

**Town of Montreat  
Board of Commissioners  
Town Council Retreat  
March 6, 2010 – 9:00 a.m.  
North Carolina Arboretum - Asheville**

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The Montreat Board of Commissioners held a Retreat on March 6, 2010 at the North Carolina Arboretum in Asheville.

Commissioners present: Mayor Letta Jean Taylor  
Mayor Pro Tem Eric Nichols  
Commissioner Ruth D. Currie  
Commissioner Jack McCaskill  
Commissioner Mary Standaert  
Commissioner O'Neil Tate

Town staff present: Ron Nalley, Town Administrator  
Stephen Freeman, Public Works Director  
Barry Creasman, Utility Maintenance Technician  
Misty R. Gedlinske, Town Clerk  
William B. McClintock, Chief of Police  
Stefan Stackhouse, Finance Officer  
David Currie, Building Inspector/Code Administrator

No members of the public were present. Mayor Taylor called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and gave the invocation.

**Agenda Approval**

Mayor Pro Tem Nichols moved to adopt the meeting agenda as presented. Commissioner McCaskill seconded and the motion carried 5/0.

**Montreat Board of Commissioners Areas of Responsibility**

After discussion, the Commissioners' areas of responsibility were assigned as follows:

Mayor Pro Tem Nichols: Commissioner of Communication and Safety  
Revenue Source Committee Chair

Commissioner Currie: Commissioner of Roads and Water  
Audit Committee member  
Open Space Conservation Committee Chair

Commissioner McCaskill: Commissioner of Finance

Commissioner Standaert: Commissioner of Sanitation  
Audit Committee member

Commissioner Tate: Commissioner of Environment  
Audit Committee member  
Montreat Landcare Committee Chair

Community Group Liaisons: These responsibilities were assigned as follows:

Asheville-Buncombe Flood Damage Reduction Task Force: Commissioner Tate

Black Mountain Center for the Arts: Commissioner Standaert

Buncombe County Greenways Commission: Commissioner McCaskill

French Broad River Metropolitan Planning Organization: Mayor Taylor,  
Commissioner McCaskill  
(Alternate)

Land-of-Sky Regional Council: Mayor Taylor,  
Commissioner McCaskill  
(Alternate)

Montreat Cottagers Association Board: Commissioner Currie

Montreat Cottagers Association Wilderness  
and Open Space Committee: Commissioner Currie

Montreat Institutional Sharing Committee: Mayor Taylor,  
Commissioner Tate (Alternate)

MRA Wilderness Committee: Commissioner Tate

Other Appointed Town Board/Commissions: Commissioner McCaskill

### **Review of Previously Adopted Goals and Objectives**

Mr. Nalley reviewed the list of 57 goals established for the current fiscal year and reported that 19 were completed, 36 were ongoing and two had been postponed.

### **Reports from Department Heads - Review of Goals and Objectives for 2009-2010**

Mr. Nalley reviewed the departmental goals for the 2009-2010 Fiscal Year as follows:

#### Governing Board:

- Two educational Town Hall Meetings were completed.

- Twenty short-term Comprehensive Plan Implementation Matrix goals were completed and 18 more are scheduled for completion by the end of the current fiscal year. Those areas that need additional work or time include the development of architectural design guidelines, development of a wayfinding and signage plan, and the development of a vehicular permitting system or other revenue generating options.
- Staff will continue investigating opportunities for a new Town hall and/or Public Works facility. An Institutional Parking Study Committee has been established and is awaiting its first meeting.
- Staff has also contacted the Division of Community Assistance (DCA) for their help in preparing an annexation study of the upper Greybeard Trail area. If DCA is able to assist, an annexation study may be underway by late Spring.
- The Mountain Retreat Association has agreed to begin charging a Community Service Fee that will be distributed to the Town. Discussion still needs to occur with Montreat College officials and representatives from other local non-profit organizations.

Administration:

- An employee salary study has been completed as part of the 2009-2010 Fiscal Year Budget process.
- Copies of Board of Commissioners meeting minutes from 1967 through 2000 have been submitted to the North Carolina Division of Archives for microfilming.
- A “Green Fleet” team has been established in order to coordinate for future vehicle purchases.
- Staff has collaborated with the Building Inspector/Code Administrator to research options for developing a stormwater utility fee. Recommendations will be presented to the Board in late Spring or early Summer.
- A Request for Proposals (RFP) for auditing and accounting services has been completed and published. The Audit Committee will meet in April to review the responses and prepare a written recommendation to the Board for presentation at their May Town Council Meeting.
- An RFP for computer services will be developed later this Spring.
- Re-establishment of a Wayfinding Committee will be held in conjunction with the work to be completed by the Institutional Parking Study Committee. This Committee is expected to begin meeting in early Spring.
- Staff will continue to research options for alternative revenue sources, PILOT contributions and vehicle permit fee options for large trucks.
- Staff will also continue to assist the Board of Commissioners with completion of the short-term goals listed in the Implementation Matrix of the Comprehensive Plan.

Public Buildings:

- Staff will continue researching options to construct a new Town Hall and/or Public Works Facilities incorporating LEED building standards.

