
The Village Record



The Newsletter of
Village of Flat Rock
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Editor: Judy Boleman

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December 2007

From The Mayor's Desk

Ray E. Shaw, Jr.

This will be my last report to you. As of December 13, Bob Staton will become your new mayor. Bob has served on the Planning Board and for the past 6 years as a member of the council from District 1. I know that you will support him as you have supported me and I thank you for that.

By working together, I believe that we have accomplished a lot in these past 4 years. Moving into our new quarters was a milestone for the Village government and our community. Our meeting room now provides adequate space for council meetings. In addition, community and nonprofit organizations now hold over 100 meetings yearly in the Village Hall. This would have been impossible before the move.

The Village was able to negotiate with Blue Ridge, Green River and Valley Hill for fire protection. These 3 fire departments had previously provided fire protection through the County's tax structure. We successfully negotiated with Henderson County an agreement whereby the per capita distribution of sales taxes would continue as opposed to going to an ad valorem method.

Our volunteer committees have been ever diligent and successful. The Greenways Committee completed the paver walk to the Sandburg property. The Kudzu Committee made tremendous strides in controlling this invasive plant. The Board of Adjustment and the Planning Board have had a very busy and productive time. Zoning Administration stayed busy with requests from builders and developers and making required site visits. The Sign Enforcement volunteers collected many signs illegally placed in the Village in violation of the sign ordinance.

I have been very fortunate to have worked with a very hard working council dedicated to preserving Flat Rock as we want it to be preserved. Our yearly "Celebrate Flat Rock" provided time for our citizens, elected officials and volunteers to meet and greet while enjoying entertainment and ice cream. I cannot give ample credit to all those volunteers that serve on boards and committees that were really the ones that made things happen. I believe that this shows that volunteer government is alive and well in small town America.

For allowing me to serve as your mayor for 4 wonderful years, I say "thank you".

Historic Flat Rock Christmas Ornaments

Brenda Hutcherson

Think Christmas!!!! We would appreciate your purchasing one of Historic Flat Rock's Bicentennial Celebration Christmas Ornaments. They make great gifts and souvenirs. \$20.00 each and they come in a nice suede pouch. They depict the Old Post Office and are made of 24 carat gold over brass. To order call Brenda Hutcherson at 828-692-3113. If you prefer send your check (**payable to Historic Flat Rock**) to **Brenda Hutcherson, 105 Ingleside Court, Flat Rock, NC 28731**, and she will send your ornament or ornaments to you. Thank you.



Holiday Happenings

Flat Rock Merchants Association

In the twinkle of an eye, the holiday season will be here. Don't miss the fun at the numerous special events in Flat Rock. Here's a quick rundown.

The Christmas Stroll in the Village of Flat Rock is an opportunity for you to enjoy visiting the shops, galleries, inns and eateries in our community. This event will be held **Saturday, December 1 from 10 am to 8 pm.** Enjoy refreshments, beverages, music, and seasonal decorations in the village. For more

information on this event, call 697-7719. Stop by the Village Hall at 3 pm while you are out strolling for the wrap-up ceremony of Flat Rock's bicentennial year.

Our association will once again be collecting donations of cash, non-perishable food and new toys for our Christmas project. We work in conjunction with guidance counselors in Henderson County Public Schools to assist appropriate families in Flat Rock's school district. Last year we assisted 3 families and we collected close to \$1,400 through donations from Flat Rock individuals, businesses and our organization's food sales at Celebrate Flat Rock and the Summer Concert Series. If you would like to donate cash, non-perishable food, or new toys, drop-off sites are The Wrinkled Egg, Flat Rock Playhouse, Hand in Hand Gallery, and Diamond Rush.

Christmas at Connemara will be held on **Saturday, December 15 from 10 am to 3 pm** at the Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site. Come celebrate Christmas with the holiday traditions of the Sandburg's with storytelling and holiday music. Call 693-4178 for information.

The season will also be busy at Flat Rock Playhouse with the comedy *A Tuna Christmas* in December. Also, a Christmas concert of hand bell music at Flat Rock Playhouse will be presented by the Blue Ridge Ringers as a benefit for the YouTheatre Education Center on **December 13, 2007.** There is a collection point in our village for the Toys for Tots program. This is at Expressions! Photography in the Singleton Centre where they will be collecting new, unwrapped toys to be donated by the Marine Corps Charity to children in need from now until Christmas.

