MINUTES - SPECIAL MEETING
BOONE TOWN COUNCIL
DECEMBER 14, 2004

A special meeting of the Boone Town Council was called to order at 5:01 p.m., Tuesday, December 14, 2004, in the Town Council Chambers, 1500 Blowing Rock Road, Boone, NC. Mayor Velma C. Burnley presided. Council members present were Mayor Pro-Tem Loretta Clawson, Graydon Eggers, Lynne Mason, Dempsey Wilcox, and Bunk Spann (arrived at 5:25 p.m.). Town staff present were Greg Young-Town Manager, Blake Brown-Public Works Director, John Spear-Development Services Director, Bill Post-Chief of Police, Freida Van Allen-Town Clerk, and Kim Tester-Deputy Town Clerk.

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss topics relating to neighborhood speed limits and cut-through traffic.

Mayor Burnley welcomed everyone to the meeting.

Charles Ulery, who operates a business at the corner of Highland Avenue and Highway 105, began by stating he is sympathetic to the traffic concerns of neighborhood residents. He stated, however, that he does not want any measure taken to impede access to his business located on Highway 105. He advised that such measures as speed bumps and lower speed limits are not the answer to traffic problems in Boone. Mr. Ulery suggested that the Town should consider alternative routes for traffic, especially for access to Appalachian State University. Mr. Ulery stated that if a person wants no cut-through traffic, he/she should consider moving to a gated community. He stated that since tax money is used to make and maintain these streets, they should be able to be used by the public.

Andrew Mason stated he supports the posted 20-mph speed limits in residential neighborhoods, however, he voiced opposition to the "no cut-through traffic" signs, stating that no law exists prohibiting the use of those public streets. Mr. Mason indicated a consistent effort of enforcement is necessary in the Stadium Drive neighborhood. Mr. Mason agreed with Mr. Ulery's statement concerning an alternate corridor to the ASU campus being needed.

Nancy Penick, who lives at the intersection of Oak Street and Summit Street, stated she is in agreement with the actions of the Town of Boone to alleviate traffic problems in residential neighborhoods; however, she feels that the speed limit could be raised to 25 mph.

Gretchen Lewis, who resides on Oak Street, expressed appreciation for the efforts of the Town of Boone and the Boone Police Department to reduce the incidents of speeding on Oak Street. She asked that these changes be made permanent. Ms. Lewis suggested using the extra roadway on Oak Street as a bike and/or pedestrian lane.

Walt Cole, who lives on Winter Drive, asked that the one-way designation on Oak Street be terminated at the intersection with Clement Street so residents from Blanwood Drive would have access to a traffic light to make left hand turns.

Mike Snead expressed opposition to the 20-mph posted speed limits, the "no cut through traffic" signs, and the "one-way only" designation of Oak Street. Mr. Snead stated these efforts do cause more traffic to be directed onto already over-burdened highways and make neighborhoods seem unfriendly.

Barney Hampton, who owns Hampton Funeral Services on Horn in the West Drive, voiced a concern with the one-way designation of Oak Street from Clement Street to Horn in the West Drive. He stated this presents a problem to many people who try to access his location from that direction. Mr. Hampton also suggested raising the speed limit to 25 mph in neighborhoods.

Jolene Bach, who lives at 659 Grand Boulevard, asked the Council to reopen Bear Trail to two-way traffic. She stated a one-way only designation to Bear Trail causes more traffic along King Street. She also asked that the speed limit be changed to 25 mph in neighborhoods.

Nan Chase, who lives at 151 Iris Lane, asked that two-way traffic be allowed on Bear Trail. She stated she spends at least two hours a month traveling on King Street and often has to cut through

other neighborhoods to get to her home. Ms. Chase asked that the speed limit be raised to 25 mph.

J. L. Laws, who resides at 280 Pine Street, agreed that traffic is a problem in Boone and favors the 20 mph speed limit. He stated he does not agree with the one-way only designation for Oak Street because he has to go out of his way to get home. Mr. Laws stated this is especially true when parades are held on King Street.

Roger Harwood, of 280 Pine Street, thanked Council members for their efforts to try to resolve neighborhood traffic problems. He also expressed appreciation for the efforts of the Police Department. Mr. Harwood stated the lower speed limit has resulted in making Stadium Drive more dangerous because drivers must watch their speedometers instead of the road. He suggested the speed limit be increased to 25 mph and be enforced more strictly. Mr. Harwood pointed out how dangerous it is for persons making left hand turns from the ASU stadium parking lot onto Stadium Drive. He asked that a caution light be installed at the location.

Wynn Ayers, who lives at 443 Dogwood Road, thanked Council members for their efforts but asked that the speed limit be raised to 25 mph.

