

BLACK MOUNTAIN NEWS

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Water, sewers in Craigmont recommended

by Dan Ward

The Black Mountain Town Board approved a proposal Monday to have an engineer study ways to provide adequate water, fire hydrants and sewer facilities to the Craigmont Community, and to make a cost estimate to aid the town in applying for Community Development Grant funding.

The Citizen Participation Committee, chosen by the Town Board to get citizen input into town needs and recommend a project for a grant proposal, recommended at a meeting March 8 that the town designate the Craigmont Community as a target area for grant-funded improvements.

After setting the primarily Black community as a target area, the committee had chosen improvements to the water and sewer systems as the highest priority project.

According to the recommendation, a grant should be applied for to provide either a 6- or 10-inch main up Craigmont Road with hydrants. The main would continue from U.S. 70 to the town limits. Additional smaller spur lines should be

installed on streets coming off of Craigmont Road with hydrants installed. If approved, the system would provide adequate fire hydrants to the entire Craigmont Community, according to committee member Joe Williams.

Williams tentatively described the Craigmont community as bordered by Craigmont Road to Hiwassee to the town limits to U.S. 70 and back to Craigmont. The area would also take in West College Street and some additional areas.

The committee recommended that professional engineers should determine whether a 10-inch or 8-inch main is needed on Craigmont Road. Williams suggested that the smaller line would be adequate.

An earlier suggestion that street lights be included in the project was rejected. Williams said that Carolina Power and Light Company has agreed to install street lights as long as the town pays for service.

The need for improved water and sewer services in the Craigmont Community was that most voiced at five hearings held during the last two months.



Springing up!

A group of crocuses defy the groundhog's prediction to hail the coming of spring. (Dan Ward)

Collins robbed

Collins Department Store in Black Mountain was robbed of \$50 in merchandise March 13. Thieves broke a front window at the store and took clothes that were on display in the window, Black Mountain Police reported. Police have yet to question two suspects in connection with the robbery.

Police have arrested a youth or stealing a six-pack of beer from Mr. Zip on March 8. No charges were filed. Three newspaper racks stolen from B and C Swift Shop and Norton's Quik Shop were recovered by police last week. No arrests were made.

Police issued four traffic citations, assisted four motorists, assisted firemen, arrested one for public drunk, transported one to Detox and investigated three accidents last week.

Solar homes planned here

Four solar heated houses are under construction and another 12 are set to be built by the end of 1978 at Highland Farms Retirement Community in Black Mountain, it was announced at a meeting of the community's stockholders recently.

The retirement community has a long-range plan to be accomplished in three stages. Stage I was the building of a Health Care Center with 60 beds, Medicare approved, serving a number of counties in Western North Carolina.

Stage II was the construction of apartments. The first section of 60 was completed late in 1973. By the end of 1978 there was a second complex of 64 apartments. Residents now number 180, one-third of whom are men.

At the annual meeting of stockholders on March 6, Executive Director Chester H. Prentice announced that the third stage has been inaugurated: the building of a number of houses in clusters on the 50-acre property. Four units are under construction and by the end of 1978 there are to be 16. A special feature of these new houses will be the use of solar energy, both for hot water and for interior heating.

According to Prentice, these installations include several devices used for the first time in residential housing. Many prospective residents have expressed interest in this development and the first apartments are already sold.

Residents in the new houses will be able to take advantage of a wide array of common facilities, including a power-tool workshop, a greenhouse, a crafts room, and lounges.

Another feature of Highland Farms, Inc. is that it is owned and controlled by citizens in the area. It is a private enterprise not related to any church or governmental agency. Four directors were elected at the last annual meeting: Mrs. John Brothers, Mrs. Arnold Plummer, Mrs. A.F. Tyson, and Mr. Frank Washburn. Officers re-elected were Paul M. Lambert, president; Edward DuPuy, vice-president; William Styles, secretary; and Chester Prentice, treasurer and executive vice-president.

"One thing that really helps is that everybody here in the shop has the option of discarding any piece," Fox said. "We say 'if you wouldn't buy it, don't pass it on.'"

Fox also practices product testing and market research in a rather down-home way. Springles are tested for longevity and color-fastness on the family porch.

"We're really concerned

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Board approves 3 grants

by Dan Ward

The Black Mountain Town Board voted at its regular meeting March 13 to accept two grants and renew another for the police department.

The board voted unanimously to accept a controversial grant to supply a dispatcher 24 hours per day for the police department with the understanding that the usefulness of the dispatchers would be under scrutiny the first year.

Under terms of the LEAA grant, the town will pay only five percent, or \$143, the first year to hire four dispatchers and install necessary equipment. State and federal funding would pick up the majority of the cost the first year, dropping to 30 percent the third and last year. The town is allowed to drop the grant at any time without penalty.

Mayor Tom Sobol and Ald. Jim Norton said that there is no way the town could pay the estimated \$45,000 per year cost after the third year of grant funding without raising taxes or cutting services.

Norton said he had no intention of raising taxes and thought it unfair to hire four persons, only to lay them off a

year or two later.

