



Town of Boone Citizen's Report

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Water Issues

Interconnect Agreements

To facilitate emergency water availability, the Town of Boone recently signed an interconnect agreement with Appalachian State University.



We also recently approved an emergency interconnect agreement with Blowing Rock. This agreement does not allow tap-ons and tax dollars will not be used to fund the connection.

0501 Ordinance and Conservation Measures

We have worked on changes to our 05-01 ordinance allowing an increase in yearly allocation amounts due to data on annual usage. We also approved final language for drought stages as requested by the Governor of North Carolina. Specific measures will be added for clarifying conditions for moving from one stage to another. We will be also continuing our efforts with the Every Drop Counts campaign to educate consumers on how to conserve water. And finally we are beginning to review rate structures for future water purchases.

New Water Source

We have been seeking an additional raw water source for over a year. After completing the Engineering Study for evaluating raw water alternatives and the Environmental Assessment of preferred options, the Town has identified sites and is in the process of negotiating an acquisition.

Once land is acquired, a permitting process will begin as well as the procurement of funds to cover the costs of a new water intake system. The permitting process is estimated to take up to 2 years. Costs are projected at \$17 to \$18 million dollars for raw water intake, transmission main & plant expansion.

Revitalization Efforts

Howard Street

The engineering plan for infrastructure improvements, parking, sidewalks and streetscapes has been created and modified. The process of acquiring needed voluntary easements has taken several months and while we have several owners who have voluntarily signed easements necessary to do this work, we have a few more to obtain in order to move forward with the work. We recently made the decision to extend the time to May to try to obtain these easements. We are aware that if we need to put this out to bid this fall, our window of time to do so this year is fast approaching. Costs continue to increase for the planned improvements. Our decision to seek voluntary easements was made to keep costs down and property owners indicated during public hearings on the plans that they were willing to help this project move forward.

Mayor

Loretta Clawson

Loretta.Clawson@townofboone.net

Councilmembers:

Liz Aycock

Liz.Aycock@townofboone.net

Rennie Brantz

Rennie.Brantz@townofboone.net

Lynne Mason

Lynne.Mason@townofboone.net

Janet Pepin

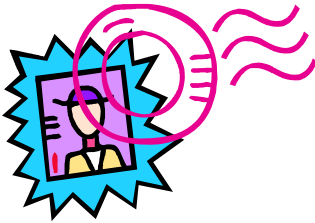
Janet.Pepin@townofboone.net

Stephen Phillips

Stephen.Phillips@townofboone.net

Revitalization Efforts (continued)

Post Office



Weber-Hodges-Godwin, acting as broker for the USPS, released the US Postal Service RFP for the sale of the Downtown Post Office with a response due by April 22nd and a 30 day window for closing after acceptance of a submitted proposal. The Historic Preservation Commission was asked by the NC State Historic Registry to review and recommend modifications to the deed covenants that protect the historical structure of the building. This deed was attached to the RFP.

We have conducted an initial inspection of the property to determine the amount of work and costs associated with restoring the building and meeting current code provisions.

We examined the benefits and concerns of Town ownership, estimated costs for restoration, asbestos removal, accessibility, and other improvements so all available square footage is usable. At the April 17th Town Council meeting closed session, the council approved the submission of a proposal for acquisition of the Post Office property. We are awaiting (along with other proposers) for the decision of the USPS and remain hopeful this property will continue to serve as a historical center of our community.

Planning

Smart Growth



The Smart Growth Audit is completed and findings were presented to Town Council and to the general public in January. The Council voted to proceed with development of a master land use plan in 2008 and follow this process with the updating of ordinances, and we are likely to begin development of a form-based code once a master land use plan is completed. Form based codes provide comprehensive information based on the type of structure. Involvement of all community stakeholders will be an important element in the development of the master land use plan and a schedule of charettes will be scheduled for feedback and ideas. Charettes are similar to focus groups but will be developed based on specific development areas under review. A committee was established to create a RFP for working with the town and its residents on this master land use plan and they are reviewing submissions for selection and recommendation to the Town Council.

ASU Master Planning

The Council has met twice with officials from ASU to work together on a joint master plan. Meetings will continue to be scheduled throughout the smart growth planning process of the town.

Intergovernmental Regional Planning

Watauga County, ASU, Blowing Rock, Seven Devils, and the Town of Boone have held regional meetings to discuss the high school and recently met on April 28th to begin discussion on regional water issues, 911 response systems, and a replacement fire ladder truck for reaching ASU's taller buildings. A committee comprised of various governmental entities will be created to address specific short-term water issues raised at the meeting which include legislative contact, conservation programs, inventory of combined water usage, and 10-year short-term projection of regional water needs. The group will meet again in late summer to address other regional issues.



