

Mars Hill Tables Development Decision

By WILLIAM LEE

The Mars Hill Board of Aldermen were swamped with requests for approval of numerous commercial projects during this week's meeting on Monday night. They were requests that the board once again had to put on hold as they await approval of their water supply by the state.

The board first heard from Kyle Boone of Boone Associates. Boone had approached the board last month about rezoning property behind the Phil-Co Hardware warehouse for multi-family use. The planning and zoning board has already approved the plans for a 46-unit apartment complex.

Mayor Owen Tilson gave Boone the same reply as last time, stating that "the board would take no action until its water problem is settled."

Tilson added that the same thing applies for a similar project along Hwy. 213. Both projects are seeking loan approvals through the Farmers Home Administration.

"We will call both of you in when we have this corrected and decide on rezoning at that time," said aldermen John Chandler.

Mayor Tilson and Town Manager Darhyl Boone, estimated that it would take approximately six months before its water project could be completed. The town has been ordered by

the state Department of Natural Resources and Community Development to reconstruct the spillway area at the Mars Hill reservoir near Wolf Laurel and Ebbs Chapel.

Kyle Boone said that it would take better than a year before the apartment complex could be completed, as he argued for an immediate decision.

"We want to be sure when we say we can provide water, that we indeed can," said Mayor Tilson.

"This is becoming an expensive project for us," argued Boone. "If you don't want this project it would be considerate of you to just say so. This seems an unreasonable delay."

"We haven't said so, but I realize that may be implied by our lack of action," Tilson replied. Tilson added that the town has submitted plans to the state for improvements, but has not received approval from the state attorney general's office.

The same explanations were offered moments later when Clayton Snyder of Great Smokey Mountains Investments, Inc. requested preliminary approval for his Mars Hill Commercial Center, to be situated near the U.S. 19 turnoff, along Hwy 23 and 19.

Snyder's eventual plan for the 35-plus acres he owns call for a 60,000 sq. ft. shopping center; a 100-unit

hotel; 30 condominium units; a 72-unit apartment complex; two fast food restaurants; a convenience store, gas station and a professional office building or bank.

Snyder told the aldermen that the first phase of the project would include construction of the 100-unit hotel, a Best Western Hotel franchise, and the two fast food restaurants and professional building.

The engineering plans as presented to the board call for traffic lights to be placed at the interchange of Hwy. 19 and Hwy 23, with an entrance to the commercial center provided. The proposed traffic signals along the highway raised doubts from aldermen who questioned whether the Department of Transportation would allow them. They also questioned Snyder regarding future plans should the highway be upgraded to interstate standards, as has been proposed. Snyder said he had talked with state officials about both contingencies.

For the same reasons given to Kyle Boone, the board of aldermen made no decision on the plans.

Local businessman J.F. Robinson was present throughout the two presentations, eager to learn how the board's lack of action might affect his plans for a 100-unit hotel on the ridge behind the Western Steer restaurant.

The proposed complex would either be a Days Inn franchise or an independently-owned hotel, Robinson told the board.

Tilson told Robinson that because the area is already served with water and sewer lines, while the others are not, he could go ahead and work out engineering sketches to present to the board.

Tilson announced that the town of Mars Hill has received \$75,000 from the Madison County Board of Commissioners for use on its water shed project. He went on to add that the town has applied for and will receive a grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission for further construction work on the project. The amount, to be determined once final plans are completed by the engineering firm McGuire-Beebe, will be matching funds of up to \$300,000.

According to town manager Darhyl Boone, the DNR is forcing the town to redo its spillway at a less steep decline from the base of the dam, and build a gate-like flashboarding at the end of the spillway. An alarm system is also being required.

"The watershed is only a stop gap measure," said alderman Grady Worley, "but necessary for us at this time."

Mars Hill now plans to take part in the Weaverville-Woodfin feasibility

study for drawing water from the Big Ivy River. An alternative source is sought pending future federal environmental measures that may force Mars Hill to build a filtering plant at its water shed.

