MINUTES-SPECIAL MEETING
BOONE TOWN COUNCIL
FEBRUARY 13, 2015

A special meeting of the Boone Town Council was called to order Friday, Feb. 13, 2015, at 8:43 a.m. in the Council Chambers located at 1500 Blowing Rock Road. Mayor Andy Ball presided. Council members present were Mayor Pro-Tem Rennie Brantz, Lynne Mason, Fred Hay, and Quint David. Staff members present were Town Manager John Ward, Town Clerk Christine Pope, Assistant to the Manager Jim Byrne and Administrative Support Specialist Nicole Worley.

The purpose of the meeting was to hold the Town Council's annual retreat.

PUBLIC WORKS

Public Works Director Rick Miller provided a brief summary of the accomplishments over the past year for Public Works, stating that the biggest accomplishment has been combining the Public Works and Public Utilities Departments. He stated the department has been working on getting a succession plan together so that there are no gaps. Discussion ensued regarding the Public Works Department's priorities for the coming year, including the state of the Brown Building, the raw water intake project, vehicle maintenance and replacement, replacement of the Deck Hill water facility, Junaluska Park playground equipment and water meter reading software. Mr. Miller noted the upcoming expiration date of July 1, 2015, for the Waste Management agreement with Republic Services. Mayor Andy Ball noted that the contract would be looked at and feedback given. Mr. Miller went on to note that he would not be asking for any additional staff at this time, and that he hoped to evaluate the department now that it has been consolidated into one entity. Mr. Miller also advised that the Town needed more money for sidewalks and street repairs. Mayor Ball brought up the issue of bike lanes in the Town and discussion ensued on this matter.

Mayor Ball declared a break at 10:09 a.m. Council reconvened at 10:17 a.m.

PLANNING AND INSPECTIONS

Planning Director Bill Bailey went over the department's accomplishments for the past year. He stated that the work on the Wellness District took much of the department's time. Mr. Bailey went on to say that in the next year he hopes the department can work on implementing a new fee schedule for Planning and Inspections. Discussion ensued regarding the pros and cons of using a graduated scale or a flat fee. The Neighborwoods Project was the next point that Mr. Bailey raised and brief discussion ensued. Mr. Bailey then stated that in the next year he hopes the department will be able to change the Quarterly Public Hearing process to make it more open and efficient. Discussion ensued and Mayor Ball advised staff to make a plan to implement this. Mr. Bailey moved on to state the needs of the department for the next year. He asked Council for consideration for new software and for the replacement of two vehicles. Discussion then ensued regarding the renovation of the Post Office building which now also houses the department. Security issues were raised and mention was made about possibly acquiring a camera to use in the archive door so that a conference room could be utilized by the public. Discussion ensued about possibly putting all Town facilities online and routing all requests through one place. Mayor Ball brought up the topic of making the restrooms in the Post Office building open to the public. Mr. Bailey noted that he would be concerned that cameras would only document someone doing something wrong and that it is difficult for staff to watch the cameras at all times. Mr. Bailey also raised concern that staff would have to begin locking doors to other rooms in the building and was unsure if the safe would be able to be locked at all, since it is a historical item.

Mayor Ball declared a break at 11:46 a.m. Council reconvened at 11:50 p.m.

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Town Manager John Ward began by discussing the department's job descriptions and efficiency. Cultural Resources Director Pilar Fotta provided a summary of the accomplishments of the past year. Discussion then ensued regarding the Christmas Tree Lighting event and the partnership with Appalachian State University's Solar Club. Ms. Fotta went on to say that she would like to see the department add events in the coming year, if possible, including adding some nighttime events to encourage people to stay the night and the next day as well. Ms. Fotta went on to discuss the improvements that could be made to the Jones House in the next year. Discussion ensued regarding implementation of the downtown parking meters and signage as well as several area Web sites linking to each other for informational purposes. Ms. Fotta then noted that the department would like to form a partnership with the DBDA. Ms. Fotta expressed that she would like to continue to move forward on trail development at Daniel Boone Park and at Rivers Park. The next item brought up by Ms. Fotta was the need for software which would enable the department to catalogue and archive historical artifacts which they have acquired. Lengthy discussion then ensued regarding the need to have Boone Heritage Days and what role was played by SAHA. Mayor Ball then stated the need to possibly revisit the MSD Boundary and possible expansion. The final point of discussion about the department was the usage of alcohol at Town events.

