

**Town of Montreat
Board of Commissioners
Town Council Meeting – Public Forum
July 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
Adrienne Isenhower, Zoning Administrator

Approximately 19 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 Fouche seconded and the motion carried 5/0.

Public Forum

Mr. Tom Frist of 98 Frist Road asked for an update on road names, Google and the US Postal Service. Mr. Carmichael stated this matter had been further complicated by the recent annexation of the new Town Hall site. Mayor Pro Tem Otto recently visited the Board of Elections to discuss this matter and while he had no new information to report he was pleased to advise that he had laid the groundwork to continue more positive dialogue between the Town of Montreat Board and the Board of Elections. Mayor Pro Tem Otto stated that he has written numerous emails to Google with no response.

Mr. Ron Vinson of 136 Quillan Lane stated that he recently ordered something from Staples and there was an “over-ride” option for local mail and package carriers which allowed the system to accept his Montreat address.

Mayor Helms took a moment to explain the “addressing situation”. For many Montreat residents the address for voting purposes is listed as Black Mountain. This means that you cannot use your voter registration identification to get your driver’s license because it does not have Montreat listed as the appropriate town.

Mr. Mike Sonnenberg of 125 Virginia Road thanked the Commission for all their hard work and the time they put in serving Montreat.

Mrs. Jean Norris of 192 Mississippi Road expressed her concerns regarding relations between the Town of Montreat and Montreat College. Mrs. Norris stated that she did not see much contribution from the College to the Town and questioned as the College grows how the Town can convert College-owned properties to the tax base.

Mayor Helms stated that Mountain Retreat Association gives us regular monetary contributions. In the past Mayor Helms has asked Dr. Maurer of Montreat College to contribute and Dr. Maurer has stated that the College is just trying to get ahead right now. Mayor Helms also stated that Montreat College does not have a lot of room to grow. The College will be using dormitory space at Ridgecrest and at Lookout Lodge during the upcoming semester. Future investments would go to the Town of Black Mountain because of the property the College owns down there. Any buildings vacated by the College would revert to MRA.

Mr. Mike Sonnenberg of 125 Virginia Road also felt that Montreat College should be contributing financially but pointed out they contributed in other ways such as events around campus, helping clean up the Town and a lot of involvement with Community residents.

Mayor Helms pointed out the relationship between the Town and the College is good and cooperative not adversarial at all.

Commissioner Tom Widmer stated that parking was a huge issue with the College and they worked with the Town and the MRA to rectify this problem in the upcoming school year.

Mayor Helms stated that the taxpayers of Montreat carry all of the burden because both the College and the MRA are exempt from taxes.

Mr. Wade Burns of 232 North Carolina Terrace stated that both institutions contribute to the vitality of the community.

Sara Baughman of Montreat College stated that Montreat College Athletes will be back on campus on August 3rd. The College has a parking plan in place for the upcoming school year. One permit will allow parking at the Montreat Campus while the blue permit will allow for parking at the Black Mountain Campus with a shuttle service. Ms. Baughman stated this year will be another record year for enrollment. She also mentioned that students are always looking for ways to volunteer within the community and if you need help with anything to contact her and she will put you in contact with some students for assistance.

Mrs. Robin Melvin of 246 Texas Road Spur had comments with regards to the Tree Management Plan which will be discussed during the regular meeting tonight. Mrs. Melvin stated that with the recent floods a lot of the culverts are clogged by trees and 95% of them are hemlocks. She is

concerned about the next 2-5 years and having some of the giant hemlocks fall and cause additional problems.

Mr. Carmichael stated that \$10,000 has been allotted in the budget for tree removal and the Town has a Certified Arborist on staff as well as a bucket truck to facilitate removing trees.

Mrs. Melvin questioned the protocol for felled trees.

Mayor Helms stated that Town Staff can always be contacted to come out and see if the tree in question is on Town right-of-way or private property.

Mr. Brinkley Melvin of 246 Texas Road Spur asked what the right-of-way was. Mayor Helms stated that it was 20 feet from the center line in most places in Montreat.

Mayor Pro Tem Otto pointed out that there is a flier called "A Tree Has Fallen! What should I do?" included in the Tree Management Plan. Mrs. Ann Vinson of 136 Quillan Lane, who put together this flier, stated that the flier can be found on the Town website or at the Town Services Building.

Mr. Ashton Phelps of 433 Kentucky Road stated that he recently had a dead tree and he informed Mr. Carmichael who sent out Mr. Creasman for help as soon as possible.

Adjournment

Commissioner Gilliland moved to adjourn the Public Forum. Commissioner Alice Lentz seconded and the meeting was adjourned 5/0 at 6:58 p.m.

Tim Helms, Mayor

Angie Murphy, Town Clerk