In other business, the board of aldermen heard from Monica Teutsch, Executive Director of the Hot Springs Health Center. Teutsch came before the board to announce the planned opening of the Mars Hill Medical Center on Chestnut St.

The center will operate out of the same facilities used by Drs. Otis Duck and Ernest Powell for their family practice. The building was donated to Mars Hill College and is being leased to the Hot Springs Health Center.

Current renovations include the expanding of the lab facilities to include a minimum trauma room for stabilizing patients for ambulance transport. When open the Mars Hill Medical Center will have seven physicians on call to serve the Mars Hill area.

The board of aldermen also approved changes to the town's dog ordinance and will soon begin asking pet owners to purchase dog tags for their pets. Dogs running loose, or reported running loose will be kennel at the owner's expense.

A change in the resolution passed last month to require all police of-

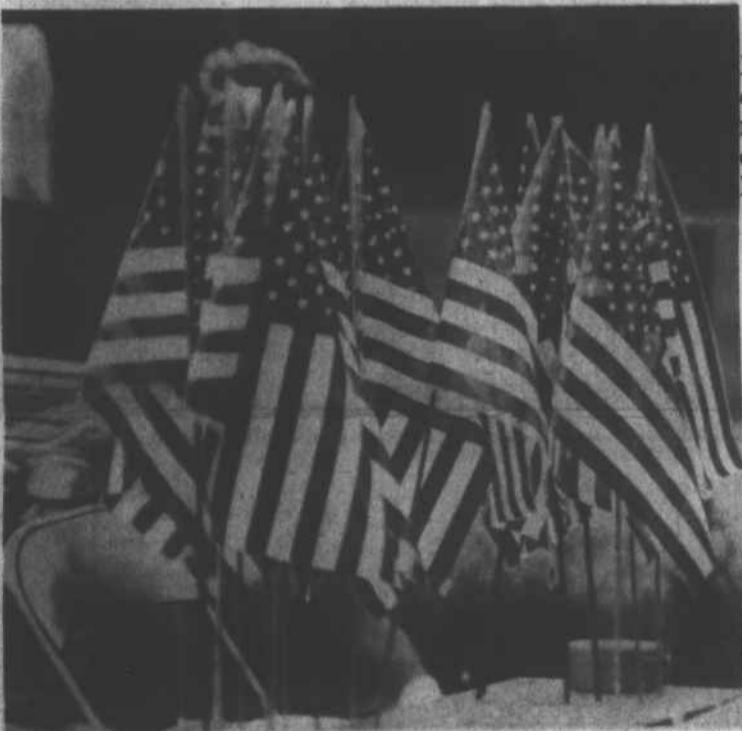
ficers to be certified in breath-alizer operations was passed two to one, over the objections of alderman John Chandler. While all officers are to be trained in the operation of radar detectors, it will be at the discretion of Police Chief R.J. Cutshall how many officers he wishes to have trained in handling breath analysis on drunk driving arrests.

Chandler said he had hoped all officers would receive as much training as possible in all areas of police work.

Chief Cutshall also expressed concern over parking spaces along Main Street being occupied all day by business owners and residents above the shops along Main Street. Of particular concern were the two florists who Cutshall said were occupying three or four places at a time and blocking the intersection with their delivery van.

Tilson told Chief Cutshall to remind the businesses of the two-hour limit and begin enforcing it if the violations continue. Tilson said ample parking was provided across from town hall, and in the parking lot adjacent Moore Auditorium. According to Tilson, Mars Hill College had given their permission for the lot to be used by downtown shopowners and patrons.

An Old-Fashioned Fourth



FLAGS DECORATED TABLES at the annual Beech July 4th celebration.

