

**Meeting of
Land of Sky Regional Council
August 20, 2014**

Minutes

- I. Call to Order - George Goosman called the meeting to order at 1:00pm.
- II. Invocation - Brenda Mills gave the invocation.
- III. Pledge of Allegiance -
- IV. Roll Call - Mike Hawkins called the roll and the following members were present: Denise Braine, Glen Engram, Wayne Brigman, Mike Hawkins, Gwen Wisler, George Goosman, Ryan Stone, Charlie Landreth, Anne Coletta, Mark Biberdorf, Barbara Volk, Dona Mennella, Darhyl Boone, Gene Knoefel, Debbie Giezentanner, Charles Dickens, Kathe Harris, Simone Bouyer, Brenda Mills, and George Morosani. Also present were: Robin Ramsey (Senator Burr's Western Region Representative), April Riddle (Governor McCrory's Western Region Representative) Dr. Linda Recio (Evergreen Solutions), and Jonathan Kanipe (Town Administrator/Biltmore Forest). A quorum was announced.
- V. Modification and Approval of Agenda -
- VI. Public Comment -
- VII. Recognition of Special Guests - Ms. Robin Ramsey (Senator Burr's Representative) and Ms. April Riddle (Governor McCrory's Representative) were recognized by Mr. Goosmann.
- VIII. Chairman's Comments and Roundtable - George Goosmann recognized Jonathan Kanipe as the new Town Administrator and who will be the Council alternate for Biltmore Forest. He also shared that the retirement party for Nelson Smith will be next Tuesday afternoon at the Town Hall beginning at 5:30pm to honor Mr. Smith's 26 years of service to the community; Charlie Landreth shared that the annual Mountain Song Festival held every September at the Brevard Music Center is already sold out this year. It's a very popular event and is a fundraiser for the Boys & Girls Club; Dona Mennella shared that Laurel Park's Police Department is taking a very proactive stance with the presentation of two events- a Police 101 held in July and the upcoming Health, Wellness & Safety Talk- all were invited; Glen Engram shared that in Henderson County, the Commissioners are engaged in a discussion of how the State's new budget will impact the county's budget with regards to pay increases for teachers. The county is also focusing on planning for capital projects. He shared as well that this coming Monday will be the long awaited ribbon-cutting for the new Green River Park; Mike Hawkins shared that Transylvania County has a new County Manager who will begin duties October 1st- Jaime Laughter, currently town manager for Mills River. Mark Biberdorf shared that the ribbon-cutting was held in July for the new Town Hall and City Council recently worked on a policy for renting space in the new facility which includes a large Community Room and a Multi-Purpose Room which will be available for public use, including evenings and weekends. He shared also that residential development is starting to come back to this area and Council has granted conditional zoning approval for a large apartment complex to be built at Blake Road and Hendersonville Road which will help to fill the need for multi-family housing in the area; Barbara Volk announced that the ribbon-cutting was recently held for Fire Station #2 which also has a Community Room available for public use, tomorrow night is Rhythm & Brews in downtown Hendersonville where a representative from the Main Street Program will be attendance as Hendersonville has received an award as one of the best main streets in North Carolina. Ms. Volk continued that the annual Apple Festival begins Friday, August 29th and runs through Labor Day with a parade in the afternoon along with crafts and other local fare. She shared that it looks like a-pretty good apple crop this year; Charles Dickens shared that Transylvania County hosted the Council on Aging's Advisory Council meeting in July at the Library in Brevard where a very interesting report on the Adult Daycare

Program was provided. He also shared that the Council is looking forward to its October meeting which will be held in the new Fletcher Town Hall; Wayne Brigam shared that Madison County was proud to have the Girls 16 & Under National Championship Softball Team- an honor that was won when the team beat Lodi, California twice to take the championship. He shared as well that the Blackberry Festival is coming up on Saturday at Ebbs Chapel Community Center. The event will feature apple-butter making demonstrations along with all kinds of jams and jellies which are made onsite; Gene Knoefel shared that Weaverville is struggling to get its Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) to the point where Council can consider it for passage. He shared that Council just voted to place a 60-day moratorium on commercial construction to assist in getting the UOD finished.

