Board members present: Mayor Tim Helms

Mayor Pro Tem Kent Otto

Commissioner Bill Gilliland

Commissioner Kitty Fouche

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 11 members of the public were also present. Mayor Helms called the Public Forum to order at 6:32 p.m., and held a moment of silence.

**Agenda Approval**

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

**Public Forum**

Mr. Emory Underwood of 120 John Knox Road stated that he knew that the Town of Black Mountain had changed their election cycle and he was interested to know what the Town of Montreat had decided on this matter. Mayor Helms advised that the Commissioners of Montreat had decided to go with even year elections which would put the next election in 2020. Mr. Underwood stated that the Commission was essentially giving themselves another year without the peoples vote. Mr. Underwood thinks it could be looked at a little differently. Mr. Underwood also commented on an article he read in the Black Mountain News about the Town of Black Mountains website.

Mrs. Clare Frist of 98 Frist Road feels that those people who are unhappy about the switch to even year elections should speak to the Commission. She feels totally satisfied with their decision and they work they do for the Town.

Mr. Emory Underwood of 120 John Knox Road thinks it is a mistake to not give people the chance to vote. Mayor Pro Tem Otto pointed out that this was not something the Town of Montreat asked for but something the General Assembly had suggested the Town address based on recent changes with Asheville’s election cycle. Mr. Underwood does not believe that all municipalities are going along with even year election cycles. Mr. Widmer stated that Asheville, Black Mountain, Montreat and Biltmore Forest are all following the same procedures.

Mrs. Mary Standaert of 118 Shenandoah Terrace hoped each of the Commissioners had a moment to read her letter to the editor in the Black Mountain News about the even year election cycle signed by herself, Mary Nell Todd and two Black Mountain residents. Mrs. Standaert stated that she spoke with Representative John Ager and Terry Van Duyn and they agreed to delay introducing the bill to the General Assembly until this Town makes a decision. Mrs. Standaert feels that it’s a huge difference to be mandated by the General Assembly like Asheville and choosing to give elected officials another year like Black Mountain, Montreat and Biltmore Forest. Mrs. Standaert feels that the financial piece is not a strong argument because the savings are only about $1000 roughly. Mrs. Standaert feels this is not a policy issue but a disenfranchisement issue. Mrs. Standaert asked the Commission to rethink their decision and put this matter on the evening’s agenda. Mayor Pro Tem Otto feels that the money piece is still important no matter the amount. Commissioner Fouche regrets that she said Montreat should go along with everyone else. Instead she should have stated Black Mountain and Biltmore Forest. Commissioner Widmer stated that the Town of Montreat did not ask for this change rather the Town was asked to do this by the General Assembly. (\*At the meeting on Thursday, March 14th Commissioner Tom Widmer made the following correction: the Town of Montreat did not ask for this change rather the Town was asked to consider their decision by the General Assembly). Commissioner Widmer mentioned that Mrs. Standaert’s letter in the Black Mountain News literally asked for a call to action to the citizens to come forward and voice their thoughts to their Commissioners. Commissioner Widmer received no such complaints.

Mrs. Clare Frist of 98 Frist Road stated that Mrs. Standaert referenced the 2015 election and that election showed that people were very unhappy with what was going on in Town. Mrs. Frist does not want the Commissioners to be discouraged or get upset when almost everyone is totally satisfied with the job they are doing.

Mr. Brad Hestir of 192 Mississippi Road stated he could not find the minutes for the Planning & Zoning Commission as well as other committees on the new Website. Mr. Carmichael advised that currently all minutes are available in Town Hall for inspection as the Website is still a work in progress right now. Mr. Hestir also mentioned that he was looking for applications for individual Board members and questioned whether they were public records. Mr. Carmichael stated that they were indeed public records and could be viewed at any time in Town Hall.

Mr. Wade Burns of 232 North Carolina Terrace stated that the Public Forum this evening was a little disorganized but so important for the Townspeople to speak and listen on what matters feel important to them.

Mr. Tom Frist of 98 Frist Road asked for an update on the Frist Road Paving Project. Mayor Helms stated that it would probably be spring due to the prohibitive weather. Mr. Carmichael stated that the contracts are in place and all we are waiting on are the asphalt plants.

**Adjournment**

Commissioner Gilliland moved to adjourn the Public Forum. Mayor Pro Tem Otto seconded and the meeting was adjourned 5/0 at 6:58 p.m.

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Tim Helms, Mayor Angie Murphy, Town Clerk