Police:

- A minimum of two annual training opportunities per officer were provided over the past fiscal year.
- A speed study was conducted in the Greybeard Trail, Kentucky Road Lookout Road and upper portion of Louisiana Road to determine the effectiveness of certain traffic calming devices.
- Staff worked to continue development of a local disaster plan and disaster preparedness education opportunities.
- Staff also worked with Montreat College officials to revise their daytime Incident Response Plan.
- Promotion of one officer to the rank of Captain will be presented for approval at the April Town Council Meeting, along with approval of a job description of this position.
- Drafts of four areas of the Police Department Policy Manual have been completed and submitted to the Town Administrator for review.
- The radio signal repeater purchase is being coordinated with the development and construction of the cellular communications tower on the South Carolina Home property.
- A draft Wildfire Emergency Community Action Plan has been completed and a presentation to the Board is tentatively scheduled for late Spring or early Summer.
- Police Department staff will continue their efforts to examine traffic calming and control enforcement and implementation options, as well as to evaluate ambiguous or confusing parking signs throughout the Town for possible relocation, replacement or removal.

Planning and Inspections:

- The Building Inspector/Code Administrator has researched options for integrating existing Town ordinances into a Unified Development Ordinance (UDO). A recommendation will be made to the Planning and Zoning Commission in Spring and then to the Board of Commissioners by Summer. Funding has been requested for completing the work in the proposed Capital Improvements Plan.
- The Inspector has continued to develop standardized requirements for “green” building practices and means of incorporating incentives for their use into the existing permit structure. He has also participated in ongoing training and certification opportunities related to “green” building techniques and practices.
- The Inspector has assumed responsibility for residential fire inspection services and transferred all related records from the Town of Black Mountain. He has also assumed stormwater management inspection and ordinance enforcement duties.
- The Inspector has collaborated with Administration Department staff to research and develop stormwater utility fee options.
- The Inspector has achieved probationary Level II Inspection Certification in building, electrical and plumbing trades. Standard Level II certification training is ongoing.

- A departmental web page on the Town's website should be completed by Spring. All necessary application and permit forms are now available in a separate directory on the website.

Public Works:

- Stormwater management and enforcement responsibility has been transitioned from the Public Works Department to the Planning and Inspections Department.
- Potential illicit discharge locations have been reduced throughout the community by 30%.
- A departmental work order system has now been fully implemented.
- All Native Plant Garden tasks scheduled for the current fiscal year have been completed.
- 85% of all Phase II, Year 5 Stormwater Permit requirements are completed, with the remaining tasks to be finished by the end of the fiscal year.
- An inventory of all currently platted by unopened streets and street right-of-ways should be completed by the end of the fiscal year or soon after.

Streets:

- The Woodland Road drainage and paving project may be completed by the end of the fiscal year, pending a final decision from the Board as to the paving width and materials.
- Repairs to eight rock headwalls in various locations within the Town will be completed throughout the Spring and Summer.
- Staff has applied for funding for the Texas Road bridge replacement project through the North Carolina Municipal Bridge Construction Program and is awaiting a response.
- Dump truck replacement in accordance with the 2009-2014 Capital Improvements Plan was delayed due to a lack of funding.
- Staff recommends that the Assembly Drive and Truck Route resurfacing project be delayed until next fiscal year due to the receipt of ARRA funding and related project commitments.

Powell Bill:

- Resurfacing projects throughout the Town are ongoing. A portion of Tennessee Road is scheduled to be completed this Spring.

Sanitation:

- An updated sanitation services brochure including information on e-trash disposal and hazardous waste recycling information will be submitted each Spring.
- Staff will discuss "pay as you throw" billing options for garbage, recycling and white good disposal services later in this meeting.

Environment, Conservation and Recreation:

- Support of the National Forest Service trail links program, Open Space Conservation Program, and Montreat Landcare program initiatives to promote a more walkable community will be on-going throughout the year.
- The Montreat Landcare Committee will continue its work to complete a Greenways/Trails Master Plan.
- Work will also continue on Phase II of the Native Plant Garden project.

Water:

- The Automated Meter Reading (AMR) system should be fully installed by the end of March, along with construction and activation of a new well house in the Harmony Lane area and water system improvements along Greybeard Trail.
- Staff completed their research of additional well site locations throughout the Town.
- Negotiations with the Town of Black Mountain to complete a revised Water Exchange Agreement will be on-going throughout the end of the current fiscal year.

During discussion, the Board agreed by consensus for staff to begin preparing a mid-year report on the status of established departmental goals for each fiscal year.

**Finance**

2010-2011 Annual Budget Review: Mr. Stackhouse presented a memorandum outlining certain planning considerations for both the Town's General and Water Funds for the upcoming 2010-2011 Fiscal Year Budget.

General Fund Revenues

Ad Valorem Property Taxes: Reassessment by Buncombe County has been postponed due to current economic factors. The Town's collection rate of over 99% is one of the best in the state and no evidence is seen that this rate will decline during the next fiscal year.

DMV Property Taxes: These revenues have been trending slightly downward for the past few years due to declining motor vehicle sales. Receipts for the next fiscal year are predicted at \$13,000 to \$14,000

Local Option Sales Taxes: Sales tax revenues did not decline as much as previously predicted, but also have not shown any significant signs of recovery to previous levels. Staff recommends budgeting between \$275,000 and \$300,000 for this category.

Other Tax Receipts: This category includes monies received from utilities, telecommunications companies, alcoholic beverage sales, motor fuel tax refunds and payment in lieu of tax (PILOT) contributions. Of these, the Town has only a small degree of influence over PILOT funds in that

the Board may request, though not require, additional contributions from local non-profit organizations. Staff recommends budgeting no more than \$65,000 to \$70,000 in this of revenue for the upcoming fiscal year.