A Joyous Holiday Season from each of us to you.

More Merchant Announcements:

- More good news: as of October 26, the total amount raised for the new YouTheatre Education Center at Flat Rock Playhouse is \$2,105,000.00.
- We are happy to announce that Flat Rock Cinema now has an ATM machine in the lobby.
- New businesses: Starr Teel's Hubba Hubba Smokehouse, featuring smoked meats and sides to go, will open soon behind Hand in Hand Gallery and The Wrinkled Egg. Also, Silk Road Interiors is now open in the upper level of the red house along Little Rainbow Row. The owners are Stephen and Kathy Skomsky. The business has complete home furnishings, gallery, home accents and gifts.
- The Book Exchange, located in the Old Flat Rock Post Office, will begin its winter hours on **January 1, 2008**. During January and February, the Book Exchange will be open from 12 noon until 4 pm on Monday through Saturday. Stop by for a gently used paperback book, always at half the publisher's price. On the first of March, the exchange returns to the usual hours of 10 am to 4 pm. Proceeds go to local charities.
- Flat Rock Wine Shoppe announces a wine tasting on **December 7, 2007**. The wine tasting event will feature live music and hors d'oeuvres from 5pm—8 pm.
- The 3rd annual Summer Music Series was a big success this year. The

season wrapped up on October 21. Special recognition to all the merchant sponsors and the series sponsor, Carolina First. The music committee of David Voorhees, Tom Fisch, Charlie Tucker and Virginia Teel deserve some thanks. Also a round of applause to key volunteers: the staff of Pleasant Surroundings, Bill Delo (Singleton Centre), Mike Modzelewski (Edward Jones), Ed and Debbie Russell (Apartments at Twin Oaks), Bill Elder (Expressions! Photography), Dale Bartlett (Flat Rock Playhouse), Starr Teel (Hubba Hubba Smokehouse), Dries Jansma (Historic Flat Rock), Steve Whiteside (Guitarist), and Bob Horky (Mill House Lodge).

- This year's Tailgate Market was a huge success with as many as 16 vendors participating. It will start again in April of 2008 and up to 20 vendors can be accepted by application. The vendors primarily sell organic and chemical free goods, and grow or make their products (no crafts please). The hours will be from 4pm—6 pm every Thursday. Thanks go to Molly Sharp for her hard work on this project. See you in the spring!

FLAT ROCK MERCHANTS CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Nov. 23—Dec. 16, *A Tuna Christmas*, on-stage at Flat Rock Playhouse, 693-0731.

Dec. 1—Christmas Stroll in the Village of Flat Rock, Flat Rock Merchants Association 10 am to 8 pm.

Dec. 1—Closing Ceremony of Flat Rock Bicentennial at 3 pm at Village Hall.

Dec. 7—Wine tasting at Flat Rock Wine Shoppe, 5pm-8 pm.

Dec. 9—Works in Progress, 2 pm. Music by students at Flat Rock Guitar, Phone: 242-5417. Free event.

Dec. 13—A Christmas Concert of Hand Bell Music at Flat Rock Playhouse, presented by Blue Ridge Ringers. A benefit concert for YouTheatre Education Center. Information 693-0731.

Dec. 15—Christmas at Connemara, 10 am to 3 pm, Carl Sandburg Home National Historic Site. Free event.

Jan. 1—Winter hours begin at The Book Exchange.

CLOSING CEREMONY OF FLAT ROCK’S BICENTENNIAL

The Official closing Ceremony of Flat Rock’s Bicentennial Celebration will be Saturday, December 1. It has been a grand year of history lessons and special events celebrating the naming of the community of Flat Rock in 1807. Join the Mayor at the Village Hall at 3 pm to unveil the paving bricks commemorating the bicentennial. Light refreshments will be served following the ceremony. Hope to see you there!

Sense of Place Update

Rick Merrill & Carol Rhea

The committee has reviewed several drafts of a revised zoning ordinance over the past three months. Late last month we came to consensus on the latest proposal by our consultant Carol Rhea. Highlights of the draft proposal are:

- The establishment of minimum landscaping requirements for new development.
- The protection of historic structures and their landscapes and allowing limited

adaptive reuse of historic structures as part of a conditional overlay rezoning.

