

MEETING SUMMARY
NC Mountain Resources Commission
January 21, 2011
Don Gibson Theater, Shelby, NC

The mission of the NC Mountain Resources Commission is to take care of our natural resources to enhance and sustain quality of life and ensure the long term health of our region and our people.

Members in Attendance: David Gantt; Chairman, Harris Prevost; Vice-Chairman, Bob Shepherd, Maxine Dalton, Ruth Ann Suttle, Wayne Abele Sr., Barbara Volk, Max Hopper, Jim Coman, George Santucci, Jay Leutze, Bill Gibson

Others in Attendance: Judy Francis, Todd Cherry, Mike Butrum, Rod Johnson, Juleigh Sitton, Karen Smith, DJ Gerken, Rick Wooten, Eric Romaniszyn, Bill Eaker, Marvin Hoffman, Bill Yarborough, Freddie Harrill, Eddie Holbrook, JT Scruggs, David Dear, Ted Alexander, Eddie Bailes

Call to Order

Chairman Gantt called the meeting to order at 1:10 PM.

Welcome, Introductions, and Comments from Special Guests

Chairman Gantt welcomed all in attendance and thanked Max Hopper for helping to arrange the meeting in Shelby. Max Hopper introduced :

- City of Shelby Mayor Ted Alexander who said the Don Gibson Theater is a great facility and expressed his hopes that the Commission would have a great meeting. He said he appreciated the Mountain Resources Commission and what the members do. A lot is happening in Shelby now. Movies are being shown in the theater now and the city is hosting the Main Street Conference next week. The city and county are both involved in supporting the facility, but it is volunteer-driven.
- Eddie Bailes, the Assistant County Manager, welcomed the Commission to Cleveland County and said he hoped they had a productive meeting. Max Hopper said the courthouse is also being restored.
- JT Scruggs gave an overview of the history of the Don Gibson Theater and Destination Cleveland County initiative. They have held 27 shows the first year and hosted performers who play different types of music. Earl Scruggs has been involved. A number of grants have been received and work continues.
- Eddie Holbrook, a Cleveland County commissioner commented on the partnerships and collaborations that have taken place in Cleveland County so far. Citizen volunteers are a large part of their success. New facilities are being developed in the county such as new conference center.
- Freddie Harrell, a representative from US Senator Kay Hagen's office said that Senator Hagen was born in Shelby. She is very interested in the activities of the Mountain Resources Commission.
- Juleigh Sitton from Governor's office said she was happy to attend the meeting and interested in the activities of the Mountain Resources Commission.

- Jim Edwards, the Executive Director of the Isothermal COG said that economic and ecologic threats continue in the region. He encouraged the Commission members to continue their work and his member-governments appreciate it. They are happy to cooperate.

Approval of December 10, 2010 Meeting Summary

Chairman Gantt asked the members to review the summary of the December 10, 2010 meeting. Maxine Dalton made a motion to approve the summary. Wayne Abele gave a second to the motion and it was approved unanimously.

Presentation Re: The Asheville Land Development Conference (ALDC)

Rod Johnston, Introduced by Mike Butrum

Mike Butrum thanked Shelby for hosting the meeting and said he was appreciative for time on the agenda. He introduced Rod Johnson by saying that the Mountain Council for Accountable Development turned into a two-day conference about best management practices. Now it is run by AB-Tech and Rod Johnson heads that up. Rod did not ask the realtors for money, but just wanted to develop partnerships. The first Asheville Land Development Conference held in 2010 had 240 people and next one is in March, 2011 in Asheville. He also plays a good banjo and does clinics around the country.

Rod Johnson said he plays music and was glad to be at the Don Gibson Theater. He'd like to bring a banjo clinic to this spot in coordination with the Earl Scruggs Memorial opening. He explained he has a background in surveying and project management. He has done residential and retail development, written books, and has extensive background working in sensitive areas. ALDC is a chance to bring education to those that want it, connect tools with users, and promotes job growth. They hosted 240 attendees last year involving all types of professionals on a variety of topics. He provided a brief PowerPoint presentation and passed out a handout with an agenda for the upcoming ALDC. Future topics include slope development, density and design, low-impact development, banking & finance, and sustainability principles. He said the Commission can help by attending the conference, supporting the ALDC in conversation, and sponsoring the conference. How can the conference help the MRC? He will communicate over time with the Commission and invite participation in future conferences. Bob Shepherd thanked Rod for doing conference because lots of development professionals want to do the right thing. Rod agreed but said lots of fields are involved and they don't always see the big picture. It's a patchwork that could work together more cohesively and have better understanding of what the various roles are. David Gantt said the conference looks good. He asked Rod that, based on his experience, what do we need to work on? Rod responded by saying that developers usually don't start right. They get the wrong project manager who doesn't have the experience to do the job well from start to finish. Also, logging roads were not built for long term, so they shouldn't be used long-term. They should not be used for residential purposes because that is not what they were designed for. Many developers do not go to a geo tech for advice so they know what exactly what they are building on. One example is in the Cascade Mountains that have volcanic soil. We could build on steep slopes but need very specific technical information that you have to get from an engineer. Controlling water in mountains is paramount on slope development areas. Max Hopper asked what Rod thought local governments should do. What is their role? Rod said they should make sure accurate topographic info is available. His email address is siteworks@earthlink.net

Other Comments

Bill Yarborough said the Soil & Water conference at Grove Park Inn in Asheville was well-attended. Chairman Gantt was there in worst snow weather to welcome the attendees and sit on a panel. He said he just wanted everyone to know what kind of man is chairing the Commission. He did a great job.

