revenues to replace Well A02 on Greybeard Trail. This well was taken out of service in July 2013 as a result of damages from severe rain events that occurred early that month. The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) provided 75% of the reimbursement funds. The remaining 25% was provided through the North Carolina Department of Emergency Management.
- The North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office has tentatively agreed to consider design examples that would allow the new Texas Road bridge structure to be similar in appearance to other bridges in Montreat. KCI Associates staff will soon meet with NC SHPO representatives to discuss a written agreement to formalize this decision.
- The Upper Kentucky Road Phase 1 neighborhood Utility Extension project is nearly complete. Work will begin on the Phase 1 Residential Utility Assessment project within the next two weeks. The paving assessment projects in this area will take place next spring.

During general discussion, Mayor Pro Tem Standaert requested an update from Matt Ashley, the Town's Metropolitan Sewerage District Board representative. In response to Mayor Taylor's inquiry, Mr. Nalley stated that the Town had received all of its expected grant reimbursement funding from FEMA and the North Carolina Department of Emergency Management. All projects related to this grant award are completed except the installation of two stormwater drainage culverts and repairs to one retaining wall.

Administrative Reports

Police Chief: Chief Staggs presented and reviewed his September 2014 monthly departmental activity report. He reminded the public to immediately report any suspicious persons or activity, and to refrain from leaving garbage outside overnight except if placed in a bear-proof container.

Public Works Director: Mr. Freeman reported on the following items:

- The Fall bulk item and white goods collection day is October 28, beginning at 8:00 a.m.
- A six-inch water main on Westminster Terrace ruptured on September 18, and was repaired within approximately four hours.
- Street Department crews will continue pothole patching and right-of-way trimming over next several weeks.
- Carolina Tree Company, a tree trimming contractor for Duke Energy Progress, has been performing utility right-of-way tree trimming on Montreat Road, and will begin similar work throughout Montreat in early November. This company will send out letters to owners of affected property prior to beginning work, and will be available on site to answer any specific questions or concerns. Although the Town has no ownership control over utility rights-of-way, Public Works Department staff met with Carolina Tree Company representatives to discuss this project, and will monitor the work as it progresses.

Mayor Taylor again suggested asking Carolina Tree Company to remove a dead tree at the intersection of Assembly Drive and Louisiana Road

Finance Officer: Mr. Stackhouse presented and reviewed the following financial reports:

- August 2014 Financial Summary Report;
- Final August 2014 Financial Statement;
- Preliminary September 30, 2014 Financial Statement;
- September 30, 2014 Cash and Investment Earnings Report.

In response to Mayor Pro Tem Standaert's inquiry, Mr. Stackhouse stated that approximately two-thirds of the Town's water service customers now paid their bills through automatic draft.

Building Inspector/Code Administrator: Mr. Currie presented and reviewed his September 2014 zoning and inspections activity report. He noted that a number of Montreat's lodges, including Georgia Lodge and South Carolina Home, have added fire escapes or made other fire safety improvements to their facilities. Neither the Board of Adjustment nor the Planning and Zoning Commission met during the past month.

Commissioner Reports

Mayor Pro Tem Standaert summarized the efforts that Board members and Town staff have taken over the past year to correct the County Board of Elections' voter registration database, which continues to inaccurately list Black Mountain's township name and ZIP Code for all registered Montreat voters and for Montreat's advertised polling location. The Town will continue its efforts to resolve this problem, and also encourages private citizens to contact both State and local officials to express their concerns. Election officials have stated that the address discrepancies will not prevent any registered Montreat resident from voting in upcoming elections, nor will it disqualify their ballots.

Mayor Pro Tem Standaert then read the text of an e-mail from Matt Settlemyer, Town Manager for the Town of Black Mountain, which stated that Black Mountain's Board of Aldermen were not inclined to de-annex any property located within its municipal limits as a general principle.