- The treatment of subdivisions as uses and allowing major subdivisions only as special uses in most districts. As part of this, new standards for major subdivisions are proposed and the definition and review process strengthened. One such standard is the requirement that new development be compatible with existing development patterns.
- The requirement for a minimum of thirty percent open space in new subdivisions and the proposal for a density incentive for larger subdivisions to conserve as much as fifty percent open space.
- The protection of views from designated public roadways by limiting development and encouraging the use of open space to protect view corridors.
- The simplification and clarification of the ordinance to make it more user friendly.
- The review and update of the ordinance to ensure compliance with current enabling legislation.

Next, the text will go to the Planning Board, large landowners who interviewed with the SOP committee, and the citizens by posting on the Village website for public review. After those reviews, it will go to Village Council for their consideration. The committee will next begin revising the subdivision ordinance.

The Hemlock Trees at Village Hall

Since the Village Hall has been in the present location the hemlock trees have been treated annually for the woolly adelgid with

completely successful results. However, the mature hemlock trees around the Village property are exhibiting a great deal of stress. Based on the professional opinion of an arborist this stress is due to two factors, drought and compact soil.

The hemlock species is very susceptible to drought stress and this year's rain deficit has had an impact. Also, the soil bulk density is high as a result of the construction and landscape activities the area underwent a couple of years ago. This decreases the available oxygen for root respiration inhibiting new root growth.

The Village is planning to have a procedure applied to the area around the tree roots to improve the physical structure of the soil to allow improved air and water penetration. The success of this procedure will be largely dependent on available moisture. With the drought and water restriction it is difficult to envision much improvement in the health of the trees.

Since the future life of the hemlock trees is unknown, the Village Council is planning to have a landscape architect provide a plan for planting a number of trees to replace or compliment the existing trees.

Audit Results for the 2006 Fiscal Year

The Village has a formal audit of its financial records and internal control mechanisms done annually in accordance with state law. The audit for the past fiscal year has been completed and submitted to the state government for review and final approval. The approval is expected before the middle of December.

The public may review the audit report at the Village Hall during normal working hours. In

addition, once reviewed and approved by the state, a copy of the report will be placed on the Village web site, www.villageofflatrock.org, to allow the public to view the results at their convenience.

If you have any questions regarding the audit, Nick Weedman (Finance Officer for the Village) should be contacted.

Property Tax Collections Update

Bills for real and personal property taxes were mailed to Flat Rock residents in early September. A total of \$653,068.69 was billed and as of November 6, 2007 payments of almost \$205,000 had been received. This is slightly behind the collection rate for the previous year but this is not a cause for concern. Many property owners prefer to delay payment until late December or even early January.

Property owners are reminded that they can pay as late as January 7, 2008, without any interest being added. After that date, a 2% interest charge is added to the bill and on the first of February and the first of each subsequent month a ¾% interest charge is added until the bill is paid in full.

For delinquent accounts, the Village uses a number of mechanisms to collect taxes owed. One method is what is termed debt set-off where we use the State Treasurer's office to withhold taxes owed to us from refunds due to taxpayers for state income tax. They also withhold money from winnings on the state lottery! In addition, garnishment of bank accounts may be used and ultimately foreclosure on property may be used. We encourage all taxpayers to pay their property tax bills on a timely basis.

We can report that the Village has an enviable record for tax collections. For 2005, the first fiscal year in which taxes were levied by the Village, 100% of the taxes billed have been paid! Very few taxing jurisdictions can claim such a record. For 2006, only two accounts are still outstanding, one of which is in bankruptcy proceedings with the other making monthly payments until that account is paid in full.

If you have any questions regarding taxes levied by the Village, you may contact Rowena Collier, Tax Collector, at 697-8100.

Greenways Committee

The Flat Rock Greenways Committee is in need of a secretary. If there is anyone in the Village that is interested in volunteering for the position, please call 243-4044. The committee only meets six times per year. Our next meeting is scheduled for January 3, 2008.

Flat Rock Election Results

Residents of Flat Rock voted in large numbers in the recent election. Beverly Cunningham, Director of the Henderson County Board of Elections, reported that over 1,200 residents voted in the election, with almost half of that number voting early at the Board of Elections office in the "One Stop Voting" option.

