

**Town of Montreat  
Board of Commissioners  
Agenda Meeting  
September 4, 2014  
Walkup Building**

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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  
Misty R. Gedlinske, Town Clerk  
Steve Freeman, Public Works Director  
Barry Creasman, Senior Water Operator  
Jack Staggs, Chief of Police

Approximately 25 members of the public were also present. Mayor Taylor called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., led the group in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance and gave the invocation.

**Agenda Approval**

Commissioner Campbell moved to adopt the meeting agenda as presented. Mayor Pro Tem Standaert seconded and the motion carried 5/0.

**Public Hearing**

Temporary Rule Affecting Montreat Zoning Ordinance Article X – Sign Regulations: At next week’s meeting, the Board will hold a public hearing on a proposed temporary rule affecting Montreat Zoning Ordinance Article X – Sign Regulations to allow placement of non-commercial, special event temporary signage in designated locations along Assembly Drive.

**Mayor’s Communications**

Mayor Taylor had no report or comments at this time.

**Review of the Consent Agenda**

The proposed Consent Agenda included the following items:

- June 19, 2014 Special Meeting Minutes Adoption;
- July 10, 2014 Town Council Meeting Minutes Adoption;
- August 7, 2014 Agenda Meeting Minutes Adoption.

**Town Administrator's Communications**

- KCI Associates has asked the Board to write an official letter to the North Carolina State Historic Preservation Office formally requesting that the new Texas Road bridge structure be similar in appearance to other bridges in Montreat.
- The Eckard family is currently in negotiations to purchase property owned by the Mountain Retreat Association adjacent to their lot on Upper Kentucky Road. If the sale moves forward, the scope of the water and sewer line extensions will be reduced to a length similar to what was proposed in the original Preliminary Assessment Resolution adopted on August 8, 2013. Huntley Construction Company has submitted a lump sum bid for the revised project in the amount of \$128,757. Staff will likely prepare a revised Preliminary Assessment Resolution for this project for the Board's consideration at next week's meeting.

The Board discussed whether to wait until the sale of the MRA's lots is finalized before amending the project scope. Mr. Nalley said that if the negotiations between the Eckards and the MRA remain favorable over the next week, he would recommend proceeding with adoption of a revised Preliminary Assessment Resolution to avoid a delay between the completion of the Neighborhood Utility Assessment and the start of the Residential Utility Assessment. Mr. Nalley also explained that property owner requests for exemption from the Residential Assessment will be addressed once the work is complete and the Preliminary Assessment Roll is presented to the Board for approval.

- There is no new information to report concerning the Town's efforts to correct township name and ZIP Code inaccuracies in the Buncombe County Board of Elections' voter registration database for Montreat.
- A group of individuals has started an online petition through Change.org, requesting an amendment in Montreat's Code of General Ordinances Chapter F – Traffic, Article IV: Operation of Vehicles to allow the use of coasters, skateboards, roller skates and other similar items on the Town's public streets. The Board is asked to advise Town staff if it wishes to consider any changes to the Town's ordinance language in response to this petition.

During general discussion, Mayor Pro Tem Standaert requested an update at next week's meeting on the status of the Town's response to two recent public records requests.

**Administrative Reports**

The Board will hear monthly departmental activity reports from the Police Chief, Public Works Director, Finance Officer and Building Inspector/Code Administrator during next week's Town Council Meeting.

Mayor Pro Tem Standaert asked Town staff for a report on the effectiveness of the Assembly Drive Greenway pedestrian bridge's design, with specific information concerning stormwater control measures to prevent standing water on the walking path during heavy rains. She also requested information on the reduction in sanitation disposal tonnages and a calculation of any related cost savings as a result of the changes in the Town's dumpster facility hours.

### **Commissioner Reports**

The Board will hear any reports from individual Commissioners during next week's Town Council Meeting.

### **Public Comment**

There were no comments from the public at this time.

### **Old Business**

- A. Temporary Rule Affecting Montreat Zoning Ordinance, Article X – Sign Regulations: The Board will discuss and consider possible action on this item following next week's public hearing.

### **New Business**

The Board will consider the following items of New Business at next week's Town Council Meeting:

- A. Resolution in Recognition of Eagle Scout Candidate Will Presnell: Boy Scout Troop 42 member Will Presnell and a group of community volunteers performed exterior painting, landscaping and other cosmetic improvements to the Town Services Office on July 11 and 12, 2014 as part of his Eagle Scout service project. Mr. Presnell's family will attend next week's meeting as the Board considers adoption of a Resolution recognizing his efforts.
- B. Montreat College Temporary Street Closure Request – Lookout Road: Montreat College has requested a temporary closure of a portion of Lookout Road between Assembly Drive and Assembly Circle between 8:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. on October 3, 2014 for their Homecoming celebration, including inauguration of their new College President. Prior to next week's meeting, staff will revise the map provided in the agenda packet to more clearly indicate the exact location of the requested street closure, as it does not include the entire portion of the roadway between these two intersections. Access to the Anderson Auditorium parking lot will be maintained, and the Assembly Circle intersection will not be blocked. If the Board chooses to approve the temporary road closure, Montreat Police Department staff recommends that the College also perform the following related actions:

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- Notify the Black Mountain Fire Department of the Lookout Road closure;
- Ensure that the barricades include appropriate signage or staffing directing detour traffic around Assembly Circle or Texas Road;
- Staff the barricades at all times with Montreat College resources, who shall wear appropriate safety vests, provide detour directions around the road closure, and be able to remove the barricades and clear Lookout Road in case of a fire or medical emergency;
- Have Montreat College Campus Police personnel on-site.

