

MINUTES
VILLAGE OF FLAT ROCK COUNCIL MEETING
VILLAGE HALL ASSEMBLY ROOM
110 VILLAGE CENTER DRIVE
JUNE 10, 2021
9:30 A.M.

Mayor Weedman presided over the June 10, 2021, council meeting at 9:30 a.m. Those present in addition to Mayor Weedman were Vice Mayor Coletta, Council Members Carpenter, Dethero, Gooch, Gregory, Tiles, Village Clerk Parker and Village Administrator Christie.

MOMENT OF SILENT MEDITATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Weedman led the group in a moment of silent meditation. He then led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comments – None

Public Hearing – FY 2021/2022 Budget

Vice Mayor Coletta made a motion to go into public hearing, seconded by Council Member Carpenter. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

Budget Officer Weedman presented a proposed Budget Message for FY 2021/2022 showing revenue and expenses totaling \$2,152,800.00. The current tax rate of \$0.13 per \$100 of property value is retained for the new fiscal year. The revenue budget compares with the FY 2020/2021 budget of a 5.8% increase. The largest budget expense item of \$1,191,000 is payment for fire protection services from three fire departments (Blue Ridge, Valley Hill, and Green River), all of whom have kept their rates at the same level as the prior year.

No comments were received from the public. Council Member Tiles made a motion to go out of public hearing, seconded by Council Member Gooch. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

Action – FY 2021/2022 Budget

Council Member Gregory made a motion to approve the budget as presented, seconded by Council Member Gooch. The motion carried a 5-yes, 1-nay vote.

Public Hearing – 160D Revisions

Council Member Carpenter made a motion to go into public hearing, seconded by Council Member Gregory. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

Village Administrator Christie presented the proposed amendments to the Village of Flat Rock Ordinances, specifically, #76 (Historic Landmarks), #79 (Tree Preservation), #80 (Unsafe Structures and Properties), #85 (Flood Damage Prevention), #96 (Land Development), and #104 (Sign Control) as required by NCGS 160D-Planning and Development Regulations. She reported the Planning Board has approved the revisions, which have been reviewed by Village Attorney Sharon Alexander. Ms. Christie asked Council to consider making the revisions effective 6/30/21 instead of this date to give staff time for the revisions to be incorporated into the ordinances. Council agreed to this request.

No comments were received from the public. Council Member Gooch made a motion to go out of public hearing, seconded by Council Member Tiles. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

Village Council thanked Village Administrator Christie and the Planning Board for all the hard work in getting the revisions completed.

Action – 160D Revisions

Council Member Gregory made a motion to approve the 160D revisions, seconded by Council Member Tiles. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

Agenda Approval/Changes – Council Member Carpenter made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Vice Mayor Coletta. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

Consent Agenda

1. The Consent Agenda consisted of the following:

- May 3, 2021 – Agenda Workshop Minutes
- May 13, 2021 – Council Meeting Minutes

Mayor Weedman stated the Consent Agenda had been approved.

Special Reports

2. Administration – Village Administrator Christie

Administrator Christie reviewed the May 2021 zoning report dated June 7, 2021, and the Village Administrator report dated June 4, 2021 (see attached reports).

3. Park Update – Council Member Carpenter

Council Member Carpenter reported the Park Commission met May 27, 2021, and discussed the following:

- **Park Ranger Job Applications:** Notice of a job opening for the position of Park Ranger was posted on our Village Facebook page as well as other venues a couple of weeks ago. The Village received sixteen (16) resumes and seventy (70) online applications. These were reviewed by Administrator Christie, Park Commission Chair Matt Toner, and Council Member Carpenter. From that, five (5) applicants were selected for interviews. One candidate dropped out, having already found a new job. The remaining interviews were scheduled for Tuesday, June 8 (1), Wednesday, June 9 (1), and Thursday, June 10 (2). The interviews will be conducted by Administrator Christie, Mr. Toner, Council Member Tiles, Council Member Gooch, and Council Member Carpenter. Council

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Members Tiles and Carpenter will be present at all of the interviews with the others attending as they are able.