Ald. Ruth Brandon, proponent of the grant, said that nobody working for the town is guaranteed a long-term job and said the dispatchers would prove invaluable. Ald. Mike Begley and Ald. A.F. Tyson asked that the dispatchers be given a year trial, since it would cost the town little for that period.

The board also voted to accept another grant providing a records clerk, with desk, chair and file cabinet. The town's share of the one-year grant will be \$386.

The board also voted to renew an Investigator Grant for the third year. Police Chief Craig Stagle pointed out that Det. Bill Stafford, whose salary is partially funded by the grant, investigated 147 cases last year, including cases of murder, larceny, rape, arson and narcotics. The town's share of Stafford's salary and expenses will be \$10,314 this year.

Street Improvements
Mayor Sobol pointed out that members of the board, Town Manager Mack Kirkpatrick and the streets superintendent were sur-

veying damage to streets to estimate repair cost for Powell Bill funding requests.

Ald. Tyson said that 80 percent of the town's streets had been examined, and that the remaining streets would be checked out later this week. He added that state engineers will follow up on a damage report to state roads made by board members and Kirkpatrick.

Sobol also noted that he and Kirkpatrick would attend a workshop on sewage collection and treatment March 15. The workshop will be on whether local officials would like to see the Metropolitan Sewerage District take over waste treatment throughout the county and to answer questions on obtaining Environmental Protection Agency grants.

HUD Grant Proposal
The board was divided in approving recommendations by the Citizen Participation Committee to apply for a Community Development Grant from The Department of Housing and Urban Development to improve water and sewer services in the Craigmont community. Ald. A.F. Tyson opposed the

recommendation, saying he would prefer to see the town apply for water improvement funding for the entire town, rather than a single community. (See related story.)

Annexation

The board voted unanimously to annex 30 acres to be developed by Stepp and Nichols Realty south on N.C. 9. Chuck Ray, representing the realtors, had made the request earlier, noting that 15 acres of the planned Forest Hills subdivision already lay inside the town limits, and that the development will be at a low enough altitude to get town water without additional pumping. Two readings remain on the annexation.

Golf Clubhouse Plan

Ald. Norton submitted a blueprint of proposed renovations to the Black Mountain Golf Clubhouse to the board and asked that a workshop be scheduled for March 30 to discuss the plan. Mayor Sobol agreed to set a workshop for 7:30 p.m. at Town Hall for that day.

Liens

Kirkpatrick noted that he planned to advertise a notice of liens on property for back taxes. He said he had tentatively set a date of May 9 for auction of liened property.

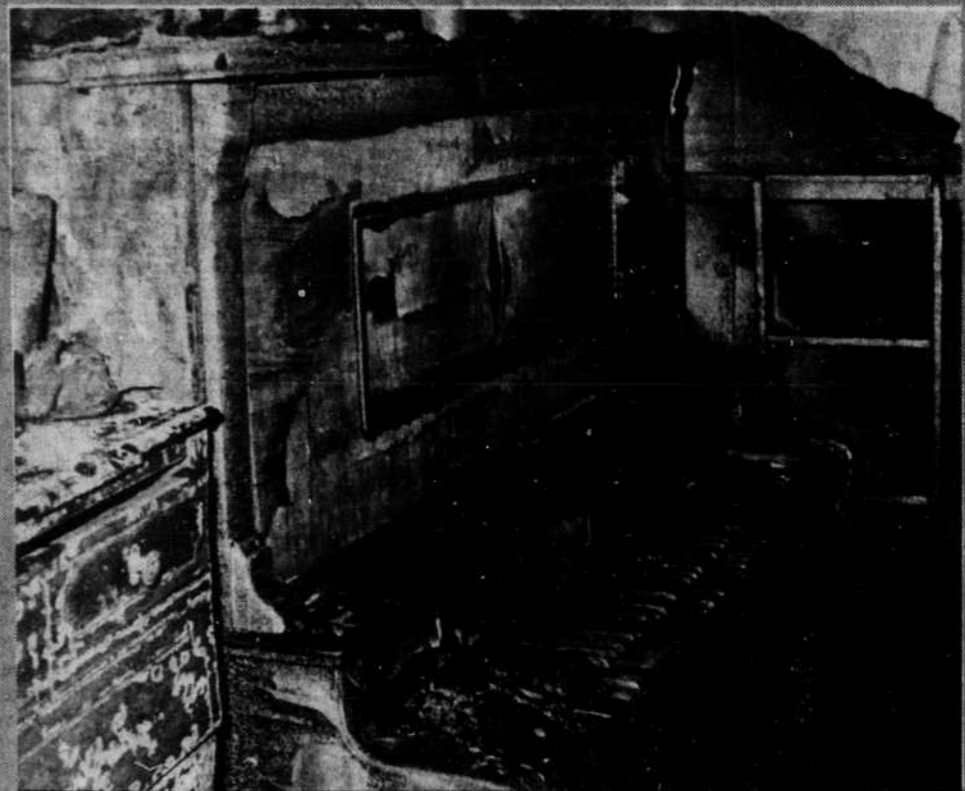
Elliott vs. Town

On request of Mayor Sobol, acting Town Attorney William Eubanks advised the board to take no action in a request from Vernon and Elsie Elliott to remove an undeveloped street from dedication.