There was brief discussion concerning the expected attendance at the Homecoming and inauguration events, whether the hours of the requested closure could be reduced, the size of Montreat College's Campus Police force, and whether the College would be able to hire the Town's off-duty Police officers to assist with the event. Mr. Nalley advised that the requested closure period included time to set up and remove the tents, chairs, barricades, and any other items related to the event. Chief Staggs stated that availability of off-duty Town of Montreat Police officers during this time period would likely be limited.

- C. Upper Kentucky Road and Oklahoma Road Extension Street Naming Requests: Staff has received street naming requests for two newly-proposed streets accessing multiple lots in the Upper Kentucky Road area and on what is currently referred to as Oklahoma Road Extension. Mr. Robert Eckard requests "New Hope Lane" as the name of the extension of Upper Kentucky Road to his undeveloped lot. During their July 18, 2014 meeting, the Planning and Zoning Commission recommended five possible names for Mr. Bill Allan's extension of Oklahoma Road: "Boulder," "Whitewater," "Living Waters," "Grace," and "Covenant". Public streets in Montreat have traditionally been named after Presbyterian synods and presbyteries, a list of which is included in the agenda packet. Staff will provide maps of each street extension for reference at next week's meeting.
- D. Town Hall Discussion Special Meeting: At next week's meeting, the Board will consider a motion to formally call for a Special Meeting on September 18, 2014 from 6:00 p.m. until 8:00 p.m. in Upper Anderson Auditorium for discussion of the Town Hall project.
- E. Public Agenda Item Request: Montreat Cottagers Association: At their August 2, 2014 Annual Business Meeting, the Montreat Cottagers Association Board passed the following motion:
- "Montreat Cottagers, Inc. requests the Montreat Town Council to consider appointing a representative task force to hear and evaluate alternatives from the community and to make recommendations to the Town Council concerning the town hall."

Mayor Taylor stated that instead of appointing a task force, the Board authorized Architectural Design Studios to evaluate the following three alternative Town Hall sites within Montreat's municipal limits in addition to the Florida Terrace property:

- The Town-owned hillside lot just inside the Montreat Gate;
- Pratt Park;
- The lot near the Montreat Post Office bordered by Assembly Drive, Georgia Terrace and Collegiate Circle.

Commissioner Campbell asked that this item remain on the agenda for next week's meeting for discussion purposes. Mayor Pro Tem Standaert agreed, but also expressed her personal view that the Board's decision to hold the Special Meeting on September 18 to review, discuss and receive public input on a comparative evaluation of four potential Town Hall sites was consistent with the intent of the Cottagers Association Board's motion. She said that many opportunities for public comment had been provided throughout the Board's consideration of this project, and that a great deal of public input had been received in multiple formats expressing a variety of differing opinions. She was hopeful that the Special Meeting would help the Board and community members reach a consensus on the location of the Town Hall and move forward together on this issue.

Discussion was then heard concerning how the Special Meeting on September 18 would be conducted, how Montreat citizens and community members would be involved in the site evaluation process, and how public input would be solicited and received. Mr. Nalley said that the meeting would include a 30-minute presentation by Architectural Design Studios staff to review their evaluation of each of the four properties and summarize their findings. A question and answer period and a time for public discussion between the Board members, public and the architects will also be provided. A comment or survey card for written citizen responses is also being considered. More information on the exact meeting format and follow-up steps will be announced at next week's Town Council Meeting. An announcement postcard inviting the public to attend the Special Meeting is being finalized and will be mailed as soon as possible, as well as posted on the Town's website, Sunshine List and social media accounts. Following the Special Meeting, the Board may choose to either hold an additional special meeting to select a final Town Hall site, or discuss this issue further during their October Town Council Meeting.

Commissioner Helms supported the appointment of an individual or small group of people to review and tally the results of the written surveys or comment cards and report their findings to the Board of Commissioners. He felt that having this step performed by a third party would help improve the public's trust in the objectivity and reliability of the results. He felt that the appointed person or group should act as an intermediary between the Board and the architectural firm, but that the authority for the final site selection should remain with the Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Campbell supported appointment of an independent

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tallying group to review the community input results, but stated that this action should not be interpreted as a referendum on the Town Hall issue. Mayor Pro Tem Standaert was also agreeable to appointing a tallying group, to be discussed in more detail at next week's meeting.

