

**Town of Montreat
Bridge Committee
May 31, 2016 – 5:00 p.m.
Wayout Building**

Board members present: Chairwoman Alice Lentz
Vice-Chair Dan Dean
Bob Cunningham
Lee Lancaster
Jan McRae
Commissioner Kent Otto
Tyler Smith

Board members absent: None

Town staff present: Ron Nalley, Town Administrator
Angie Murphy, Town Clerk
Steve Freeman, Public Works Director
David Currie, Code Enforcement Officer

Thirty-three members of the public were present. Mrs. Lentz called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m., and led the group in a moment of silence.

Agenda Approval

Ms. Lancaster moved to amend the order of the agenda so that Public Comments will be addressed before Bridge Committee - Reports, Communications and General Discussion. Mr. Cunningham seconded and the agenda was approved as amended 7/0.

Old Business

A. **Approval of May 17, 2016 Meeting Minutes:** Mr. Cunningham moved to approve the Minutes as presented. Ms. Lancaster seconded and the motion passed 7/0.

Public Comment

Mr. Bill Scheu of 146 Eastminster Terrace, expressed his thanks to the Montreat Bridge Committee for all of their hard work. Mr. Scheu stated that he supported a pedestrian bridge on Texas Road and felt that most people in Montreat were capable of walking to the Gate in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Mr. Ted Carey of 116 John Knox Road, stated that the extreme catastrophic events that are being mentioned as a reason to have a bridge on Texas Road are far exceeding those that could be reasonably expected. Mr. Carey felt that if an emergency situation occurred that most residents could leave the affected area on foot by using the pedestrian bridge across from the Post Office. Mr. Carey stated the he supported a pedestrian bridge in place of the current vehicular bridge on

as a vote "in favor". There being no further discussion, the motion carried 7/0.

2. Vice-Chair Dean moved as follows: The Montreat Bridge Committee recommends that the Town Council not proceed any further with the current plans for the replacement of the Texas Road Bridge at its current site, which plans are known as Option B in the previously considered plans, and which plans were approved by the previous Town Council. Ms. McRae seconded and the motion carried 7/0.
3. Vice-Chair Dean moved as follows: The Montreat Bridge Committee recommends that the Town Council not build any vehicular bridge at the site of the previous vehicular bridge on Texas Road. Ms. McRae seconded and motion carried 7/0.
4. Vice-Chair Dean moved as follows: The Montreat Bridge Committee recommends that the Town Council take all necessary steps to avoid repayment of funds previously provided for the bridge project by the federal government through the Municipal Bridge Program, in the approximate amount of \$250,000. Ms. Lancaster seconded and the motion carried 7/0.
5. Vice-Chair Dean moved as follows: The Montreat Bridge Committee recommends that the Town Council refurbish and maintain the current Texas Road Bridge as a pedestrian bridge, and that it also enhance and beautify the area surrounding the bridge. If keeping the current bridge as a pedestrian bridge should prove impractical or undesirable, then it is recommended that a new, smaller and attractive pedestrian bridge over the creek be constructed at that site. Mr. Cunningham seconded and the motion carried 7/0.
6. Vice-Chair Dean moved as follows: The Montreat Bridge Committee recommends that the Town Council seriously consider and address the many concerns expressed by citizens regarding safety issues on Texas Road as they concern children and pedestrians using the various recreational, club and child care facilities located on and around Texas Road. For example, suggestions received from citizens include the following:
 - a. Make Texas Road in this area a pedestrian-only road during the busy summer season (except for residents living on Texas Road);
 - b. Create designated drop-off/pick-up points for children – either on Texas Road or at alternate non-Texas Road sites (this would require coordination with the Conference Center);
 - c. Make Texas Road in this area safer by installing speed bumps or other traffic calming features;
 - d. Construct a cul-de-sac in the vicinity of the old, closed bridge so that cars have an easy way to turn around on the now dead-end Texas Road;
 - e. Limit or prohibit parking on Texas Road in this area;
 - f. Prohibit trucks from using Texas Road Spur;
 - g. Limit Texas Road Spur to emergency use only.

term issues and planning. The committee as a whole neither endorses nor recommends these ideas or thoughts to the Council, but it does believe that they are worthy of consideration by the Town Council.

