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Time Posted: _____

Posted By: Pat Parris

Witnessed By: _____

**MINUTES OF A
WORK SESSION
OF THE JACKSON COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
HELD ON
NOVEMBER 19, 2012**

The Jackson County Board of Commissioners met in a Work Session on November 19, 2012, 1:30 p.m., Justice & Administration Building, 401 Grindstaff Cove Rd., Room A227, Sylva, North Carolina.

Present: Jack Debnam, Chairman
Doug Cody, Vice Chair
Charles Elders, Commissioner
Mark Jones, Commissioner
Joe Cowan, Commissioner

Chuck Wooten, County Manager
J. K. Coward, Jr., Co. Attorney
Pat Parris, Clerk to Board

Chairman Debnam called the Work Session to Order.

(1) REGION A TRAILS ASSESSMENT – MOUNTAIN TO SEA TRAIL:

Gerald Green, Planning Director, and Don Kostelec, Regional Trails Plan Project Manager, stated the Mountains-to-Sea Trail runs 1000 miles from the Great Smoky Mountains to the Outer Banks to showcase North Carolina's natural, rural and cultural features. North Carolina's Mountains-to-Sea Trail is a unit of the State Park System created and maintained in partnership with local, state and federal governments and citizen groups. An official route for the Mountains-to-Sea Trail between the Great Smoky Mountain National Park and Balsam Gap on the Blue Ridge Parkway has never been designated since the trail was first proposed in 1977. He requested that the Board consider requesting the NC Division of Parks & Recreation, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and the Nantahala National Forest to adopt a primary planned route for the Mountains-to-Sea Trail through Jackson and Swain Counties. If the Board is interested in pursuing the request, a Resolution can be considered during a regular meeting.

(2) CODE ENFORCEMENT SOFTWARE UPDATE: Mike Murphy, President of ROK Technologies, gave a power point presentation depicting the new format for permit applications for the Inspections, Code Enforcement and Health Depts., and explained how the data will then be consolidated and tracked. The software will make it easier and more of a "one stop" process for the public. It is anticipated that the software will be totally operative within the next months.

(3) GoMAPS PROGRAM UPDATE: Kevin Jamison, GIS Director, stated the purpose of the program is to bring together information previously separated by different data sources and enabling the public to find property using physical addresses and access to newly adopted fire insurance districts. Currently, databases with many different kinds of data and databases stored on separate servers do not talk to each other. GIS can be used to fix the problems because information is stored on maps as locations. A physical address and a tax PIN number are locations that can be placed on a map. Since the County's separate data sources all contain something to tie the information to a location, they can all be housed together in the GIS. GIS can put addressing data and fire district data into tax data tables for web updates and internal use because of a common location. This will not work if a property does not have an addressed structure or when a property has multiple addressed structures such as a mobile home park.

(4) SCENIC BYWAY PROPOSAL: WCU political science students presented a proposal to designate Highway 107 from Old Cullowhee Rd. to the South Carolina line as a Scenic Highway in order to preserve the highway's natural scenery. Tourism has long been one of Western North Carolina's most valuable economic sectors and is the heart of this area's economy and must be protected. The mountains have long been a destination for people from all over the nation. Highway 107 leads to several historical sites as well as touches the doorstep of others, i.e., Judaculla Rock, WCU, several lakes, mountain ranges, County Courthouse, etc.

Pursuant to DOT guidelines, there are four steps in the process: endorsement by the Board of Commissioners, endorsement by Southwestern Rural Planning Organization, review for appropriateness by DOT, and a positive vote by the State Board of Transportation. His research reveals that once a highway is designated scenic no new billboards can be permitted; however, existing billboards can remain until they are abandoned.

The beauty of Jackson County can be preserved and there is no need to stain the breathtaking scenery with signage towering, looming and distracting tourists and residents from the greatness that exists. He requested the Board to consider requesting NCDOT to designate a portion of Hwy. 107 as a Scenic Highway.

If the Board is interested in endorsing the proposal, a Resolution would be considered during a regular meeting.

(5) DEPT. ON AGING UPDATE: Helen Bryson, Director, gave an overview of the status of services for the older population. By 2025, it is projected that the county will have more people over age 60 than under age 17.