Commissioner McCaskill disagreed with appointing a tallying group, and felt that the Board should make a final site selection decision in September. He stated that the Board had been considering this issue since 2006, and that the public had been given multiple opportunities to attend meetings and voice their concerns. He also pointed out that although the Town already owned the Florida Terrace lot and hillside lot inside the Gate entrance, it was unknown at this time whether Pratt Park or the lot beside the Montreat Post Office would be attainable, or if any site other than Florida Terrace would be suitable for development as a Town Hall location.

Mayor Pro Tem Standaert agreed that the Board should make a final site selection as soon as possible, and that many aspects of the three alternative sites were unknown at this time. She also felt that the offer by members of the "Montreaters for a New Town Hall in A Better Location" group to purchase the Florida Terrace lots from the Town would also need to be confirmed. Commissioner Vinson asked Mountain Retreat Association Vice President for Development Lynn Gilliland if any additional information about the availability of Pratt Park and the lot beside the Post Office. Mrs. Gilliland referred to the recent correspondence between Mr. Nalley and MRA President Dr. Pete Peery as the most current information available concerning the status of these properties.

There was also brief discussion concerning how the postcards and comment cards would be mailed to the community. Mayor Pro Tem Standaert reiterated her desire to reach as many interested parties as possible, including Montreat College students, tax payers, rental tenants and owners of property in Black Mountain adjacent to the hillside lot at the Gate entrance. Commissioner Campbell also commented on her recent conversations with a member of the Pratt family concerning the history of Pratt Park and those that are recognized on the three plaques located within this area.

### **Public Comment**

Mrs. Shannon Ingersoll of 124 Eastminster Terrace asked for confirmation that the September 18 Special Meeting would include a period of open dialogue between the Board and members of the public concerning the Town Hall project, stating that this was something that she and other members of the public had requested for some time. Mayor Pro Tem Standaert said her understanding was that there would be a time for community discussion. Mayor Taylor reiterated that final plans for the Special Meeting's format would be announced during next week's Town Council Meeting. Mrs. Ingersoll also noted that the date of the next Montreat Landcare Committee meeting was incorrectly listed on tonight's agenda.

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Mr. Monroe Gilmour of 94 Penland Cove Road in Black Mountain said that if an appropriate degree of public outreach and communication had occurred when the Board first began discussing the Town hall project in 2006, there would not be the current level of community discord. He again referred to the State Veterans Nursing Home in the Grovemont community of Swannanoa and the City of Asheville's development of a five-year management plan for the Asheville Watershed area as examples of projects that, despite initial public controversy, achieved positive outcomes due to the willingness of governing officials to alter project plans in response to community concerns. He again encouraged the Board to take similar actions in response to the public opposition to the Florida Terrace site. He felt that all potential alternative sites should be equally evaluated, including the lot outside the Montreat Gate proposed by the "Montreaters for a New Town Hall in A Better Location" group. He believed that a significant cost savings could be gained by selecting a different Town Hall location. He also stated that the public did not accept or support the Board's determination that the new Town Hall must be located inside the Gate.

Mr. Ashton Phelps of 433 Kentucky Road read aloud a text message sent to him from his wife, asking the Board why they were proceeding with the Florida Terrace Town Hall site in spite of the public opposition expressed about this location, and why the Board has so far refused to speak openly with the public about this issue. He agreed with Mrs. Ingersoll's comments that an open dialogue between the Board and public about the Town Hall project was extremely important.

**Upcoming Meeting Dates**

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

<u>September Town Council Meeting:</u>	September 11, 2014, 7:00 p.m. Walkup Building
<u>Special Meeting - Town Hall Project Discussion:</u>	September 18, 2014, 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. Upper Anderson Auditorium
<u>Agenda Items Due:</u>	September 26, 2014, 5:00 p.m. Town Services Office
<u>Agenda Packets Available:</u>	September 30, 2014 <a href="http://www.townofmontreat.org/TownGovernment.php">http://www.townofmontreat.org/ TownGovernment.php</a> or Town Services Office
<u>October Montreat Landcare Committee Meeting:</u>	October 1, 2014, 9:00 a.m. Location TBA

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<u>October Agenda Meeting:</u>	October 2, 2014, 7:00 p.m. Walkup Building
<u>October Town Council Meeting:</u>	October 9, 2014, 7:00 p.m. Walkup Building
<u>Agenda Items Due:</u>	October 31, 2014, 5:00 p.m. Town Services Office

**Adjournment**

There being no further items of business to discuss, Commissioner Vinson moved to adjourn the Agenda Meeting. Commissioner Campbell seconded. The motion carried 5/0 and the meeting was adjourned at 7:43 p.m.

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Letta Jean Taylor, Mayor

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Misty R. Gedlinske, Town Clerk