

MEETING OF THE TOWN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF DECEMBER 2, 2009

Town Board Present: Mayor Don Mullen, Mayor-Elect David Wilkes, Vice Mayor Amy Patterson, Commissioner Dennis DeWolf, Commissioner Hank Ross, Commissioner Larry Rogers, Commissioner John Dotson and Commissioner-Elect Gary Drake.

Staff Present: Town Manager Jim Fatland, Town Engineer/Public Services Administrator Lamar Nix, Planning & Development Director Joe Cooley, Police Chief Bill Harrell, Recreation Director Selwyn Chalker and Town Attorney William Coward.

1. Call to Order.

Mayor Don Mullen called the Town Board of Commissioners meeting to order at 7:00 pm.

2. Public Comments.

Bob Kieltyka of the Highlands Chamber of Commerce stated that the tree lighting held on November 28, 2009 was a success and looked forward to the upcoming Christmas Parade.

Members of the public thanked Mayor Don Mullen and Commissioner Hank Ross for their time serving on the Board.

3. Approve Agenda.

Vice Mayor Amy Patterson moved to approve the Agenda, was seconded by Commissioner Dennis DeWolf and was unanimously approved by the Town Board.

4. Approve Minutes of November 18, 2009.

The following corrections are made to the November 18, 2009 minutes:

Section 9, FEMA Grant Resolution, first sentence, substitute the word approved with submitted.

Section 11, Consider Appointments to Sustainability Committee, first paragraph, last sentence is amended to read that three completed applications were received.

Vice Mayor Amy Patterson moved to approve the Minutes of November 18, 2009, was seconded by Commissioner Hank Ross and was unanimously approved by the Town Board.

5. Reports.

A. Mayor

Mayor Mullen had no report but wanted to thank the present Town Board and previous Board members for their hard work in the past years. Mayor Mullen stated “we have a special place here in Highlands. I think we all agree on that”.

B. Commissioners

There were no comments by the Commissioners.

C. Committees

There were no committee reports.

D. Town Manager

Town Manager Jim Fatland stated that he, his wife, and grandchildren attended the tree lighting, which was “very impressive”. Mr. Fatland further stated that his granddaughter was “speechless” when she saw Santa Claus. Mr. Fatland advised that he was looking forward to the Employee Christmas Luncheon set for December 8, 2009 and also the upcoming Christmas Parade.

6. Consent Agenda

- A. Public Services Department
- B. Police Department
- C. Parks & Recreation Department
- D. Planning & Zoning Department
- E. Monthly Calendar
- F. Budget Amendment: Close Out of Completed Projects
- G. Fire Department Appointments for Chief and Fireman’s Relief Fund Trustee
- H. Set Public Hearing for January 6, 2010 for Real Estate Development Signs
- I. Set Public Hearing for January 20, 2010 for Gilbert & Tate Rezoning, 2271 Dillard Road

Prior to approving the Consent Agenda, it was announced as to Item G, that the on December 1, 2009 the Fire Department elected James “Popcorn” Manley as Chief for the year 2010 and recommended that the Town Board re-appoint Bob Houston as Trustee of the Fireman’s Relief Fund. Olin Vinson is the Town’s other Trustee whose term ends December 31, 2010.

Commissioner Larry Rogers moved to approve the recommendation of Bob Houston as Trustee of the Fireman’s Relief Fund, was seconded by Commissioner

Hank Ross and was unanimously approved by the Town Board.

Commissioner Dennis DeWolf moved to approve the Consent Agenda, was seconded by Commissioner Larry Rogers and was unanimously approved by the Town Board.

7. Special Presentation from Mayor Pro Tempore Amy Patterson

Vice Mayor Amy Patterson presented Mayor Don Mullen and outgoing Commissioner Hank Ross with plaques commemorating their years of service with the Town of Highlands.

Mayor Don Mullen along with former Mayor Buck Trott presented outgoing Commissioner Hank Ross with a proclamation citing the work that he had done while serving on the Town Board and making “our community a better place”.

8. Swearing in of Mayor-Elect David Wilkes & Commissioner-Elect Gary Drake

Magistrate Patrick Taylor sworn in Amy Patterson as Commissioner and Gary E. Drake as Commissioner. Magistrate Patrick Taylor sworn in David Wilkes as Mayor.

