

**Town of Montreat
Board of Commissioners
Public Input Session
October 15, 2018
Walkup Building**

This meeting was not a meeting of the Town Council but a Public Input Session for the public to make recommendations about the Design-Build Town Hall Project. The recommendations and comments made at this meeting are as included as part of the “minutes” of this meeting.

Commissioner Kitty Fouche opened the meeting by thanking everyone for attending and introducing the Town Staff and the owner’s representative, Rick Giles; the architect, Maury Hurt; and builder, Brian Sineath. After a few opening remarks she turned the meeting over to Mr. Hurt and Mr. Sineath.

Jean Norris of 192 Mississippi Road asked about the budget for the design portion versus the budget for the construction portion. Commissioner Fouche advised that a lump sum of money had been budgeted for the Town Hall Project prior to it being selected as a Design-Build Project. A portion will be used for the design with the rest designated for the construction. Mr. Hurt advised that the contract is inclusive of the preliminary design, the final design and the construction.

A male participant asked Mr. Hurt what kind of role he will play after the design portion is over. Mr. Sineath reported that Mr. Hurt would remain in a consultant-like position after the initial design phase has been completed.

Jean Norris of 192 Mississippi Road asked if there was an agreement about the size of the meeting space in the new Town Hall. She wondered whether there was a political reason to keep renting space from the MRA or should the design have bigger accommodations for meeting space in the new building. Commissioner Widmer stated that representatives from the MRA had recommended that the Town not rely on their meeting spaces in the future. Commissioner Widmer advised that the building program does include a multi-purpose space/meeting room.

A male participant asked Mr. Hurt if his involvement in the new development in downtown Black Mountain would be in competition with his time and energy for the Town of Montreat. Mr. Hurt advised that the drawings for this new development are largely done and will not interfere with Montreat’s Town Hall Project.

Mike Sonnenberg of 125 Virginia Road would like to see that the building can be modified easily for smaller and larger projects. Mr. Hurt advised they would give some forethought to this during the design process.

Jean Norris of 192 Mississippi Road stated that it appears that the break room and event space are one space and this needs to be thought out because sometimes employees need to access the break room during a meeting. Also, the server and A/V equipment are shown to be in the same space and she is not sure that they need to be together. The multi-purpose room should have the ability to be separated into smaller spaces as well. Ms. Norris read about separate secure entrances for the police but the multi-purpose room should be used as a command center in the event of emergency. She questioned where that room should be in relation to the police offices. Mr. Carmichael stated that an emergency operations center is used for multi-agency emergencies for the opportunity to share information in real time in the event of an emergency. Mr. Carmichael stated that it did not need to be in a secure environment which means that it does not have to be adjacent to the police offices. Mr. Hurt stated that the break room/kitchen would be adjacent to the conference room. Ms. Norris felt that the break room and kitchen do not serve the same purposes therefore it may be prudent to keep them separate. Mr. Sineath advised that he is doing a construction project now where the server is overheating and they are having to isolate the server and he feels Ms. Norris made a good point about keeping the server separate from the A/V equipment.

Mike Sonnenberg of 125 Virginia Road suggested building with trusses so that we can remove/add rooms real easily. Mr. Sonnenberg suggested a trailer that could be moved easily in emergency situations. He also mentioned that adaptations be made for handicapped/disable people. Mr. Hurt advised that the restroom have to be ADA compliant.

Mr. Hurt and Mr. Sineath then verbally reviewed the recent survey questions that went out to the community via the Sunshine List and the Town of Montreat website. These ideas were written down on poster board paper at the front of the room and can be found in minutes following this document.

Jim Williamson of 529 Memphis Lane felt that there were two qualities which were very important to consider but they are intangible items that cannot be written down or measured in square feet. One is the "quality of welcome" and the other is the "quality of the civic". Mr. Williamson feels that to meet the quality of welcome the structure needs to be more than utilitarian. This will be the first building that everyone encounters before they even get to the gate. Mr. Williamson stated that our existing Town Services Building is a public building but it does not represent the civic quality. The idea of presenting what Montreat is all about is the civic quality. To Mr. Williamson these two qualities are more important than anything tangible.

Commissioner Widmer read aloud some comments that related to Mr. Williamson's concerns.

Mr. Hurt then asked the crowd what the "Montreat Style" means to them. The answers can be found on the following minutes.

Jean Norris of 192 Mississippi Road asked if the function of welcome meaning volunteer desks

and fliers would occur inside the Town Hall Building. Ms. Norris thinks that should influence the obvious entry point.

Ginny Porter of 388 Appalachian Way asked how they would identify the building as a Town Hall. Mr. Hurt said that something would have to be done to identify it to others outside the community. Ms. Porter asked who visited a Town Hall. Town Clerk Angie Murphy reviewed the types of visitors. Ms. Porter stated that she worked in the Gate House over the summer and she was amazed at the number of people who came in with questions about Montreat. She feels that there should be a kiosk or volunteers on hand to answer questions for people who stop in prior to entering the gate.

