

REGULAR MEETING
TOWN OF WAYNESVILLE
BOARD OF ALDERMEN
TOWN HALL – 9 SOUTH MAIN STREET
FEBRUARY 22, 2011
TUESDAY – 7:00 P.M.

The Board of Aldermen of the Town of Waynesville held a regular meeting on Tuesday, February 22, 2011. Members present were Mayor Gavin Brown, Aldermen Gary Caldwell, Libba Feichter, Wells Greeley and LeRoy Roberson. Also present were Town Manager A. Lee Galloway, Assistant Town Manager Alison Melnikova, Town Clerk Phyllis McClure and Town Attorney Woodrow Griffin. Mayor Brown called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Approval of Minutes of February 8, 2011

Alderman Roberson moved, seconded by Alderman Caldwell to approve the minutes of the February 8, 2011 meeting as amended to change the time of adjournment from 8:14 p.m. to 9:14 p.m. The motion carried unanimously.

Request by Coley Phillips for “Historical Ghost Tour of Green Hill Cemetery – A Night When History Comes to Life in Waynesville, NC

Ms. Coley Phillips, 4-H Agent with the Haywood County Cooperative Extension, presented a letter to the Board requesting permission to hold the “Historical Ghost Tour of Green Hill Cemetery”, in late October. This is a fund raising effort to support a college scholarship for a member of the 4-H youth council, with a portion to be given to the town for the preservation of the Green Hill Cemetery. The letter explains the manner in which the tour would be conducted, with about ten actors dressed in costume of the characters in Waynesville and Haywood County history they would be presenting. A web site was provided for board members to research information on the Williamsburg Lantern Tour, and it was indicated that there are similar ghost tours conducted throughout the country, keying on historical landmarks or historical figures.

Ms. Phillips attended the meeting to present the request. She said this historical tour would be a good opportunity to get the youth involved, learning skills they can use later in their careers. The proposed project is to make history come alive and it was hoped to involve high school students throughout Haywood County. Grant money is available and the youth council will be formed through a grant she is writing through the Cherokee Preservation Foundation. This three-year grant is for \$45,000, split 25% the first year, 20% the second year and 15% during the final year to provide start up money to conduct research such as traveling to Charleston or Williamsburg to visit their Ghost Tours.

Mayor Brown said there is a lot of history in Green Hill Cemetery, including the burial place of Charles Frazier, Novelist and author of Thirteen Moons. Ms. Phillips said another historical figure buried in Green Hill Cemetery is William Howell Thomas, whom she discovered to be her

great, great, great uncle. Mayor Brown said one concern of the board is to make sure this is done right the first time by establishing protocol to make sure it is handled appropriately. Ms. Phillips said the top portion of the cemetery could be used with the top loop used to walk around with this area taped off. The historic characters could enter through the cemetery. All tours would be respectfully arranged with small groups guided by a tour guide that would point out historic markers, etc., as the tour progresses.

Wells Greeley asked what time the tour would be staged. Ms. Phillips said she is proposing at night, probably between 6:00 p.m. until 9:00 p.m. Tour guides will carry lanterns and there will be solar lights or something similar to provide adequate lighting. Mayor Brown said he would like for the tours to be done in a manner that would not reflect negatively with the public. Some research will be needed to determine whether admission fees can be charged for the tours. Assistant Town Manager Alison Melnikova has done a lot of research on the Civil War Markers in Green Hill Cemetery. Mayor Brown suggested that Ms. Phillips work with town staff in developing the tour. It was also suggested that Ms. Phillips speak with former Mayor Henry Foy or Bruce Briggs regarding Haywood County history and the people who lived here.

Alderman Feichter moved to approve the request of Ms. Phillips and that she work with town staff to develop the tour, seconded by Alderman Greeley. The motion carried unanimously.

Ron Reid said St. Augustine, Florida does this all the time and this is a huge tourist attraction. He suggested that Ms. Phillips contact them to find out how this has been done in the past.

Alderman Greeley said Mayor Brown and Alderman Roberson brought up a good point, that anytime you are doing something in the cemetery, people want to know what is going on. But, if you approach it from the standpoint of history and the reverence for history, it will be accepted by the public. Overall, Alderman Greeley said this is a good concept and Waynesville has a good amount of history. There was discussion regarding the history of how Green Hill Cemetery began.

Report by Manager Galloway

Manager Galloway thanked the board for the time they spent during the retreat on Friday, February 17. Manager Galloway said work has begun on some of the follow-up issues from the retreat, including contract negotiations for the sale of water with the Junaluska Sanitary District.

Manager Galloway said he has drafted a letter to send to Representatives Rapp and Haire and Senators Hise and Davis regarding a proposed bill that would dictate how power agency cities could use their electric revenues and how this could affect Waynesville. Manager Galloway said Waynesville is different from other power agencies and has the 20th lowest electric rate in North Carolina. It is felt that Waynesville has been responsible and this has allowed them to transfer funds earned by the electric system to subsidize other departments such as recreation, water and sewer. If this bill is passed, Waynesville could be forced to increase its tax rate, and possibly water and sewer rates. Manager Galloway has a meeting in Raleigh later in the week and hopes to discuss this issue with Waynesville's representatives during that time. Alderman Feichter said

sometimes these decisions are made without looking at the harm that can be done by their actions.

“Share the Warmth” Fundraiser

Alderman Feichter said on behalf of Mountain Projects they have already gotten some dire predictions about what is going to happen to funding for people needing heating assistance. A “Share the Warmth” concert will be held at Haywood Community College on Sunday, February 27, with all of the money raised going to the “Share the Warmth” program to provide funds for people needing heating assistance. Tickets are \$10 each and can be purchased in advance or at the door. Balsam Range and Hominy Valley Boys are scheduled to perform at the concert.

Adjournment

It was the consensus of Board to adjourn the meeting at 7:20 p.m.

Phyllis R. McClure
Town Clerk

Gavin A. Brown
Mayor