

## 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 9:00 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 April issue of "The Village Record" is July 14, 2005.*

## Village Directory

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

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

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

District 3  
Terry A. Hicks 697-9022  
Donald E. Roark 697-2068

**Village Clerk:**  
Rowena M. Sweezy 697-8100

**Administrative Assistant:**  
Michelle D. Hill 697-8100

**E-Mail Address:** vofr@bellsouth.net

**Website:** villageofflatrock.org

**Village of Flat Rock**  
**PO Box 1288**  
**Flat Rock, North Carolina 28731**

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# The Village Record

The Newsletter of  
Village of Flat Rock  
Singleton Centre  
Flat Rock, North Carolina  
Telephone: (828) 697-8100  
Fax: (828) 697-8461

Editor: Nick Weedman

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May 2005

### From The Mayor's Desk

*Ray E. Shaw, Jr.*

On March 24, 2005 your Village government officially moved into its new quarters at 110 Village Center Drive. The new facility is really the old Stradley-Jones house. This facility was purchased from Historic Flat Rock, refurbished, and a meeting room was added to facilitate, not only Council meetings, but to be used by civic groups and non-profit organizations. I believe that this is a big plus for homeowner associations needing more room for their meetings. Although the move was made, the landscaping is incomplete but we hope to have that in by the early June.

On Tuesday, May 3rd, at 4:00 PM and on Thursday, May 5th, at 7:00 PM, informational meetings were held in the Village Office to explain and to answer questions on the proposal to levy an ad valorem tax in conjunction with the 2005-06 annual budget. This tax levy, if adopted, would be used, in part, to pay for fire protection now provided by the County. The tax would replace the one now charged by the County for the same service. This ac-

tion will keep the Village eligible for a portion of the sales tax that is distributed to units of local government in Henderson County. Our citizens would not see any change in the level of fire protection. Currently three fire departments, Green River, Valley, Hill, and Blue Ridge provide this service through contracts with Henderson County. For more information, see the article beginning on page X of this issue.

We invite your input, questions, and suggestions in this very important decision and action by your Council. The annual budget ordinance for 2005-06 is expected to be adopted by the Council on June 9, 2005.

### Celebrate Flat Rock Event Food, Festivities, and Fun

The Village of Flat Rock, Blue Ridge Fire and Rescue and a number of Flat Rock merchants will be holding a festival – Celebrate! Flat Rock on June 11<sup>th</sup> from 12 noon until 4 p.m. Anne Cheadle

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and Lee Luebbe are handling the event on behalf of the Village.

The Village will be formally opening its new municipal offices and meeting facility as well as celebrating the tenth anniversary of the election held to incorporate the Village.

Blue Ridge Fire and Rescue will celebrate the staffing of its Station Number 2 that is located in the Village adjacent to the Flat Rock municipal offices. An event to commemorate the staffing of this station is being planned.

Several new Flat Rock businesses in the Singleton Centre will hold open houses to formally open their new facilities. These include: Expressions Photography, Edward Jones Investments, Flat Rock Wine Shoppe, and others.

Historic Flat Rock will participate in the event as well as many Flat Rock merchants including Stuart Stepp, Architect; Pleasant Surroundings, Singleton Properties, Bold Life magazine, The Wrinkled Egg, Chicken Little, Hand in Hand Gallery, Flat Rock Outfitters, The Woodfield Inn, 3D Photo Memories and Steve Whiteside.

Ice cream will be served free of charge at the new Village Hall during the event. The new Edward Jones security firm office in the Singleton Centre and Expressions Photographic Studio will be serving hot dogs and hamburgers for a highly attractive price. And, for the adults, the new Flat Rock Wine Shoppe will hold a

wine tasting.

The Carl Sandburg House will be open on June 11<sup>th</sup> and, as always, invites the public to stroll down for a tour of their facilities.

And a number of other Flat Rock merchants will have special events on the day. And plans are being made for demonstrations of various skills and crafts at some of the shops in Flat Rock.

There will be ample entertainment again this year. The Kenmure Chorus will bring their talents to the event, and a number of other musicians and entertainers will also be participating. There will be face painting for the kids and other activities to keep all entertained.

Equipment from the three fire departments serving the village will be on display. This was a hit in 2004 and promises to be even better this year.

For those who have not yet seen the new Village Hall, tours will be conducted and a history of the building will be available for those interested.

Volunteer help is sought in several areas. We need people willing to spend 30 minutes dipping ice cream and some strong backs to help set up tables, chairs, etc. for the event from 11 a.m. until noon. Finally, following the event, we need volunteers to help take down tables, chairs, etc. and restore the grounds to a presentable shape. If you are willing to volunteer for any of these needs, please call either Michelle Hill or Rowena Sweezey at the Village Hall (697-8100) or send an e-mail to [vofr@bellsouth.net](mailto:vofr@bellsouth.net). Your

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## Contracts Signed with Three Fire Departments

Contracts were executed between the Village of Flat Rock and the three Fire Departments serving its citizens for fire protection services. Mayor Ray E. Shaw, Jr. signed on behalf of the Village with Chief Gary Brown of Blue Ridge Fire and Rescue, Battalion Chief Tim Garren of Valley Hill Fire Department and Chief Todd McCrain signing on behalf of their departments. (See photo below)

The contracts call for the Fire Departments to provide fire protection for the Village at specified levels while the village will make semi-annual payments for those services. The Village will levy a property tax to pay for those services in place of the tax currently collected by Henderson County. The arrangement becomes effective on July 1, 2005.