During discussion of this topic, Mr. Nalley stated that the Town most reliably received PILOT contributions from the Mountain Retreat Association and South Carolina Home. Mayor Taylor suggested that staff send letters of request to other local tax-exempt and non-profit entities to request donations.

Powell Bill: The Town's allocations dropped from about \$41,000 for the 2008-2009 Fiscal Year to just over \$37,000 for the current year. Staff does not expect this amount to increase for the upcoming fiscal year.

Grants: The Town received some grant and loan funding this year through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). It is unknown at this time whether there will be any future disbursements through this Act or what the Town's eligibility may be for those funds.

Building and Fire Inspection Permits and Fees: Approximately \$30,000 in revenues from inspection and permitting fees are projected for the current fiscal year. Staff recommends budgeting a similar amount for the coming year.

Public Safety & Sanitation Charges: Revenues from this category are budgeted at about \$38,000. Additional growth may come from a "pay as you throw" user fee system if the Board chooses to implement this.

New Revenues: A potential new revenue source would be the development of a stormwater utility fee. More research is needed before staff can prepare a recommendation on how these fees should be computed, whether they should be imposed in addition to the current property tax rate or with an offsetting reduction in property taxes, and how to account for these revenues either within the General Fund or separately. It is difficult for staff to provide a reliable estimated budget figure the next fiscal year at this time.

During discussion of this topic, the Board asked staff to research the process for obtaining local legislation from the General Assembly to impose a local occupancy tax for rental properties.

#### General Fund Expenditures

Payroll: The total payroll budget for the current fiscal year is \$838,300. Staff predicts a \$30,000 to \$40,000 surplus in this area due to a vacancy in the Public Works Department. If the Board chooses to approve a cost of living adjustment for the coming fiscal year, every 1% salary increase will increase payroll expenses by \$6,240.

Employee Health Insurance Benefits: Employee health insurance premiums are currently budgeted at \$84,900. The Town has been in a multi-year process to increase deductibles and co-payments in order to limit the impact of premium increases. The Board may wish to consider further measures depending on the renewal quotes received this year.

Local Government Retirement System (LGERS) Contributions: The Town has been notified of a significant, mandatory increase of nearly 25% in the employer match for LGERS contributions for the next five years. As a result, budgeted retirement expenses have increased from \$62,000 for the current fiscal year to \$69,700 for the upcoming year.

Capital Outlays: Due to the receipt of ARRA grant and loan funding, capital outlay expenditures are currently budgeted at \$773,200. The Town's Capital Improvement Plan anticipates expenditures continuing in the \$500,000 to \$750,000 range over the next five years. These expenses are one of the most discretionary areas of budget, as the Board has the flexibility to alter, defer or delete planned projects depending on available funding.

Inter-fund Transfers: The General Fund currently receives \$91,200 from the Water Fund as a reimbursement for personnel costs and other expenditures paid through General Fund but benefitting the Water Fund. There are options available to increase this amount, but the capacity of the Water Fund to absorb higher rates of transfer is limited without further water rate increases.

Changes in Fund Balance: During the current fiscal year, \$318,660 was budgeted as an appropriation from the General Fund into the Town's Fund Balance. This amount is exceptionally high and occurs only as a result of the need to match received ARRA funding. Staff does not recommend the use of Fund Balance appropriations other than as a means of buffering unexpected shortfalls or for very short-term property tax relief to avoid depleting reserved funds that may be needed for large-scale emergency expenses.

#### Water Fund

Water Fund revenues for the current year are budgeted at \$657,560. This amount is much higher than normal and reflects the receipt of ARRA funding. Without this funding, the amount would have been \$338,300 which is comparable to previous fiscal years. Last year, revenues exceeded expenditures by just under \$5,000 for the current year, a decrease attributed to ongoing public water conservation measures and decrease in summer occupancy. There are few opportunities to cut expenditures as our capital needs continue to be great.

The Town's implemented its last water rate increase in July 2007, opting to charge \$4.15 per 1,000 gallons for all categories of users. At the time, a \$180 monthly system access fee for Institutional customers was proposed but later reduced to \$90. The Board could consider raising this fee to the amount originally proposed, which would yield an additional \$30,000 in annual revenues. Alternately, a middle step of \$135 per month could be considered.

Discussion was heard concerning the possibility of examining Institutional water rates to determine how best to define this category and the types of properties that may be billed at this rate. Staff will examine this as a goal for the upcoming fiscal year, as well as performing an inventory of large-volume water users to ensure that they are billed under the appropriate rate category. Commissioner McCaskill also asked that the public be made aware that the new automated water metering system would provide more accurate readings than the previous meter style.

Banking/Investment Practices: Mr. Stackhouse referred to the March 1, 2010 quarterly investment earnings report presented at the March 4, 2010 Agenda Meeting. He reiterated his intent to transfer the majority of the Town's available investment funds out of its North Carolina Capital Management Trust (NCCMT) accounts and into money market accounts at other financial institutions. During discussion, the Board directed staff to research past Board of Commissioners meeting minutes for information on the establishment of these accounts and any actions needed to close or modify them. The Board also asked that a report of the Town's average weighted interest earnings be included as part of each monthly Financial Statement.

