

**Town of Montreat  
Board of Commissioners  
Continued Meeting  
March 10, 2008 – 7:00 p.m.  
Town Services Office**

The Montreat Board of Commissioners held a continued meeting on March 10, 2008 at 5:00 p.m. in the Town Services Office. Present among the Board were Mayor Letta Jean Taylor, Mayor Pro Tem Eric Nichols, Commissioner Ruth Currie, Commissioner Bill Hollins, Commissioner Jack McCaskill and Commissioner O’Neil Tate. Town Administrator Ron Nalley represented Town Staff. No members of the public were present. Mayor Taylor called the meeting to order and stated that the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the implementation of the items listed as short-term goals in the Montreat Comprehensive Plan Implementation Matrix. She explained that these goals were intended to be completed within one year of the Comprehensive Plan’s formal adoption date.

**Character and Design Strategies**

**Recommendation 2: Ensure that areas outside the Town limits but within the ETJ are preserved.**

- Strategy 1: Evaluate zoning map and determine the extent to which zoning provides protection for the land as envisioned in the Comprehensive Plan.
- Strategy 2: Update the zoning map to ensure all zoning districts are clearly delineated.
- Strategy 3: Revisit the uses in the Woodlands and R-3 districts and determine whether the permitted use lists require revision to adequately manage growth outside of the Town.
- Strategy 4: Evaluate the need for a new zoning district for the areas beyond the Town limits to better manage growth.

The Board agreed by consensus to assign Strategies 1-4 to the Planning and Zoning Commission for review of potential implementation options.

**Recommendation 3: Guide the design of new and renovated structures in existing neighborhoods to foster consistency in scale, style materials and design with the existing built form that is characteristic of Montreat.**

- Strategy 1: Create architectural design guidelines for new and removed houses to preserve character.
- Strategy 4: Modify zoning ordinance to ensure that new homes conform to the setbacks of existing structures to provide visual continuity.

The Board agreed by consensus to create an Architectural Character and Design Committee to review Strategies 1 and 4, along with possible Historic District regulations. Mayor Pro Tem Nichols recommended Jim Williamson as a nominee to serve on this committee.

**Recommendation 5: Promote a compact form of development.**

Strategy 2: Add Conservation Subdivision design and clustering standards as options in the Subdivision Ordinance.

The Board agreed by consensus to assign Strategy 2 to the Planning and Zoning Commission for review of potential implementation options.

**Recommendation 6: Improve hillside development regulation language to further protect environmentally sensitive areas and existing views for proposed developments that are less than a 25% grade slope**

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.

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).

The Board agreed by consensus to assign Strategies 1 and 2 to the Planning and Zoning Commission for review of potential implementation options.

**Recommendation 7: Improve hillside development regulation language to further protect environmentally sensitive areas and existing views for proposed developments that are equal to or greater than a 25% grade slope.**

Strategy 1: Evaluate the possibility of applying more stringent regulations on slopes greater than 25%. For example: Consider maximum disturbance and maximum impervious surface regulations outlined in Buncombe County's Zoning Ordinance {Hillside Development Standards 70-68(e)}. For example: Consider utilizing a density-scale similar to Buncombe County's Zoning Ordinance {Hillside Development Regulations 70-68(d)} that will gradually reduce the permissible density of a site based upon incremental increases in slope percentages.

The Board agreed by consensus to assign Strategy 1 to the Planning and Zoning Commission for review of potential implementation options.

**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.**

The Board agreed by consensus to assign this Recommendation to the Parks and Recreation Committee for review of potential implementation options.

**Recommendation 9: Improve signage and monumentation to aid in circulation and wayfinding.**

Strategy 1: Institute a committee that will establish guidelines and oversee the process of signage design, monuments design, and wayfinding.

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.

The Board agreed by consensus to assign Strategies 1 and 2 to the Wayfinding Committee for review of potential implementation options.

