

Town of Maggie Valley
Board of Aldermen Annual Retreat
February 18, 2020
MINUTES

Members Present: Mayor Mike Eveland, Aldermen: Twinkle Patel, Tammy Wight, Clayton Davis, and Phillip Wight

Staff Present: Manager Nathan Clark, Finance Director Shayne Wheeler, Chief Russ Gilliland, Planner Ron Hancock, Public Works Director Mike Mehaffey, and Town Clerk Vickie Best

Others Present: Mountaineer Reporter Kyle Perrotti and Developer Craig Woolmington

The Retreat began at 9:34 am on Tuesday February 18, 2020 in the Town Hall Boardroom.

Craig Woolmington owner of a 5.8953 acres lot on Soco Road beside the Rock Shop and across the road from Legend's Restaurant (PIN# 7686-28-6655) addressed Council providing a history of his development expertise in California i.e. forty (40) years in shopping center development, town centers, subdivisions, and the last big project was a transit center. Over 1.3 million dollars was spent on studies for the transit center. In California, the community has input on every aspect of the development which makes development difficult and time consuming.

Mr. Woolmington stated that he wanted to go somewhere that people are easier to work with and he can make things happen faster. Mr. Woolmington stated that he has owned this property for thirteen (13) years and really wants to do something above standard... create a sense of place. To keep rules and regulations in place, the entire property will be under central management.

The Marriott/Fairfield Hotel will be one of the anchor tenants in the "Town Center". The goal is to use Jonathan Creek to the maximum potential as an attraction. The first study said that 150-rooms could be built. The banker thought that was a little ambitious. Phase 1 will be an eighty (80) room hotel.

Phase 2 will be another anchor tenant, a brewery. Breweries want to be by water and have area for event space. Mr. Woolmington stated that he would consider selling the brewery site if that would help the investors get a better loan. Mr. Woolmington would maintain ownership of all other properties.

Another feature would be the greenways along Jonathan Creek and recreation area along the tributary that runs through the property. If done properly, the greenways would be an anchor itself.

Mr. Woolmington's vision is to extend the greenways to Elevated (Mountain Distillery) Park and create another park. There would be over 600' of creek frontage with Elevated Park.

The ditch (tributary) is a major source of pollution to Jonathan Creek. "There is always kitchen garbage that has blown down the ditch."

The idea is to turn the ditch/tributary into an asset by landscaping, installing a walking trail and adding a bridge or a waterfall. The Town would provide the signage, install the greenways and landscape the ditch/tributary as well as maintain the areas for public use. The trail system would be open to the public, but a gate would be installed so that public access could be controlled.

Possibly people could do distillery and brewery tours. The Woolmington property would have a restaurant that could sell Mr. Angel's spirits.

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Another personal goal is to have WNC high quality arts and crafts from local artist and jewelers. One could co-brand with the hotel and have the art in the hotel and maybe even have an artisan on site.

The center will have outdoor patios for people to enjoy the flowing water and beautiful landscaping.

Mr. Woolmington stated that he would grant the Town a public easement in exchange for the Town building the greenways and installing landscaping along the drainage ditch.

Mr. Woolmington has analyzed all the studies done for the Town and creating a sense of place is a large part of the equation. "Maggie Valley needs a development of substance."

As for financials, the investors still need to raise 25% or approximately \$650,000 to start construction on the hotel.

"Perceptions are greater than reality." The image of Maggie Valley needs to be improved and the signage needs to be addressed. Mr. Woolmington stated that he wanted to be a leader and set the standards. "Make people feel that they have arrived." Mr. Woolmington was in favor of the road diet, but agreed the crosswalks need improving.

Council thanked Mr. Woolmington for his presentation and briefly discussed the pros and cons of entering a partnership with ownership/control issues.

A deck could be built like the one at Parham Park. Public restrooms to serve both properties and increased security lighting for overflow parking would be expensive.

Mr. Woolmington added that the greenways must be installed to get the brewery, otherwise the greenways will be private and would not be open to the public. "It is in the Town's best interest to make this the Town Center" (although Mr. Woolmington would remain in control).

Manager Clark admitted that more greenways would be a benefit to the town, but a development agreement must be in place. A sketch and timeline would also need to be submitted and approved. As Mr. Woolmington stated he wants the area to be the Lexus of greenways. It would be a costly project considering time and cost and satisfying Mr. Woolmington.

