

**Regular Meeting Minutes of the Town Board of Commissioners Meeting of March 20, 2014 at the Highlands Community Building, 71 Poplar St., Highlands, North Carolina.**

**Town Board Present:** Commissioner John Dotson, Commissioner Amy Patterson, Mayor Pro Tempore Donnie Calloway, Mayor Patrick Taylor, and Commissioner Brian Stiehler.

Also Present: Town Manager Bob Frye, Town Clerk Rebecca Shuler, Town Attorney Jay Coward, MIS/GIS Director Matt Shuler, Public Works Director Lamar Nix, Planning and Development Director Josh Ward, Police Chief Bill Harrell, and Parks and Recreation Director Lester Norris.

**1. Meeting Called to Order**

Mayor Taylor called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.

**2. Public Comment Period**

Chamber President Bob Kieltyka asked if it was appropriate to speak about the parking issue during this public comment period or if he should wait until it was being discussed during Item 8. He was told to wait until that topic was being discussed later in the meeting.

**3. Adjust and Approve Agenda**

Commissioner Stiehler made a motion to approve the agenda as presented, which was seconded by Commissioner Pierson and the vote was unanimous.

**4. Approval of February 20<sup>th</sup> Regular Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner Patterson asked that on page 10 under the Customer Refund of Credit Balance on Inactive Accounts that the verbiage be changed to state “the amount is equal to or over \$5.00.” Commissioner Patterson made a motion to approve the regular meeting minutes of February 20, 2014, which was seconded by Commissioner Stiehler and the vote was unanimous.

**Approval of February 27<sup>th</sup> Special Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner Stiehler made a motion to approve the special meeting minutes of February 27, 2014, which was seconded by Commissioner Pierson and the vote was unanimous.

**5. Reports**

**A. Mayor**

Mayor Taylor informed the Board that an ABC Board official had notified the Town that any citizen who holds an ABC license could not serve on the local ABC Board. This would possibly affect a couple of the newly appointed ABC Board members. Taylor told the Board that Manager Frye was going to take a closer look into this matter.

**B. Commissioners and Committee Reports**

There were no Commissioner and Committee reports.

**C. Town Manager**

Manager Frye informed the Board the Town would be holding the 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual HomeTown Day on Saturday, October 11<sup>th</sup> from 11am until 3pm in Kelsey Hutchinson Park in connection with the 32<sup>nd</sup> Annual Highlands Own Craft Show at the Highlands Civic Center from 9am until 5pm.

## **6. Consent Agenda**

Public Works Department  
Police Department  
Parks & Recreation Department  
Planning & Development Department  
Treasurer's Report

Mayor Pro Tempore Calloway made a motion to approve the consent agenda, which was seconded by Commissioner Pierson and the vote was unanimous.

## **7. Presentation of Certificates of Appreciation**

Mayor Taylor presented Anna Stiehler and Brandon Moss with Certificates of Appreciation for designing advertisements for the Town during the Highlander Newspaper's "Newspapers in Education" event.

## **8. Discussion: Parking Restrictions on Main Street**

Mayor Taylor informed everyone in attendance at the meeting that parking issues was a topic covered at the town retreat. The retreat is a session used for idea sharing and brainstorming held once a year. One idea was to have no parking ordinance at all, but no decision has been made. The current ordinance is still in place and will not be voted away at this meeting. Nevertheless, Town officials, staff and citizens have had helpful discussions in recent weeks among the groups affected by the parking ordinance. After one on one conversation with commissioners, Taylor said he believed the town board wants to strengthen and improve the ordinance, especially in the area of enforcement and consistent application. If a common ground can't be found among the downtown merchants on these basic parking issues, then maybe in the future the elimination of the parking ordinance will be an option. Taylor said he believed the Town can improve the existing ordinance. All town representatives have heard the concerns from the merchants and citizens. The position statement by the Highlands Chamber of Commerce has been read and appreciated.