Green Fleet Policy – Vehicle Purchases: Last year, the Board asked staff to prepare a Green Fleet Policy to reduce fleet size by purchasing lower-emission, higher fuel efficiency vehicles that can be used inter-departmentally. The Policy would also establish a Green Fleet Team to make vehicle purchasing decisions based on established guidelines. Mr. Nalley presented the draft Green Fleet Policy for the Board's review and noted that it had not yet been formally adopted. Some discussion was heard concerning the need for certain revisions to the Policy related to carbon monoxide monitoring and the possible appointment of a Council member to the Green Fleet Team. Staff will present a revised Policy for formal adoption at the April Town Council Meeting.

2010-2015 Capital Improvements Plan: Mr. Nalley again explained how each project is prioritized within the Capital Improvements Plan on both the departmental and organizational levels. In order of staff-assigned priority, the proposed General Fund Expenditures for the upcoming fiscal year were:

- 1) Assembly Drive and Truck Route Paving and Drainage Improvements
- 2) Texas Road Bridge Replacement
- 3) Police Department Vehicle Replacement
- 4) Assembly Drive Greenway Project
- 5) Unified Development Ordinance Recodification
- 6) Texas Spur Road Paving and Drainage Improvements
- 7) Town Hall Replacement
- 8) Public Works Facility
- 9) Street Department Dump Truck Replacement
- 10) Native Plant Garden Phase II

Discussion was heard concerning whether Assembly Drive could be resurfaced prior to the installation of any bicycle or pedestrian pathways. Mr. Nalley explained that project costs would be much greater in this instance, and that many options for trail installation may no longer be feasible if the road were simply resurfaced using its current design. Commissioner McCaskill also asked whether the Texas Road Bridge replacement project should be completed ahead of any new road paving projects. Mr. Nalley explained that paving of Texas Road Spur was scheduled to coincide with a water line extension in this area in order to reduce project costs.

Mr. Nalley then reviewed the proposed Water Fund Expenditures for the upcoming fiscal year in order of staff-assigned priority as follows:

- 1) Peace Lane and Providence Terrace Water Line Extensions
- 2) Water Line Replacement on Texas Road Spur
- 3) Portable Generator Purchase
- 4) Water Tank Inspections and Maintenance

During discussion, Commissioner Currie asked that stone surfacing on the Town's well houses be added to future budget planning where funds allow. Mayor Taylor asked that certain dead or dying trees near Welch Field be removed before they posed a threat to public safety.

Mr. Nalley again reviewed how the Capital Improvement Plan was used to determine expenditures for each fiscal year's budget based on the priorities assigned to each project. He asked the Board to consider each suggested project carefully prior to adopting the Plan at either the March or April Town Council Meeting.

### Recess

Mayor Taylor announced a ten-minute recess at 10:35 a.m. The meeting resumed at 10:45 a.m.

### Facilities

Board and Commission Meeting Relocation: Mayor Pro Tem Nichols moved to approve the permanent relocation of all future Board of Commissioners, Planning and Zoning Commission and Board of Adjustment meetings from the Kirk Allen Building to the Walkup Building unless otherwise advertised. Commissioner McCaskill seconded. Some discussion was heard concerning sound equipment relocation and possible changes to the meeting room setup. The motion carried 5/0.

Town Hall and Public Works Facility: Discussion was heard concerning whether to proceed with negotiations with the Mountain Retreat Association and Phillips family for purchase of the Creekside Cottage and neighboring home as sites for a new Town Hall and Public Works facility. The Board agreed by consensus to proceed once final arrangements are made for the Greybeard Trail well site lots.

**Services and Infrastructure**

ARRA Projects Update: Approximately half of the required piping has been installed for the Greybeard Trail water line extension project. Piping is also being installed to connect the Harmony Lane well house to a nearby 8” water main, and concrete footers have been poured for the well house structure. Installation of the automated meter reading system is nearly complete, with about 40 residential and eight institutional meters yet to be replaced. The automated meter reading system software will be installed and tested within the next week. Commissioner Currie again noted that all components of the AMR system would be thoroughly tested to ensure accuracy before the system is fully implemented.

Title issues have been resolved for three of the Greybeard Trail well site lots, and Town Attorney Susan Taylor Rash will soon provide a memorandum summarizing the title status of the remaining nine lots being considered for purchase. The Town was denied approximately \$140,000 in ARRA grant funding for the Greybeard Trail well site but is eligible for loan funding at a 2% interest rate. Mayor Taylor asked staff to prepare a summary of all engineering and legal fees the Town has occurred during the process of acquiring the Greybeard Trail lots for presentation along with the Town Attorney’s memorandum at the next MRA Board meeting.

Texas Road Bridge Replacement: Mr. Nalley presented and reviewed an updated cost estimate from McGill Associates for the Texas Road Bridge replacement project. Total project costs including contingencies were estimated at \$541,106. Staff has been pursuing matching grant funding from the North Carolina Department of Transportation’s Municipal Bridge Program and recently received word that funding is available. Although the Town will receive funding for 80% of the project costs, some challenges exist as a result of accepting this funding, in that the new structure must be built in the exact location of the existing bridge, certain studies required by state and federal agencies before construction starts may take up to a year to complete, and the Town will not be reimbursed for any costs incurred before the funding is awarded. After discussion, the Board agreed by consensus to pursue funding for this project through the Municipal Bridge Program.