While much of the nation's attention was focused on the Liberty Weekend activities in New York, local residents celebrated the Independence Day holidays with picnics, sack races, a rodeo, parades and of course, fireworks. Community celebrations were held in Marshall, Hot Springs, Weaverville, Mars Hill and Beech

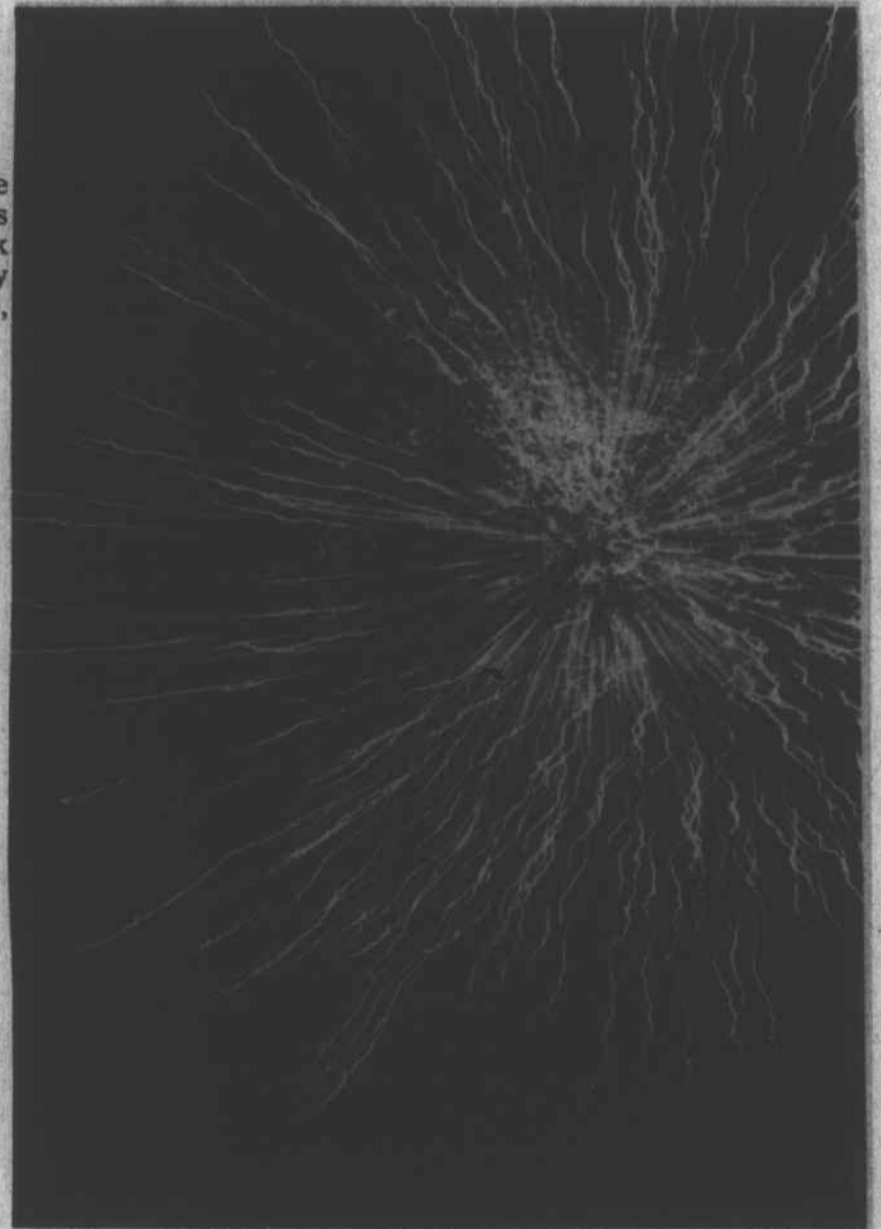
Photos By William Lee



WOLF LAUREL RESIDENTS GATHERED for a July 4 picnic at the ski lodge.



DAREDEVIL CYCLIST entertained crowd at Weaverville celebration.



FIREWORKS LIT UP THE SKIES OVER MARSHALL as the Marshall VFD's July 4th celebration came to a close.



CLOWN ENTERTAINED YOUNGSTERS AWAITING START OF fireworks display in Weaverville.

WOMEN TENDED THE BARBEQUE at the Mars Hill celebration.