- IX. Approval of Minutes from the August Regular Meeting - August Council meeting minutes were made available at the meeting. Kathe Harris made a motion to approve the minutes as submitted and Gene Knoefel seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously and without further discussion.
- X. Consideration and Approval of Consent Agenda Items – Including Item - A. June FY2014 and July FY 2015 Treasurer’s Report. Charles Dickens made a motion to accept the Consent Agenda item. Brenda Mills seconded the motion which was approved without further discussion.
- XI. Presentations/Recognition
 - A. NC Foreclosure Prevention Fund – Steve Evans, Communications Outreach Specialist with the NC Housing Finance Agency shared with Council that foreclosure prevention funds help to save fragile housing stock in communities. He shared that by the time the program ends, it is estimated that nearly 24,000 homeowners will be assisted to stay in their homes as a result of the program. The ultimate goal of the program is to use federal funds provided by the US Treasury to help stabilize very fragile economies in rural and low-population communities by preventing foreclosure in order to help local economies. Nineteen hardest hit states were identified using one of two criteria- 1) a severe depreciation in home values as a result of the 2008 economic downturn; or, 2) a severe level of unemployment during the same period. North Carolina qualified for the Foreclosure Prevention Funds under the latter criteria. The funds were awarded as part of the original American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 in order to assist states’ in stabilizing their economies. The funds are used for two different programs: the Mortgage Payment Protection Program helps people who have suffered a loss of income through no fault of their own. The program pays all mortgage-related expenses including property taxes and homeowner association dues. The second program is the Mortgage Refinance Program which assists people to stay in their homes by providing relief from primary and second mortgages on homes which were financed before the economic downturn. The program requires the homeowner to have a plan in place to continue payment of the refinanced mortgage after leaving the program. These programs have been used to provide mortgage relief to veterans released from the military and in need of re-training during their transition back to the civilian workforce. More information on the NC Foreclosure Prevention Funds can be found at:
http://www.ncforeclosureprevention.gov/am_i_eligible.aspx?gclid=CPK2m4ei0MACFcZQ7AodUFQAWw.
 - B. 9/11 Day of Service Project - Patti Cameron, RSVP Volunteer Coordinator, shared with Council that Land of Sky’s 9/11 Day of Service project will be a military care package drive designed to assist military personnel from North Carolina. She urged Council members to get involved.
 - C. Performance Audit Findings, Recommendations, and Commendations - Dr. Linda Recio, Leadership President with Evergreen Solutions shared with Council the results of the performance audit that was conducted beginning in February of this year with onsite work completed in March. Dr. Recio shared that the audit was a diagnostic review of Land of Sky and included interviews with key stakeholders including county and city managers, department supervisors and staff and a review of documents, policies and procedures.

Discussion occurred regarding the services provided by Evergreen Solutions and how Land of Sky compares to other similar sized public agencies. It was shared that the performance audit provides a snapshot of the agency in time and that some things have changed since the audit was performed including the reduction in several staffing positions.

Regarding the expectation of accountability around the recommendations contained in the performance audit, Justin Hembree shared that once the full report is provided to Council the next steps will include meetings with the Executive Committee and the Leadership Team to develop a two-track implementation process for the recommendations including target completion dates. Activities to be undertaken include the revision of staff job descriptions including the description of job duties for the executive director. Other planned activities include the development of a comprehensive policy manual for the agency. Work will begin at the Executive Committee level and Council will be informed as the activities planned unfold. It was shared that Evergreen provided a very detailed report which contained examples of the recommendations which were made.

The full report is about 100 pages long and can be found at:

http://www.landofsky.org/pdf/Admin/LOS_Performance_Audit_2014.pdf.

XII. Old Business -

XIII. New Business -

XIV. Executive Director's Report -

A. NADO 2014 Innovation Awards - Mr. Hembree shared with Council that Land of Sky has been awarded four (4) national awards. Projects receiving awards from NADO included GroWNC- both from the standpoint of the regional development plan and for the ability of that plan to be implemented at the grassroots level; the Martin Luther King Day of Sharing service event; and, Land of Sky's Re-Branding initiative. He shared that Land of Sky was one of very few regional councils' nationwide to receive three innovation awards.

Mr. Hembree shared with Council that Land of Sky also was a winner in NADO's 2014 Photo Contest under the tagline "*Investing in Our Regional Economy*". The winning picture was taken by Carrie Turner, GroWNC's lead planner and depicted the tokens provided by the Asheville City Market in exchange for credit/debit, EBT and other benefits cards used by shoppers.

B. Legislative Update - Mr. Hembree directed Council's attention to the legislative budgetary updates provided at today's meeting. He shared that there were a couple of things that the regional councils were keeping an eye on including that there is a relatively small amount of de-obligated CBDG funds available for use to train communities about the CDBG programs which the Department of Commerce plans to use to hire additional planners who can provide this information to the communities in North Carolina. Mr. Hembree shared that talks with the Department of Commerce are continuing as the COG's have been providing their communities with this information for years and it makes sense for these agencies to continue to do so.

Secondly, Mr. Hembree mentioned the Op-Ed piece that Mr. Dickens' co-authored regarding the \$1 million dollars in funding cuts to the Home and Community Care Block Grant (HCCBG) programs which were a part of the State Budget signed by Governor McCrory on August 7th. As Mr. Dickens shared in the Op-Ed piece, these funding cuts could mean fewer meals to hungry seniors, reduced personal care assistance to seniors struggling to remain at home, reduced respite care for family members under stress and, reduced access to grocery shopping and medical assistance for those who can no longer drive, etc. Mr. Hembree shared that LeeAnne Tucker, Director of the Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is monitoring this situation. He also suggested that Council members ask their county managers' about these funds as those staff are familiar with HCCBG funds. Land of Sky's AAA staff can answer questions as well.

XV. Important Dates – Mr. Goosmann reminded Council that the next meeting will be Wednesday, September 17th with lunch provided prior to the 1:00pm meeting.

XVI. Adjournment – With no further business before Council, George Morosani made a motion to adjourn. Gene Knoefel seconded the motion and the meeting stood adjourned.