

**Town of Montreat
Board of Commissioners
Town Council Meeting – Public Forum
April 12, 2018
Walkup Building**

Board members present: Mayor Tim Helms
Mayor Pro Tem Kent Otto
Commissioner Kitty Fouche
Commissioner Bill Gilliland
Commissioner Alice Lentz
Commissioner Tom Widmer

Board members absent: None

Town staff present: Alex Carmichael, Town Administrator
Angie Murphy, Town Clerk

Approximately 9 members of the public were also present. Mayor Helms called the Public Forum to order at 6:30 p.m., and held a moment of silence.

Agenda Approval

Commissioner Gilliland moved to adopt the agenda as presented. Commissioner Widmer seconded and the motion carried 5/0.

Public Forum

Mayor Helms started the Public Forum by stating that he had a nice long visit with Postmaster Tim Bryson about the Montreat zip code addressing issue. Mr. Bryson has spoken with the Board of Elections and with the Emergency Management Personnel of Buncombe County as well as US Postal Service employees in Charlotte about the crossover between the Montreat and Black Mountain zip codes. Mr. Bryson felt quite hopeful that this situation could get rectified.

Mr. Mike Sonnenberg of 125 Virginia Road had several instances in the last month where he entered the Montreat zip code and it was converted to the Black Mountain zip code. Mr. Sonnenberg thanked the Board for their enormous service.

Mr. Carmichael stated that Zoning Administrator, Adrienne Isenhower, has also been working on the addressing situation. Ms. Isenhower has been in communication with the 911 Addressing Coordinator of Buncombe County, who referred her back to the US Postal Service, but this conversation led to further talks with the Emergency Services Manager of Buncombe County. They explained their process of responding to emergencies and how addressing plays a role. Mr. Carmichael stated that while it was not an answer we are trying to glean as much information about the matter as we can. Mr. Carmichael mentioned that the new Web Developer is making recommendations to Google to address the zip code addressing issues.

Mrs. Mary Standaert of 118 Shenandoah Terrace, stated that she had been working on the addressing situation for eight years. It remained on the meeting agendas for approximately two years. In 2014 Mrs. Standaert received communication from the Board of Elections Director Trina Parker Valez that the addressing problem had been fixed with respect to voter registration cards. They had listed everyone in Montreat as being a resident of Black Mountain. Mrs. Standaert wrote to the Board and let them know the physical addresses were wrong as well as the polling location address. Mrs. Standaert stated that new voter registration cards are half right and half wrong: the polling address is correct now but the physical addresses remain incorrect. Mrs. Standaert sent a recent email to the newly elected Board of Elections and she summarized this email in detail. She attended a meeting with the Buncombe County Commissioners and outlined the list of address problems. They directed Nate Pennington to look into the problems with a goal towards resolution. Mrs. Standaert spoke to Postmaster Tim Bryson who says that the addressing issue is absolutely not the fault of the US Postal Service and the Postal Service does not assign physical addresses. Mrs. Standaert felt that this was the most critical piece of information in eight years. Mr. Pennington stated that Emergency Medical Services has Montreat listed as Montreat which is pivotal as well. Mrs. Standaert feels that the current voter registration cards which list Montreat addresses with the Black Mountain zip code will not be accepted by the NCDMV when applying for the new drivers licenses which are required by 2020.

Mr. Tom Frist of 98 Frist Road thanked Mrs. Standaert for her persistence with the addressing issue. Mr. Frist wanted an update on the Texas Road Bridge and the new Town Hall. Mr. Carmichael stated the NCDOT as administrator of the municipal bridge program grant sent the final bill for administrative fees earlier this month. The invoice has been processed and the Mayor has signed the check so upon receipt of the check the Town of Montreat will be officially out of the municipal bridge program. At last month's Council meeting, the Board appointed a committee to assess the aesthetics design of a pedestrian bridge. Mr. Carmichael stated that funds for that conversion are allocated in the Capital Improvement Plan. As for the Town Hall, we are moving forward with a controlled burn on April 28th by the Black Mountain Fire Department and multiple other agencies. The controlled burn will be supervised by State Inspectors. It will begin at 10:00 a.m. that morning and will involve a series of burns that start and stop throughout the day. Mr. Carmichael stated that we are at a point to begin writing the bids, in conjunction with the School of Government, for architects and engineers.

Mrs. Mary Standaert of 118 Shenandoah Terrace referred to the Rules of Procedure which were passed last month. Mrs. Standaert stated that the new Rules give 48 hours or two working days to review the packets whereas previously there was a week and two days for review. Mr. Carmichael stated that the goal is to provide the agenda packets a week prior to the meeting. State law requires that the agenda be publicized at least 48 hours prior to the regular meeting. Mrs. Standaert state the Rules of Procedure stated that if the Board wants a week prior to the meeting then the Rules need to be changed.

Adjournment

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Commissioner Gilliland moved to adjourn the Public Forum. Mayor Pro Tem Otto seconded and the meeting was adjourned 5/0.

Tim Helms, Mayor

Angie Murphy, Town Clerk