Water, Sewer and Street Standards: Mr. Nalley presented updated street rating information and maps which had been revised to reflect paving and water system improvement completed over the past year. He explained how staff used this information to prepare recommendations to the Board for road paving and water system improvement projects. Mr. Currie briefly reviewed proposed revisions to the Town’s street standards to include a “Green Street” classification and specifying the design elements that must be incorporated in order to receive this designation. He again noted a recent modification to the draft revision language stating that alternate paving methods were required, rather than recommended for roads intended to have a 14’ pavement width. The revisions will be eligible for formal adoption following next week’s public hearing on this matter. The Board will hold a Public Hearing in April on revisions to the Town’s Water Shortage Response Plan requested by the North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources. Revisions to the Town’s ordinances regulating public utility and street extensions which prohibit the installation of private water and sewer lines or private street

extensions have been in place for nearly a year. Staff has received a certain amount of negative input from the public as a result of these changes, and expects that the number of requests for public utility and street extension requests will increase in the near future.

NPDES Stormwater Permit Requirements: Mr. Nalley presented copies of the Town's National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Stormwater Management Program Report. Staff recently prepared and submitted this report as a requirement to renew the Town's five-year stormwater permit. Mr. Nalley encouraged the Board to review this document, paying particular attention to several tables provided throughout which summarized various goals and duties assigned over each year of the permit.

Sanitation/Recycling: Mr. Nalley briefly reviewed the 2008-2009 Annual Solid Waste Management Report and noted the annual tonnages for household garbage and recycling disposal. There have been worsening problems with illegal dumping of furniture, building materials and other unacceptable items at the Town's dumpster facility. Some of these items are presumed to come from Black Mountain, but some have come from inside Montreat and are dumped either before or after normal office hours. Periodic police patrols of the dumpster area have shown only a temporary improvement. Disposal of these materials is beginning to damage the compactors, and there is a risk that the Town may become financially liable for any repair costs. Staff suggests closing the dumpster facility after normal weekly business hours during the winter months and at noon on Saturdays during the summer season. After brief discussion the Board agreed by consensus and asked that notifications about the new schedule be placed at the Post Office and Town Services Office as well as updated signage installed at the dumpster site.

Mr. Nalley also mentioned a "pay as you throw" sanitation disposal program designed to shift service delivery costs from a tax-based system to a user-based arrangement. If the Board wishes to consider this option, it will first need to decide whether to charge disposal fees based on either the weight or the number of garbage bags to be disposed of. After discussion, the Board agreed by consensus for staff to research implementing this type of program for brush and yard waste disposal, with exceptions made for storm debris removal. Commissioner Standaert also asked that staff encourage more members of the public to take advantage of the mulch and wood chips created from yard debris removal and stored behind the Town Services Office.

### **Environment and Recreation**

Landcare: Mr. Nalley presented copies of the Montreat Landcare Committee's Bylaws and Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) among its member entities. He reminded the Board that the Landcare Committee's MOU was a non-fund obligating document and that the financial components of any project must be approved through separate agreements with each involved party. The Landcare Committee's main ongoing projects are the Native Plant Garden and development of a dedicated website to advertise and promote local Landcare projects, provide public education and links to related articles or resources.

Native Garden Park Plan: Commissioner Tate said that a local botanist had shown interest in performing native plant rescue, whereby native plant species are identified and relocated prior to any land clearing or grading projects. The plants would then be transplanted onto private property if the owner is interested or placed in public areas where suitable. Commissioner Tate would like to recommend this as a Montreat Landcare project. Commissioner Standaert offered to approach local colleges and universities to inquire if their biology or environmental studies departments would be interested in allowing their students to assist. After brief discussion, the Board agreed by consensus to proceed with a Native Plant Rescue initiative, and for Commissioner Standaert to contact local colleges and universities for their possible interest in student participation.

Open Space Conservation Program: The Board reviewed the Open Space Conservation Plan's introductory section. Commissioner Standaert noted a need for minor revisions to the first paragraph to include the Presbyterian Church's involvement in the 1907 land purchase which established the Montreat community. Commissioner Currie agreed to review this issue during future revisions to the Plan. She reported that the next edition of the Town newsletter will include a feature article on the four real property donations made through the Open Space Conservation Program. Negotiations for additional land donations are ongoing. Commissioner Currie also advised that because the Open Space Conservation Plan prohibits the use of public tax money for real property purchases, a separate fund has been established to accept monetary donations for the purchase of land as it becomes available and eligible for the program.

Greenways and Trails Plan: Mr. Nalley referred to the proposal from Equinox Environmental Consultation and Design, Inc. for a Trails and Walkability Plan originally discussed at last Thursday's Agenda Meeting. He again explained that a plan to facilitate pedestrian traffic between Montreat and the Town of Black Mountain was one of the community priorities identified during the Comprehensive Plan development process and assigned to the Montreat Landcare Committee as an implementation goal. Proceeding with Equinox's proposal will not guarantee funding for completion of any identified project, but it will allow the Board to promote a trails and greenway system for Montreat and gather public input to be used when deciding the desired appearance, design, materials and use of any new trails in the context of their proposed locations. Mr. Nalley used the newly-installed crosswalks near the Montreat College campus as an example of a project that while not originally thought of as necessary is now being widely used and looked upon favorably by many in the community. The Board will consider this matter further at next week's Town Council Meeting.

### **Recess**

Mayor Taylor announced a lunch recess at 12:30 p.m. The meeting resumed at 1:10 p.m.