## Directions to the Book Exchange and Historic Flat Rock, Inc. (Old Post Office)

Many people apparently are having problems getting to the Old Post Office and this especially hurts the Book Exchange. Here are the directions: from North Carolina Highway 225 (old U.S. Highway 25 or Greenville Highway) turn right/left onto Village Center Drive, which is the driveway to the fire station, across from the main parking entrance to the Playhouse, on top of the hill. After about 50/60 yards turn right and follow this road past the new Village Hall, on your right. The road will lead you to the back of the Old Post Office. New paved parking places, steps and a paved path lead around the building to the side and front entrances. Handrails will be installed soon on the steps and the parking surfaces will be heightened to be level with the top step. In the meantime, be careful with that step! Please pass the word and visit



Fire protection contract signing on May 10, 2005 at Flat Rock Village Hall

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 explain proposed actions and to answer citizen questions. If you have any questions regarding this issue, feel free to contact the Village Office, the Mayor or any Council Member.

### New Village Hall

The new Village Hall was completed in March and was opened for business on March 28<sup>th</sup>. The former Stradley-Jones house was renovated and an addition involved a new meeting hall. Landscaping is now underway and is expected to be completed in June.

The Stradley-Jones house was originally the residence of the postmaster of the Flat Rock post office and was built around 1840 or so. The

Village purchased the house and over 2 acres of land from Historic Flat Rock and the construction project began in 2004.

In addition to administrative offices, there are two meeting facilities that are available to civic or nonprofit organizations based in Flat Rock. The larger room where the Village Council meets will handle up to 60 people while a smaller conference room can handle 8-10 people. If your organization has an interest in use of either of these facilities, contact the Village Office during normal working hours at 697-8100.

A formal opening ceremony will be held on June 11, 2005 as part of the Celebrate Flat Rock event. Please plan to join us on that date!



*Left - a view of the Village Hall with the large meeting room on the right side of the picture. The large building is new construction.*



*Right - the Village Hall as seen from the Greenville highway. The portion of the house shown here is the oldest section and is believed to have been built about 1840. For many years it was the residence of the Post Master for Flat Rock.*

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help would be highly appreciated.

So, mark your calendars and come to help Celebrate Flat Rock!

In the event of rain, the event will be held on Sunday, June 12<sup>th</sup> from noon until 4 p.m.

### Our Soil, Our Water

*Dave Bucher, Councilman*

The Village Office has copies available of the educational material developed by this Mills River Partnership and funded by the EPA.

Included in the brochure on the following items of interest:

- Ten top list of effects of Erosion and Sediment
- Recommended buffer width and regulation to control erosion.
- The law and mandatory standards for land regarding land-disturbing activities.
- Information as to where to obtain technical advice.

Copies of the “*Our Soil, Our Water*” are available in the entry area of the Flat Rock Village Office.

### An Open Letter To The Citizens Of Flat Rock Village

*William Slonaker, Zoning Administrator*

The function of a zoning ordinance apart from bringing order to a community is also to make the community a comfortable,

healthy, and safe place in which neighbors can live side-by-side in reasonable peace and tranquility. If the ordinance is well written, conscientiously enforced and complied with by well-intentioned citizens it becomes the cornerstone of a community we can all be proud to live in. We believe we have such a situation in the Village of Flat Rock.

However, from time to time, well meaning citizens, especially those living away from the village center, become lax, forget that there are rules to live by or just aren't aware of the rules.

Such is the case when people allow their property to become a repository for trash, abandoned and/or unlicensed vehicles, trailers and other miscellaneous unsightly junk. It may not bother them but could be offensive to their neighbors and is in violation of the Village Zoning Ordinance, Article X, Section 1005 and 1009.

