

**MINUTES
VILLAGE OF FLAT ROCK COUNCIL MEETING
ASSEMBLY ROOM
MARCH 9, 2017
9:30 A.M.**

Mayor Staton presided over the Council meeting on March 9, 2017, at 9:30 a.m. Those present in addition to Mayor Staton were Vice Mayor Weedman, Council Members Brown, Coletta, Gooch, and Jamerson, Village Clerk Parker and Village Administrator Boleman. Council Member Dockendorf was not present.

MOMENT OF SILENT MEDITATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

AGENDA APPROVAL/CHANGES

Vice Mayor Weedman made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, seconded by Council Member Coletta. The vote was unanimous, motion carried.

Mayor Staton welcomed Mr. Tony Ray, interim Fire Chief for Blue Ridge Fire Department.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – Mr. Ed Foster, resident of Highland Golf Villas thanked Council for removing the culverts in the stream close to his property.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. The consent agenda consisted of the following;
 - January 30, 2017 – Agenda Workshop Minutes
 - February 9, 2017 – Council Meeting Minutes

Vice Mayor Weedman made a motion to approve the consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Council Member Gooch and carried on a unanimous vote.

Special Reports

2. Administration – Village Administrator Boleman

Village Administrator Boleman reviewed the February 2017 zoning report dated March 8, 2017, and the Village Administrator report dated March 9, 2017 (see attached reports).

Ms. Boleman gave a volunteer hours report indicating that 95 volunteers provided 8,886 hours of service to the Village in 2016.

Ms. Boleman reported she attending the N.C Zoning Officials Conference last week and a big issue discussed in Eastern Carolina, and the possibility of this issue moving to our area, is the increase of technology and thirty-five foot poles being placed in right of ways by cellular companies. Mayor Staton and Administrator Boleman will review the Land Development Ordinance, and ask the Planning Board to review it and make recommendations related to communications. She and Mayor Staton will gather more information, and come to Council at a later date.

Ms. Boleman mentioned she has received interest from Blue Ridge Fire Department, and Sid Blythe, owner of Flat Rock Square, in discussing and providing more parking within Flat Rock. She proposed an exploratory meeting with Mayor Staton, a couple of council members, the fire department, and Mr. Blythe to see if we have any needs in common or any coordination required to provide more parking and continuity with the Village. Mr. Ray reiterated that the fire department does have an interest in working with the Village on this issue.

3. Tax Report – Vice Mayor Weedman

Vice Mayor Weedman reported that, as of March 8, 2017, the current fiscal year tax collections are at 99.6%, with \$928,579.50 total collected (see attached report dated March 8, 2017).

He stated he should have asked the Council in February to direct the Tax Collector to advertise delinquent accounts. However, failing that timely action, he made the following motion: It is moved that the Village Council direct the Tax Collector to advertise delinquent accounts in one or more local newspapers at any time between March 1st and June 30th at a time she may select after being satisfied that no further collections are likely for this fiscal tax year. The motion was seconded by Council Member Coletta and carried on a unanimous vote.

Vice Mayor Weedman reported that, with respect to one problem account, Just Vino, we will ask the county for a release. Just Vino went out of business in late 2016. The county had levied a presumptive business personal property tax on the business, which was based on the presumption that such a business would have certain taxable personal property. The assessed value of the presumed business personal property was in excess of \$69,000.00. Ms. Boleman discussed the matter with Sid Blythe, owner of Flat Rock Square. Mr. Blythe stated that the proprietor of Just Vino advised in October 2016 of his intention to exit the rental space and paid no further rent. Furthermore, Mr. Blythe had seen nothing in the way of business personal property, only inventory and some disposable serving dishes. The business was gone before year end. Discussions with the county assessor's office revealed the proprietor never filed a business personal property listing and, as a result, that office merely presumed a value of business personal property. Under the provision of NCGS 105-312(l), the municipality has the authority to adjust the tax bill. Vice Mayor Weedman made a motion to reduce the tax bill to zero and close the account, seconded by Council Member Gooch. The vote was unanimous, motion carried.

Vice Mayor Weedman reported the County has released an account of a boat owner, formerly a Flat Rock resident, that moved to Etowah and we secured a release on the account. Vice Mayor Weedman made a motion to approve the discoveries and releases provided by Henderson County to remove the tax account from our records in the amount of \$61.46, seconded by Council Member Jamerson. The vote was unanimous, motion carried.

4. Park Update – Council Member Brown

Council Member Brown reported that Don Farr's term as chairman of the Park Commission had expired and a chairman needed to be appointed. She made a motion to appoint Don Farr as Chairman of the Park Commission, seconded by Vice Mayor Weedman. The vote was unanimous, motion carried.

The Park Commission met March 8, 2017, with a representative from NCDOT, two engineering consultants working on the Highland Lake Road project, and two representatives with French Broad River MPO for a brief overview of the proposed improvements for Highland Lake Road. He stated over a year ago, Mayor Staton wrote a letter with recommendations requesting installing a multi-use path rather than sidewalks, no bike lanes, and to have the lowest impact possible on right of way, and to use curb and gutter rather than 10 foot wide shoulders. NCDOT is currently planning to go with Mayor Staton's recommendations. They will come before Council first, then hold a public input meeting in early June.

