

TO: Mayor and Aldermen
FROM: Lee Galloway, Town Manager
DATE: April 4, 2005
SUBJECT: Status Report for Period Ending April 1, 2005

Time has sped by rapidly since the last report, and it has been a busy time for the staff and various departments. Winter is often a time when things slow a bit and we can catch our breath, but not this year! With so many different activities and projects going on and some unusual issues like fuel adjustment charges thrown into the mix, it has been anything but a slow and restful winter.

DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Town staff has been involved in several development projects during the first four months of the year. It has seemed that construction and expansion of the tax base had been stymied for two years, and we have seen virtually no growth in our property tax base. Now it finally appears that some projects are about to get underway, and we will be grateful for that.

Representatives of the firm Dayco have been to our offices a about the Land Development shopping area comply with task, but the firm handling seems interested in trying to standards. They are our standards and to work the environmental issues on work out, construction on that site



considering the former site of few times to meet and talk Standards. Making a retail those standards is no easy the development planning make the project fit our continuing to work with with the State in terms of the property. If the studies could begin in early 2006.

Much has been written in the news media about the residential project which has been proposed on the Noland Property near the intersection of Route 19 and Route 276. Town staff has had several meetings with representatives of SEMAR as they attempt to get this project off the ground. We do not know anything about the internal politics that seem to have played a part in the progress of this project. We were told that this project would supply some much needed, quality housing for middle income types and that some of the housing may be subsidized. Representatives of the development company shared some designs of housing they have constructed in other areas, and town staff will agree that it is top notch in appearance and should be something of which our community would be proud. We will continue to work with this group as this project progresses, for it would be a taxable project, and the group desires annexation into the Town.

An upscale apartment project is in the planning stages for the tract of land south or Autumn Care Residential Care Facility on Old Balsam Road. The initial plans were for approximately 150 units of quality rental property, and it is our understanding that there is a serious shortage of good rental property in our community. This development still has some approvals to secure from various Boards and Commissions, but if things go well, construction could begin later this year.

FIBER OPTIC SYSTEM

The Town and County have been working with a private firm on the possibility of installing a Voice Over Internet Protocol (VoIP) system. The private firm would install the fiber optic cable line which would allow connection and interconnection of the town and county facilities. Telephone service as well as computer service would then be over the internet rather than through the private telephone company as is done at present.



Haywood County had actually reached the point of growth when their employees would often get a busy signal trying to dial an outside line because all of the lines which were available were in use. When the Town has not experienced the same situation, the proposed system will allow both County and Town a great many more available lines than either of us have at present. It will allow for additional growth of both town and county operations as well as providing a cost savings to local government. For the Town of Waynesville, the initial review determined that there could be a savings of \$7,500 annually over the first five years and that all town offices would

have new telephone equipment. The system would also allow a much faster transfer of data, such as tax maps and other material from the County's Geographic Information System.

We will continue to investigate this possibility with the private firm and hope to have a report back for the Board to consider in early summer.

DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION – MEETINGS AND PROJECTS

The Town has been in contact with the Department of Transportation on two projects in recent months. One of these is the Howell Mill Road reconstruction and the other is for Plott Creek Road.

In February, the DOT and KO Associates requested a meeting with the elected officials to present the alternatives for the Howell Mill Road project and to hear the reaction of the Town Board. As it turned out, a large number of local residents were present, having been informed that it was a public input session. The Town staff sent a subsequent letter to KO Associates providing reaction and comments on the three different alternatives which were presented.