The critical problem that Taylor wants the Town to address is the enforcement of the existing ordinance and contrary to what some believe, the police and town staff are not lazy in enforcing the ordinance. The police spend substantial time investigating violations and issuing tickets. Too often, violators go to Town Hall expecting these tickets to be voided. Or, these same people refuse to pay the fine and continue to violate the ordinance. For those few that violate the ordinance over and over, there needs to be consistent policies of enforcement and consequences for flagrant noncompliance. Taylor proposed that the board appoint a committee of town staff, merchants and citizens to review the enforcement issues and make recommendations to the town board at its next regularly scheduled meeting in April.

Commissioner Stiehler said that he felt the Mayor had done an excellent job summarizing the issues at hand. He continued to say that he knew the ordinance was not perfect but that it did serve its purpose for merchants and visitors. All parking spaces in Town have an economic impact on the Town and this should be a joint venture.

Mayor Pro Tempore Calloway said he felt the Town was on the right track. The Town needed ordinances that had teeth to them and if not they needed to be kicked to the curb.

Chamber President Bob Kieltyka said the parking ordinance over the past couple of years has become very effective. Especially the past five years since the timed parking had been dropped. Kieltyka said Highlands was far ahead of many other towns in reference to their parking problems.

Mayor Pro Tempore Calloway made a motion to form a committee to review the parking issue, which was seconded by Commissioner Pierson.

Mayor Taylor said he would like the committee to consist of himself, Commissioner Stiehler, Manager Frye, Police Chief Bill Harrell, Planning and Development Director Josh Ward, Chamber President Bob Kieltyka, and merchants Leslie Scott, Harry Bears, Jerry Moore, and retired retail executive Julian Franklin. Taylor also said that a meeting had been tentatively set for Wednesday, March 26, 2014 at 5pm at the Community Building.

Mayor Pro Tempore Calloway amended his motion to form the committee with the before mentioned members, which was seconded by Commissioner Pierson and the vote was unanimous.

**9. Planning Matters: Finalization of Way Finding Signage**

Sign samples were presented to the Board at the retreat in February and discussion was had to look at several other font choices and directional designs.

The Board was presented with the following signage sample exploring these different fonts and directional designs:



Manager Frye told the Board the choice was theirs. However, from a distance choice three was the best viewed.

Commissioner Stiehler said that he preferred choice three as well.

Mayor Taylor said that the new town logo was clean and was looked good.

Manager Frye said it would be nice to have a decision soon to be able to get the signs ordered.

Mayor Taylor said that tonight was the night.

After a brief discussion about distances, Commissioner Stiehler made a motion to approve choice three on the sample sign without the distances included, which was seconded by Mayor Pro Tempore Calloway and the vote was unanimous.

## **10. Miscellaneous Matters**

### **A. Community Building Use Request**

Paul Christy and Jennifer Forrester of the Highlands United Methodist Church sent a letter to Parks and Recreation Director Lester Norris requesting use of the Community Building every Tuesday night from 5:30 p.m. until 8 p.m. beginning Tuesday, April 1, 2014 for a weekly meal to serve as a community outreach and fellowship.

Commissioner Patterson said the Community Building was named for that reason for community outreach.

Commissioner Stiehler made a motion to approve the HUMC request for the community outreach and fellowship, which was seconded by Mayor Pro Tempore Calloway and the vote was unanimous.

### **B. Request From SOAR For Use of Town Property**

Jim Oesterle from SOAR of Western North Carolina, Inc. presented the Board with a request to use the Town Quarry on Poplar Street for the rappel segment of the annual adventure race in June.

Town Staff consulted with Wayah and was told as long as the Town does not sponsor the race and SOAR has their own insurance for the event, the Town should require a certificate of insurance with adequate liability limits as well as a risk transfer/Hold Harmless agreement from SOAR.

Commissioner Stiehler made a motion to allow the use of the Town Quarry if all requirements were met by SOAR, which was seconded by Commissioner Pierson and the vote was unanimous.

## **11. Adjournment**

Commissioner Pierson made a motion to adjourn the meeting, which was seconded by Commissioner Stiehler and upon unanimous vote, the Town Board adjourned at 7:37pm.

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Patrick Taylor  
Mayor

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Rebecca R. Shuler, CMC, NCCMC  
Town Clerk