Commissioner Campbell gave a brief update on the Montreat Landcare Committee's October 8 meeting. She reported that two Montreat College graduate students were participating in a number of Landcare projects as part of their Master's degree programs. An Arbor Day celebration is planned as part of the 2015 Native Plant Show and Sale next spring, and community volunteers are encouraged to participate in these events. Commissioner Campbell also encouraged Montreat residents to obtain Backyard Wildlife Habitat Certification through the National Wildlife Federation to support the Town's continued certification as a Certified Community Wildlife Habitat. Montreat is the first municipality in North Carolina to achieve this designation.

Commissioner Helms had no report at this time.

Commissioner McCaskill said that he and Mr. Currie would attend the upcoming 2014 Western North Carolina Stormwater Summit sponsored by the Land-of-Sky Regional Council.

Commissioner Vinson noted the date and time of the Open Space Conservation Committee's November meeting. She encouraged owners of undeveloped property in the Upper Kentucky Road area or other parts of Montreat who may be interested in placing their lots into permanent conservation to contact her.

Public Comment

Montreat College Provost and Senior Vice President Dr. Marshal Flowers thanked the Board members and Public Works Department staff for their participation and assistance with the College's recent Homecoming and Presidential Inauguration events. He also invited the public to attend an upcoming College vocation symposium event scheduled for early November.

Ms. Robyn Josephs of 538 Peace Lane felt that land restoration should be included in the Upper Kentucky Road area assessment projects. She also said that after listening to the Architectural Design Studios' presentation at the September 18 Special Meeting, her opinion of the Town Hall project had significantly changed, and that she was disappointed in some of the information presented. She stated that she now believes that the proposed facility is too large, with an excessive amount of lobby, meeting, and storage spaces. She expressed concerns about the future financial burden of maintaining the new facility and felt that more examination of alternative options that would serve the entire community was needed.

Mr. Bob Cunningham of 162 Virginia Road commented on the amount of community tension surrounding the Town Hall project deliberations, and felt that the Board should delay its decision regarding final site selection for the new facility.

Old Business

- A. Upper Kentucky Road Phase 1 Resident Utility Assessment: Mayor Pro Tem Standaert moved to adopt Resolution #14-10-0001 Directing that the Upper Kentucky Road Phase I Residential Assessment (Portion) Public Utility Extension Project Be Undertaken. Commissioner Campbell seconded and the motion carried 5/0. A copy of this Resolution is attached to these minutes and incorporated herein by reference.

- B. Ad Hoc Comment Card Tabulation Committee Report: Mr. Bill Straughan said that the ad hoc comment card tabulation committee members had agreed to include in their report a summary of all responses received, including those which expressed a preference for a Town Hall site outside the Montreat Gate. He explained that the reason for this decision was a desire to provide the most comprehensive information possible, reflecting the full scope of all opinions expressed on the comment cards that were returned within the specified period.

Commissioner Campbell then moved to include in the ad hoc comment card tabulation committee's report all comments received, including those related to Town Hall sites located outside the Montreat Gate. Commissioner Helms seconded. After brief discussion, the motion carried 4/1, with Commissioner McCaskill voting in opposition.

Mrs. Linda Stroupe explained the process the committee used to review, organize and record the information received on each comment card. Mr. Emory Underwood reviewed the committee's method of analysis, which contained the following information:

- A numerical identifier assigned to each card;
- Whether the respondent attended the September 18, 2014 Special Meeting;
- Whether the respondent viewed the comparative site evaluation presentation materials on the Town's website;
- Which sites the respondent viewed as acceptable or unacceptable as potential Town Hall locations;
- Whether the respondent desired consideration of an alternative site;
- A brief synopsis of any additional comments.