We have been advised that later this month, the DOT will be holding a follow up session on the Plott Creek Road redevelopment. You will recall that there was a public session on this in December, but the Town Board and Town Staff were not advised of that meeting. In the aftermath, the Board learned that there were many objections to the proposal, and the Board asked for a second public meeting on the project. DOT has heard that request and plans on that meeting in late April

COLUMBARIUM UNITS/CEMETERY RULES

Mr. Daniel Hyatt of John Broadbooks and Associates has put the final design work on the columbarium area at Green Hill Cemetery. We were required to take the plan to the Community Appearance Commission as the columbarium units fell into the category of “non-residential structures”. Mr. Hyatt will have to make a follow up appearance before that commission this week regarding the pavers proposed for the walkway and in the circular area where last rite services are to be held. We are still hopeful that this project will go to bid this month and that construction can begin in May. Once the contract is let, we will place the order for the columbarium units, as they have a 30 to 35 day delivery period. It is still a reasonable goal to have the project done by June 30.

In May, after the preparation of the budget, I need to get back with the cemetery committee to further discuss the rules and regulations for the use of the columbarium area. In talking with a number of cemetery operators from across the country, it was indicated that we must have a good, solid set of rules in place prior to opening the area for columbarium units.

While on this topic, I would note that Town Clerk Phyllis McClure has been doing some research on the general rules and regulations of other cemeteries in North Carolina. Several issues have come up in the past year or so that simply were not covered by our existing rules, and it seemed time to consider revisions to try and develop more concise and defined rules and policies at Green Hill Cemetery.



BUILDING DESIGN BY ARCHITECTS

During early December, the Board met with Jim Powell and Keith Carlyon of ADW Architects of Charlotte to discuss the Space Needs Study of town facilities which that firm conducted. The Board accepted the recommendation that the main fire station should be relocated off of Main Street and to a spot where traffic congestion does not present so many challenges to a timely response to fire calls. Another recommendation was that the existing downtown building where police and fire are located should be gutted and renovated for sole use by the police.

The Board authorized a contract with ADW to prepare building schematic designs to see that the police department could be incorporated into that space. There was also to be an addition to the front of the existing building to provide all of the 14,000 square feet of projected floor space needed by the department. That addition to the front included some other uses transferred from the existing Town Hall, connected to renovations which were proposed for that building.

During the winter, the architects held two meetings with the Police Department and made a number of contacts with them as they worked on the schematics of the new building. On March 29, Mr. Powell and Mr. Carlyon met with the Town Board to present the final draft of the design. This will be a topic of discussion at the Town Board’s annual retreat as well as during the budget sessions in the coming months.

GREENWAYS

During the past few months, there have been several meetings of Town Staff on the potential location for the greenway connecting Lake Junaluska with the Waynesville Recreation Park area. This project was funded several years ago, but there have been a number of challenges and problems with bringing this project to the point of actual construction. At one time, the route proposed by the engineers would have required three bridges at a total estimate cost of \$600,000, and with only a \$200,000 grant, this just was not a viable option.

Other potential routes to avoid Richland Creek ran into opposition from property owners who were unwilling to provide easements for the greenway. Mr. Tim Welch was willing to give an easement across his property, and Mr. Tim Plowman of the Recreation Department and Mr. Tony Sexton, the County Greenway Coordinator, have been trying to work through final issues on the route. They have been dealing with improvements to Happy Hill Road to meet Americans With Disabilities regulations. They have also been working with the DOT plans to improve Howell Mill Road to assure that the greenway will connect with the pedestrian paths along that road as well as with the walking trails within the Park.



I no longer give estimates of when construction on this project might begin, but I want the Board to be aware that we are continuing to pursue the greenway development and have not placed the work on the shelf.

WATERSHED

On Monday, March 21, the Board of Directors of the Conservation Trust of North Carolina (CTNC) paid a visit to the Allens Creek Watershed. CTNC was holding its Board meeting at the Lake Logan Retreat Center, and while in the area, they wanted to do a tour of the watershed since they have been so involved in the protection of this asset. There were about 30 people present, joining Kyle Cook, Superintendent, Hugh Parrott, Watershed Attendant, and me for their two hour visit. There were many questions about the history of the watershed and how the Town Board went about purchasing the last, privately held lands in the watershed. There was also much interest in the conservation easement, and they were surprised over the controversy which arose over the plans to have a forestry management plan for the watershed. We received many favorable comments from those attending the tour, and both Kyle Cook and Hugh Parrott did an excellent job of representing the Town with these guests to our facilities.