The 2012 records reflect that visits, including veterans' services, to the Senior Center show an increase from 2,152 in January to 2,462 in September. Services provided out of the facility: 1,671 support services, 10,898 home delivered meals, 141 liquid supplements, 154 home repairs, and 165 truckloads of firewood. 85% of senior centers report increased demand for their programs and services.

Beginning in 2013, the federal Budget Control Act of 2011 triggers automatic across the board cuts to most federal programs. Under this process, known as sequestration, federal dollars that would have otherwise been spent on mandatory and discretionary programs are held back and used for deficit reduction. Analysts estimate that the U.S. Administration on Aging could lose between 7.8% - 9% of its funding in 2013. For North Carolina, this could mean a potential loss of between \$2.3 - \$2.7 million in funding for the Older Americans Act program which could mean a loss of 165,000 congregate meals, 112,000 home delivered meals, 28,200 hours of in-home aide service, 3,000 hours of adult day services, 18,300 trips to medical appointments, grocery stores, etc.

The Dept. on Aging must continue to develop strategies to guide future growth, assist in developing new state policies and promote additional programs that meet the needs of an every growing population. The economic and budget restraints the county and state face will require identifying priorities and creating approaches to maximize the effect of available resources.

(6) FONTANA REGIONAL LIBRARY AGREEMENT: Karen Wallace, Fontana Regional Director, presented a revised joint Regional Library Agreement between Jackson, Swain, Macon Counties and Fontana Regional Library. Fontana will operate the county libraries and branches and each county will provide facilities, utilities, building and grounds maintenance, improvements or rent. Each county will pay Fontana the amount of money necessary for Fontana to carry out its mission. All state funds will be used for salaries and benefits of employees serving the whole Fontana region, library materials, telecommunications or telephone services and any other region-wide service. Each county has equal representation on the Fontana Library Board of Trustees. The Agreement is for an initial term of ten years and thereafter automatically renew for successive periods of ten years each, unless otherwise terminated. If there are no objections, the Agreement will be considered during a regular meeting in December.

(7) TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY RESOLUTION (TDA): Subsequent to the November 5th public hearing, representatives from the Steering Committee and Commissioners met and agreed that Section 2A and Section 11B be modified as follows:

Section 2: Appointment of Membership

A. The Jackson County Tourism Development Authority shall consist of fifteen (15) members who shall be appointed and approved by the Jackson County Board of Commissioners. *They shall also be voting residents and/or taxpayers of the County or employees of a Jackson County business that collects Jackson County Occupancy Tax or pays Jackson County Property Tax.*

Section 11: County Government and the TDA

B. *Funds shall not be used to create and pay positions from TDA funds unless approved in advance by the TDA Board and the Jackson County Board of Commissioners.*

A revised Resolution will be considered during the next regular meeting.

TDA Membership: Following the public hearing, a comment was made that it appeared some people collecting occupancy tax did not have the opportunity to volunteer to serve. The finance office provided a list of every individual/company collecting occupancy tax. Letters and applications were mailed today stating the Board of Commissioners is prepared to appoint 15 members to the new TDA Board. Ten of those appointments will come from the lodging industry and if any person is interested in being considered, complete and return an application by November 28th.

The Executive Directors of the Cashiers Area Chamber and Jackson County Chamber presented a list of recommended individuals as initial members who meet the criteria set forth in Section 2 “Groups One – Group Five”. The Commissioners may also submit names. Prospective members will be considered and appointed during a regular meeting.

Appointments will be considered at the December 3 regular meeting.

(8) ORDINANCES - ENFORCEMENT OFFICIAL: Mr. Coward recommended, to prevent any misunderstanding or loop holes, that an official be designated as the person responsible for enforcing ordinances. If there are no objections, a Resolution will be considered during the next regular meeting.

(9) BOARD RETREAT: January 3, 2013 at the NC Center for Advancement of Teaching, WCU campus.

CLOSED SESSION:

Motion: *Chairman Debnam moved that the Board go into closed session pursuant to G.S.143-318.11(a)(3)Legal. Commissioner Jones seconded the Motion. Motion carried.*

Chairman Debnam called the work session back to order and stated no action was taken in closed session other than the approval of closed session minutes.

There being no further comments, Commissioner Elders moved to adjourn the work session. Commissioner Cowan seconded the Motion. Motion carried and the work session adjourned at 5:00 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

Patsy C. Parris, Clerk to Board

W. J. Debnam, Chairman