Vice-Chair Dean moved as follows: The Montreat Bridge Committee approves, without endorsement or recommendation, the submission of the following documents to the Town Council:

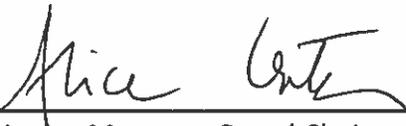
- a. Statement of Alice Lentz dated May 30, 2016 (attached to the Committee's Report to Town Council as Attachment G)
- b. Statement of Jan McRae dated May 10, 2016 (attached to the Report as Attachment H)
- c. Statement of Bob Cunningham dated April 13, 2016 (attached to the Report as Attachment I)
- d. Statement of Bob Cunningham dated May 20, 2016 (attached to the Report as Attachment J)
- e. Statement of Lee Lancaster dated May 24, 2016 (attached to the Reports as Attachment K)

These statements which are attached have been made a permanent part of these minutes. Ms. Lancaster seconded and the motion carried 7/0.

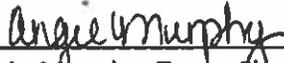
12. Vice-Chair Dean moved as follows: The Montreat Bridge Committee approves and submits to the Town Council the document entitled "Final Report of Montreat Bridge Committee to Montreat Town Council Regarding the Texas Road Bridge, May 31, 2016" with Attachments A-K, as such Report is amended to include the minutes of the May 31, 2016 meeting of the Committee, specifically to include the Resolutions and Recommendations adopted by the Committee at such meeting. Mr. Cunningham seconded and the motion carried 7/0.

Adjournment

There being no further comments or business, Mr. Cunningham moved to adjourn the Montreat Bridge Committee meeting. Ms. McRae seconded and the motion carried 7/0. The meeting was adjourned at 6:03 p.m.



Alice Lentz, Montreat Board Chair



Angie Murphy, Town Clerk

ATTACHMENT G

May 30, 2016

TO: Montreat Bridge Committee (MBC)

FROM: Alice Lentz

RE: A Further Thought on an "Evacuation Plan" – Immediate, Stop-Gap Option to Address This Real Concern

As a consequence of our community colleagues' expressions of concern about safety and evacuation in the event of emergencies, our MBC proposed report calls on Town Council to develop an evacuation plan.

Over the weeks of the MBC's work and through conversations with many people, I have heard comments pertaining to the elements of an evacuation from Montreat that would be activated in the event of an emergency. Some of these comments have been first-hand; others, second- or third-hand. To the degree that these comments are accurate, they should be collected by Town staff in a **one-page document and communicated widely**, such that all in Montreat have access to this information in one spot and such that Montreaters' minds can be eased by knowing that there are elements of a draft evacuation plan already in place.

By "communicated widely," I mean posted at the Post Office, at Town Offices, on the Town website, at Town buildings; posted, to the degree that MRA and Montreat College are in accord, in those institutions' facilities; and mailed to Town residents and property owners, such that the one-page document could be posted in their homes.

In Attachment J, Bob Cunningham speaks in detail to some of these elements, based on his conversation with Ron Nalley on May 3.

If there is accurate information already available about how an evacuation would take place, then all in Montreat should have this information in an easy and handy format. By posting a one-page document widely in the community, visitors and residents alike would have ready access to this information.

ATTACHMENT I

Letter to Bridge Committee. 4-13-16

We in Montreat, through the misfortune of a worn-out bridge, have received a rare gift: the opportunity to think about our future as a town and a community. Having been without the use of this bridge for nearly a decade, some have come to view Texas Road as not an artery through Montreat, but as a primary destination for recreation and child care.

Let's use this challenge of a broken bridge for forward thinking to consider long term our vision about what we want Montreat to become. Let us view this situation as an opportunity for creative thought, a blank slate, using positive thinking and language on what Montreat might become. Not negative, naïve, or pessimistic. Let us be optimistic, yet realistic, seeking consensus on a direction to move forward in that direction.

Let us put forth our dreams and hopes, and through positive dialogue seek consensus of the community, listening positively and optimistically as we come to understand the community's perspective and goals for Montreat. Let us build on the ideas of others as we move toward a vision for Montreat.

In the deadline handed our committee—June 3—our community is unlikely to achieve consensus on a future direction. I think the best we can hope for is to recommend a process which can be adopted in order to generate ideas and achieve consensus.

A process might include a large group session, such as was held on the Town Hall issue in the summer(?) of 2014. Those attending could number off into assigned groups to share their diverse opinions within the groups. Ideas generated could be written on poster paper – accompanied by reasoning, and attached to the wall, to be viewed by everyone and then summarized and shared with all those present. The committee could receive other written e-mail comments. A second Texas Bridge committee could then summarize all comments and look for threads upon which a consensus might be constructed.