### **Montreat Comprehensive Plan Review**

The Board reviewed the short-term goals listed in the Comprehensive Plan Implementation Matrix as follows:

## CHARACTER & DESIGN STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

### Completed Short-term Goals:

- Recommendation 2, Strategy 1: Evaluate the official zoning map and determine the extent to which the zoning provides the protection for this land as envisioned in the comprehensive plan.
- Recommendation 2, Strategy 3: Revisit the uses in the Woodlands and R-3 and determine whether the permitted use lists require revisions to adequately manage growth outside of the town.
- Recommendation 2, Strategy 4: Evaluate the need for a new zoning district for the areas beyond the town limits to better manage growth.
- Recommendation 5, Strategy 2: Add Conservation Subdivision design and clustering standards as options in the subdivision ordinance.
- Recommendation 6, Strategy 1: Evaluate the height limit for residential and non-residential structures to limit the height of the proposed building in order to preserve the character, scale and viewsheds.
- Recommendation 6, Strategy 2: Evaluate the possibility of establishing a maximum disturbance and maximum impervious cover similar to Buncombe County's Zoning Ordinance as outlined in the dimensional requirements (Section 78-642).
- Recommendation 7, Strategy 1: Evaluate the possibility of applying more stringent regulations on slopes greater than 25%.
- Recommendation 8: Continue to protect the environment by collaborating with the National Wildlife Federation and state agencies to promote awareness about the unique wildlife habitat found in the planning area.

### Ongoing Short-term Goals:

- Recommendation 2, Strategy 2: Update the zoning map to ensure all zoning districts are clearly delineated.

### Short-term Goals Not Begun:

- Recommendation 3, Strategy 1: Create architectural design guidelines for new and renovated houses to preserve character.

- Recommendation 3, Strategy 4: Modify zoning ordinance to ensure that new homes conform to the setbacks of existing structures to provide visual continuity.
- Recommendation 9, Strategy 1: Institute a committee that will establish guidelines and oversee the process of signage design, monuments design, and wayfinding.
- Recommendation 9, Strategy 2: Identify critical locations where the placement of signs and/or monumentation will add to the character of that area and also help in orientation for visitors by identifying key buildings, structures and uses.

## MANAGEMENT OF GROWTH STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

### **Completed Short-term Goals:**

- Recommendation 1, Strategy 2: Adopt new regulations and improve existing regulations as mentioned throughout in this section to address Montreat's issues and opportunities.

### **Ongoing Short-term Goals:**

- Recommendation 1, Strategy 3: Update the Comprehensive Plan on a regular basis and no less than every five years to address the changing needs of the community.

### **Short-term Goals Not Begun:**

- Recommendation 1, Strategy 1: Appoint committees to develop detailed implementation plans for strategies that require input beyond what town staff can accomplish on its own.

## TAX BASE & REVENUE SOURCES STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

- Completed Short-term Goals:** None.

### **Ongoing Short-term Goals:**

- Recommendation 1 Strategy 1: Expand the potential sources of revenue to include user fees, special assessments, negotiated payments in lieu of taxes, and facility fees.

Recommendation 4                      Strategy 1:    Coordinate with the Land of Sky Regional Council of Governments or a similar entity to seek help in grant writing.

**Short-term Goals Not Begun:**

Recommendation 2, Strategy 2:      Request the state grant Montreat the ability to levy an occupancy tax, or similar fees, on lodging/rentals.

Recommendation 3:                      Consider new fees for vehicle permits, parking permits, building permits, inspection fees, or privilege license fees on certain businesses.

**IMPACT OF THE MRA AND COLLEGE STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

**Completed Short-term Goals:**

Recommendation 1, Strategy 3:      Investigate opportunities to identify a location for a new town hall in collaboration with the MRA and Montreat College as they expand, renovate or add to their existing facilities.

**Ongoing Short-term Goals:**              None.

**Short-term Goals Not Begun:**              None.

**HOUSING STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

**Completed Short-term Goals:**

Recommendation 1, Strategy 1:      Maintain the permitted uses at the permitted density for the R-1 and R-3 districts in the existing zoning regulations.

Recommendation 2, Strategy 1:      Modify the zoning ordinance and subdivision ordinances to allow for conservation subdivision by right for the outlying areas as identified in Figure #7, the Proposed Town-Wide Plan.

Recommendation 2, Strategy 2      Modify the minimum lot size requirements in the zoning ordinance/subdivision ordinance to allow for the flexibility in lot dimensions to encourage conservation subdivision.

**Ongoing Short-term Goals:**

Recommendation 1, Strategy 2: Consider only amendments to the official Zoning Map that result in the reduction of the R-1 and R-3 districts if such amendments are consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

**Short-term Goals Not Begun:** None.

**TRANSPORTATION (VEHICULAR MOBILITY) STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

**Completed Short-term Goals:**

Recommendation 1, Strategy 1 Continue the program of street maintenance and upgrades of existing streets.

**Ongoing Short-term Goals:**

Recommendation 2, Strategy 1 Inventory all platted but non-built streets on a map.

**Short-term Goals Not Begun:**

Recommendation 3, Strategy 1 Conduct a geotechnical study to evaluate the acceptable weight that the existing roads in the town could handle.

Recommendation 3, Strategy 2 Institute a permit system that is administered by the town which requires vehicles above the acceptable weight to be charged a fee to offset the maintenance cost associated with the wear and tear of roads from such traffic.

Recommendation 5, Strategy 1 Identify key areas that lend themselves as transition points in the community, especially in areas of increased pedestrian activity to slow vehicular traffic.