Mayor Ball declared a break at 12:53 p.m. Council reconvened at 1:04 p.m.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Downtown Boone Development Association:

Chairman Brad Harmon spoke on behalf of the DBDA. Mr. Harmon stated that in the next year, the DBDA would like to continue to partner with the Town of Boone, expressing interest in the department working with the Town at the Jones House. Mr. Harmon stated that he has heard from the local business community that they would like to see the downtown streetscape and Howard Street projects completed. Mr. Harmon stated that the committee does have $289,500.00 in escrow to assist the town in those projects. Discussion ensued regarding downtown lighting improvements, the Art Crawl promotion and cards promoting local restaurants and events downtown.

Tourism Development Authority:

Wright Tilley spoke on behalf of the TDA. Discussion began regarding the allocation of funds and the setting aside for larger projects. Mr. Tilley expressed that the committee would like to see more benches, planters and public restroom access in downtown Boone. Discussion ensued on the negative impression that "No Public Restroom" signs in local businesses leave with the public. Mr. Tilley stated that the boards' priorities included the Howard Street project, Daniel Boone Park, public restrooms in downtown, a parking deck and the Middle Fork Greenway project. Council Member David asked what Mr. Tilley's top three priorities would be for the Town to assist with. Mr. Tilley replied that he would like to see better communication on Town events, visitor's guides in downtown locations and visitor's center downtown. Mr. Tilley suggested using the spare office in the Post Office for this purpose. Discussion ensued regarding the use of the spare office in the Post Office for a visitor's center and making the Post Office more public-friendly with brochures, etc.

Cultural Resources Advisory Board:

Kim Wangler spoke on behalf of the Cultural Resources Advisory Board. Ms. Wangler gave a brief overview of each property that the Board oversees. She also expressed the Board's desire to develop the house on the Rivers Park property and would like to revisit the deed restrictions on the property with the new town attorney to see what the possibilities might be. For the future, Ms. Wangler mentioned that she would like to see the Board not get caught up in details as much and that the qualifications of the Board needed to be revisited. Discussion ensued regarding the use of the Rivers House and possible uses.

Planning Commission:

Eric Woolridge spoke on behalf of the Planning Commission. Mr. Woolridge started with discussion about the Wellness District. He expressed interest in opening up public comment and the fact that there was not a clear understanding of the watershed issue in the Town. Discussion then ensued regarding communication on all issues.

Historic Preservation Commission:

Eric Plaag spoke on behalf of the Historic Preservation Commission. Mr. Plaag spoke about the issues the Commission has seen over the past year, including the theft of two historical markers as well as vandalism in the historical cemetery. It is the board's consensus that the Town should take over ownership of the cemetery. The need for the board to transition to quasi-judicial status was discussed at length. Mr. Plaag also noted two items he, personally, wanted Council to consider, those being the possible purchase by or donation to the Town of the WPA/Weaving Room and the Greer-Henson farm, which he has not had a chance to present to the Commission yet **(Mr. Plaag's full statement permanently on file in the February 2015 meeting file).**

Mayor Ball declared a break at 2:31 p.m. Council reconvened at 2:38 p.m.

Affordable Housing Task Force:

Maria Owens spoke on behalf of the Affordable Housing Task Force. Ms. Owens stated that the Task Force not meeting quorum at meetings is an issue. She stated that out of the past twelve scheduled meetings, only four were held, because there were was not sufficient turn out. Ms. Owens provided a list of short term, medium term and long term goals the Task Force had. Lengthy discussion ensued regarding the ideas and possibilities of a Web site providing information related to affordable housing.

