Board members present: Mayor Tim Helms

Mayor Pro Tem Tom Widmer

Commissioner Jane Alexander

Commissioner Kent Otto

Commissioner Alice Lentz

Board members present via

Zoom: Commissioner Kitty Fouche

Board members absent: None

Town staff present: Alex Carmichael, Town Administrator

Angie Murphy, Town Clerk

David Arrant, Chief of Police

Town staff present via Zoom: Scott Adams, Zoning Administrator

No members of the public were present at Town Hall but several were watching via Zoom. Mayor Helms called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., and led the group in the pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence.

**Agenda Approval**

Commissioner Jane Alexander moved to adopt the agenda as presented. Mayor Pro Tem Tom Widmer seconded and the motion carried 5/0.

**Dog Waste Systems**

Town Administrator Alex Carmichael stated that Town Staff, as well as the Board of Commissioners, had received numerous complaints with regards to dog waste found on trails, resident driveways, near the columbarium and on sidewalks around Town. Mr. Carmichael researched the costs involved for purchasing and installing dog waste receptacles. The full unit which includes the waste bags would cost between $189-$388 per station. The price of the receptacles only would average $201.98-$282.98. Mr. Carmichael stated that if the Town were to move forward with the purchase of the dog waste receptacles consideration would have to be given on where to place the receptacles in and around Town. The majority of the complaints involved the trails and the columbarium which is private property that belongs to the Mountain Retreat Association. Mr. Carmichael has reached out to MRA President Richard Dubose for a meeting in the next week or so to discuss partnership opportunities. Staff will continue to investigate possible locations with the help of the Public Works Staff and other Town entities and bring recommendations back to the Council at future a meeting.

**Mayor’s Communications**

Mayor Helms reminded everyone that the Town of Montreat will be closed on Monday January 18th in honor of Martin Luther King Jr Day. He encouraged partaking in the numerous MLK Jr. events being held all over the region. Mayor Helms expressed his regret in the inability to hold the monthly Public Form meetings and he hopes these can be reinstated soon. Mayor Helms reminded everyone that Montreat College is back in session and testing for COVID-19 was utilized prior to students and faculty returning to campus. Mayor Helms expressed his gratitude for their significant focus on COVID-19 and keeping Montreat safe.

**Meeting Minutes Adoption**

* December 10th Town Council Meeting Minutes

**Town Administrator’s Communications**

Mr. Carmichael had no communications to report.

**Administrative Reports**

* Administration – This report was given in written format.
* Planning & Zoning – This report was given in written format.
* Police – This report was given in written format.
* Public Works and Water – This report was given in written format.
* Finance – No report provided.
* Sanitation – This report was given in written format.
* Streets – This report was given in written format.

Mayor Helms advised the Commission that Finance Officer Darlene Carrasquillo was recently in a car accident and was unable to provide a finance report. Commissioner Alice Lenz asked for an update on sanitation services with regards to bagged leaves and brush. Mr. Carmichael stated that the volume of leaves and brush were beyond Town Staff’s capacity at this time but staff are working diligently to get the leaves and brush picked up. Commissioner Kent Otto mentioned that the Town’s sanitation brochure needs to be reviewed with regards to contract labor and leaf pickup. Mayor Pro Tem Widmer was really pleased to see that water leak adjustments have improved significantly in recent years. Town Clerk Angie Murphy and Alex Carmichael advised that Debbie Taylor, Utility Billing Clerk, had been doing an excellent job of handling the water billing system and all issues. Kudos to Debbie!

**Public Comment**

Town Clerk Angie Murphy read a comment from Mr. John Hinkle of 121 Mecklenburg Circle with regards to dog waste. Mr. Hinkle had written an email to the Board of Commissioners in early December and he was pleased to see it on the January agenda. Mr. Hinkle feels that the dog waste is an eyesore as well as a health issue. He suggested that the Town not furnish the bags as relying on the bags might cause additional problems.

Town Clerk Angie Murphy read a comment from Dr. Mary Standaert of 118 Shenandoah Terrace with regards to comments made at the December Town Council Meeting and in the Black Mountain News. Dr. Standaert respectfully disagrees with statements made by members of Town Council that Montreat citizens should not reach out to government officials and staff with concerns and questions about the Montreat address issue. Dr. Standaert believes that those experiencing “Montreat-fatigue” over the address issue will lead to an engaged effort to find a resolution.