STREET PROJECTS

With the arrival of more favorable weather, work has resumed on a number of projects that were on the back burner over the winter. The rush is on to try and get most of this work done before the arrival of tourist season and a much heavier traffic flow.



During the late winter, crews began reworking the alley between Town Center and the Schulman Building connecting Main Street with Wall Street. This is the main path between the parking areas along Wall Street and was in need of rehabilitation. It was also a key focal point in the work that is being done on Wall Street to enhance both vehicular and pedestrian uses. Work also has been done on Wall Street to create more defined pedestrian paths from the parking areas to the street. This would assist in pedestrian safety and hopes to encourage people to cross the busy street at specific points rather than wherever they have a mind to.

The Street Department has begun making the improvements to the intersection of Depot, Branner and Haywood Streets. A work order has been issued to Haynes Electric for the installation of new traffic signals at this intersection, and the wide streets there are going on an “asphalt diet” to steal a term frequently used by Public Works Director Fred Baker. Once the new curbing and crosswalks have been installed, there will be some landscape improvements to enhance the appearance of this area. We anticipate a much higher volume of traffic at this intersection once the Justice Center opens and the parking deck begins seeing greater use. The new traffic signals and new lane stripes should contribute to improved safety for both motorists and pedestrians.



Work has begun on improvements to the area surrounding the lot where the fountain was located at the foot of Wall Street. New curbing and sidewalk has been poured and there will eventually be an area established for pedestrians within the small park, with benches and a water fountain and an attractively landscaped area. This will be a focal point at the entrance to the downtown area and has been a good joint project with the Master Gardeners and the Town.

MGT CORPORATION

Mgt Corporation has been working with the Town for several months on two different personnel studies. The first study attempted to address the staffing needs of each department and consider whether different areas were overstaffed or understaffed or how adjustments might be made to present personnel without adding new employees. This study took a bit longer than planned and the final report is still being revised.

The Compensation and Classification Study continues at present and will not be completed before the budget is completed. Finance Director Eddie Caldwell and I have discussed the possibility of setting aside some funds to make adjustments to various positions which might be recommended by MGT and approved by the Town Board.

PERSONNEL ITEMS

You may have seen the article in the local paper about the recent accomplishment of Freida Rhinehart. She has completed the necessary courses and training sessions to earn the designation of Master Municipal Clerk in the International Association of Municipal Clerks. Congratulations to Frieda on this accomplishment!

We have provided you with the letter of resignation submitted by Land Use Manager John Swift. John intends to resign at the end of August, but his last day of work will be July 20. He has given us a goodly amount of time to search for his successor, and we will be advertising in North and South Carolina to seek that person. Paul Benson and I will focus on this search, but no matter how hard we try, it will be impossible to find any one with the knowledge of the community and the land development standards that John will take with him into his retirement. As noted, John was kind to give us so much advanced notice, and we will give as much attention to the process as we can. It comes in the midst of budget season and at a time when several development projects are coming to the forefront, but we make sure that we find the time for this important work. Of course, we are pleased for John (and a bit envious, I must admit) of his being able to reach retirement and we wish him well.

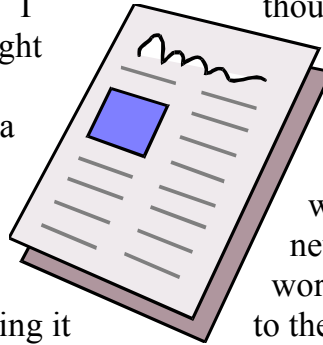


Margaret Langston has given a great deal of time during the past year in serving on the Grand Jury for Haywood County. She began her service last summer as the Vice-Chairman of the Grand Jury and has recently been promoted to Chairman. The Grand Jury meets monthly, and it does require a good deal of time and dedication on the part of the members. We are appreciative of the commitment which Margaret has made to her service with this group. Margaret continues to serve on the Board of Directors of the North Carolina Risk Management Services, the insurance wing of the League of Municipalities. Margaret has been on this Board for several years and has been a good and faithful member, contributing much, from what I am told, to the deliberations which are conducted by the Board.