Of the 268 comment cards received during the specified time period, 194 viewed the presentation materials from the Town's website, and 83 indicated attendance at the September 18 Special Meeting. The sites with the most acceptable comments were Pratt Park and Near the Post Office, while Florida Terrace received the fewest acceptable comments. Florida Terrace also received the most unacceptable comments, while Pratt Park received the fewest. Sixty cards indicated that none of the four proposed sites was acceptable, and 87 cards indicated a desire to consider an alternative Town Hall site. The most common alternative site suggested was the lot owned by the Mountain Retreat Association just outside the Montreat Gate.

Mr. Bill Hollins said it was the ad hoc committee's intention for the information contained in their report to serve as a means of building consensus, and to facilitate public input and participation. On behalf of the committee, he thanked the Board for the opportunity to serve offered the committee's continued assistance to help ensure the Town Hall project's success.

Commissioner Campbell move to accept the ad hoc comment card tabulation committee's report, with gratitude for the work of the community and the input of all the citizens who participated. Commissioner Helms seconded and the motion carried 5/0. Mayor Taylor recognized and thanked the ad hoc committee members for their efforts. Mayor Pro Tem Standaert thanked the public for their correspondence and phone calls concerning the Town Hall project, and for their attendance at recent Board meetings.

- C. Town Hall Project Discussion: The Board agreed by consensus with the exterior conceptual design plans for the Town Hall project as presented. Commissioner Vinson noted that although the architects had based their designs for the new facility on the Florida Terrace site, the Board was not ready to begin the construction phase of the project at this time.

New Business

- A. Change Order Approval – Upper Kentucky Road Phase 1 Neighborhood Utility Assessment: Commissioner Helms moved to approve Change Order #6 from Huntley Construction Company, Inc. dated October 1, 2014 with a revised contract amount of \$288,375.36 for the Upper Kentucky Road Phase 1 Neighborhood Utility Assessment project. Commissioner Campbell seconded. During discussion, Mr. Nalley explained that this change order would allow the Upper Kentucky Road Phase 1 Residential Utility Assessment project to be undertaken as a continuation of the current work on the Phase 1 Neighborhood Utility Assessment, at a net additional cost of \$140,757. This figure includes a base project price of \$128,757, along with additional amounts for potential rock excavation work related to the project. After brief discussion, the motion carried 5/0.
- B. Well A02 Replacement – Greybeard Trail: Mayor Pro Tem Standaert moved to authorize Caldwell Well Drilling to drill Well A05 to replace Well A02 on Greybeard Trail for a price not to exceed \$22,000 and authorize the Mayor and Town Administrator to execute any necessary related contract documents. Commissioner Vinson seconded. During discussion, Mr. Nalley said this project was expected to be completed within the next six months, well before the higher water system demands experienced during the summer conference season. He advised that the Town was now operating its well pumps an average of three to four hours per day, and had not needed to purchase any water from the Town of Black Mountain for nearly five years. In response to Mayor Pro Tem Standaert's inquiry, he also stated that all property purchase costs for the Greybeard Trail and Harmony Lane well sites have now been fully paid. The motion then carried 5/0.

Public Comment

Montreat Conference Center Vice President for Development Lynn Gilliland invited the Mayor and Board members to attend an upcoming reception for retiring Conference Center President Rev. Pete Peery. She also announced evening public worship events available the following week, offered as part of the "More Than None" conference.

Mr. Gordon Neville of 226 Alabama Terrace asked the Board and members of the public to consider what each of them could do as an individual to restore peace to the Montreat community.

Mr. Bill Goodwin of 519 Providence Terrace thanked the Board for their efforts. He noted that in the past, very few people regularly attended Town Council meetings, and felt that the recent increase in attendance was an expression of love for the Montreat community by its citizens.

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Mrs. Mary Nell Todd of 143 Eastminster Terrace read aloud a resolution of support for the Board, Town staff, and the proposed Florida Terrace Town Hall site signed by a citizen group called "Concerned Citizens Ready to Move On."

