Board members present: Mayor Tim Helms

Mayor Pro Tem Tom Widmer

Commissioner Kitty Fouche

Commissioner Mason Blake

Commissioner Jane Alexander

Commissioner Kent Otto

Board members absent: None

Town staff present: Ben Blackburn, Interim Town Administrator

Angie Murphy, Town Clerk

Approximately four members of the public were present. Mayor Tim Helms called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., and led the group in a moment of silence.

**Agenda Approval**

Commissioner Jane Alexander moved to adopt the agenda as presented. Commissioner Kitty Fouche seconded and the motion carried 5/0.

**Public Forum**

Mrs. Linda Stroupe of 105 Kanawha Drive read a series of questions for her neighbors who could not be present for the meeting. On behalf of Meredith Greene and Laurie Morgan of 130 Kanawha Drive, Mrs. Stroupe asked the following: What is the total to date that the Town has spent on the SUP hearings and appeal regarding the proposed lodge and is there an estimate of further costs to the Town before its responsibility in this matter is completed. Mayor Helms stated that the Town has spent between $121,555 and $124,555 which includes all staff time, an estimated $7,000-$10,000 in attorney fees for the Superior Court appeal, and the balance of $99,813 for attorneys, court reporter and other fees. On behalf of Dan Zorn of 112 Kanawha Drive, Mrs. Stroupe asked the following four questions: How much is the annual allocation for legal fees? Mayor Helms advised that $45,000 was allocated for legal fees for Fiscal Year 21/22. Should the Board increase the amount of this item going forward not that this precedent has been set? Mayor Helms stated that the amount would probably be increased going forward but he would much rather see the money spent on other projects which directly impact the townspeople. If we have overspent on this line item, what other budgeted events will suffer this year? Mayor Helms responded by saying that the Town is being forced to use funds earmarked for the Texas Road Bridge Conversion repair to pay for the expenses. If the Town is not directly sued, why start the tab on legal fees? Mayor Helms stated that there was one attorney who represented the Board of Adjustment to make sure the BOA’s proceedings were proper and legally correct. There was another litigation attorney who represented the Town of Montreat to monitor and observe the hearings to be prepared to defend the Town of Montreat in the event to an appeal to the Superior Court.

Mrs. Grace Nichols of 527 Suwannee Drive thanked Mayor Helms for signing the Monarchs Mayor Challenge and announced that after a two year absence the Native Plant Sale will be held on Saturday, April 23rd. There will be activities and events for the entire family. Mrs. Nichols thanked the members of the Commission who had volunteered their time for the plant sale. Mrs. Nichols also commended the work of the grounds crew who recently mulch and weeded around Town Hall.

Mr. Brad Hestir of 192 Mississippi Road stated that the Native Plant Sale is also an opportunity to celebrate and remember Arbor Day in Montreat. Mr. Hestir urged the Commission to support tree conservation in Montreat and to make sure the environment is considered a primary issue with regards to all decisions made in Montreat.

**Adjournment**

Mayor Pro Tem Tom Widmer moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Kent Ottoseconded and the motion carried 5/0. The meeting was adjourned at 6:52 p.m.

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Tim Helms, Mayor Angie Murphy, Town Clerk