The first candidate was interviewed on Tuesday, June 8, at the Village Hall by Administrator Christie, Council Member Gooch, Mr. Toner, and Council Member Carpenter.

The second candidate was interviewed on Wednesday, June 9, at the Village Hall by Administrator Christie, Council Member Gooch, and Council Member Carpenter.

The third and fourth interviews are scheduled for June 10 at the Village Hall by Administrator Christie, Council Member Gooch, Council Member Tiles, and Council Member Carpenter.

A decision on the final candidate selection will be submitted to the Village Council for approval to hire.

- **Park Usage Request:** A group requested permission to conduct full-moon walks in the Park each month, but this request was turned down as the Park is only open during daylight hours and there is no ability to oversee nighttime activities. It was also noted that nocturnal activities might be objectionable to the residents who live in close proximity to the Park.
- **Proposed Asphalt Path around the Nature Center:** A proposal was made to construct an asphalt path around the Nature Center. It was suggested that the families who contributed funds to build the Nature Center be consulted to determine their feelings about this before deciding how to proceed. This will be discussed further at the June meeting.

Council Member Carpenter discussed this proposal with Council Member Coletta, as her family had been the primary contributor for this building. She stated that the families were not in favor of an asphalt pathway going around the building, as it was a Nature center and as such, any pathway in the vicinity of the build should be constructed of only natural materials. Council Member Coletta also stated that the original idea for the Nature Center was to landscape around the building's concrete apron using native plants to soften the look and provide more nature learning. That was not initiated at the time the structure was finished, but she said the families would appreciate it if the park commission would consider doing this as an up-coming project.

- **Tree Donations:** Park Commission member Will Garvey offered several paw-paw and persimmon trees to be planted in appropriate locations within the Park as food sources for wildlife and for scenic beauty. The Commission members accepted this offer. The trees will be planted as soon as possible.

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- **Dye Creek Restoration Project:** Ms. Myra Grant discussed the Dye Creek Restoration project. She has attended two (2) seminars on state grants conducted by the Attorney General's Office and has submitted a letter of intent to apply for one of these grants on behalf of the Village. The formal application must be submitted no later than June 24, 2021. In order to complete the application, a detailed budget of the costs involved is required. Mayor Weedman and Administrator Christie have contacted construction firms

to see about getting quotations in time for submittal for the grant. Ms. Grant stated that over 130 letters of intent had been received so far by the Attorney General's office, so there is much competition for the grants. Once an application has been submitted, it will take five (5) months to finish the review process. Also, Community Foundation grants look promising as well.

- **Green Master Plan:** Mr. Garvey suggested that the Park Commission form a "Green Master Plan" sub-committee to look at where new trees, plants, flowers, etc., can be placed, along with a master list of what native species can and should be planted. This idea was well received and will be discussed further at the June meeting.
- **Invasive Species:** Conserving Carolina is resuming its efforts to remove invasive plant species from the park. Mr. Garvey and Park Ranger John Wilkerson walked the park with the representative from Conserving Carolina on May 28. Their first workday to remove invasive plants/trees with volunteers is Saturday, June 26, 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. Invasive species Russian Olive, Alantus, and Tree of Heaven have been found in the Park. It was noted Mr. Joe Henski with FitzSimons has a license to treat invasive plants. The Commission gave Ranger Wilkerson approval to ask FitzSimons to begin treating these plants as soon as possible with a goal of total eradication within the Park boundaries.
- **Nature Walks:** Nature walks are scheduled to resume in June and will continue through October. These walks will take place on the third Saturday of each month beginning at the Pavilion at 10:00 a.m. Nature Immersion Walks (shinrin-yoku) begin in June as well and will continue through September. This activity will be held on the fourth Saturday of each month beginning at 9:00 a.m.
- **Tree Survey:** The Henderson Country representative of the NC Forestry Dept. will be conducting an evaluation of the tree species and population density in the Park over the summer months.
- **Park Commission Minutes:** It was noted that the Commission will need a volunteer to take the minutes at our June 24 meeting since Ranger Wilkerson will be on vacation that day.
- **Vertical Garden:** Commission Member Georgia Bonesteel noted that a small "Vertical Garden" is planned for one of the corners in the Pollinator Garden.
- **Request for Garden Shed:** Ms. Bonesteel requested that the Park Commission consider erecting a small garden shed near the Pollinator Garden so that the volunteers will not need

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to lug all of their tools and supplies from the storage building near the Park entrance all the way out to the Pollinator Garden when they have work to do. This will be considered at the June meeting.

