

Subject: Early Voting
October 20, 2022

Thursday, October 20 is the start of early voting. It continues to November 5. I don't know why we call it early voting anymore; a whole lot of folks now vote well before Election Day on November 8. The early voting format has become a standard way ballots are cast.

If a voter is registered in Macon County and works in Highlands, that person can early vote at the Highlands Recreation Department precinct. If the voter waits until Election Day, he or she will have to vote in their assigned precinct. The long and short of it is that early voting is a very easy and flexible way of casting a ballot in North Carolina. The important point is that everyone living and/or working on the Highlands Plateau should cast a vote. It sends a message to the entire county that Highlanders are concerned and engaged with what happens in our Macon County.

Now I'm not writing this get-out-the-vote message to tell anyone who to vote for in the midterm election. I value the American secret ballot tradition. Once in a voting booth a voter can vote for the candidates of their choice and not be obligated to tell anyone who or why they voted for specific candidates.

I will tell you that I am voting for the 1/4 of a penny increase in the sales tax. Of the surrounding counties, Macon County is the only county that has not approved this increase. A vote for this increase would set the sale tax rate at 7 cents (pennies) per dollar instead of the current 6.75 cents. This increase will help the county provide critical support to education and insure other county services.

Thursday night, October 20, is the Highlands Town Board meeting. It begins at 7 pm at the Highlands Community Center next to the ball field. The meeting can also be accessed on YouTube by way of the town website.

The meeting agenda is rather long. There will be a budget amendment to purchase a new pumper fire truck. The department needs to order it now and hope that is delivered in a year or so.

The board will also get an update from the Playhouse and a request for a HAM radio antenna attachment on the Big Bear Pen tower. The board will review and hopefully approve the lease agreement for the Highlands Visitor Center and Chamber offices.

EnviroSpark will be making a presentation on EV charging stations for the downtown area. Another item on the agenda is changes to the code of ordinances concerning outdoor burning, grumbling and noise. Town committees comprising staff and board members have been working on these issues and will report to the full board for action to be taken. Lamar Nix, our public works director, will present to the board a policy on private road maintenance and snow removal procedures.

Hope to see you at Thursday night's meeting. Public comment will be at the top of the agenda.

Patrick Taylor
Sent from my iPad