By consensus, I mean agreement to a substantial degree on the main lines of the direction. In the absence of a consensus, the default option should be the alternative with the lowest opportunity cost.

After receiving feedback, the committee could outline specific suggestions for moving forward. My sense of the Town Council majority at the March TC meeting was that action on this issue would be slow and deliberate. Questions of evacuation time can be addressed, along with questions of bridge - no bridge, walking bridge vs auto bridge, various definitions of safety and cost benefit calculations that are brought to bear. These micro issues cannot be addressed within the allotted April 14-June 2 time frame.

Notes:

During the citizen comment session at the end of the March Town Council meeting, Mary Bruggeman challenged us to consider how Montreat might respond to an increasingly elder population, with lessened mobility, seeking to navigate the narrow, winding roadways of Montreat. Is there a way of accommodating people with varying mobility capability to enjoy life in Montreat? Can we afford to consider the passenger car to be the only vehicle of possibility inside the Montreat gate, and the relation that shift might make in the changing demand for feeder, auto, and pedestrian transportation?

Look at Texas Road from Anderson Auditorium to Assembly Drive: Eleven or so single family dwellings. The entire Northwest side of the street is geared to recreation or child care use.

Bob Cunningham

risk. Best protection for one's house and property is to avoid flammable materials near one's home. Town Council had a special session on this issue, with excellent presentations, about 18 months ago. Perhaps Ron Nalley could direct interested people to those sources. Fire risk is unlikely to be alleviated by a Texas Road bridge, except perhaps for those 10 houses between the present bridge and Robert Lake Park facing a fire occurring immediately to their north and adjacent to Texas Road. Of course, they could escape personal injury by walking across the present bridge or down Texas Road extension. None of the Texas Road residents who have written or spoken indicated fire as a primary concern.

Ron Nalley said that the town has multiple emergency exits from Montreat West of Assembly Drive. East of Assembly Drive the emergency exit from Montreat would be up Lookout to the connection to the "Old Mitchell Road" to Black Mountain. The way out would be cleared by a "lift loader" bulldozer leading the way, and cars/people could be evacuated at 4 MPH. That would be sufficient speed for fire and water emergencies, with the contingencies noted above.

[Note: these are my notes and recollections from my conversation with Ron. Before quoting him in our report, I think we should confirm that these are his views.]

Therefore, it is my inference from the above information that no bridge on Texas Road would impact resident risk from fire or rain, but a dam break might be dangerous for those near Flat Creek.

Texas Road is the Central Hub of outdoor recreation in Montreat

Financial risk of rejecting the original Contract.

The issue is the risk of having to pay back the federal government seems to be off the table. Ron Nalley indicated in his statement of 5-17 that the main issue is the phrasing of the council action of (date). The wording change of a future TC decision will likely remove the mandate of the Montreat liability for \$250,000. The Town Council reopening the planning document would likely obviate paying back \$250k to feds. At the present time, it appears that the town remains obligated to pay back the state cost of \$30,000.

Aesthetics

Several speakers described the importance of aesthetics--the beauty of Welch Field and the surrounding area. It is a relatively large, flat, open space, relatively dry, available for multiple activities during daylight hours. Although designed and used originally for softball, it accommodates easily to a variety of sporting and outdoor activities—frisbee, pickle ball, soccer, kickball. It is the only such location in Montreat. When one drives into Montreat, the points of view drawn to the eye are first the gate, second Welch Field, third the dam and Lake Susan. The image conveyed by the design of the Texas Road version of the proposed bridge drew the ire of several people concerned about keeping the bridge design compatible with their image of Montreat.

Traffic flow

road? Could we become a "fire safe" community with some education and community involvement?

Federal Money: My suggestion for the allotment of the federal money is to consider using the money for repair or an upgrade for either Community Center or Lookout bridge.

Aesthetics: In my conversations with community members, there is a large concern about the aesthetics of any bridge. Indeed, it is a large part of the objections to the proposed Texas Road bridge. If a bridge is built at the Tennessee Road site, my hope is that the bridge fits into the aesthetics of the area- using stone not stamped concrete, that the bridge is as small as possible, etc. A traffic study would help determine whether the bridge should be one-way, one or two lanes, and whether a bridge is really necessary.