Sustainability Task Force:

Council Member Quint David spoke on behalf of the Sustainability Task Force. He stated that the Task Force's top three priorities for the year were the Jimmy Smith Park, working with the Boone area cyclists to get a community bike repair shop and also working with the farmers' market to get a winter farmers' market started. Discussion ensued regarding a plastic bag fee as well as a composting program within the Town.

Board of Adjustment:

Dr. Richard Crepeau spoke on half of the Board of Adjustments beginning by stating that the Board has spent the past year getting used to the new UDO and that the Board has done a good job changing gears. Dr. Crepeau stated that the Board developed a new rules procedure and that they started to incorporate training into parts of the meeting. There was discussion among the group regarding the length and procedure of Board meetings.

Tree Board:

Urban Design Specialist Brian Johnson spoke on behalf of the Tree Board and presented the Council with a packet of information which highlighted some of the accomplishments of the Board in the past year **(Information permanently on file in the February 2015 meeting file)**. The goals of the Board in the upcoming year include the education of the public on the Neighborwoods Project, working on the Wellness District Project, getting involved in more school settings and a partnership with a local utility provider on a Tree Planting Project. Mr. Johnson stated that the Board was approached by New River Light and Power and that the company has committed the man power and the funds to plant 100 trees in Town.

Greenway, Parks and Gardens Committee:

Public Works Director Rick Miller spoke on behalf of the Greenway, Parks & Gardens Committee. There was discussion about consolidating this Committee with other committees due to the lack of quorum.

Water Use Committee:

Public Works Director Rick Miller spoke on behalf of the Water Use Committee and stated that the Board met three times last year.

Transportation Committee:

Public Works Director Rick Miller spoke on behalf of the Transportation Committee. Mr. Miller expressed interest in having the Scope of Services for the Committee revisited.

Alternative Transportation Subcommittee:

Public Works Director Rick Miller spoke on behalf of the Alternative Transportation Sub-Committee. Mr. Miller noted that work was being done in regard to safe school routes. Mr. Miller stated that the Scope of Services had been defined in the past but never approved. Mr. Miller noted that approval was needed.

Community Appearance Commission:

Urban Design Specialist Brian Johnson spoke on behalf of the Community Appearance Commission. Mr. Johnson stated that the Commission has been trying to define a look for the Town of Boone. Discussion ensued on this matter.

Mayor Ball stated that the Council addressed the Boone Housing Authority Board matters at the February 6, 2015, retreat and that there was nothing new on the matter.

Outside Agency Funding Review Committee:

The Outside Agency Funding Review Committee was discussed by Mayor Ball and Council Member Brantz. Mayor Ball stated that more members were needed. Council Member Brantz noted that he knew of one person who he thought would volunteer. Town Clerk Christine Pope advised that the gentleman's application to serve on the Committee had been received and would go before Council for consideration at their next regular meeting. Town Manager John Ward inquired as to how the Council normally allocated funds. Council Member Brantz noted that there were guidelines. Mayor Ball stated that a formula was used each time a funding request was approved. Discussion ensued regarding waiving the sidewalk fees, with Mayor Ball requesting more information before moving forward.

RECESS MEETING

At 5:01 p.m., Council Member Brantz made a motion that the Annual Retreat be recessed until Monday February 23, 2015, at 8:30 a.m. at the Town Council Chambers located at 1500 Blowing Rock Road. Council Member Hay seconded.

VOTE: Aye - All
Nay – None

CALL TO RECONVENE

A recessed meeting of the Boone Town Council was called to order Friday, Feb. 23, 2015, at 8:55 a.m. in the Council Chambers located at 1500 Blowing Rock Road. Mayor Andy Ball presided. Council members present were Mayor Pro-Tem Rennie Brantz, Lynne Mason, Fred Hay, and Quint David. Staff members present were Town Manager John Ward, Assistant to the Manager Jim Byrne and Administrative Support Specialist Nicole Worley.