Town of Boone Website

If you have not checked out the recent changes to the Town of Boone website, please go to www.townofboone.net to see some dramatic changes. We have redesigned the homepage to not only better reflect the beauty of where we live but have also added more user-friendly navigation tools so you can find information easily. Our second round of changes will be to update some of the department pages and to add more content of interest to visitors to the site.

Walkable and Green Community

There are challenges in moving from wanting the Town of Boone to be a walkable and green town and making it that way. Improving and adding sidewalks, expanding Greenway trails, adding and restoring crosswalks, bicycle lanes, beautification, and the support of the Appalcart route expansion all require negotiation with entities including private land owners, the State Department of Transportation, and Watauga County. The Council is meeting on May 2nd with the State Department of Transportation to discuss needs of the town residents. We continue to financially support the Appalcart free rider program.



Some of the current enhancements we have planned include:

Greenway Expansion- a plan is created to extend the Greenway from behind the Hunan restaurant to Faculty Street along Greenway, Winklers Creek and Wilson Roads and will include bike lanes and sidewalks. Work is scheduled in four phases and we are awaiting DOT approval for Phase I.



421 Expansion to Hardin Street. The Town and Watauga County has sought enhancements from DOT such as sidewalks, bike lanes, green medians, and retaining walls with native materials. These enhancements have yet to be included in the DOT expansion plans though both the town, county and ASU have sent letters in support of these enhancements.

Fit Grant - This grant will provide funds for sidewalk improvements and educational and promotional materials. Funds may be targeted towards the completion of sidewalks to the Human Service Complex on Poplar Grove Road Ext.

Adopt a Flowerbed Program— The Council approved the Greenway, Parks and Gardens committee's recommendation for an Adopt a Flowerbed program and there are six areas left for adoption. Community members who adopt a flowerbed will work with the landscaping team at Public Works to design a flowerbed using native plants and assist in maintaining it during the year. Materials will be provided by the Public Works department.



Trees— The Tree Board has recently been approved to apply for a grant to undertake an Urban Tree Planning project which will examine our canopy and serve as a data baseline for tree plan-

Did you know that tree topping is not a recommended practice for the health of a tree? The Town of Boone passed an ordinance last year prohibiting tree topping as a pruning practice for all commercial properties. Many commercial owners hire landscaping companies from outside of the area who are unaware of this ordinance. Avoid fines as well as protect the health of your trees by ensuring your landscaping companies are aware of this ordinance. Educational information is available at the Planning and Development Services office.

Infrastructure Big Ticket Items

Like many towns our size and age, we are faced with a growing list of major infrastructure needs that seemingly compete with each other in terms of priority and funding. A summary of projects and estimated costs is provided that are in addition to the day-to-day costs of providing ongoing services to our taxpayers.

New Water Intake System & Plant Expansion (to meet growing demand for water by 2011.) **\$\$\$\$\$\$**

Estimated Costs: \$18 million

Howard Street Project **\$\$\$**

Estimated Costs: \$4.5 million

Town of Boone Space Needs **\$\$\$**

Estimated Costs: unknown at this time. Report is in but costs for property/land acquisition has not been compiled.



Stormwater Infrastructure **\$\$\$\$\$**

Initiate stormwater activities that would incorporate a water quality component. In order to fund this activity a new fee based utility is anticipated.

Affordable Housing



The Boone Affordable Housing Task Force was formed in 2007 to address what the Town of Boone can do to promote affordable housing and to compliment what the County Task Force is doing. To date this task force has adopted Affordable Housing Definitions, and continues to study ways to encourage affordable housing.

The goals for 2008 include the continued review of the UDO to remove regulatory barriers to affordable housing, the evaluation of water and sewer fees for affordable housing projects, the consideration of inclusionary zoning and density bonuses, the promotion of mixed use development and the exploration of incentives to build alternative multi-family units including town homes, cottages and cluster homes.

If there are other issues you would like to see addressed in this Citizens Report, please feel free to contact any of the Town of Boone Councilmembers at the email addresses listed on page 1 of this report. Keeping our citizens informed and educated on the issues and decisions is important to all of us. Each council member sits on several different committees (some permanent, some temporary) and a list of these are located on the town's website (www.townofboone.net). Our plan at this time is to publish this Citizen's Report quarterly. However, if you find it useful, please let us know and we can increase the frequency of its publication. Thank you!