**Management of Growth Strategies**

**Recommendation 1: Implement the Comprehensive Plan.**

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

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

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.

The Board agreed by consensus to be responsible for implementing Strategies 1-3.

**Tax Base and Revenue Source Strategies**

**Recommendation 1: Investigate and consider alternative sources of revenue.**

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

The Board agreed by consensus to create a Revenue Source Committee to review and develop implementation options for Strategy 1. During discussion, Don Reid and Henry Copeland were mentioned as possible candidates to serve on this committee if interested.

**Recommendation 2: Consider new taxes, such as the real estate transfer tax and/or occupancy tax, to supplement tax revenues already being collected.**

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

The Board agreed by consensus to assign Strategy 2 to the Revenue Source Committee for review of potential implementation options.

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

The Board agreed by consensus to review building permits and inspection fees and to assign review of vehicle permits and parking permits to the Revenue Source Committee.

**Recommendation 4: Consider retaining the services of a grants specialist to seek grants from both public and private entities that may be available and appropriate for specific needs.**

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

The Board agreed by consensus to assign Strategy 1 to Town Staff for review of potential implementation options.

**Recommendation 6: Seek special legislation to mitigate the impact of loss of revenue due to the conservation easement.**

Strategy 1: Coordinate with the League of Municipalities and investigate the opportunities to collaborate with municipalities with similar constraints and draft a bill to identify means to generate funding.

This Recommendation was moved forward by consensus as a short-term goal, and Strategy 1 was assigned to the Revenue Source Committee for review of potential implementation options.

#### **Impact of the MRA and College Strategies**

**Recommendation 1: Create opportunities where the major institutions in Montreat may collaborate for common purposes.**

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.

Mayor Taylor stated that Strategy 3 would be an ongoing goal for Mr. Nalley and the Board of Commissioners.

### **Housing Strategies**

#### **Recommendation 1: Maintain a predominantly single-family residential land use at an overall density of four DUA.**

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

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.

The Board agreed by consensus to assign Strategies 1 and 2 to the Planning and Zoning Commission for review of potential implementation options.

#### **Recommendation 2: Provide as an option an alternative to conventional subdivision: cluster or conservation development patterns where possible to preserve the natural environment.**

Strategy 1: Modify the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to allow for conservation subdivisions by right for the outlying areas as identified in Figure #7, the Proposed Town-Wide Plan.

Strategy 2: Modify the minimum lot size requirements in the Zoning and Subdivision Ordinances to allow for the flexibility in lot dimensions to encourage conservation subdivision.

The Board agreed by consensus to assign Strategies 1 and 2 to the Planning and Zoning Commission for review of potential implementation options.

### **Vehicular Mobility Service Strategies**

#### **Recommendation 1: Maintain existing streets.**

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

The Council agreed by consensus that Strategy 1 would be an ongoing goal for the Board of Commissioners and Town Staff.

**Recommendation 2: Evaluate platted but non-built streets for abandonment if no future need is identified.**

Strategy 1: Inventory all platted but non-built streets on a map.

The Board agreed by consensus to assign Strategy 1 to Town Staff for review of potential implementation options.

**Recommendation 3: Evaluate placing weight limits on streets to minimize the impacts of heavy vehicles, which can damage streets.**

Strategy 1: Conduct a geotechnical study to evaluate the acceptable weight that the existing roads in the Town could handle.

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.

The Board agreed by consensus to assign Strategies 1 and 2 to Town Staff for review of potential implementation options, with Strategy 2 to be addressed in conjunction with the Revenue Source Committee.

**Recommendation 4: Evaluate a vehicle permit system for all vehicles to offset street maintenance costs and manage peak flows.**

Strategy 1: Conduct a vehicle count study to assess the actual peak flow during busy summer months and Sunday mornings.

Strategy 2: In collaboration with the MRA, Montreat College and the Presbyterian Church, and based on the vehicle count study, the Town can evaluate the possibility of creating a permit system that charges a nominal fee for visitors' vehicles coming into Montreat on a daily or weekly basis.

