

Subject: Town Meeting – Contracts, Reports and more
November 14,2022

The Highlands Board of Commissioners meeting is this Thursday night, November 17, starting at 7 pm at the Highlands Community Center. The meeting will begin with public comments.

Like in October, the November meeting agenda is long. One item not on this agenda is the EV charging stations for the downtown area. Our town engineer is still in discussions with representatives from EnviroSpark. Lamar Nix will provide a report at the December 8 board meeting.

The board will review two contracts at the meeting. First, our town attorney will present a draft of a contract for the WHLC Tower Attachment Lease. The technology committee recently met to discuss specifics about the lease. Also, Kimberly Horn, a company that specializes in evaluating towers and antennas conducted a study concerning antennas currently located on the town's Big Bear Pen Tower. The second lease agreement that Mr. Coward will present will be the Highlands Chamber of Commerce lease agreement. Barring unforeseen circumstances, I anticipate the board approving both lease agreements at this meeting.

Several months ago, the town contracted with a company to conduct a town-wide ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan. Representatives of this company will present to the board, by way of ZOOM, their findings and recommendations. Upon review of this study, the staff will present to the board a plan to fund and implement the recommendations from the plan.

Last month the board reviewed proposed ordinances concerning burning and grubbing inside of town limits. The fire chief and the town planner have contacted the US Forest Service and state agencies concerning burning permits and restrictions. Michael Mathis will update the board. My position is that the town's primary concern should be with grubbing, which creates long-term burning issues. I am not concerned so much about residents burning leaves or brush for a short period, so long as it is done in a responsible manner.

The board will also review and update the master sidewalk plan. The public works committee has been reviewing the sidewalk plan which has not been updated in several years. There will also be a presentation from the engineer who has developed the preliminary conceptual drawings of the proposed sidewalk on NC 106. The board will also be updated on related issues and how NCDOT has assessed the NC 106 project.

Last month we tabled a review of financial policies that the town auditors have proposed. The board and staff will discuss these recommendations. Items such as what should be the policy for reserve funds will be addressed. At the December meeting the auditors will present the completed annual audit that has been reviewed by the NC Local Government Commission.

Finally, the board is having a special meeting at 6 pm prior to this regular meeting. This meeting will be a board tour of the new fire department. It is a public meeting, but there will be another public open house meeting and dedication ceremony that will follow this board tour.

Hope to see everyone at tonight's meeting.