The purpose of the meeting was to hold the Town Council's annual retreat.

Town Manager John Ward began the meeting by referencing a General List which was displayed on the wall in Council Chambers. Items on the General List included: a Parking Deck, the Howard Street Project, the Rivers Development Greenway, Town Park Additions and Expansions, the Exploration of a Plastic Bag Program and the Howard's Knob Protection

Program. Mr. Ward stated that he would like to see Council use ten stickers each and divide them among the different list items.

COUNCIL SUBMITTED DISCUSSION ITEMS

Space Needs

List items include: Brown Building/Pubic Works, Police Department, Consolidated Town Facility for Planning and Inspections, Law Enforcement and Public Works.

Lengthy discussion ensued regarding the possibility of a municipal complex to consolidate multiple departments and a meeting space. Council Member Mason stated that she felt like the Town buildings are all scattered about and they are all on prime real estate. She noted that the value of the Brown Building and the Police Department/Council Chambers alone was $5.5 million.

Council Member Mason inquired about the possibility of a consolidated 911 emergency center. Mr. Ward stated that he would be revisiting this option. Assistant to the Manager Jim Byrne noted that expanding the Town's 911 center would cost $300,000.00 just for equipment and installation with no work on the current building. Mayor Ball noted that it would be better to hold off on this project until further feedback comes in. Council Member Hay asked how much a patch on the Police Department/Council Chambers roof would cost to which Mr. Ward replied that it would cost $50,000 to patch. Mr. Byrne noted that it would cost $100,000.00 to replace. Council Member Mason felt like the Town could begin to identify a potential site and get an estimate of what it would cost to combine Planning and Inspections, the Police Department, Public Works with a meeting space all at one site. Council Member Mason stated that the values of the three buildings in question based on appraisals we had done, is over $7.3 million of property, so the Town does have something to work with. Mr. Byrne added that as of January 1, 2015, the Town can no longer buy parts for the existing 911 system as it was out of date. So the Town had to do something quickly. Mayor Ball offered that there has been money in the past for this type of project. Mr. Byrne offered that the system operated like an enterprise fund.

Public Works

List Items Include: Storm water, street needs, sidewalks, bike lanes, water intake. Water Intake- need for equipment upgrades waiting on water intake.

Council Member Mason offered that she would like to see equipment needs be considered line items on the budget so that Council was not picking and choosing. Mr. Ward noted that staff would be working with Assistant to the Manager Jim Byrne and Finance Director Amy Davis to develop a capital improvements list. Mr. Ward went on to state that he would like to see the

Town move toward a vehicle replacement plan which could be incorporated into the budget process.

Council Member Brantz brought up the storm water project. He stated that the Town had problems that needed to be addressed, but was concerned that there was no mandate on this topic. He added that he felt the Town should hold off for now, but think about using “Band-Aids” to make the town safer for now. Mr. Ward noted that the Town could inch its way toward mandates on the topic. Discussion about daylighting in the Town followed. Mr. Ward stated that the Town already has plans in place for most of the topics on the Public Works list. Lengthy discussion ensued.

Downtown

List Items Include: Streetscape and sidewalks, Howard Street, Parking (Contract with McLaurin, Meters, Public Parking Lots, and Parking Deck) and Lighting.

Mayor Ball offered that he would like to see the parking topic added to the general list. Lengthy discussion followed regarding planning and a traffic study among other things.

Mayor Ball began discussion about the Howard Street Project. Council Member Mason expressed concern about making sure that the proposed improvements were inclusive of all of the MSD. Mr. Ward mentioned that he would revisit the MSD as a whole. Brief discussion ensued regarding any needed funding for an MSD expansion.

Mr. Ward went on to note that he had discussed partnerships with DBDA on downtown streetscapes and banners. He asked for Council to give direction so that staff could create a game plan for Council to look over and approve, then go on to develop funding.