9. Election of Mayor Pro Tempore

Mayor David Wilkes stated that the commissioner with the highest number of votes is appointed Mayor Pro Tempore but Commissioner Amy Patterson advised that the process was changed that it was left to the Town Board to choose.

Commissioner John Dotson nominated Commissioner Amy Patterson as Mayor Pro Tempore, who accepted, and was unanimously approved by the Town Board without further discussion.

10. Committee Appointments.

Mayor David Wilkes deferred Committee appointments to the next meeting. The Mayor preferred to make appointments after hearing from individual commissioners on which committees they would like to serve on. He asked the Town Manager to coordinate the process.

11. Appointment to Highlands ABC Board.

The Highlands ABC Board was organized under the provision of House Bill #657 of the North Carolina Legislature, General Assembly, June 17, 1977, and implement by Town Wide election held on August 16, 1977. The Highlands Board of Commissioners appoints three members who serve staggered three-year

terms whereby one appointment occurs each year. The ABC Board Members are David Wilkes (August 17, 2012), Georgia Sanders (August 17, 2010) and Mike Thompson (August 17, 2011).

David Wilkes will be resigning from the Highlands ABC Board to coincide with his swearing in as Mayor of Highlands on December 2, 2009.

The Town Board posted the vacancy at its November 18, 2009 regularly scheduled meeting. Subsequent to that meeting, an application from Eric Pierson was received.

It has been recommended to the Town Board that it consider an appointment to fill the remaining term of David Wilkes and to consider the appointment of the Highlands ABC Board Chairman.

Eric Pierson, the only person to submit an application, was nominated to replace David Wilkes on the ABC Board.

Commissioner Gary Drake moved to appoint Eric Pierson to the ABC Board, was seconded by Vice Mayor Amy Patterson and was unanimously approved by the Town Board.

The ABC Board will nominate a Chairman and will submit that name to the Town Board for approval at a future meeting.

12. Establishment of Downtown Main Street Advisory Committee

This agenda item has been reviewed by Sherry Adams, Western Region Coordinator NC Small Town Main Street Program and Bob Kieltyka, Executive Director of the Highlands Chamber of Commerce.

The success of our Downtown depends on good communication and the establishment of a Downtown Main Street Committee can greatly assist in achieving this goal. In our current economic times it is vital to work together on the Small Town Main Street Principles which are 1) organization, 2) promotion, 3) design and 4) economic restructuring.

Most recently the Downtown merchants and supporters of Downtown have come together on promoting Winter Events. We need to maintain the enthusiasm that this group has developed and continue on a permanent basis. Establishing a Downtown Main Street Advisory Committee can greatly assist us in achieving the goal of improved communication.

The Downtown Main Street Advisory Committee would report to the Highlands Chamber of Commerce and the Town Board and it is recommended that the Town Board establish a Downtown Main Street Advisory Committee.

Mayor David Wilkes advised that the name “Downtown Main Street” was a misnomer and would encompass the entire town. Mayor Wilkes stated that he wanted a wide spectrum of business owners to become involved and to have someone on each block, which would encourage communication. Mayor Wilkes stated that “it gives you somebody within a block of you who you can take problems, questions and suggestions to“, who in turn could bring them to the Town Board.

Vice Mayor Amy Patterson inquired how the committee would be structured but no decision was made. Vice Mayor Patterson voiced her concern that people will talk but not necessarily go to someone to voice their concerns and sometimes you “need to ask”. Mayor David Wilkes suggested that the people that would be on the committee would be actually willing to show up and serve, be involved, willing to talk to business owners. Commissioner Larry Rogers stated that the committee was a good idea.

Commissioner Gary Drake moved to Establish the Downtown Main Street Advisory Committee, was seconded by Commissioner Larry Rogers and was unanimously approved by the Town Board.

13. Adjourn

Vice Mayor Amy Patterson moved to adjourn, was seconded by Commissioner Gary Drake and the Town Board adjourned at 7:35 p.m.

James R. Fatland
Town Manager

Jane J. Capman
Recording Secretary

David Wilkes, Mayor