We have a number of Town employees serving on various state boards, and this requires a time commitment from each of them. Police Chief Bill Hollingsed serves on the Board of the State Police Chief's Association, Tax Collector James Robertson has served as President of the Privilege License Association and is a member of the Tax Collector's Association. I am completing my fourth and final year on the Board of Directors of the League of Municipalities. In addition, Town Alderman Libba Feichter continues as a member of the League's Transportation, Communications and Public Safety Committee, and is in her second year as the Vice-Chairman of that group. All of these Boards require a lot of time away from the office and time spent on the road between here and Raleigh or wherever the Boards happen to be meeting. It is a big commitment to serve, and the State groups often have difficulty convincing people from this distance to serve. Thanks to those employees from the Town of Waynesville who are willing to take on these extra commitments!

NEWSLETTER/WEBSITE

You have likely received the quarterly newsletter for April 1, and it arrived at my home on March 29. The newsletter contained an excellent article on the increase in the electric rates which the Town had to implement in light of the significant hikes in costs paid to Progress Energy for the purchase of wholesale power. I had an excellent article on this topic and sought comment from representatives of Progress Electric Membership Coop. There was also a newsletter about sewer overflows and about into the wastewater collection system. I commend Phyllis McClure for her work on the newsletter and for their assistance in getting it distributed in a timely manner.



thought the Mountaineer also out information and Energy and Haywood great article in the infiltration and inflows want to salute Town Clerk newsletter. I would also work they do on the layout of to the mailing company and



I also want to call your attention to the fact that the Town's new Internet web site is about to go live. Ms. McClure has worked with Rick and Debi Hall of CGI Group for much of the present fiscal year in developing the site and in compiling the information for the site. The site can be accessed but is still under construction, and there are some kinks which still must be worked out before it is in final form.

ELECTRICAL RATE INCREASES

We spent considerable time in recent months in discussing the increase in the costs the Town pays to Progress Energy for wholesale power. There is not much else that we can say on this, and as indicated in the previous section, our Town newsletter and the local news media have attempted to explain the situation as best we could. I do want to mention again a word of praise for Finance Director process, we seemed to keep than we had answers. It direction we tried to go or financial information, Eddie able to find the answer. You the same comment I am once again - we are very fortunate to have someone like Eddie Caldwell as our Finance Director. And I am sure that over the next two months, as we deal with the budget and additional financial issues, we will again realize this. Thanks Eddie!!!!



Eddie Caldwell. Throughout this coming up with more questions seemed that no matter which whenever we needed more was there with the answer or was are aware of this and have made making here, but I have to say it

TOWN BOARD RETREAT

Please remember that the Town Board will be holding its annual planning retreat at the Lake Logan Episcopal Retreat Center on Friday, April 8. The meetings are set to begin at 8:00 a.m. and conclude at 5:00 p.m. Alderman Gary Caldwell has agreed to drive the van from the lower level parking area behind the Police Station to the Lake Logan site, and it will be pulling out at 7:15 a.m. Someone will be contacting you to see if you wish to ride in the Town van. If you plan to drive on your own, there will be juice, coffee, water and doughnuts and pastry available for the attendees beginning at 7:45 a.m.

The Lake Logan location is a change from previous years, but the Episcopalians have done an outstanding job with this facility and it is good that we can support them. Town Staff and I look forward to a good and productive day in working through issues and the future challenges, possibilities and opportunities with the Town Board.