### Article X, Section 1005: Recreational, Commercial and Utility Vehicle Storage and Parking.

*The overnight storage and parking of recreational and commercial vehicles exceeding a two (2) ton capacity or a length of twenty-five (25) feet or height of twelve (12) feet within the jurisdiction of this ordinance shall be prohibited, except as otherwise provided herein. All permitted recreational, commercial, and utility vehicles, including motor powered vehicles, trailers or campers, and boats used solely by the residents of the premises shall be stored on the lot or tract of the principal residence in a garage or other enclosed accessory building, or in a side or rear yard if adequately buffered. For the purpose of this section, buffering may include plantings, walls, fences, existing vegetation and buildings or a combination*

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of buffering techniques.*

***Recreational vehicles may be temporarily parked on the lot or tract of the principal residence of the owner for the purposes of loading and unloading, maintenance and cleaning, for a period not to exceed seven (7) consecutive days or a total of six (6) weeks in a calendar year. Except as permitted in Section 808, no such vehicle shall be used for sleeping or eating purposes within the jurisdiction of this ordinance for more than the seven (7) consecutive days or the total of six (6) weeks in a calendar year described in the preceding sentence.***

***Except where not visible from an adjacent property or roadway, no recreational, commercial or utility vehicle shall be stored outside of an enclosed garage or building.***

We recognize you may not consider what you have in your yard “junk”, but for the purposes and intent of the ordinance the term describes the objects and materials we are referring to. However you think of it, if it fits the description and is openly displayed on your property, it is in non-compliance and is against the law to have it there.

The intent of this open notice is not to incriminate anyone, but to appeal to your sense of citizenship and good will. If your property is in non-compliance with the ordinance, take the necessary steps to correct it as soon as possible. Remember, as you read this so does your neighbor who may not be happy with the appearance of your property and may file a complaint. We prefer voluntary

compliance.

However, should a complaint be filed and we are forced to act, you subject yourself to civil penalties for violation per Article XIII, Section 1307.

The Village of Flat Rock Zoning Ordinance No. 31 can be read in its entirety on-line at [www.villageofflatrock.org](http://www.villageofflatrock.org), or a copy may be purchased at the village office. If you have questions regarding your situation, contact the zoning office at 697-8100, Monday – Friday between 2:00pm – 4:00pm.

### **US Highway 25 Through Flat Rock is now NC State Highway 225**

The North Carolina Department of Transportation recently renamed the main thoroughfare of the Village from U.S. Highway 25 to North Carolina State Highway 225.

Residents will need to be aware of this when they have visitors since US Highway 25 still exists. This route now follows Interstate 26 from the Fletcher interchange to Exit 55.

There is a business route 25 that goes from near Saluda and follows US Highway 176 through Hendersonville up to the Fletcher exit.

Signage is not a well defined as we might like and numerous street signs along the Greenville Highway still show this as US 25.

Confused? Think how visitors might feel

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trying to sort their way through all of this.*

So, be cautious when giving directions to those unfamiliar with the area or with the main road going through the Village!

### **Flat Rock Tax Situation**

*(The following article contains pertinent comments from a recent letter sent by Mayor Ray E. Shaw, Jr. to all Flat Rock property owners. Following the letter, two informational meetings were conducted and about 50 citizens attended to pose questions and get concerns addressed. The article is intended to reach those who may not have received the Mayor's letter or who were unable to attend the sessions.)*

The Village of Flat Rock presently anticipates the need to implement an ad valorem or property tax effective with the 2005/2006 budget year beginning July 1, 2005. We feel that our citizens are due an explanation of the need for this action. A review of both background and current situations is in order.

Since the incorporation of the Village in 1995, Flat Rock has operated without any property tax. The major revenue source for the Village has been the distribution of sales tax revenue received from the State intended for municipalities. This source currently provides approximately \$500,000 of a total budget of \$730,000. The County Commissioners have two options in their decision on the distribution of the sales tax revenue: distribution based on population of each municipality (the per capita method) or on the basis of the amount of property tax revenue raised in each municipality (called the ad valorem method). Sales tax is now and has been distributed on a per capita basis with all of the municipalities in Henderson County and the County government sharing in these

taxes. With the incorporation of Mills River, the County's share of the sales taxes decreased. A more favorable formula for the County would be to distribute these taxes on a property tax basis. Since the County Commissioners have the authority to select the basis of distribution, they had indicated that this is an action they would likely implement in the 2006/2007 fiscal year. After lengthy negotiations with the County Commissioners in 2004, an agreement between the County and the Village was reached whereby the current method of distribution would be retained for two more years. In return for this agreement, the Village would remit to the County \$137,243 in fiscal year 2004/2005 and \$205,864 in fiscal year 2005/2006. After that time it was generally understood that the County would likely change from the per capita method of distribution to the ad valorem method. This would eliminate the Village from receiving any sales tax since the Village does not levy any property tax. Sales tax represents nearly 70% of Village revenue.

Three fire departments, Blue Ridge, Green River and Valley Hill currently serve the Village. After discussions with these fire departments lasting over a period of several months, the Village and the fire departments have agreed to enter into contracts whereby the Village would assume the financial responsibility for providing fire protection in Flat Rock. In order to fund this and other services, the Village would need to impose a property tax effective with the 2005/2006 annual budget. Although the rate has not yet been set, it will likely range between 7 cents and 9.5 cents per \$100 of property evaluation. It is our intent that the property owner pays little or no more than is now paid to Henderson County for this service. This action by the Village would make the Village eligible for sales tax distribution through the ad valorem distribution method.

The Village Council held public information hearings May 3rd and May 5th, 2005 to further  
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