Council discussed getting Haywood Waterways involved with the ditch. Mr. Woolmington discussed putting a culvert in the ditch/tributary and making a waterfall.

Decision Making

Interest-based approach

- Participants are Problem Solvers
- The goal is an effective agreements reached amicably
- Emphasis is on interest, not positions
- Look for mutually advantageous gains

Position-based approach

- Participants are Adversaries
- The Goal is Victory
- Participants Defend Entrenched Positions
- Demand One Sided Gains

The Town should strive to be interest-based as opposed to position-based.

Mayor Eveland felt that Council was interest-based when making the decision to open the festival grounds to a different kind of event i.e. "Blow Up Your TV". Council displayed an interest-based approach to the different variations of fiscal conservative measures.

The worksheets that Council was asked to complete show that Council's values are very similar.

Mayor Eveland stated that Council should look for opportunities during the Soco Road Project to extend greenways. Greenways and parks are assets to both the commercial and residential districts. The proposed Veteran's Park will be another attraction in town.

Again, the Soco Road Project will leave the five lanes allowing focus on the crosswalks, pedestrian islands, and signage. The grant is for 2.4 million dollars.

The current greenway systems take people on and off the sidewalk to get back to Jonathan Creek. Alderman P. Wight agreed, adding the Woolmington property would be a huge greenway project. Mayor Eveland had concerns about control issues while Alderman T. Wight added that she did not want the town to pay for a study and then Mr. Woolmington not be satisfied.

Director Mehaffey informed Council that it will be difficult to do anything to the ditch/tributary. The town cannot do more than individuals environmentally; all laws still apply. Also, lighting would be an issue. The greenways along Jonathan Creek would be easy because the town already has a twenty (20) foot sewer easement along the creek.

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Alderman Patel questioned how Mr. Woolmington would have control if the town already has an easement.

The easement only protects the area from being built over the municipal sewer line.

Manager Clark agreed that expecting a Lexus style greenway would be different from the rest of the greenway systems in the valley and the cost would be higher.

Council directed Manager Clark to look at greenway options. The more people see the success of greenways the more favorable they look at giving greenway space to the town.

The benefits produced by having a "Town Center" would be good, but it would come at a cost.

Both Aldermen T. Wight and Patel had concerns about investing money with no guarantees.

Manager Clark reminded Council how long it took from acquisition of Parham Park to construction. Greenways are developed in feet not acreage. Every part of Jonathan Creek has a different flow pattern.

Alderman T. Wight reminded Council that Maggie Valley owns a waterfall.

Manager Clark inquired about the vision for the waterfall. The town owns a little over eight (8) acres with just a strip of land up the waterfalls.

The town in the past, received a letter from the NC League of Municipalities that carries Maggie Valley's insurance, brought up at least five (5) major problems with the waterfalls. One of the problems is parking. Alderman Davis added that the town may want to invest in having the property surveyed and flagged.

Alderman Davis went on to explain his idea of creating parking and a turn around. Where the creek comes across the road move that dirt and put it between the road and the creek. There is eight hundred (800) to one thousand feet (1,000) feet of cascades below the creek.

Mayor Eveland would like to see the possibility of marketing the property. Alderman P. Wight suggested meeting with Mark Pruett with Haywood County Erosion Control to discuss the possibilities.

Manager Clark stated that Council had set aside \$40,000 to study the waterfall vs a splashpad to determine which option to pursue. None of those funds have been spent.

Another issue is Old Still Road is maintained by the Country Club and the road is sketchy at best.

The number of parking spaces will determine how much work Council will want to do to the waterfalls. If there are only a couple of parking spaces, then cut a few trees and let people walk from point A to point B. In reverse, you would not want to overdesign the parking and under design the park.

Manager Clark added that it would take an environmental specialist to design the park.

Alderman T. Wight felt the town could start small and then expand later.

Alderman Davis felt with some engineering the town might get fifteen (15) parking spaces. A dump truck load of clay costs \$100, gravel \$500, and boulders can be purchased for about \$1,200. Add some picnic

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tables and the waterfalls would be wonderful place to go. Walking trails could be incorporated on the land owned by the town, with a gravity fed wading pool and Rhododendrons would spruce up the area. Crossties could be used for steps up the water fall with a chain for a handrail. It may take two (2) or three (3) years; but would be well worth it.