**TRANSPORTATION (NON-VEHICULAR MOBILITY) STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

**Completed Short-term Goals:**

Recommendation 2, Strategy 1 To provide the greatest benefit, prioritize the trails that will need to be constructed according to the pedestrian network as detailed in Figure #7.

Recommendation 3, Strategy 1      Coordinate with the MRA Wilderness Committee and consider its recommendations as to where the town should provide connections to the Wilderness Trails.

Recommendation 3, Strategy 2      Identify and prioritize connections to the Wilderness Trails.

**Ongoing Short-term Goals:**

Recommendation 2, Strategy 3      Seek funding from potential national, state and private sources to aid with the design and construction of pathways and greenways throughout the planning area.

Recommendation 5, Strategy 1      Evaluate the feasibility of a bike lane on the Assembly Drive by narrowing the vehicular lane.

Recommendation 7, Strategy 3      Continue coordination with the various wilderness committees to identify sources of funding through private donations.

**Short-term Goals Not Begun:**      None.

**TRANSPORTATION (PARKING) STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION**

**Completed Short-term Goals:**

Recommendation 5, Strategy 1      In addition to the requirement for off-street parking based on the square footage of the residential unit, require off-street parking based on the number of bedrooms, whichever is higher.

**Ongoing Short-term Goals:**

Recommendation 1, Strategy 1      Conduct a study that will evaluate existing parking areas, and redesign them to achieve a higher number of parking spaces.

Recommendation 8, Strategy 1      Create signage at key locations, such as at the intersection of Lookout Road and Assembly Drive that identifies the location of key buildings and places in Montreat and directs residents and visitors to nearby parking locations.

**Short-term Goals Not Begun:**      None.

## INFRASTRUCTURE STRATEGIES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

### Completed Short-term Goals:

- Recommendation 1, Strategy 1      Investigate the possibility of additional well locations within the conservation easement by discussing this situation with Southern Appalachian Highland Conservancy and the MRA.
- Recommendation 5, Strategy 1      Enforce stormwater standards that meet federal and state requirements.

### Ongoing Short-term Goals:

- Recommendation 2, Strategy 1      Determine the additional peak time capacity needed to handle future fire emergencies.

Short-term Goals Not Begun:      None.

During discussion, Mayor Taylor asked that goals which may appear indefinite be re-worded to create a tangible completion date or to indicate what progress has been made. The Board agreed by consensus. Staff was also directed to document which goals had been partially or fully completed on a twice-yearly basis.

### Personnel and Employee Benefits

Employee 401(k) Benefits: Mr. Nalley presented a summary of salary and benefit information for all Town employees. Discussion was heard concerning whether the 401(k) plan benefits should be modified to some type of a matched contribution plan as means of encouraging personal investment and fiscal responsibility. Staff advised that most municipalities within NC provide a 5% 401(k) contribution without requiring matched contributions from employees. Mr. Nalley also said that that some employees would not be financially able to make contributions and would therefore not be able to participate of 401(k) plan was changed to mandatory contribution format. After discussion, the Board agreed by consensus to encourage, but not require employee 401(k) contributions.

Senior Water Technician and Police Captain Positions: Job descriptions and appointment recommendations for each of these positions will be presented to the Board for consideration at their April Town Council Meeting.

Employee Assistance Program: Mr. Nalley presented information on the North Carolina Interlocal Risk Management Agency's Employee Assistance Program (EAP) Incentive Program, provided through the North Carolina League of Municipalities Risk Management Services (RMS). The EAP Incentive Program supports local North Carolina governments to establish a long-term assistance and referral plan to provide intervention and help for employees

experiencing personal stress that often results in absenteeism and medical, workers' compensation and accident claims. Effective use on an EAP has often been shown to provide a cost savings through improved employee well-being, enhanced work performance and increased productivity.

If the Town chooses to participate, it must first develop an EAP consistent with several standards established by RMS and then submit a proposal for acceptance into the Incentive Program. Once approved, RMS will make payments of \$30 per covered employee for the first year of the plan with the expectation that the Town will continue providing an EAP for at least two years. The Town will pay the full cost of the EAP after the first year, with a projected annual cost of less than \$1500. Each year, the Town would receive a report on the number of employees using the service, but no further information would be provided in order to maintain confidentiality. After discussion, the Board agreed by consensus for staff to develop an Employee Assistance Plan and submit a proposal to participate in the North Carolina Interlocal Risk Management Agency Employee Assistance Program Incentive Program.

#### **Citizen Communication**

The Board discussed potential topics for Town Hall Meetings or educational session for the upcoming fiscal year. Suggestions included fire emergency planning and safety, Community Wildlife Habitat Program education, and opportunities for additional community disaster preparedness training courses through Hearts With Hands. Staff also advised that the Town newsletter continues to publish bi-monthly, with about 60 households signed up for electronic distribution. PDF files of each newsletter will be published on the Town's website. Anyone registered on the electronic distribution list also receive copies of Board of Commissioners' meeting agendas, special meeting notices and public notices. A short message about the upcoming public hearing on proposed changes to the Town's Water Shortage Response Plan (Montreat General Ordinance Chapter E, Article II "Water Conservation Ordinance) will appear at the bottom of the March water bills.

