

**Town of Montreat
Board of Commissioners
Town Council Public Forum
March 8, 2018 – 6:30 p.m.
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

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

Approximately 12 members of the public were also present. Mayor Helms called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., and held a moment of silence.

Agenda Approval

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

Public Forum

Ms. Sara Baughman from Montreat College was in attendance to inform the Commissioners about several spring activities planned at the College. There will be a lecture series on the Montreat Campus, a lecture at the Cove and a creative writing festival at the Montreat Campus. The annual Pops Concert will be held on April 28th and an outdoor concert on April 20th called Coda Music Festival. This festival is being created and ran entirely by the music business students. It is a family friendly concert that will have food trucks and will be over by 9:30 p.m. Ms. Baughman had several fliers with her outlining the above activities.

Mrs. Mary Standaert of 118 Shenandoah Terrace, announced that her husband's wild game camera showed up a coyote in their backyard for the first time. Mrs. Standaert referenced the article in the Asheville Citizens Times by Joel Burgess in which Montreat was characterized as "richer, whiter and older". Mrs. Standaert accepts Mayor Pro Tem Otto's comments from last week but feels that Montreat is now tagged with those words. Mrs. Standaert feels there is only one Montreat and that is the Town. The reaction she has received from outside the community has not been positive. Mrs. Standaert felt that the statement "richer, whiter" closely resembled that of a real estate ad and it seemed to sound affirming. Mrs. Standaert wanted to hear what the Commission's thoughts were on this matter. Mayor Pro Tem Otto stated that it was a total mischaracterization. Mayor Pro Tem Otto stated that he tries to get people from outside the community to visit Montreat. He routinely invites members of the Montreat community to the athletic events and concerts hosted around town. Commissioner Fouche felt that bringing more

attention to the article causes more problems. She wishes that Mrs. Standaert had spoken to Mayor Pro Tem Otto in private before chastising the whole Council. Commissioner Lentz reflected on the irony that Mayor Pro Tem Otto was filling in for Mayor Helms as he was attending Dr. Graham's memorial service on behalf of the Town of Montreat. She agrees wholeheartedly to move forward and not give it anymore life. Mayor Helms stated that he was in attendance when Mayor Pro Tem Otto received the phone call from the reporter. Mayor Helms stated that you don't fight with ink because those were the reporter's words not Mayor Pro Tem Otto's. Mrs. Standaert stated that she tried in her last two years on the Council to add the words "welcoming" and "inclusive" to the Montreat Mission Statement. This was turned down by the Council on numerous occasions. Mrs. Standaert listened to the taped discussion of the Annual Board Retreat when the council discussed changing the Mission Statement and it was decided that no changes were needed. Mrs. Standaert believes that if those words were added to the Mission Statement it could go a long way to refute those words in the paper. Mrs. Standaert reiterated that only the elected official speaking in an official capacity speak for her not the College or the Conference Center.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Commissioner Fouche moved to adjourn the Public Forum. Commissioner Gilliland seconded and the motion carried 5/0. The meeting was adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Tim Helms, Mayor

Angela Murphy, Town Clerk