Mayor Ball moved discussion back to the Public Works Department. He noted that a bike plan has been adopted and the Town has put funding aside to help with this. He noted that he would like the Town to continue its partnership with the DOT. He inquired if Council would like to find funding for these projects as needed or put a fund together for these projects. Council Member David stated that he felt it would be beneficial to do more work with the local bike groups on bike lanes. Council Member Mason added that as the Town repaves and repaints throughout, she would like to see the Town integrating recommendations. There was discussion about discretionary funding. Mayor Ball finished by recommending Council send a prioritization list to the Alternative Transportation Committee.

Daniel Boone Park

List Items Include: Horn in the West, Native Gardens and the Farmers Market.

Town Manager Ward began by noting concern for parking at these venues. He also stated that the main changes to this License Agreement were the coordination of a master calendar and the parking arrangements. Mr. Ward noted that it is anticipated that all scheduling will be handled by the Cultural Resources Department. Discussion ensued with Mr. Ward offering that the Town was trying to find a balance to fully use the park with the limited parking. Council Member Brantz offered his support stating that the new arrangement is a major step forward and better for the parties involved. Council Member David noted that it was a struggle to understand what the true cost of this park was on a line item approach. Mr. Ward replied that he has been working with Finance Director Amy Davis to address that.

Discussion followed regarding the existing Daniel Boone Park master plan. Council Member David inquired as to whether the parking spaces at this lot were still being leased. Town Manager Ward stated that the Town would like to continue to lease the spots this year. Finance Director Amy Davis added that these leased spots brought in close to $25,000 in revenue last year. Council Member Mason expressed concern that the Native Gardens and SAHA are both non-profit organizations and that the Farmer's Market is a business using the space. Lengthy discussion ensued. Council came to the consensus to eliminate the $5,000 fee to the Watauga County Farmers' Market when negotiating the license agreement moving forward. Mayor Ball added that he would like for staff to take direction to go forward on licenses and to look at charging user fees for the restrooms and electricity.

<u>Greenway Expansion and Consideration of Adding Additional City Parks</u>

Mayor Ball and Mr. Ward both raised questions of funding. Finance Director Amy Davis noted that funds were in fact given to New River Stream bank. She went on to note that in years past it was $50,000 per year, but not since 2008. Mr. Ward brought up the Southern States property and the easement that the Town has been given. He stated that the Town could choose to use the existing culvert or put a bridge over the creek. Council Member Mason asked if staff could look at whether grant opportunities existed with the Watauga County Health Department. Discussion ensued and the decision was made to add new Town parks to the general list. Mr. Ward assured Council that he would get with GIS and the Greenway Parks and Gardens Committee to get a good visual representation of what land the Town does own before we start exploring additional parks or expansions.

<u>Cultural Resources</u>

List Items Include the Rachel River Coffey Property and the Potential Uses Honoring the Deed Restrictions.

Town Manager John Ward noted that the High Country Host as well as the Tourism Development Authority were both looking for a site such as the Coffey property and thought that the Town may be able to a create partnership with both so agencies remain in Boone. Mr. Ward mentioned that he would like Council's authority to enter into verbal discussion on this matter. Discussion ensued regarding additional resources that could fill this building. Brief discussion ensued regarding the two options given for eliminating the white house on the property, which were to demolish the house or do a controlled burn as a training exercise for the Fire Department. Mayor Ball offered that it was preferable to do a controlled burn of the building as a training opportunity, as long as the neighborhood was notified.

Consideration of Development and Implementation of a Plastic Bag Reduction Program

Council Member Brantz offered the basics of the program. He said that the Town could charge $0.10/bag at grocery stores only. Four cents of the charge would go to the store and six cents would go to sustainable development for the Town. Discussion followed regarding this topic.

Mayor Ball declared a break at 10:49 a.m. Council reconvened at 11:04 a.m.

Outside Agency Funding

List Items Include: Consideration of support for Boone Boy Scouts.

