

**MINUTES OF THE TOWN OF LAKE LURE
REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING**

Tuesday, November 12, 2024 @ 5:00 pm
Lake Lure Inn



Agenda

I. Call to Order

Mayor Pritchett called the meeting to order at 5:02pm

II. Agenda Adoption

Commissioner Jim Proctor made a motion to amend the agenda and move item number V before the Mayors Updates, Commissioner Scott Doster Seconded and the motion carried 4-0.

III. Eagle Scout Presentation by Emerson Ansley

Eagle Scout Emerson Ansley gave a poignant presentation about the impact that Hurricane Helene has had on him and the community. He advised that he wanted to do something for the community and he thought that adding a bench near the Little Lakeside Chapel would be meaningful. Town Council was supportive of the idea but recommended that he first speak to the Pastor of the Chimney Rock Baptist Church to be sure he and his congregation were supportive. Assuming they were in agreement, they suggested that he temporarily put the benches near the Green Space until the debris and silt removal process in the lake was completed.

Mayor Carol C. Pritchett: I will like to thank you for what you are doing – I have grandsons that were boys scouts and this is very dear to me.

Commissioner Scott Doster: we are in recovery process, maybe the troop will allow you to build the bench get your eagle scout, and then come back at some point and we will let you put it on there or parks and rec for a temporary location.

Commissioner Jim Proctor: as a former scout, and a long history of scouting we will like to see you here to have a permanent location, speak to the pastor and this council is behind what you.

Commissioner Patrick Bryant: said that it was a great idea and thanked the scout.

IV. Mayors Updates

Mayor Pritchett thanked everyone for being here, the town has come a long way – we are still in recovery process, this is the hardest part of this, we are moving forward with it we have a vision of what we want Lake Lure to look like, we are going to restore it and it may look different, but we are all in this together we are all working towards the same goal.

V. Town Manager Updates

Thank you for coming tonight – we have all of the department heads who will present, we are moving in the arcade bldg., we are making renovation to the bank space.

We are going to be working with ICF and I will ask that they come up and speak to everyone: Mike

Junell project manager for ICF will be here to help the town recover – his goal is to get the townback to normal, they are here to help and guide.

Ms. Stewman stated that we are excited to be working with them, and FEMA will be alongside them.

FEMA: Mark Bartlett notedthe deadline for applying for individual assistant has been extended to January 7, 2025.

Army Corp of Engineers (Ashbritt) noted that they are continuing to do debris removal. It was asked that types of debris be sorted. They explained why the current dumpsite is suitable.

VI. Consent Agenda

- **Terminate Agreement with the Policy Group**

Commissioner Jim Proctor made a motion to accept the consent agenda as presented, Commissioner Dave DiOrio seconded and the motion carried 4-0.

VII. New Business

Commissioner Patrick Bryant: Thanked all of our town staff, especially the fire department, I know they have been through a lot and they have worked so hard.

❖**Fire Department Updates:** Chief Dustin Waycaster advised that the Town was not in the recovery phase of the disaster and that we were still under a State of Emergency. He advised that Fire Fighters were assisting in the Town restoration as needed. Everyone thanked the first responders for their exceptional performance during the storm.

❖**Parks and Recreation Department Updates:** Director Dana Bradley advised that they had removed 110 boats from the Washburn Marina and all but about 25 boats from the Rumbling Bald Marina. She provided a summary of the recent water quality tests. The Town of Lake Lure worked with Clear Water Lab to sample the water at the Broad River (above Lake Lure), at the

debris field in the lake (just beyond Morse Park), in the center of Lake Lure, and at the Lake Lure Dam. The results are better than anticipated given the catastrophic hurricane on 9/27/24; however, the lake is closed to everyone except licensed contractors and Town staff. Test results will be repeated as recommended by the NC Department of Environmental Quality. She noted that if boats were being washed near the shore, to be sure no detergents or chemicals flow into the lake.

* The results are posted at the following

link: <https://www.townoflakelure.com/community/page/lake-lure-water-sample-rep...>

❖ **Public Works Department Updates:** Dean Lindsey gave an overview of the west-end project which is underway to restore sewer services to the 33 homes west of Town Center due to the manholes that were damaged during the hurricane. He summarized the work that is underway on the water lines, the waste water treatment plant, the lift station, the pressure valve installation, and the hydro-electric plant. He advised that the Proctor Road landslide was being assessed by NC DOT. He also explained that a temporary bridge was to be constructed on Boys Camp Road and that designs were being obtained for a permanent bridge.

* Since this meeting took place, a construction start date for the temporary bridge on Boys Camp Road was confirmed for 11/25/24 – 11/26/24. Due to the new positioning of the temporary bridge, the ford will have to be removed to install the new river crossing. There will be no vehicle access during the construction.

- The Fire Department will stage emergency vehicles beyond the bridge to provide support as needed during the 48 hour timeframe.
- A walking path will be set up for anyone needing to be able to leave the area during construction.
- Firefighters will be available during specified time periods each morning and evening as needed to assist anyone needing to walk over the path.
- A parking area is available at the field at Sheridan Lane and Boys Camp Road so cars may be left for anyone needing to leave during construction.
- For assistance or coordination coming and going during construction please send an email to the following address and we will work with you to support your needs if at all possible. Email Communications@townoflakelure.com (Subject: Boys Camp Road Bridge Crossing)

❖ **Community Development:** Director Mike Williams advised that he and his team were resuming their routine work with permitting and inspections. He also advised that the plans were proceeding for the cell tower in the Boys Camp Road area as originally planned. He advised that new geotechnical assessments would be conducted and all information related to the cell tower will be posted on the website.