The Board agreed by consensus to assign Strategy 1 to the Montreat Police Department to perform the vehicle count study, and assigned Strategy 2 to the Revenue Source Committee for review of potential implementation options.

**Recommendation 5: Evaluate street design to create features for transition, especially in the Town Center area.**

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.

The Board agreed by consensus to assign Strategy 1 to Town Staff for review of potential implementation options.

### **Non-Vehicular Mobility Service Strategies**

#### **Recommendation 2: Define, prioritize and construct an improved pedestrian network for the greater Town area.**

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.

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 3: Provide connections to the Wilderness Trails.**

Strategy 1: Coordinate with the MRA Wilderness Committee and consider its recommendations as to where the Town should provide connections to the Wilderness Trails.

Strategy 2: Identify and prioritize connections to the Wilderness Trails.

#### **Recommendation 5: Provide space for bicycle traffic along Assembly Drive.**

Strategy 1: Evaluate the feasibility of a bike lane on the Assembly Drive by narrowing the vehicular lane. This will further slow the traffic on the Assembly Drive and make it safer.

#### **Recommendation 7: Establish a fund devoted to pedestrian amenities.**

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

The Board agreed by consensus to assign all of the above-listed Recommendations and Strategies Strategy 1 to the Parks and Recreation Committee for review of potential implementation options, in conjunction with the Open Space Conservation Committee where applicable.

### **Parking Service Strategies**

#### **Recommendation 1: Reconfigure existing parking areas for improved efficiency.**

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

The Board agreed by consensus to assign Strategy 1 to a Parking Committee made up of representatives from the Town, Montreat College and Montreat Conference Center. for review of potential implementation options.

**Recommendation 5: Require adequate off-street parking in residential areas.**

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.

The Board agreed by consensus to assign Strategy 1 to the Planning and Zoning Commission for review of potential implementation options.

**Recommendation 8: Provide better signage to direct visitors to parking locations.**

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.

The Board agreed by consensus to assign Strategy 1 to the Wayfinding Committee for review of potential implementation options.

**Infrastructure Strategies**

**Recommendation 1: Although storage capacity is sufficient for current usage, identify and pursue additional well sites and storage facilities to meet future demand.**

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.

The Board agreed by consensus to be responsible for implementing Strategy 1, with assistance from Town Staff.

**Recommendation 2: Identify additional water sources needed to provide efficient flow and service for future fire emergencies.**

Strategy 1: Determine the additional peak time capacity needed to handle future fire emergencies.

The Board agreed by consensus to delegate implementation of Strategy 1 to Town Staff.

**Recommendation 5: Establish or continue programs for compliance with state and federal water quality requirements, as well as to limit damage from local erosion and flooding.**

Strategy 1: Enforce stormwater standards that meet federal and state requirements.

The Board agreed by consensus to assign Strategy 1 to Town Staff for review of potential implementation options as part of the Phase II Stormwater Permit requirements.

Mayor Taylor explained that once the Comprehensive Plan had been formally adopted, the Council would then be able establish and appoint members to the Architectural Character and Design Committee, Parking Committee and Revenue Source Committee. During further discussion, Mr. Nalley recommended holding another public hearing to discuss the Comprehensive Plan and Implementation Matrix. The Board agreed by consensus to amend their March 13, 2008 Town Council meeting agenda to include both a call for a public hearing on this matter and Steven Aceto's appointment as a regular member of the Board of Adjustment. Mr. Nalley also advised that he would invite Walter Fields and Meg Nealon to attend the public hearing and answer any questions that the Board or members of the public may have at that time.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business to discuss, Commissioner Tate moved to adjourn the Continued Meeting. Commissioner Hollins seconded. The motion carried 5/0 and the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 p.m.

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Letta Jean Taylor, Mayor

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Misty R. Gedlinske, Town Clerk