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| The town workshop and town board meetings will be held on Thursday, November 21, at the community center next to the ball field.  The workshop session begins at 6 pm, and the monthly board meeting at 7 pm.  Both meetings can be accessed remotely by using the link on the town website.The workshop session will start the process of reviewing proposed new town website designs and systems.  At the last board meeting, the town manager was directed to identify new options for redesigning the town website.  Several website providers will be reviewed in the coming weeks.At the 7 pm board meeting, John Bryant of River Sand, Inc. will update the board on phase one of the Mirror Lake dredging project.  The Mirror Lake Improvement Association is funding this first phase.  John will review with the town board the dredging plan and scope.  All testing, permitting, and easements have been secured for phase one.  River Sand is now staging equipment and developing sites for the dredging to begin in the coming days or weeks.A video on the dredging is on my website, AskmayorPat.com.  I also posted on the site a video on the repair and rebuilding of the damaged section of NC 106.  The video shows an aerial view of the road washout and the challenging grades involved in securing the culvert and drain pipe system.  Matthew Eberz of Heritage Productions did an outstanding job creating this informative video about this project that impacts all Highlanders.There are a couple of preliminary and final subdivision plats on tonight’s agenda.  Both plats are of small subdivisions.  Also, Parkside Partners will be requesting a B-1 Conditional Zoning for the property on the corner of Maple and Oak Streets, which is across from the EMT building.  The request calls for a number of townhomes to be built on the site.  The agenda also has several water treatment-related items and the Highlands Chamber of Commerce building lease.  Once again, I am optimistic that issues related to the lease can be resolved and that a new lease without monthly payments can be set in place. Last week was the rollout of the Macon County Housing Study that included sections on Franklin, Highlands and the Flats areas.  Flats is another name for the Scaly Mountain area.  The Dogwood Health Trust funded the 385-page comprehensive study.  We will create a link on the town website for those who would like to access the information in the study.Patrick Bowen, the study's chief author, presented some of the study's highlights this past week at a community meeting coordinated by the Highlands Chamber of Commerce.  Mr. Bowen emphasized that addressing the housing shortage in Macon County will take a comprehensive partnership of government entities, private developers and community groups.  The construction of 600 to 700 housing units in the county will be required just to catch up to the demand shortfall.  Securing funds and commitments to address the housing shortage will be the challenge.  A lot of effort and hard work lies ahead in meeting this critical need. |

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