❖ **Finance Department Updates:** Director Steve Ford acknowledged the work of his staff Wendy Terry and Diane Duval. He reported that the Town's revenue streams were impacted. He advised that he was working with the insurance company on the claims assessment. He stated that he should not have made any speculations regarding the insurance coverage.

❖ **Police Department:** Chief Humphries gave an overview of recent traffic enforcement efforts which revealed drugs and firearms, which officers were able to immediately address. He advised that they had received replacement vehicles from other agencies when Police vehicles were damaged by the storm. He advised that the flock safety cameras were on hold at the present time.

VIII. Public Comment

1. Kimberly Sayles: Mrs. Sayles expressed her concern that the State Park was closed and this dramatically impacted tourism in the area and therefore businesses like the Grafton Lodge that she and her husband own. She asked that the Town look for ways to support local businesses. She also asked that the State Park come to present their plans moving forward.

2. Holly Jensen: Ms. Jensen expressed concern regarding the proposed location of the new cell tower and asked to see all related assessments.

3. Russ Pitts: Mr. Pitts explained that Pangea provided broadband for Lake Lure and the hub for these services were in Town Hall. They have been supplying a generator to ensure the services continued and he hoped a temporary power pole could be added there. Dean Lindsey advised that power could be turned on in Town Hall anytime though the building was still being assessed and cleaned.

4. Steve Molito: Mr. Molito asked about the Town's comprehensive plan. Town Council and Town Manager Stewman advised that the Town was already working on the comprehensive plan prior to the storm and this effort would continue with the Foothills Regional Commission. They will assist in the process and public meetings will be held and surveys will be conducted to obtain community input.

5. Dan Gorman: Mr. Gorman read the following statement.

My name is Dan Gorman, 241 Washburn Rd and I'm a member of the Flowering Bridge Board.

As a relatively new resident, the Flowering Bridge has been my entry point to this wonderful community, and I am forever indebted to those people who have supported the vision all along. This includes many folks who are present this evening. I wanted to speak tonight to ensure that everyone knows we intend to continue to create beautiful gardens at this location and to continue to be a prominent attraction in accordance with our mission statement.

Our community has a special moment to choose how we respond to this disaster. I believe that we can respond in a way that strengthens the gorge and continues to provide beauty to residents and visitors alike. I believe that we can rebuild in such a way that the 2nd phase of the Flowering Bridge is celebrated for future generations, as always intended.

Understanding that our magical place could have never come to fruition without the unique cooperation between the Town and the Flowering Bridge, we want to assure both the town and public that we remain committed to continuing that partnership as we redevelop our "Gateway to Somewhere Beautiful."

To be perfectly clear here is what we can commit to at this moment:

1. We will continue to plant and maintain gardens at this site, for public enjoyment at a time when the Town and Flowering Bridge deem it to be safe.
2. We will finish the construction of our Education Center in order to "educate people about gardening and its health and environmental benefits," in accordance with our mission.
3. We will tribute our original gardens, features, and historic bridge in a way that is fitting and meaningful for our organization, our community, and our supporters.
4. In symbiosis with the development plans of both Lake Lure and Chimney Rock, we hope to re-establish a pedestrian bridge over the Rocky Broad River, recognizing that this may be a bit of a moonshot, with countless unknowns to be conquered, but that we are committed to a long term approach that provides value and beauty to our area and reconnects our communities.

Here are the primary actions that we've taken as a group to date:

1. We've reviewed The Thrasher Group's visual inspection report that recommended the bridge is unsafe for use and should be closed immediately. We fully support Town's decision to close the bridge and Town has informed us that more permanent barriers are in the works to mitigate the danger.
2. We met on site this afternoon with David Odom of Odom Engineering to discuss considerations around the bridge's possible demolition and ways to preserve pieces of the iconic architecture for reuse or repurposing. Town staff is aware we would like to preserve as many architectural details as possible while coordinating the details of storage and transport.
3. We've contacted multiple professionals and contractors, including a world class pedestrian bridge designer, in order to begin the process to reconnect our communities by footpath as soon as possible, with appropriate tribute to our original 1925 bridge.
4. We've had preliminary discussions on how we can continue our mission and beautify this site with the new challenges we face. We fully intend to have beautiful spring flowers in our gardens, even if they won't have their full past glory, yet.

Thank you to the Town Council (present and past), Town Staff, and all of the residents and visitors over the years who have made our gardens possible. We want to reassure everyone that we have the grit and determination to see this through, to bounce back with a beautiful garden that will join two special communities for future generations, as always intended.

6. Laura Doster: Ms. Doster expressed how hard the Town Council members were working, meeting every day, practically 24 hours a day with calls and texts. She advised that the Chamber had been somewhat on hold, but there were still three active board members. She advised that the Holiday Gala had been canceled. She announced that a 5013c was being formed to support Lake Lure and Chimney Rock Businesses.

7. Barbara Searcy: Ms. Searcy said thank you for all the work that has been done. She stated that she was amazed by the work that was taking place.

8. David Weizgurber: Mr. Weizgurber stated that he wanted to express a complaint that after the storm there was no internet in the area and he didn't know where to find information. He noted that at some point he located the Town Facebook page and saw information posted

there. He added that as a lesson learned he hoped that if this ever happened again that information could be posted in town center.

* Note that Town Storm Recovery Updates were published on the Town Website and Facebook page. The updates were printed and routinely placed in the Post Office, at Ingles, at the FEMA Bus, and with the Christian Aid Ministry team that provided free meals. We are truly sorry that everyone was not aware of this information.

IX. Adjournment

Commissioner Jim Proctor made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Commissioner Dave DiOrto seconded and the motion carried 4-0, the meeting ended at 6:25pm.

ATTEST:

Elba A. Willette, Town Clerk



Carol C. Pritchett, Mayor