Updates from Technical Advisory Council (TAC)

- Update on Slope Recommendations – Karen Smith gave a brief update on the recommendations regarding priorities that the TAC still working on. They have developed five priorities to focus on and they should have a complete report ready for the next Commission meeting. Rick Wooten showed several PowerPoint slides regarding the status of the slope stability mapping effort. The information included how hazard zones are delineated, how debris flows affect private property, and what counties have been mapped (Buncombe, Macon, Watauga, and Henderson). Jim Coman said this information was the genesis for doing a slope ordinance in Buncombe County. Max Hopper said that once this info is known, it seems like it would be tough for developers to ignore it. Bob Shepherd mentioned that the Chocolate Drop development in Polk County is an example of what can happen and it will involve lawsuits. Jay Leutze asked if the TAC is looking at roads and building sites because slope stability and grade also need to be considered. Harris asked what the timeline of recommendations is going to be. David Gantt said the first priority of the Commission needs to be a focus on getting counties familiar with the Commission. Maxine said the MRC needs to talk about a couple of issues simultaneously by providing information about the Commission to the public and talk about issues such as slope development. Max Hopper said this is a public safety issue and the Commission can build support around it.
- Outreach Presentation – Judy said the Outreach Presentation regarding general information about the Commission has been completed and she will email it to Commission members to use in their presentations to local groups.
- Report Card Project – Judy said the Report Card project has received two verbal finding commitments. A sub-committee of TAC members are working to generate a list of needed data to include in the existing project and there will be more specific information available at the next Commission meeting.

Committee Reports

Fund Raising Committee: George Santucci said the committee has not met formally since the last meeting, but they are continuing to investigate possible funding sources. He said Phil Haines passed away over the weekend from Winston- Salem. Jay Leutze said his death was a big loss for the conservation community.

Administrative Committee: Max Hopper said the draft bylaws are not yet ready, but he will be working with Walter Clark to have that ready for the next Commission meeting.

Outreach & Education Committee: David Gantt said the members need to start scheduling presentations to local groups. He said he wants to schedule COG presentations so they can get in front of local governments right now. MRC members from that region should attend. Please coordinate meeting dates with the COGs and do presentations at county meetings too.

Legislative Committee: Jay Leutze said the General Assembly opens next Wednesday. And MRC members should communicate with the legislators. There is a misunderstanding about what MRC is, so it is important to stress the non-regulatory authority of the MRC. Spend time with members of the General Assembly and invite them to our meetings. This is a long session and the budget process is underway. Session days are Tuesday through Thursday, so plan trips to Raleigh accordingly. A Legislative Breakfast such as what the MRC previously discussed would have to be in Raleigh during the session because legislators are not scheduling meetings in the districts. The economy is driving the agenda of General Assembly and Governor Perdue. Harris Prevost said there used to be a western

delegation breakfast where we outlined five priorities for the region. Bob Shepherd said the new Asheville Chamber of Commerce President wants to go to Raleigh with recommendations for the western region. He and David Gantt are scheduling a meeting with her to talk about MRC involvement. Jay said there will be an Economic Summit in Raleigh on February 23rd to talk about the values of conservation and additional information from the Trust for Public Land. Max Hopper said that Rep. Clary was invited to this meeting but could not attend. She told him that she supports the MRC and is glad we're meeting in her district.

Other Business

TAC Member Replacement Appointment: Judy passed out information about Todd Cherry including a brief bio and copies of the economic newsletter for western North Carolina that he authors. David Gantt reminded the members that both the MRC and TAC members asked for an economist to fill the vacancy on the TAC. Harris Prevost made a motion to appoint Todd Cherry to the TAC. The motion received a second from Bob Shepherd and it was approved unanimously. Todd Cherry said his background is in economics and environmental policy and the balance of managing nature and the economy. He has lots of county level economic data and is looking forward to working on report card project.

Logo Review: Judy passed out copies of the latest draft logo that depicts a three-legged stool. Harris said he showed it to a couple of people and they still don't understand what we're talking about. He said the image depicts how we think but not what we do. He recommended holding a logo competition between students at Western Carolina University, University of NC- Asheville, and Appalachian State University. Judy will prepare an announcement and post it on the webpage. Members will encourage entries from their contacts at the colleges. Jim Coman, Bob Shepherd, and Ruth Ann Suttle will be on a committee to sort through the entries and make a recommendation to the full Commission.

Determine location for March 18 Meeting: Barbara Volk offered to host the March 18 meeting in Henderson County at the Hendersonville City Operations Center on Williams Street.

Adjourn

There being no further business, Bob Shepherd made a motion to adjourn. Barbara Volk seconded the motion and it was approved unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 3:45 PM.