#### **Update on Current Projects/Services/Issues**

Opening Invocations: A federal judge ruled on January 28 that the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners' practice of holding sectarian prayers as opening invocations to their meetings represented an illegal governmental representation of religion. Forsyth County is appealing this ruling, but as a result of the litigation the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners has decided to begin giving non-sectarian invocations themselves instead of inviting local clergy members to offer prayers. Staff presented e-mail communication from Buncombe County attorney Michael Frue, as well as several newspaper articles on this subject, and Commissioner Currie read aloud from the most recent *Asheville Citizen-Times* article on the matter. After discussion, the Board voted 4/1 to offer a moment of silence at the start of their meetings rather than offering a spoken invocation. Commissioner McCaskill was opposed to this decision.

**Recess**

Mayor Taylor announced a brief recess at 2:17 p.m. The meeting resumed at 2:30 p.m.

**Goals and Objectives for 2010-2011**

In addition to any ongoing goals from the current fiscal year, the Board agreed by consensus on the following departmental goals for the upcoming fiscal year:

**Governing Board:**

- Conduct at least two educational Town Hall meetings focused on fire emergency planning and safety and opportunities for additional community disaster preparedness training courses through Hearts With Hands.
- Implement all short-term goals listed in the Comprehensive Plan's Implementation Matrix.
- Begin voluntary or involuntary annexation procedures in the upper Greybeard Trail area.
- Submit letters to community non-profit organizations to negotiate additional PILOT contributions.
- Research legislative options for possible enforcement of a local occupancy tax.
- Develop an Employee Assistance Plan and submit a proposal to participate in the North Carolina Interlocal Risk Management Agency Employee Assistance Program Incentive Program.
- Continue investigating opportunities for a new Town Hall and/or Public Works facility with representatives from the Mountain Retreat Association and the Phillips family.

**Administration:**

- Provide continuing staff support to the Board of Commissioners to complete the short term goals listed in the Comprehensive Plan's Implementation Matrix.
- Provide a mid-year status report of Board-assigned goals and other ongoing projects.
- Investigate options to provide Town-related information using social media and develop a departmental social media policy.
- Pursue any available grant funding to implement a paperless agenda system.

**Finance:**

- Develop and implement a stormwater utility fee.
- Address successfully the internal control matters detailed in the Management Audit letter for fiscal year ending 2009.
- Complete the Payroll and Utility Billing Software upgrades required by ICS.
- Complete certification requirements for Certified Governmental Finance Officer.
- Provide written summaries of the Town's average monthly weighted interest earnings.

- Research past Board of Commissioners meeting minutes for information on the necessary measures to alter certain North Carolina Capital Management Trust accounts.
- Send letters of request to local non-profit entities for additional PILOT contributions and written projections of the amount of revenue the Town may receive.

Police:

- Provide two additional opportunities for officer training.
- Select four additional department policies for review and possible revision.
- Choose three streets or area for speed sign targeting.
- Evaluate ambiguous or confusing parking signs throughout the Town for possible relocation, replacement or removal.

Planning and Inspections:

- Develop a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for assisting in creating a form-based Unified Development Ordinance (UDO).
- Develop Minimum Housing Standards.
- Develop a Comprehensive Stormwater Management Plan that recommends a stormwater utility fee.
- Continue training and certification in “green” and sustainable building practices.
- Complete training to become a Low Impact Development (LID) certified professional.
- Research sustainable building practice incentives for Board consideration.
- Continue training toward achieving Certified Floodplain Manager status.
- Acquire Level II Standard Certification in Building, Electrical and Plumbing.

Public Works:

- Assist in the completion of the Native Plant Garden project.
- Assist in completing Year One of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) Phase II Permit renewal requirements.

Streets/Powell Bill:

- Complete the planning phase of the Assembly Drive and Truck Route resurfacing, bike lane and greenway project.
- Complete the Texas Road Bridge replacement project.
- Replace the dump truck in accordance with the Capital Improvements Plan.
- Initiate a street sign replacement or refurbishment program.
- Complete the paving of Lookout Road from the Montreat College Maintenance Shop to the Lookout trailhead.

Sanitation:

- Research options to implement a “pay as you throw” billing options for brush and yard waste disposal services.
- Conduct public education efforts to promote recycling, encourage community-wide use of the Town’s mulch supply and to notify the public of the change in the dumpster facility’s available hours.
- Develop a RFP for the lease of new sanitation compactors and recycling containers.
- Research options for a security camera system for the dumpster facility.

Environment & Recreation:

- Complete or begin implementation of the Greenways/Trails Master Plan.
- Promote and support the National Forest Service trail links program, Open Space Conservation and Montreat Landcare program initiatives.
- Complete Phase II of the Native Plant Garden project.
- Begin implementation of a Native Plant Rescue Program and solicit student participation from local colleges and universities.
- Launch the Montreat Landcare Committee website and establish a link to the site from the Town’s website.
- Promote public education and involvement with Open Space Conservation, Landcare and other environmental conservation initiatives and projects.

Water:

- Bring the remaining two wells on the upper end of Greybeard Trail into service.
- Complete the water line replacement along Texas Spur from Well B to Texas Extension.
- Initiate a fire hydrant replacement or refurbishment program.
- Assist in the completion of a Water Exchange Agreement with the Town of Black Mountain.
- Research possible ways to redefine the Institutional water rate category and the types of properties that may be billed at this rate.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business to discuss, Commissioner Tate moved to adjourn the Retreat. Commissioner McCaskill seconded. The motion carried 5/0 and the meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

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Letta Jean Taylor, Mayor

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Misty R. Gedlinske, Town Clerk