Town Clerk Angie Murphy read a comment from Mike and Kathy Mader of 159 Mississippi Road with regards to setback adjustments. The Maders questioned whether the Montreat Zoning Ordinance revisions would result in a secondary process for making setback adjustments to small, irregularly shaped lots. Mr. Carmichael was asked to reach out to the Maders and explain that the ordinances were still in the recommendation process and had not been yet revised.

**Old Business**

There was no old business to discuss.

**New Business**

1. Culvert Repair-Greybeard Trail: Mr. Carmichael stated that the owners of 435 Greybeard Trail had reached out to the Town a year ago about a culvert that runs under their driveway and across their property up to West Virginia Terrace. This culvert is currently failing and the owners want the Town to repair it. An easement was established and it is signed and documented. Bids were received from three different companies. State statutes require the Town to award the contract to the lowest bidder. Commissioner Otto moved to approve the bid from Dogwood Estate Management, Inc. for culvert repair at 435 Greybeard Trail and to authorize the Mayor and Town Administrator to negotiate and sign a contract for repairs. Commissioner Alice Lentz seconded and discussion ensued. The motion carried 5/0.
2. Black Mountain Water Meter Reader Tower: The Town of Black Mountain approached Mr. Carmichael a few months ago asking to install one of their meter reader towers on Montreat property to better assist reading meters on this side of Town. The ideal location that they have identified is next to the new Public Works Building. The agreement is for $1 a year and this would be a great opportunity for continued partnership with the Town of Black Mountain. Commissioner Alice Lentz moved to approve the easement request from the Town of Black Mountain as presented. Mayor Pro Tem Widmer seconded and the motion carried 5/0.
3. 911 Consolidation Discussion and Possible Action: Mayor Helms advised the Commission that earlier this week the Town of Black Mountain Board of Aldermen voted unanimously to consolidate their dispatch services with Buncombe County Emergency Services. This puts the Town of Montreat in the position of doing without dispatch services or agreeing to consolidate with Buncombe County as well. Currently Montreat pays the Town of Black Mountain around $21,000 a year for dispatch services while the County is offering $11,193 a year. Mayor Pro Tem Widmer moved to authorize the Mayor and Town Administrator to negotiate and sign a contract with Buncombe County for dispatch services. Commissioner Alexander seconded and the motion carried 5/0.

D. Planning Discussion for 2021 Annual Board Retreat: It was decided that Mr. Carmichael would look into two half days in late February/early March for the Annual Board Retreat. Mayor Helms would like Mayor Pro Tem Widmer to boil down the community survey to a more manageable amount to address some of the more pressing topics at the retreat.

E. Decision on next steps to deal with P&Z Zoning Ordinance recommendations: It was decided that Mr. Carmichael would like for a date that pleases the Board of Commissioners and several of the Planning & Zoning Commission members to go over the more substantive changes to the Montreat Zoning Ordinance.

**Public Comment**

There was no Public Comment at this time.

**Commissioner Communications**

Mayor Pro Tem Widmer gave an update on the Montreat address issue. A meeting was held with Montreat Postmaster Tim Bryson and it was not encouraging because it appears the problem is much greater than the zip code issue. Mayor Pro Tem Widmer also advised everyone that Buncombe County released some changes to their vaccination schedules today. The State of NC has expanded vaccine eligibility to 65+ effective February 1st. No vaccines are currently available in Buncombe County but the public will be notified when they are available and appointments can be made.

Commissioner Alice Lentz advised that Mayor Helms has signed the Mayor’s Monarch Pledge which will help initiate a new emphasis on attracting and preserving Monarch butterflies. Montreat Landcare has been focusing on leaf collection and the pet waste problem.

**Dates to Remember**

* Tree Board January 26, 2021 9:30 a.m. Zoom Software Only
* Montreat Landcare February 3, 2021 9:00 a.m. Zoom Software Only
* Planning & Zoning Commission February 4, 2021 10:30 Zoom Software Only

**Adjournment**

Commissioner Alice Lentz moved to adjourn the meeting. Mayor Pro Tem Widmer seconded and the motion carried 5/0. The meeting was adjourned at 7:59 p.m.

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Tim Helms, Mayor Angie Murphy, Town Clerk