Ms. Gay Currie Fox of 307 Tomahawk Avenue in Black Mountain recalled a severe residential fire in Montreat that occurred in the late 1990s and required the coordination of multiple fire departments to control. She urged the Board not to construct the new Town Hall on the Florida Terrace site due to the risk of a future ridgeline fire that may endanger the structure or make it inaccessible as a emergency command center.

Mr. Tom Lentz of 115 Eastminster Terrace thanked the ad hoc comment card tabulation committee for their efforts. He presented and reviewed four display boards of bar graphs he had prepared based on the responses from the 203 comment cards received by October 8, 2014. He stated that 81 responses expressed a preference for none of the four suggested sites, and that 121 cards included comments supporting evaluation of the proposed alternative site located outside the Montreat Gate. He also said that approximately 164 comments indicated that the Florida Terrace site was the worst possible option, and only 34 comments expressed support for this location. Mr. Lentz then noted that of the 427 registered Montreat voters, only 128 participated in the Town's last election. He also referred to a petition printed in the current edition of the *Black Mountain News* requesting evaluation of the lot outside the Montreat Gate, which he said included signatures from 475 individuals. He felt that these statistics indicated a strong desire by the community for their voices to be heard, and he encouraged the Board to grant the Montreat Cottagers Association Board's request for appointment of a representative task force to make recommendations concerning the Town Hall project.

Mr. Peter Boggs of 338 Chapman Road also thanked the ad hoc committee members for their work, and Mr. Lentz for his previous comments. Mr. Boggs stated that every effort was made to verify that the petition signatures appearing in this week's *Black Mountain News* were printed with permission from the named individuals. He said that no one had asked for their name to be removed from the petition, and that since the publication deadline, 78 additional people had asked to have their names added to list of signatures. He also said he rejected efforts by some community members to make a distinction between seasonal and part-time Montreat residents, stating that all property owners paid taxes and expect equal representation by their elected officials. He urged the Board to listen to the wisdom of the majority concerning the Town Hall issue.

Mrs. Mary Jo Wright of 399 Appalachian Way thanked the Board for their efforts, and said that both she and her husband, Perrin Wright, supported the Florida Terrace site as a reasonable location for the new Town Hall.

Dr. Bill Seaman of 425 Appalachian Way said he could not understand why the location of the new Town Hall facility was such a contentious issue for some community members, since the peak

average visitor count to the current Town Services Office was only 10 to 15 people per day. During his recent travels along Florida Terrace, he observed that the developed properties along this street were primarily Institutional in nature, and included a Montreat College facility, two Montreat Conference Center lodges with capacities over 20 people, and 10-person capacity rental home. He read from an electronic advertisement placed by the owners of the rental home, which described it as being located near the center of Montreat and Lake Susan. He thanked Architectural Design Studios for their work to reduce the proposed building layout from three stories to two stories in response to public comment received following the initial design presentation. He also expressed his appreciation for the Board and Town staff, and felt it was past time to make a final site selection and proceed with the project.

Mrs. Sally Eads of 200 Tabernacle Road in Black Mountain said she also owned property in Montreat. She expressed her admiration for those who hold public office, especially in a small town where elected officials represent their neighbors. She hoped that disagreements over matters of public business did not become personal conflicts between individuals.

Mrs. Alice Lentz of 115 Eastminster Terrace hoped that the current level of civic engagement in Town business would continue, and encouraged all eligible Montreat property owners to vote during upcoming local election cycles. She agreed with Ms. Fox's concerns about wildfire risks in Montreat, and responded to Ms. Janie Moore's recent letter to the *Black Mountain News* by stating that while Town Hall facility is a building, poor decisions about its design and location could bankrupt a community and harm relationships among its citizens. She encouraged the Board to appoint a representative task force to study the Town Hall issue, with funding appropriated to hire independent and objective professionals to evaluate all available alternative building sites.

