

**Town of Montreat
Board of Commissioners
Special Meeting
June 25, 2009 – 8:00 a.m.
Town Services Office**

The Montreat Board of Commissioners held a Special Meeting on June 25, 2009 at 8:00 a.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. Representing Town Staff were Town Administrator Ron Nalley, Town Clerk Misty R. Gedlinske and Finance Officer Stefan Stackhouse. No members of the public were present. Mayor Taylor called the meeting to order and gave the invocation.

Agenda Adoption

Commissioner Hollins moved to adopt the meeting agenda as presented. Commissioner McCaskill seconded and the motion carried 5/0.

2009-2010 Fiscal Year Budget Ordinance

Mr. Nalley presented and reviewed a worksheet detailing the most recent revisions to the draft 2009-2010 Fiscal Year Budget Ordinance. He explained that because some of his working data had been lost, the final budget ordinance document had not yet been updated to reflect all of the changes made to the budget since it was first presented. He said the Board could choose to adopt the budget at this meeting based on the information shown on the revision worksheets or delay final approval until the final budget ordinance document was completed.

Commissioner Hollins asked whether funding for the Texas Road bridge replacement project through the North Carolina State Transportation Plan Distribution Fund had been formally approved. Mr. Nalley replied that although a final decision from the NCDOT Board was not expected until late July or early August, he and Mayor Taylor felt confident that the Town would likely approve about \$200,000 in funding for this project. He also explained that if no outside funding was approved, the Town will have to fund the project through a Fund Balance appropriation and adopt a budget amendment reflecting that change.

Mr. Nalley then advised that when McGill Associates compared the final bridge replacement design to current Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) floodplain mapping data, they discovered that a new bridge in this location must be raised between five to seven feet in order to avoid construction within the floodway and surrounding non-encroachment areas. He said that based on further discussions with staff and McGill Associates engineers, the Board could choose to take one of the following actions:

- Leave the existing bridge closed to vehicular traffic and limit its use to pedestrians only.
- Submit a Letter of Map Amendment to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) or apply for a No-Rise Certification that would allow the existing bridge to be repaired or replaced with an identical structure.

- Build a higher, longer bridge in the same location that will comply with current floodplain construction regulations.
- Build a new bridge in a new location near Well B, upstream from the existing bridge.

Mr. Nalley advised that both the Letter of Map Amendment and No-Rise Certification options would cost several thousand dollars to prepare. He explained that a No-Rise Certification would be based on the Town's ability to adequately prove that the project would not raise or lower the flood elevation in the area by more than 1%. He said there was no guarantee that FEMA would grant either the Letter of Map Amendment or No-Rise Certification, and that if denied, the Town would then be forced to either redesign or relocate the bridge. Mr. Nalley also advised that the cost of replacing the bridge in its existing location with a higher, longer structure was estimated at about \$400,000, which was significantly more expensive than the amount previously budgeted for replacing the bridge with an identical structure. He explained that the additional cost was attributed to the added elevation and length and related engineering work and not due to any aesthetic design changes.

During discussion, Mayor Taylor asked whether more trees and other existing vegetation would have to be removed in order to install the higher, longer bridge option in the same location as the existing bridge. Mr. Nalley confirmed that this would likely be the case. Mayor Pro Tem Nichols suggested that if the Board chose to build a new bridge farther upstream, the existing bridge could be retained for pedestrian use only as a means of preserving the vegetation and character of that location. Commissioner Currie suggested that the Town may want to do its own research to compare how much vegetation removal would be needed at both the current site and the proposed bridge relocation area. Commissioner Hollins asked whether the Town's funding eligibility would be jeopardized or delayed by a decision to redesign or relocate the bridge. Mr. Nalley replied that he did not believe funding eligibility would be negatively impacted in either instance. Mayor Pro Tem Nichols suggested that the Board should take an opportunity at this meeting to visit both the existing bridge and the proposed relocation site. Commissioner Hollins agreed and also felt that both the structure size and construction area boundaries of the proposed bridge relocation site should be marked. Commissioner Currie asked that the trees that would need to be removed from the site also be marked. Commissioner McCaskill suggested that a landscape plan for the chosen site be developed to show which trees and other vegetation removed during bridge construction could be replaced with plants of a similar type and size.

After further brief discussion, the Board agreed by consensus to tour both the existing bridge and the proposed relocation site later in this meeting.

Mayor Pro Tem Nichols then moved to adopt the 2009-2010 Budget Ordinance, a copy of which is attached to these minutes and incorporated herein by reference. Commissioner Hollins seconded and the motion carried 5/0. Staff was directed to complete and prepare a final Budget Ordinance document for presentation at the June 29 Special Meeting. Mayor Taylor said this item would be added to the agenda for that meeting, along with further discussion of the Texas Road bridge replacement project.

Mayor Taylor then announced a recess at 8:50 a.m. and stated that the meeting would reconvene at the site of the existing bridge on Texas Road.

The meeting was reconvened at 9:05 a.m. at the site of the existing Texas Road bridge. All members of the Board were present and were joined by Town Administrator Ron Nalley, Public Works Director Charlie Caldwell, Town Clerk Misty R. Gedlinske and Building Inspector/Code Administrator David Currie. No members of the public were present. Mr. Nalley and Mr. Currie demonstrated the approximate dimensions of the site's floodplain and non-encroachment areas, the estimated height and length of the new bridge design for this location, potential changes to the roadway path due to the added bridge length and areas in which trees and other vegetation may need to be cleared to accommodate the new structure. The group then moved a short distance upstream near Well B and the Texas Road tennis courts. Staff indicated that this was the approximate location of the alternate bridge replacement site and demonstrated the estimated locations of the roadway, bridge structure and construction area. Mr. Nalley advised that the floodplain elevation was much lower and the non-encroachment area was much narrower in this location, allowing a shorter, lower bridge structure than what would be required at the existing bridge site. Mr. Caldwell predicted that fewer trees and other vegetation would need to be removed, and felt that a new bridge in this area would improve safety at the intersection with Texas Road Spur. The group then relocated again to a pedestrian bridge across Flat Creek on the far side of the tennis courts. Staff used this location as an example of an area with a comparable floodplain elevation and non-encroachment area width to the alternate bridge replacement site.

After further discussion, the Board agreed by consensus to ask McGill Associates to prepare a preliminary bridge design plan including flood elevation information for the proposed bridge relocation site near Well B and to mark the boundaries of the bridge dimensions and construction area. Staff was directed to prepare an inventory of the trees and other vegetation to be removed, and to make attempts to preserve or transplant as much of the existing vegetation as possible. The Board also agreed by consensus that if the proposed relocation site near Well B was formally approved, the existing bridge would be converted to pedestrian-only use.

Public Comment

There were no comments from the public at this time.

Adjournment

There being no further items of business to discuss, Commissioner McCaskill moved to adjourn the Special Meeting. Commissioner Hollins seconded. The motion carried 5/0 and the meeting was adjourned at 9:25 a.m.

Letta Jean Taylor, Mayor

Misty R. Gedlinske, Town Clerk