Committee members present: Mayor Tim Helms (Chair)

Maggie Elliott

Mari Gramling

Dr. Paul Maurer

Richard DuBose

John Casper

Dr. Bill Seaman

Committee members present via

Zoom: None

Committee members absent: Daniel Hewitt

Town staff present: Angie Murphy, Town Clerk

Scott Adams, Zoning Administrator

Town staff present via Zoom: None

Approximately five members of the public were present at Town Hall and several more were watching via Zoom. The Chair called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m., and led the group in a moment of silence.

**Agenda Approval**

Dr. Paul Maurer moved to approve the agenda as presented. Mr. John Casper seconded and the motion carried 6/0.

**Minute Approval**

Mari Gramling moved to approve the January 26, 2022 minutes as presented. Dr. Bill Seaman seconded and the motion carried 6/0.

**New Business**

Drew Draper, Project Manager of the Comprehensive Plan, advised that he and his associates got jump-started in late January. They’ve done some more analysis and review since then. Today’s meeting will focus on the workbook that they prepared which will help lead the next steps in the planning process. Shannon Fergus briefly reviewed the agenda. Dr. Bill Seaman had provided, prior to the meeting, the group with some documents called “Planning 101”. Ms. Fergus suggested that the group take a look at the Town of Black Mountain’s Comprehensive Plan at their convenience. Shannon reviewed the relevant best practices which include inputs and outputs. The inputs include authentic community engagement, technical analysis and expert review. The outputs include values, visions and goals, realistic strategies for the future and support for funding applications. Shannon advised that data-drive plans should include the following:

* Assess strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats which they did with the workbooks
* Establish fact base and current trendline
* Acknowledge interconnectedness of social, natural and built systems
* Develop a future vision using shared community values
* Consider key concepts like infrastructure, environment, economy, equity, health and regionalism in addition to land use
* Develop goals and strategic actions to achieve the vision; realistic implementation
* Communicate clearly to all with easy to understand, well-designed materials

Katie Sieb advised that the committee is in the early stages of planning which includes assessing strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. The steps go hand-in-hand and layer together. Shannon advised the group that their workbook answers were extremely thoughtful and were the best they’ve ever received. The answers helped move the consultants a little more forward and helped planned todays activities.

Shannon reviewed the guiding principles for Montreat Tomorrow (so far). The consultants aim to be transparent and offer meaningful opportunities for public involvement in a variety of ways and to provide clear communications and materials that are easy to understand. They aim to be respectful with regards to the spiritual character of the Town’s institutions, while acknowledging that the plan must serve the community overall. They will consider the needs of property owners with equality and respect. They will identify mutual goals and opportunities to partner where appropriate. The consultants aim to be flexible because planning in the time of a pandemic and changing planning laws in the State make for a challenge. They plan to meet this challenge with flexibility, accommodating virtual and in-person engagement and clear, strong project management. Shannon briefly reviewed the draft event schedule. A Community Survey will go out in early May to hear from Montreat residents about their vision for the future character and services of Montreat. In June a Community Workshop is planned to showcase plan concepts to the public along with a series of activities designed to get people thinking about the future of the Town and share their opinions about possible recommendations. During July-September there will be email updates and activities for the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee to stay involved. Activities such as monthly email updates and online activities like additional workbooks, surveys and draft chapters. Dr. Seaman felt that more community engagement would be needed. Katie stated that there would be many ways for the public to participate and mentioned paper surveys that people could mail in if they weren’t comfortable with computerized surveys. Shannon stated that the next meeting of the committee will be virtual to discuss community engagement activities. The final meeting of the committee will be virtual as well and will be a review and discussion of draft plan. The consultants hope to present a draft plan to Town Council in December with a Public Open House as well.

Shannon reviewed a packet of map data with the Committee based on what they heard in the workbooks. The maps include land use, transportation and environment data. Dr. Seaman asked if the maps would be available for the Committee to delve in deeper too. Shannon stated they would make them available to the Committee.

Katie led a conversation about how the 2008 Comprehensive Plan was structured: elements to retain and elements to change. Katie asked if the Committee found the recommendations of the 2008 plan to be realistic. Maggie Elliott stated that she liked how the recommendations were completed by sections and felt that would be a good way to proceed with the Montreat Tomorrow Plan. Mayor Helms stated that the plan was realistic but not relevant any longer for today. Mayor Helms felt it was well organized with the way it was sectioned off. Mr. Draper stated the consultants would be preserving items in the 2008 plan as well as adding new items for the new plan. Dr. Seaman felt the 2008 plan had too many recommendations to achieve and felt notable areas had been left out in his opinion. Mr. Casper agreed with Dr. Seaman and stated there didn’t seem to be much prioritization. Mayor Helms likes the thought of a more concise and succinct document. Dr. Seaman felt there were some things missing such as stormwater management, environment, recreation, the arts, information communication and town administration.

The consultants led the committee through a series of fun activities derived from answers in their workbook.

**Public Comment**

There was no public comment at this time.

**Adjournment**

Richard DuBose moved to adjourn the meeting. Dr. Paul Maurer seconded and the motion carried 6/0. The meeting was adjourned at 12:01 p.m.

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Tim Helms, Chair Angie Murphy, Town Clerk