Bob Staton, a six-year council incumbent from District 1, was elected mayor and will replace the retiring Ray Shaw. Nick Weedman, incumbent and the Village's Finance Officer, was elected to a second term as a District 1 council member. From District 3,

Jimmy Chandler, past chairman of the Flat Rock Planning Board, was elected to replace the outgoing Terry Hicks. In a contested race to replace the outgoing veteran council member Judy Boleman in District 2, Don Farr, who currently serves on the Flat Rock Board of Adjustment, defeated Scott Schenck, also a member of the Board of Adjustment.

The residents of Flat Rock deserve a "well done" for exercising their right to vote. All of the candidates appreciate the support they received from the voters.

Candidates Sought for District 1 Council Seat

Upon Bob Staton's installation as mayor on December 13, the District 1 council seat he now holds will become vacant with two years remaining in the term. The council will appoint a resident of District 1 to serve for the remainder of the term.

District 1 is the geographical area of the Village lying west of the Greenville Highway and south of Little River Road. If you reside in District 1 and have an interest in serving your community as a council member, the council would like to hear from you. Please contact the Village Hall and indicate your interest in serving, and a staff member will see that you get a volunteer application. You may also access an application on line at the Village website, www.villageofflatrock.org.

The deadline for filing the completed application in the Village Hall is December 15, 2007.

Volunteers Needed

Our Village continues to depend on the many volunteers who give of their time to serve on the various boards and committees at the Village Hall. Volunteers serve as members of the Planning Board, Board of Adjustment, Zoning Administration, Greenways Committee, and Traffic Safety Advisory Committee, to name a few.

If you are a resident of Flat Rock and can give volunteer time to the Village, contact the Village Hall at 697-8100 or access a volunteer application online at www.villageofflatrock.org.

What is Stormwater and Why Do I Care?

Stormwater is the water that runs off of streets, parking lots, rooftops, and other hard surfaces whenever it rains. Storm drains or ditches carry run-off directly to nearby streams, without passing through a water treatment plant.

Stormwater run-off is a problem because it carries pollutants from the surrounding landscape into our waterways. Metals, salts, oil, etc. from roads and parking lots; fertilizers and other products from golf courses and landscaping; pet waste; grease, soap, and chemicals that may get dumped out the back door; anything that gets deposited on the pavement or sidewalk eventually ends up in a nearby stream.

Here are a few things you can do to help prevent stormwater runoff problems:

- Scoop up after your pet, even on the grass.
- Make sure your septic system is in good condition, and have it maintained regularly.

- Apply fertilizers and other garden products sparingly. If anything ends up on a hard surface, sweep it back into the grass or dirt.
- Plant, mulch, or contain any area of bare soil.
- Never dump anything down a storm drain. “Only rain down the drain.”
- Consider installing a rain garden, rain barrel, porous pavement, or other landscape feature to capture runoff from your roof and driveway.
- If you use chemicals, oil, solvents, etc., store them in good quality containers. Only pour them in an area that has containment structures, such as a berm around the area, to catch spills.

Flat Rock Village Hall

The North Carolina League of Municipalities recently published the “2008 North Carolina Hometown Calendar”. We are happy to report that a picture of Flat Rock Village Hall is included in the calendar.



Village of Flat Rock
P.O. Box 1288
Flat Rock, NC 28731-1288

Schedule of Meetings

All monthly **Council Meetings** are on the **second Thursday** of each month, and will start at 9:30 AM.

Agenda Workshops are scheduled to start at 9:30 AM on the **Monday** 10 days prior to the Council Meeting, unless that Monday falls on a holiday.

The Planning Board meets the **first Tuesday** of each month from 9:15 AM until 11:30 AM.

The Board of Adjustment meets the **first Tuesday** monthly at 3:00 PM (if there are agenda items).

Village of Flat Rock office hours are 9:00 AM—4:00 PM, Monday through Friday.

The Zoning Administration office hours are from 2:00 PM-4:00 PM, Monday through Friday.

The deadline for articles to be included in the March issue of "The Village Record" is February 15, 2008.

Village Directory

Mayor:
Ray E. Shaw, Jr. 698-2449

Council Members:
District 1
Robert V. Staton, Vice Mayor 696-4020
Nick Weedman 693-5300

District 2
Judy M. Boleman 698-8912
David Bucher 696-3269

District 3
Terry A. Hicks 697-9022
Jim Wert 693-0132

Village Clerk:
Rowena M. Collier 697-8100

Deputy Village Clerk:
Michelle D. Hill 697-8100

E-Mail Address: vofr@bellsouth.net

Website: villageofflatrock.org