Board Members Present: Commissioner Alice Lentz

Bill Scheu

Mary Nell Todd

Philip Arnold

Board Members Absent: None

Town staff present: Angie Murphy, Town Clerk

Alex Carmichael, Town Administrator

There were two members of the public present. Commissioner Alice Lentz welcomed everyone and held a moment of silence.

Mr. Bill Scheu moved to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. Philip Arnold seconded and the motion carried 4/0.

Mr. Philip Arnold moved to approve the November 19, 2018 minutes. Mr. Bill Scheu seconded and the motion carried 4/0.

Ms. Mari Gramling of 216 Alabama Terrace wanted to comment about the proposed driveway at Wynne-Lithia Springs. Ms. Gramling stated that while working on the opposition to the driveway she realized how unprotected certain areas of Montreat seem to be. Ms. Gramling did not realize that the Open Space Conservation Committee only met twice a year. Ms. Gramling hopes to learn more during the meeting about exactly what an Open Space is to Montreat. Ms. Gramling also stated that she had read and studied the Open Space Plan and she wanted to know how she can help more.

Dr. Mary Standaert of 118 Shenandoah Terrace also did not realize that the Committee only met twice a year. Dr. Standaert thanked everyone for their service to the Town. Dr. Standaert suggested refreshing the Town’s collective memory regarding the purpose of the Open Space Conservation Committee. Dr. Standaert thanked former Town Commissioner Ruth Currie for starting the Open Space Conservation Committee years ago. Dr. Standaert expressed a desire to know which properties are in the Open Space Program. She would like to see a listing of the donation dates and names of donors with a plaque of appreciation. Dr. Standaert would also like to know the criteria for acceptance and rejection of properties. She also wanted to know how much money is in the Town budget to pay for the paperwork to accept properties into the program.

During the Administrator’s Report, Alex Carmichael advised that there had not been an active donation since the last meeting.

Under Old Business Mr. Philip Arnold advised that there are two different funds with the Town of Montreat. There is an amount allocated each year for surveys, quick deeds, etc. There is another fund where money is given to the Town by the Cottagers Association as seed money for the acquiring of land. Mr. Arnold stated that it was the responsibility of this Committee to maintain each of these funds. Mr. Carmichael stated that he wasn’t aware of any monies from the Cottagers Association and Mr. Arnold said he wasn’t sure there was any left at this time but in previous years this money did exist. Mr. Carmichael advised that in past budget years the Town Council allocated about $20,000 towards legal fees but recently these monies have not been allocated. The legal funds do not roll over as they are allocated each year.

Under New Business, Mr. Bill Scheu nominated Ms. Mary Nell Todd as Chair. Mr. Philip Arnold seconded and the motion carried 3/0. Mr. Bill Scheu nominated Mr. Arnold to serve as Vice-Chair. Ms. Todd seconded and the motion carried 3/0. Ms. Todd nominated Mr. Scheu as Secretary. Mr. Arnold seconded and the motion carried 3/0.

Commissioner Alice Lentz advised that Rules of Procedure allow for five members.

There was some discussion about how the Committee wants to continue. Mr. Philip Arnold advised that most of the promotion of this Committee is accomplished by the Cottager’s Association. Mr. Scheu stated that perhaps the Committee should encourage the Cottager’s Association to be more proactive in promotion. Mr. Arnold advised that when there is a Cottager’s Association Meeting there is usually a table with brochures and pamphlets outlining the purpose of the Committee. Mr. Arnold also advised that there is not a purpose in meeting every month unless there is an application for donation or actual business to entertain. Commissioner Alice Lentz suggested using the Montreat Minute to publicize the Committee.

During the second Public Comment period, Dr. Mary Standaert stated she would like to see the Committee become more pro-active. Dr. Standaert stated that while relying on the Cottager’s Association to promote had worked in the past perhaps a different vehicle of promotion must be recognized. Dr. Standaert recommended asking to add a fifth member to the Committee as well as asking $20,000 from the Town Council to be added to the budget this year.

Ms. Mari Gramling asked who has the responsibility for actual active preservation of historic and environmental spots in Montreat. Ms. Gramling doesn’t feel that anything is actually happening and she finds that to be frightening.

Mr. Philip Arnold suggested that members should review the by-laws and see if they want Town Council to review or expand responsibilities.

There was no further new business to discuss.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m. with a motion by Philip Arnold and a second by Mary Nell Todd.

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Philip Arnold, Vice-Chair Angie Murphy, Town Clerk