- **Kids in the Parks:** This program was formally launched on Saturday, May 22.
- **Beehives in the Park:** Mr. Garvey announced that six (6) beehives are up and running in the Park. The locations of the hives can be found on the free-standing maps located throughout the Park.

Ms. Grant presented a document of potential grant sources for the Dye Creek stream restoration project and a handout showing a budget of preliminary costs of \$175,000 for that restoration.

This preliminary cost estimate was given by Mr. Andrew Bick and will be the amount that will be used for grant proposals.

Mayor Weedman emphasized that if the Village Council files for a grant with the NC Attorney General Environmental Grant, the Council is committed to the project. If the Council receives the grant, the Council will then be obligated to continue, and Mayor Weedman will have to sign a commitment letter.

Mayor Weedman made a motion that Council:

- 1) wants to file for this grant, and
- 2) Council understands and is committed to the Dye Creek Restoration project.

He reported funds of \$50,000 have already been appropriated in the Capital Projects Fund for this project.

After discussions, Mayor Weedman moved to have Council vote on the Dye Creek Restoration project and to ask Ms. Grant to proceed with filing the application, pending further clarification on any restrictions, for a grant to cover as much of the \$175,000 as possible. Once the project is started, the Council must be willing to obligate up to \$175,000 for the Dye Creek Restoration project. Council Member Gooch seconded the motion and it was carried by unanimous vote.

4. Foundation Update – Council Member Gooch

Council Member Gooch turned the meeting over to Mr. Dennis Flanagan, who gave a background history in forming the Foundation. He reported that at the last board meeting, the Board of Directors voted to dissolve the Park Foundation corporation. The Foundation asked the Council to continue supporting the Park with the “Friends of the Park” sustainability campaign, which currently has 150 members and donation potential of \$70K - \$80K a year. Mr. Duncan Fraser’s term is ending after serving on the Foundation Board for six years, and Mr. Flanagan’s term is ending June 30, 2021, after serving five years. At the end of June 2021, two board members terms will expire and one board member no longer wishes to serve on the board, which leaves the board with six members.

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There was a question on whether the Foundation Board had the authority to vote to dissolve, and the Board felt that they had that authority. Mayor Weedman stated the Foundation had done an outstanding job and the Village would not be as far as it is without the financial and activity support given. He disagreed that the Foundation had the ability to dissolve itself, because the Council created the Foundation and the Council alone had the right to dissolve the Foundation. Mayor Weedman reported the Council wished to continue the Foundation, and at the July Foundation board meeting, officers will be elected.

After discussions, Council Member Carpenter made a motion for Village Council to continue the Foundation and begin the period of transitioning to find new members. The motion was seconded by Council Member Gooch and carried a 5-yay 1-nay vote.

Mayor Weedman made a motion to appoint Ms. Maureen Adams as a board member to the Foundation board, seconded by Council Member Gooch. There were concerns expressed in

appointing Ms. Adams as a board member. Mayor Weedman asked council members to approach volunteers to serve on the Foundation board. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

5. Transportation Update – Vice Mayor Coletta

- NCDOT awarded a \$6.6 million construction contract for the N. Highland Lake Road project (U-5887) on May 18, 2021.
- The Henderson County TAC will start meeting in person at their June 16 meeting.
- The Village received a traffic report from the Sheriff's Office showing drivers' speed from the speed trailer monitoring northbound traffic on Greenville Highway (NC 225). The speed trailer has now completed monitoring speed on both northbound and southbound Greenville Highway.
- Vice Mayor Coletta reported that she had requested a total dollar figure from NCDOT on the N. Highland Lake Road project.

6. Financial & Tax Report – Mayor Weedman & Paul de Chalain

Mayor Weedman reported that, as of June 8, 2021, the current fiscal year tax collections are at 99.9 percent with \$1,256,930.77 total collected (see attached report). No financial report was available from Paul de Chalain.