Alderman Davis added that staff needs to talk with the residents in the community to get them onboard with the project.

The town could ask Haywood County for assistance since it would be for recreation.

Before deciding, Mayor Eveland would like to see the expense of the project listed in phases.

Alderman P. Wight responded that the town needs to do something rather it is an asset or a liability.

Alderman T. Wight, with experience in tourism and a member of the Haywood County Tourism Development Authority, stated that waterfalls are the number one attraction for our area. Alderman Patel agreed, adding that guests at the motels frequently ask about waterfalls.

ADA does not require waterfalls to be accessible.

Staff should seek any grant funding available for the waterfall project.

Mayor Eveland added that there may be a group of people that would want to work on the waterfall. "If it is not practical for the town to make a park there, then we can put the issue to bed."

Alderman T. Wight was interested in a Heritage Walk or a museum displaying Mountain Heritage. Dave Angel is somewhat involved by trying to get a Raymond Fairchild deal in place. Raymond Fairchild, Popcorn Sutton and Miss Maggie are all notable people from our area.

A lot of history was lost with the passing of historians Ernestine UpChurch and Hattie Davis.

There was a brief discussion on Martin's Motel and house being a great place for a museum and artists could use the rooms to display and sell their goods. It would show what 1950's tourism looked like.

The town would have to remove the quilters guild, but the Flossy White Room could be used at no cost to the town. Booths could be set up in the Flossy White Room showing early motels and the early days of Ghost Town.

The Plott House would make a great museum and there is a waterfall on the property. Although there are a lot of historic elements left in the house it would be expensive to bring the house up to code for commercial use.

Manager Clark warned that sometimes history can become a fable and not be historically accurate.

Once the road project is complete, Council will look at creating a Veteran's Park.

A meeting will be set up with the MVSD and other stakeholders about creating walking trails in the watershed or Elk Conservation areas.

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Mayor Eveland would like to have a meeting with the Cherokee Chief to get better acquainted with our neighbors across the mountain.

Mayor Eveland added that he was going to set up office for a couple hours, a couple of days per week to allow people to come and talk with him. The desire is to more accessible to the public.

Alderman T. Wight would like to see an agreement be made for school students to come during holidays or on weekends and sing at different areas throughout the valley. Alderman T. Wight felt the town should set up a booth to raise funds for the July 4th Fireworks Show or find sponsorships since the HCTDA will not provide funding assistance.

Director Mehaffey informed Council that the maple trees in front of Town Hall need to be cut down. The trees are very old and are dying, thereby creating a danger to folks walking the greenway trail.

Alderman P. Wight asked about the condition of the Town Hall roof or other deficiencies in the building and pavilion.

There are no leaks in Town Hall or the pavilion.

Council asked for a packet of items that need repaired or improved. Manager Clark responded that the wooden side doors need to be replaced and some tile work would help.

Council discussed things looking "cool old" or just looking dated.

Alderman T. Wight questioned if a covered area on the festival grounds would be beneficial for promoters; just extend the roof line from the stage for people to get under during events.

Every promoter uses the grounds differently; staff would never be able to place something on the grounds that would satisfy everyone.

THE BOARD OF ALDERMEN WILL MEET ON FRIDAY MARCH 6, 2020 FOR THE AGENDA SETTING/MONTHLY WORKSHOP AT 9:30 AM.

COUNCIL WILL HAVE A SPECIAL CALLED MEETING ON MONDAY MAY 24, 2020 TO DISCUSS APPROVING THE WINTER WOOD LIGHTING DISPLAY AT 9:30AM.

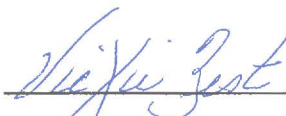
The budget schedule will be given to Council in March.

As for rules and procedures discussed yesterday, for a month or so the Clerk will repeat the motion and the yeas and nays on all votes that are not unanimous.

Retreat day number two (2) ended at 1:35 pm.



Mayor Mike Eveland



Vickie Best, CMC, NCCMC, Town Clerk