Mr. Farr presented a drawing of a preferred park entrance from Highland Lake Road, which would be located between Dye Creek and Highland Golf Drive. He explained with the proposed improvements to Highland Lake Road, NCDOT is proposing to straighten the curves to meet current standards for a 35 mph speed limit on Highland Lake Road. With the proposed improvements, Mr. Farr asked NCDOT to permit moving the planned new entrance closer to the existing entrance than that proposed on the original master plan. He spoke with Mr. Joel Setzer, of NCDOT, who suggested providing documentation that Council approved the preferred entrance location. On the drawing, Vice Mayor Weedman suggested the entrance be designated the preferred "alternate" entrance. Mr. Farr will amend the drawing accordingly and submit it to NCDOT. Council Member Brown made a motion to accept the drawing as the "preferred alternate entrance" to the park, seconded by Council Member Jamerson. Vice Mayor Weedman expressed concerns about NCDOT taking a lot of the right of way from park property. After further discussion, the vote carried on a unanimous vote.

Chris McDonnell and Steve Jamerson met with a security company and received a proposal for installation of four security cameras located at the gate, and two additional cameras at the Welcome Center for a total cost of \$6,694.00. A donation of \$1,500.00 has been made, and a pending donation of \$250.00 to be applied towards the cost of the cameras. If Council approves, installation could start by end of March and be completed by mid-April. Council Member Brown made a motion to install the security cameras, seconded by Council Member Coletta. The vote was unanimous, motion carried.

Council Member Brown mentioned the incident in the park of a man walking six German shepherds. The man operates a dog boarding business. We have received a complaint about the dogs allegedly lunging towards and frightening children. Mayor Staton wrote a letter to the man explaining that he cannot bring six dogs to the park by himself. Ms. Brown will discuss with the Park Commission a rule governing the number of dogs one person alone may bring into the park.

Council Member Brown gave an update on the following:

All trails are ADA compliant.

Lastein/Perimeter Trail is complete; no date has been set for the dedication.

Trail D is complete.

Trail to the future Nature Center is complete.

Trail to the Quiet Place is complete.

Grading and seeding will be done in the area next to the Welcome Center.

Boulders have been placed by the park entrance gate at Highland Golf Drive.

Grading of the site for the Nature Center has been done. Steve stated Mill Creek will complete design drawings shortly.

Trail to the lower portion of the playground structure is complete.

The gravel area of the perimeter trail behind and down the hill from the Welcome Center and Pavilion is now an asphalt trail, and additional drainage has been installed.

Don Farr mentioned a section of the trail beyond the playground continues to have an issue with rainwater runoff. He has reviewed the issue with Dunkin FitzSimons and has found no resolution. He suggested hiring a hydrologist to do a design and make recommendations to correct this issue.

5. Foundation Update – Council Member Gooch

Council Member Gooch reported the Foundation is developing a campaign for funds to complete all remaining trails in the park.

Mayor Staton left the meeting at 11:00 a.m., and Vice Mayor Weedman presided over the meeting.

6. Roads; Bike and Pedestrian Plan Update – Council Member Dockendorf

In Council Member Dockendorf's absence, Administrator Boleman reported a Bike and Pedestrian Plan Steering Committee meeting will be held early in April.

Old Business – None

New Business – None

Other Business

7. Mayor – Council Reports

Council Member Coletta mentioned the nature walks in the park will be starting March 18th at 9:00 a.m., with Roselie Estey, Naturalist from the Arboretum. On this first walk she will be looking at spring trees and spring flowers.

Council Member Brown mentioned a volunteer luncheon will be held at the park in the Rudnick Room, March 14, 2017, at 12:00 noon.

Council Member Jamerson passed out budget worksheets and asked council members to review their accounts and return the worksheets to her. She will prepare a budget amendment at a later date.

Vice Mayor Weedman discussed the following:

Animal Control

- Met with Sheriff's Chief Deputy Frank Stout to review the revised numbers for animal enforcement calls from the Village. The numbers in the revision appear to be accurate.
- Major Stout stated the Sheriff's office would accept responsibility for county-wide animal enforcement but lacked the necessary resources.
- He stated that perhaps the county would pay (including those costs in the upcoming budget), or a cost sharing arrangement might be possible.
- Following that the estimate provided by the Sheriff's department to hire two additional deputies and to equip them for animal enforcement was analyzed. Annually recurring costs for a single deputy would be \$100,522.00 with a one-time startup cost of \$59,102.00. Hiring two deputies and splitting the cost between the county and the four municipalities would mean the municipalities would pay the \$100,000.00 figure and possibly the \$59,000.00 one-time cost.
- If such a cost were split among the four municipalities (Mills River is excluded), the annual cost to Flat Rock would be \$12,300.00 with an added one time cost of \$7,300.00.
- Flat Rock will host the LGCCA meeting in April and will have this subject on the agenda.

Electric Vehicle Charging Station

- A quote was received just before the meeting from Trace and Company to add two spaces to our existing parking lot. One of the spaces would be a van accessible handicapped spot. The quote to alter the parking lot is \$3,840.00.
- Duke Energy has been contacted to advise how to provide power to the station and to provide a cost to accomplish this.
- Our target to have this station fully installed and operational is not later than April 30th.

Community Partnership for Pets

- A letter from Mike and Mary Cervini revealed they will issue the last voucher for spay and neuter services on March 31st. Over the years they have raised over \$2.5 million for pet services in Henderson County.
- Some type of recognition by the County seems to be justified for the work done by the Cervini's since 2005.

With no further discussions, the meeting adjourned at 11:30 p.m.

Michelle Parker, CMC
Village Clerk

Robert V. Staton
Mayor