Eubanks said the board should wait until a court decision is made on whether the town has possession of the street before it decides whether or not to take it out of dedication. The board agreed to take no action.

Drinking Ordinance

Eubanks also presented an amended ordinance prohibiting public drinking and display of alcoholic beverage containers. An earlier ordinance passed by the board was found invalid because it took in beverages already under ABC jurisdiction, Eubanks said. Eubanks agreed to rewrite the amendment when it was pointed out by board members (Continued on page 10)



Charred remains of a piano stand in the Jack White home, destroyed by fire March 10. (Charlie Taylor)

Fire guts home

A fire that apparently started in the furnace at the Jack White residence at 409 Occoneechee Ave. on March 10 destroyed everything the family owned "except the clothes on their backs," according to Black Mountain fireman Steve King.

White discovered the fire, thought by King to have been burning for at least an hour, when he returned home that evening. Firemen had the fire under control in about 26 minutes, King said.

Damage was estimated at

\$15,000. White's wife and two sons were not home at the time of the fire, King said.

Approximately \$500 damage was done by smoke from a burned pot at the Dickens residence at 107 Second St. March 6. One truck and three men responded.

On March 11, two trucks and 15 men responded to a soot fire in the chimney of the Hutchins residence on Hutchins Avenue. No damage was reported.

The Buncombe County Ambulance Service made 10 routine runs last week.

Swannanoa Fire

The Swannanoa Fire Department made six runs last week.

One truck and seven men were called to put out a brush fire on Rockdale Avenue March 7.

Two trucks and 16 men responded to a car fire in the Beacon Manufacturing parking lot March 8.

On March 9, three trucks and 11 men responded to an alarm at the ETL store that was accidentally set off with the store's sprinklers. About \$75 damage was done

by a chimney fire at the Rodman Sawyer residence on Bee Tree Road on March 11.

On March 12, two trucks and 22 men responded to a false alarm of a car fire on U.S. 70. That day, the department also investigated a false report of a car fire on the Buckeye Cove Road bridge.

Fireman of the Month for February is Roger Patton, son of Mr. and Mrs. Woodrow Patton of 316 Wilson Ave. Patton is employed by Daniels Graphics.



Candidate for U.S. Senate Luther Hodges Jr. met employees of Beacon Manufacturing in Swannanoa March 9 before coming to Black Mountain to meet with local Democratic leaders. (Dan Ward)

Flower factory stays folksy

by Dan Ward

One might say that the days of the inventor-entrepreneur are gone. Pet rocks and hula hoops seem to be the limit to the imagination of the inventor businessman.

In Black Mountain, one man has proven to be an inventor-entrepreneur of the old school, however. Joe Fox has moved from a small producer of some craft to an efficient industry with an unlikely product—plastic doo-dads known as Springles—sold in 3000 outlets nationwide.

His "factory", an eleven

workshop located in the attic of his home, has the unusual atmosphere of a combination quilting bee and Rube Goldberg assembly line. After 11 years of trial-and-error and problem solving, Fox has established assembly devices that are as interesting as the colorful flowers, butterflies and angels that flow off of them.

A kite string linked around the room by a series of pulleys carries the drying Springles, which are whacked when dry into a box by a paper propeller attached to a fan motor. The homespun device is only a

visual example to the grassroots method used in making Springles.

Fox plays down his ingenuity.

"You see what you need, and do what you have to fulfill that need," he said.

To make the Springles, one person begins by twisting brass wire on a jig, or a series of pegs in the shape of the flower or butterfly. The flat figure is then soldered to a heavier wire stem. The person then bends the petals, leaves, wings, or whatever into a desired shape. From there, it goes to another

person, who dips the twisted wire into polyvinyl alcohol, which forms a plastic film inside the wires, much like a soap bubble in a ring.

The clear-petaled objects, after making a round on the drying line, are then dipped again in polyurethane, which will keep them flexible, and sent on another drying round. After that, they are coated with an iridescent laquer, created by Fox, to give the flowers a silky sheen and make them reflect light.

The production process then takes on a less mechanical flavor as a series of steady-handed workers hand-paint details on Springle components.

Meanwhile, a man makes stands for the arrangements by pounding a piece of brass pipe filled with florist's foam into a wooden block. Flowers, leaves, angels, butterflies and stands all meet at a table, where two employees put together any of 110 arrangements and pack them in boxes for shipping.

Fox said that a particular advantage he has in operating the folksy enterprise is that all employees have some say in what models they produce, how the process could be made more efficient, and in creating new designs.

"One thing that really helps is that everybody here in the shop has the option of discarding any piece," Fox said. "We say 'if you wouldn't buy it, don't pass it on.'"

Fox also practices product testing and market research in a rather down-home way. Springles are tested for longevity and color-fastness on the family porch.

"We're really concerned



Joe Fox with his partner and wife, Gay. (Dan Ward)