A male participant stated that he felt the “heart of Montreat” is the area around Lake Susan so we should emulate those buildings in the design.

Beth Fountain of 132 Kanawha Drive stated there was a house on Laurel Circle in Black Mountain designed by Mr. Hurt that looked like Montreat in her opinion. Mr. Hurt stated that particular home is in the arts & crafts style.

A female participant stated that Montreat stone are more natural and rounded like they just came out of the creek.

Jean Norris of 192 Mississippi Road stated that arts & crafts stylings and timber frame would be reflective of Montreat.

Mike Sonnenberg of 125 Virginia Road stated that Montreat was dark and he was hoping for a lot of glass and light.

Mr. Sineath asked what would be welcoming on the exterior.

Marth Campbell of 149 Maryland Place stated that the main entrance needs to be easily seen.

A male participant stated that building a welcoming building requires welcoming people. This participant felt like volunteers should be on hand with an area to provide a welcoming environment. This could encompass the exterior with table being set up in the summer to the interior with information in the cooler months.

Lee Lancaster of 229 Texas Road Ext asked if they had thought of the placement of the building on the property. Mr. Hurt stated there are a lot of constraints to where the building can actually be placed.

Erskine Clarke of 558 Providence Terrace felt that a welcoming environment is one with a lot of light and windows.

A female participant mentioned that tying in the rocking chair theme that Black Mountain uses

would be welcoming as well as a grateful gesture toward Black Mountain for their willingness in the de-annexation process.

Gill Campbell of 149 Maryland Place mentioned placing the porch off the multi-purpose room.

Mary Jo Clark stated that Montreat has the reputation of not being welcoming especially for certain groups of people. She questioned how we can make the Town Hall more welcoming for a wide spectrum of people.

Lee Lancaster of 229 Texas Road Ext suggested native and appropriate landscaping.

Commissioner Fouche suggested a water feature either inside or outside.

Jean Norris of 192 Mississippi Road stated that the landscaping could not be expansive due to the land constraints.

Tom Frist of 98 Frist Road expressed his interest in having a little park down by the creek.

A male participant suggested the landscaping also include the parking lot.

A female participant suggested a beautiful seasonal tree.

A female participant suggested the use of firewise plantings.

Mike Sonnenberg of 125 Virginia Road stated that the landscaping should be low maintenance.

Mr. Hurt asked about the interior aesthetics.

Jean Norris of 192 Mississippi Road asked if we could consider open permeable pavers for the parking lots.

Martha Campbell of 149 Maryland Place reminded everyone that this will be a business office so it needs to have the feel of a business office.

A male participant suggested high vaulted open ceilings or revealed structures/timbers.

Tom Frist of 98 Frist Road feels that we can do all these things that have been mentioned tonight. He stated that one side could be "Chamber of Commerce" like with volunteers and brochures and the other side be the business office. Mr. Frist suggested a big attic for storage of documents.

Mike Sonnenberg of 125 Virginia Road suggested eliminating hallways thereby reducing space used and putting a lot of doors outside on the porch.

Elizabeth Fountain of 132 Kanawha Drive wants the current and future employees to feel honored after having to endure a “glorified rat hole” for so many years.

Mike Sonnenberg of 125 Virginia Road reminded people that jobs will evolve in the coming years and people will transition to working from home or their cars so the office spaces should be easily converted to other things.

A female participant mentioned that she was impressed with the renovations of Assembly Inn and that we can learn a lot from them.

Ken Shortridge of 113 Mississippi Road stated that arts & crafts movement evolved from the industrial revolution. Natural wood and open spaces would be in both the interior and exterior. Mr. Shortridge suggested visiting the Biltmore Forest Town Hall and the Gate House at the Grove Park Inn.

Linda Shortridge of 113 Mississippi Road applauded what other people have said this evening about incorporating the rock and the wood. Mrs. Shortridge stated that the building should represent the old but inject a fresh twist as well.

Commissioner Fouche suggested a public bathroom at the front door for hikers or walkers.

Mr. Widmer reviewed slides with information from the recent survey.

Judy Shuford of 613 Greybeard Trail felt that something should be done to the exterior of the current Town Services Building even though we do not own it. It should be complimentary rather than an eye sore.

Tom Frist of 98 Frist Road felt that security was very important. The doors leading to the offices should be secure.

Brad Hestir of 192 Mississippi Road stated that he read somewhere that certain employees need showers. He felt that the designs should fit the dual needs of both the public and the employees. Mr. Hestir also mentioned putting conduits under the floor to entertain the idea of expansion more easily. Commissioner Fouche stated that the showers would be in the new Public Works Building which will be behind MRA’s maintenance shed.

Mike Sonnenberg of 125 Virginia Road stated that the Town of Black Mountain employees had not used their showers in years.

A male participant suggested visiting The Cove Admin Building for ideas.

Lee Lancaster of 229 Texas Road Ext suggested visiting Asheville Eye & Associates for historical based decorating on the interior.

A male participant thanked everyone for the opportunity that was given this evening.

Commissioner Widmer then gave some closing remarks and the meeting ended at 5:59 p.m.