Mr. Erskine Clarke of 558 Providence Terrace requested an open public dialogue between the Board members and public in a question and answer format concerning the Town Hall project. He also encouraged those in favor of the Florida Terrace site to express the reasons for this preference, and asked that they consider whether they really wanted a Town Hall in a location that so many other members of the community opposed.

Mrs. Ann Seaman of 425 Appalachian Way thanked the Board members and Architectural Design Studios staff for the revisions made to the proposed Town Hall building design plans in response to public input. She believed that the Board had listened extensively and in multiple formats to concerns about this issue, and had sought compromise through their willingness to consider three potential alternatives to the Florida Terrace site. She felt that those who insisted on consideration of the proposed site outside the Montreat Gate were disregarding the Board's clearly stated position that Montreat's Town Hall should be located within the Town's municipal limits. She also expressed her personal opposition to the site outside the Gate. She stated that the Florida Terrace site was supported by a large number of Montreat citizens, some of which chose not to attend meetings or express their opinions publicly due to their desire not to attract negative attention from some individuals opposed to the project.

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Mrs. Janie Moore of 100 Frist Road described the level of rhetoric surrounding the Town Hall project as disproportionate to the issue at hand, and felt that it created a negative atmosphere that damaged both Montreat's public image and the relationships between its citizens. She believed that instead of refusing to listen to the public, the Board had considered the arguments of those who favored a Town Hall location outside the Montreat Gate and had ultimately decided against this course of action. She expressed her support of the Florida Terrace property as an acceptable and appropriate Town Hall site, and said she did not favor building the new facility within a dedicated greenspace area or within the regulatory and jurisdictional control of another municipality.

Mrs. Robin Melvin of 246 Texas Road Spur asked the Board to consider the requests made by the ad hoc committee and several other community members to make a decision regarding the Town Hall project that would heal the community.

Mr. Eric Nichols of 527 Suwannee Drive spoke on behalf of Montreat resident Philip Arnold of 530 Magill Drive, who was unable to attend tonight's meeting. Mr. Nichols said that Mr. Arnold trusted the Board of Commissioners and Mayor, and would fully support whatever decision the Board reached concerning site selection for the new Town Hall facility.

Mr. Bob Eckard of 108 Mississippi Road said he had many friends in Montreat, some with opposing points of view concerning the Town Hall project. He believed that these varying opinions were not caused by differences in personal intelligence or integrity, but rather by the difficulty of the situation. He felt that none of the proposed Town Hall sites were ideal, including the suggested property outside the Montreat Gate, and that all would pose various challenges. He believed there were responsible and thoughtful people on both sides of the issue, and called for respect of all viewpoints.

Upcoming Meeting Dates

Mayor Taylor reviewed the following list of upcoming meeting dates and deadlines:

<u>Special Meeting: Town Hall Site Selection Discussion and Final Action:</u>	October 10, 2014, 2:00 p.m. Walkup Building
<u>October Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting:</u>	October 16, 2014, 7:00 p.m. Walkup Building
<u>Fall Bulk Item Collection Date:</u>	October 28, 2014
<u>Agenda Items Due:</u>	October 31, 2014, 5:00 p.m. Town Services Office

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Agenda Packets Available:

November 4, 2014
[http://www.townofmontreat.org/
TownGovernment.php](http://www.townofmontreat.org/TownGovernment.php)
or Town Services Office

November Agenda Meeting

November 6, 2014, 7:00 p.m.
Kirk Allen Building, Swannanoa Room

November Open Space Conservation Committee Meeting:

November 11, 2014, 3:30 p.m.
Moore Center Meeting Room

November Town Council Meeting:

November 13, 2014, 7:00 p.m.
Walkup Building

Town Services Office Closed:

November 27-28, 2014
Thanksgiving Holidays

Adjournment

There being no further items of business to discuss, Commissioner Helms moved to adjourn the Town Council Meeting. Commissioner Campbell seconded. The motion carried 5/0 and the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Letta Jean Taylor, Mayor

Misty R. Gedlinske, Town Clerk