

Town of Mars Hill
MAYOR & BOARD OF ALDERMEN
Monthly Meeting

April 1, 2013
7:00 p.m.

Town Hall

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor John Chandler; Aldermen Larry Davis, Stuart Jolley, Nicholas (Nick) Honeycutt, and Robert W. (Bob) Zink

OTHERS PRESENT: Rick Molland; Rich Olejniczak; Anna Freeman, The News Record and Sentinel; Lee Hoffman, Community Housing Coalition; Wyatt Stevens; Cindy Weeks; Scott Dedman; Geoffrey Barton; Don Tise; Chris Day; Chris Eller; Sonya Coates; Mattie Quinn; Bob Carr; Jon vanHoff; Pat Shelton; Casey Robinson; Larry Burda; Larry Leake, Town Attorney; Darhyl Boone, Town Manager; Joanne Rice

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Chandler with the first item being approval of the March, 2013, Minutes. A motion was made by Nick Honeycutt, second by Larry Davis, to approve the March Minutes as written. The motion received unanimous approval.

There was no Agenda modification and it was approved unanimously as presented following a motion by Stuart Jolley and a second from Nick Honeycutt.

Mayor Chandler announced that the meeting would go into a Public Hearing for the purpose of reviewing a Zoning Amendment Request by Mountain Housing Opportunities to rezone six acres of property from Rural Residential (R-1) and Highway Business (C-2) to Medium Density Residential (R-3) to allow multi-family homes.

Lee Hoffman with Community Housing Coalition in Madison County addressed the Board with the Coalition's support for this project and the need of the facility. In a brief overview, he stated that the project is not a public project and is market-rate housing that is affordable. The homes are privately owned and will remain on the tax rolls.

Chris Day with Civil Design Concepts gave a brief overview of the site which is six acres of the Robinson family land located behind Robinson's Furniture. The project consists of forty-eight multi-family units and will be eight units per acre. Water and sewer services will be provided by the Town of Mars Hill. There will be four buildings per group and a common building and an outdoor picnic facility. The project has met approval by the Water Shed Ordinance.

Don Tise, project Architect, gave a power point presentation covering the design of the individual units. He stressed that these units meet all housing standards as required by the State. The forty-eight units will consist of one bedroom; two bedrooms; and three bedrooms and are three story walk-ups. Standards as to square footage, counter space, etc., have all been met and the finished project will be managed by an experienced property management company with state-wide credentials.

Pat Shelton explained some management aspects. Applicants must undergo a credit and criminal background check. All income must be reported and is verified. Apartments undergo annual inspections and have professional lawn and landscaping care weekly in summer months and as needed during winter. Maintenance is provided with a maintenance person and site manager on site in the project as well as a telephone contact number in case of emergencies.

Following a question as to how rental rates can be kept so low, it was explained that the project is done utilizing tax credits issued by the Federal government to the State who, in turn, sells the credits to investors. This limits the amount of debt incurred by the project; therefore, rent does not have to be at a higher rate to repay debt.

Potential renters are the average working person with rate of rent based on total income – percentage of average median income. The long term goal is to create home ownership. Leases are for one year, then on a month to month basis with a \$200 security deposit. The turn-over rate of renters is only approximately 20%. The project must remain as was initially developed for thirty years. MHO has the first right of refusal to buy after the thirty year period.

Madison County employees will be the target group for these units with ads being placed in local paper. No application can be refused but every renter must meet all criteria before they can be approved.

There was much additional discussion including the time frame for this project if funding is approved. MHO has currently a 100% funding record for its projects to date with only two having to go to second round of funding. All units are built and the project complete before any units are rented. Local contractors and sub-contractors may bid and are encouraged with the time frame being one year from project's beginning.

Mayor Chandler asked for any further questions from the Board, for comments from the public in attendance, and there were neither. He asked for any opposition to the project. There was none. Mayor Chandler declared the Public Hearing closed and the meeting to return to regular session.

Darhyl Boone explained that the Planning & Zoning Board has reviewed the Zoning Amendment Request in depth and has recommended that the Board give approval. He further stated that this re-zoning is in line with the Town's Land Development Plan that was adopted a number of years ago.

With no further discussion, questions or comments, Larry Davis made a motion to approved the Zoning Amendment Request by MHO to rezone six acres of the Robinson family Land from Rural Residential and Highway Business to Medium Density Residential to allow for the multi-family housing development. The motion received a second from Stuart Jolley. The motion carried by a vote of four for and one against.

The next item of business was a Child Care Provider Proclamation proclaiming May 10, 2013, as a day of appreciation for those who provide care of children outside the home. A motion was made by Bob Zink, second from Stuart Jolley, to approve this Proclamation. The motion received unanimous approval.

Mattie Quinn, a member of the Girl Scout Cadet Troop, made a presentation to the Board for the need of a sidewalk on Bruce Road to accommodate the pedestrian traffic. She has a petition with 150 signatures. Mattie gave a very insightful presentation stating pertinent facts to reinforce the need for these improvements. She chose this project to earn an award with the Girl Scouts. The Board

commended Mattie on the job she did in presenting her case. Darhyl shared with her that there is actually DOT monies to be available in 2016 to develop a greenway in the Bruce Road area to help eliminate the need for pedestrian travel along the roadway. He, too, commended Mattie on a very good job with her facts and presentation.

A request was received from Malcombe Jackson, who owns a lot on Bruce Road, on which 2007 property tax are due. Mr. Jackson has requested a release of the penalty and interest on this bill since he was only recently made aware that it was owed. Darhyl looked into the matter and agrees that Mr. Jackson was not aware of the outstanding bill and that he has faithfully paid all other tax bills. A motion was made by Bob Zink that the Town release the penalty and interest due on this 2007 property tax bill and charge only the principal amount. The motion received a second from Stuart Jolley and was unanimously approved.

Under Old Business, Darhyl reported that the ground breaking for the new Mars Hill Medical Center will be held on April 17, 2013, at 10:00 a.m. and the proposed site. If there should be inclement weather, the meeting will be held in the Town Hall Community Room.

Bob Zink reported that Mars Hill College will have a gathering on April 2, 2013, at 4:00 p.m. where they will be awarded a grant/loan for the proposed Allied Health Building. The Board and Town Manager are invited to attend the award presentation.

Under New Business, Darhyl stated that Ryan Pickens in a telephone conversation asked that he relay to the Board his intent to move forward with a building re-use grant through the Rural Center. This is similar to the feasibility study grant he previously received to study the Mars Theater property and determine possible uses. This grant would need to be a joint application with the Town of Mars Hill being the applying agency. There was brief discussion among Board members with Bob Zink stating that the Town would need to hold a first mortgage on the property. The general consensus of the Board was that the Town should not become involved in this grant process due to possible liability for the Town.

Being no Public Comment, a motion was made by Bob Zink, second by Stuart Jolley, that the meeting be adjourned. The motion received unanimous approval.