Council Member Brantz started off by saying that last year, outside agency funding had $115,000 which was focused on five or six different agencies to underserved people in our community. He hoped the Town could continue at least that level this year since requests totaled around $260,000 from different agencies. He went on to state that the boy scouts are finishing up on construction of a new facility and they need money for sidewalks around the building since the Town is unable to waive that requirement. Discussion ensued regarding the waiver of sidewalks around the buildings of for-profit and non-profit organizations. Council Member Brantz asked that the Town Manager review. Town Manager John Ward said that he would work with staff to come up with a recommendation.

Staffing Needs

List Items Include an Assistant Town Manager, Housing Coordinator, EDC Coordinator, Public Relations/Director of Public Communications and Program Developer for Cultural Resources.
Green Space Preservation was briefly discussed.

Funding Options

List Items Include: Bonds, Loans and Leases.

Town Manager Ward asked if Council would support the potential use of bonds for funding. Council Members offered support but Mayor Ball stated that if the Town does go in this direction and identify things we put on the ballot for bonds, the Town needs to develop a status of our debt. Lengthy discussion ensued on this topic.

Mayor Ball asked that Council Members identify their priorities on the sheets at the front of the room. The lists were laid out and votes were cast as follows:

Police Department:
Two Full Time Police Officer Positions (Three votes)
Four Patrol Vehicles

Human Resources:
Conduct Employee Pay Study (Three votes)
Personnel Policy Review and Update (One vote)
Fitness Room Upgrades
Increased Team Building

Fire Department:
Replacement of OSHA fit testing equipment (One vote)
Replacement of Engine #8 (Two votes)
Purchase of Automatic Vehicle Locator System (One vote)
Repairs and upgrades to Fire Station #1

Public Works:
Resurface Existing Streets Program (3 miles per year) (Four votes)
Resurface New Market Boulevard (One vote)
Replace Playground Equipment at Junaluska Park (Two votes)
Technology Upgrades to Increase Efficiency (One vote)
Vehicle and Large Equipment Replacement (One vote)

Planning and Inspections:
Equipment Upgrades (3 Computers, High speed/capacity scanner, 2 LCD Monitors for Conference Rooms) (One vote)
Maintain Training Budget
2 Vehicles
Split Environmental Planner/Code Enforcement into two full time positions (Two votes)

Cultural Resources Department:
Increase Part Time Position to Full Time (Three votes)
Expand Programming budget to Support More Programs (One vote)
Funding to Design, Develop and Implement a Comprehensive Branding, Marketing and Social Media Plan (Three votes)
Downtown Streetscape (Two votes)
Daniel Boone Park Renovations (Four votes)

Cultural Resource Cataloguing and Archiving Software
Rachel Rivers Coffee Park Plan and Development of Uses for House (Four votes)

General:
Municipal Complex (Three votes)
Parking Deck (Three votes)
Howard Street (Three votes)
Rivers Development Greenway on Donated Easement-West Downtown Boone Plan (Two votes)
Park Additions and Expansions-Park and Greenway Project (One vote)
Explore Plastic Bag Program (Three votes)
Howard's Knob Protection (Five votes)

Council Member Mason asked if budget talks could be moved up to May from June. Mr. Ward advised that staff would do their best but that they may not be able to have the whole picture by then. Discussion ensued with Mayor Ball suggesting that if possible to have staff try to get a budget draft to Council by mid-late May.

Mayor Ball placed stars next to all list items that bonds would be needed for. The items were the Howard's Knob Protection plan, the Municipal Complex, Parking Deck, Howard Street, Downtown Streetscape and Daniel Boone Park Renovations.

Mayor Ball requested that staff come up with figures for the bond project. He stated that Council will get Council Member Peña's opinion on these matters later at the regular Council Meeting.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon a motion by Council Member Brantz, seconded by Council Member David, Council moved to adjourn at 12:23 p.m.

VOTE: Aye-All
Nay-None

(All Departmental Reports are permanently on file in the February 2015 Annual Retreat Packet.)

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Nicole Worley, Administrative Support Specialist   Andy Ball, Mayor