Sue Combs, of 174 Skyview Drive, asked that Oak Street be reopened for two-way traffic. She stated this would give residents an option to get to a traffic light to make a left-hand turn.

Nancy Henry, who resides at 143 Skyview Drive, stated that since this area does not have sidewalks, these efforts have made the streets safer. She thanked the Council for making these changes.

Gary Childers, of 173 Leah Drive, thanked the Council for the measures taken thus far, but asked that the speed limit be raised to 25 mph. He also inquired as to why a three-way stop was installed at the intersection of Poplar Hill Drive and Highland Avenue.

Joseph William Hildebrand, of 429 Oak Street, stated that the use of barricades on Oak Street and the reduced speed limit have calmed the traffic situation. Mr. Hildebrand asked that leniency be exercised for those who park behind the barricades during inclement weather. If the barricades are removed, Mr. Hildebrand asked that speed humps be installed.

Mary Gray, of 283 Westbrook Drive, stated these efforts have greatly reduced traffic and improved pedestrian safety in her neighborhood. She stated she would not oppose raising the speed limit to 25 mph.

Eli Bentor, of Westbrook Drive, thanked the Council for the traffic control efforts. He asked that Bear Trail remain a one-way street and that the speed limit on that street be kept at 15-mph.

Larry McRae, who lives at 625 Dogwood Drive, stated that these efforts have helped the traffic situation in his neighborhood and that he favors the 20 mph speed limit. He stated he does not want to live in a gated community, but the Town needs to make neighborhoods more livable. Mr. McRae pointed out growth in Watauga County as a factor in the increased amount of traffic in Boone.

Angela Wheeler, who lives at 585 Oak Street with her family, stated that her driveway is not visible from the street until directly approached. She stated that since these traffic measures were put into place, she can cross her street and check her mail box safely. She favors the reduced speed limit and stated that the increased police presence makes her neighborhood safer.

Jim Toub, who lives at 229 Eastbrook Drive, expressed appreciation for these efforts and supports the one-way designation of Bear Trail. He advised that the installation of a traffic or trip light at this location would be detrimental. Mr. Toub stated he would gladly spend five extra minutes on King Street to get home for the benefit of reduced traffic in his neighborhood.

Howard Dorgan, of 747 Stadium Drive, stated these efforts are making the streets safer. He asked that no changes be made to these efforts.

Bob Slagle, who lives on Highland Avenue, stated due to these efforts, the amount and speed of

traffic in his neighborhood has been reduced. He stated he is in favor of the 20-mph speed limit.

Richard Gray, of Westbrook Drive, stated the 20-mph speed limit is safer and asked to keep Bear Trail a one-way street.

Wiley Martin, who has been a resident of Boone since 1947, asked that the speed limit be increased to 25 mph. He suggested using video cameras as a part of traffic enforcement so that officers need not monitor traffic. He also suggested that the Town of Boone, ASU and State officials cooperate to devise an alternative route for traffic in Boone. Mr. Martin pointed out the real problem with traffic in Boone is due to a lack of long range planning in the past.

In response to the inquiry about the three-way stop on Highland Avenue, Grady Moretz contended this made the neighborhood safer because it slows down traffic.

With no other persons wishing to comment, Mayor Burnley relinquished the floor to Blake Brown, Director of the Public Works Department. Mr. Brown relayed several comments he had received from persons who could not attend the public hearing:

- Helen Trivette, who lives on Oak Street, asked that Oak Street be reopened for two lane traffic.
- Virginia Yates, also of Oak Street, asked that the barricades be taken down on Oak Street.

Mr. Brown stated this process has also helped his department gather information concerning other traffic concerns, such as street lighting and signage. He stated he has received much positive feedback during this process. He stated that the Traffic Committee does not want to make any recommendations until members receive public input. Mr. Brown informed the group that two new speed humps were placed on Stadium Drive and Horn in the West Drive. He stated these are more aggressive and are half the cost of traditional speed humps.

Bill Post relayed several figures to the Council and audience concerning traffic surveys taken during 2003 and 2004. He explained that the volume of traffic has decreased by 41% on Stadium Drive.

Council member Mason asked Chief Post to inform the audience of how the data was gathered. Chief Post stated new software implanted in the roadways is used to gather this information instead of traditional methods. Mr. Brown elaborated that this software records such information as vehicle type, speed, and weather conditions. He stated this information can then be graphed and analyzed by the Police and Public Works Departments.

With no other public comment or information, Mayor Burnley thanked all for attending. She adjourned the meeting at 6:10 p.m.

Deputy Town Clerk		Mayor