Old Business

7. Town Hall Meeting – Council Member Carpenter

Council Member Carpenter reported he is looking at the first Town Hall meeting to be held on June 28, 2021, 6:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m., at Pinecrest Church Fellowship Hall, for a rental fee of \$100.00. If Council agrees, he will submit the application. Each council member will give a brief description of their oversight responsibilities, then the meeting will be opened to residents

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to interact with Council. After discussions, it was decided to not hold the first meeting on June 28, 2021, and no date was officially set.

8. American Rescue Plan

Not discussed

New Business

9. Foundation Board Member appointments – Mayor Weedman

Appointments were previously discussed and action was taken under Item #4, Foundation Update.

10. Parking – Council Member Gregory

Council Member Gregory mentioned Mayor Weedman and Council Member Dethero previously met with Mr. Sid Blythe, owner of Flat Rock Square to discuss possibly acquiring volunteer

parking spaces, with no success. Mr. Starr Teel and Mr. Blythe communicated on the parking issue, and Mr. Blythe recommended Mr. Teel could rent 50 parking spaces for \$800/month in the southside parking lot from the Flat Rock Cinema. Mr. Teel inquired if the Village would be willing to pay the cost, or split the cost with him for \$400/month each. Council Member Gregory spoke with Mr. Blythe who suggested renting the spaces for a period of one year.

Council Member Gregory made a motion to spend \$200/month for one year of Village funds towards rental of parking spaces in the Flat Rock Square southside parking lot. The motion was seconded by Council Member Carpenter. After discussions, the motion carried a 5-ay 1-yes vote.

Other Business

11. Mayor – Council Reports

Vice Mayor Coletta reminded council members to let her know if they had any information for the general public so that she can post that on the village social media (Facebook, Instagram, and the Village’s website).

Council Member Tiles gave an update on the following:

Flat Rock Playhouse - The Playhouse paid for air scrubbers and spray cleaning equipment to enable them to start summer camps that begin next week. They are still looking for funds to complete government and industry-mandated upgrades in order to reopen. On June 17 from 5:00 p.m. – 6:00 p.m., Kenmure is hosting an event for the Playhouse to update their progress on

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reopening and answering questions. Council members have been invited and asked to please RSVP to the invitation.

COVID – The current guidelines from Governor Cooper state that those who are fully vaccinated no longer need to wear masks or social distance, other than on public transportation and in healthcare settings. The mass gathering limits have been lifted. As of June 9, 45 percent of Hendersonville residents had received first dose and 42 percent are fully vaccinated. Henderson County has had 10,288 confirmed cases of Covid and 165 deaths.

Census – On May 26, Council Member Tiles attended a webinar hosted by the Office of State Budget and Management about the census release data. Most pertinent to the Village was that there was no change in the redistricting release date, which remains September 30, 2021. The final steps prior to releasing the data will be installing data privacy protections, which have been modernized and improved using techniques to safeguard and protect personal information.

Public Comments – Mr. Fraser asked Council to reappoint Mr. Terry Stein to the Foundation Board for a three-year term effective July 1, 2021. Mayor Weedman made a motion to reappoint Mr. Terry Stein to the Foundation Board effective July 1, 2021, for a three-year term, and Vice Mayor Coletta seconded the motion. The motion carried by unanimous vote.

Ms. Victoria Flanagan with Historic Flat Rock, Inc. thanked the Village Council for maintaining the Stradley-Jones (Village Hall) building with the upkeep and maintenance. She received a thank you from Chris & Mary Jane McDonnell’s family for the council members who attended the memorial on May 24, 2021.

On Saturday, June 19, 2021, Mr. Steve Pettis is doing a discussion on invasive plants at the corner of the Preserve and Bird Sanctuary at 10:00 a.m.

Ms. Flanagan also mentioned that the NC State Extension Master Gardeners are working on a drainage plan for the side of the Historic Flat Rock building.

Adjournment

With no further discussions, at 12:10 p.m., the meeting was adjourned.

Michelle Parker, CMC
Village Clerk

Nick Weedman
Mayor