

# Highlands Newspaper

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Volume 22, Number 8 Real-Time News, Weather & WebCams: HighlandsInfo.com Thurs., Feb. 20, 2025

## BOC, Franklin and Highlands meet to break bread and collaborate

By Kim Lewicki

Last Thursday the “government” of Macon County got together to break bread and talk.

Combo-meetings used to be an event done three times a year with the MC Board of Commissioners, the Town of Franklin

Council and the Highlands Town Board, a practice that has fallen to the wayside over the years but off-

• See **COLLABORATE** page 7

## Shearl says ‘time to move forward’ on HS soccer field

By Kristin Fox

At this week’s meeting of the Macon County Board of Education, school officials discussed the Highlands School soccer field hoping to continue moving the much-needed project forward.

The goal of the board is to try to get the right solution for fixing the field in place for consideration for the upcoming 2025-2026 Macon County budget.

For well over two years, the question of how to fix the soccer field has been looming over the school board. Although the soccer field has been discussed at multiple meetings over the last two years, there is a renewed sense of urgency to finally get the field fixed in the next year, possibly during the summer.

• See **SHEARL** page 4



Photo by Brian O’Shea

## Seniors up front and center at home game

By Brian O’Shea

Highlands varsity basketball teams celebrated wins against Blue Ridge Early College at home and recognized senior athletes during Senior Night Feb. 7.

HS also held its annual Black-Out Against Cancer and encouraged everyone to wear black to honor those battling the disease.

Highlands girls won a solid victory over the Lady Bobcats ending with a final of 59-15.

Highlands boys fought a tough battle against BREC that ended with a final of 60-52.

Highlands recognized senior athletes between games, including varsity basketball players Mallory Shriver, Aislynn Wyatt-Luck, Wy-

att Wilson, Kasen Mitchell, Carson Forrester; and Highlands High School Cheerleaders Rea Miller, Katie Earp, Shirley Diaz, Yazmin Mendoza Cortez, and Karen Gomez.

Highlands senior Finneas Garner could not attend Senior Night as he was competing in a regional swim meet.

## New event space on Carolina Way OK’d

By Kim Lewicki

One of the items on last week’s Zoning Board of Adjustment agenda was the request for a Special Use Permit for a new business on Carolina Way.

When a business changes use, a Special Use Permit (SUP) is required.

Amber Mull and Eric Cahill purchased 442 Carolina Way (previously the Custom House) and were requesting a SUP to open a 1,000 sq. ft. event space for inside birthday parties, rehearsal dinners and other events which they envision being mostly accessed by foot, or shuttles from nearby hotels.

Since the potential business hit all the required marks regarding use in the B3 zone including the parking requirements, Planning & Development Director

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# • THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

## • MAYOR ON DUTY •

### Workshop and TB mtgs in a nutshell

Thursday, Feb. 20, will be the Town Board workshop at 6 pm, followed by the business meeting at 7 pm. Both meetings are at the Highlands Community Building adjacent to the ball field. Both sessions can be viewed remotely by going to the town website, which will have a meeting access portal.

At the 6 pm workshop, the board will hear an update from Tom Neal concerning the hospital, followed by an update on the electric grid by Lamar Nix. The staff will also share with the board information from the state concerning subdivision on-site septic requirements.

The first item on the 7 pm business meeting will be a public hearing concerning Parkside Partners B-1 Conditional Zoning Request. The request is to allow residential units to be built on the property at the corner of Maple and Oak streets. The Zoning Board of Adjustment and Planning Board have reviewed the plans and have made favorable recommendations.

The board will also hear an update from Hotwire Communications concerning their



Highlands Mayor  
Patrick Taylor

progress in building the underground portions of the town fiber network. Hotwire is also designing a Wi-Fi network for the downtown area. This week they were looking at sites to place their equipment and connect to power.

The board will also hear a Town of Highlands Mobile App proposal. Tyler Trantham of mOCV will make the presentation. I want us to move forward with providing a town app without delay.

Kaye McHan of the chamber will make a presentation to replace the current downtown Christmas wreath decorations. The current decorations were purchased 10 years ago, and the central part of the wreaths, red plastic lanterns, are now fading to a faint pink.

The chamber will also make an event request. They are asking to add an additional concert in the park in May. The concert would be set up and staged like all the concerts they sponsor during the summer and fall.

We will also be reviewing the terms of the chamber building lease again. Maybe this is the time we can come to terms and move forward.

The board will also hear a request from the Highlands and Mountain Top Rotary clubs to install an international peace pole on town property. Rotary International has been supporting this initiative that now has several thousand peace poles installed worldwide.

At a previous workshop, the board reviewed the outdoor recreation use policies. Lester Norris will present the amendments that were suggested at the previous workshop.

Lamar Nix will present the progress of building an electrical distribution line on US 64. This line will provide a second feed from Duke to the town. Lamar will seek approval of a low bid to allow work to begin on the line as soon as possible.

Chief Holland will ask the board for a budget amendment to buy a new police cruiser. An area police department ordered the cruiser from a dealership and decided not to purchase it. Our department was planning to purchase the same vehicle in the upcoming budget year. If the town purchases this one, the dealer will give the town a \$13,000 discount. It is a good deal that we should accept.

Hope to see you at the meeting or join us remotely.

Also, don't forget the planned Duke power outage next Wednesday, February 26 from 8 am to 6 pm.

## • SNAPSHOT •







The old man who protects the forest and its creatures

*Do you have a heartfelt, funny, interesting, or beautiful photo you would like to share in our new "Snapshot" section? Email it to [highlandseditor@aol.com](mailto:highlandseditor@aol.com) or text it to 828-200-1371, with a brief description and a name. No anonymous photos will be accepted.*

Photo by Robert Cabe

## • WEATHER •

Thu, 20-Feb	Fri, 21-Feb	Sat, 22-Feb	Sun, 23-Feb
 26°F 11°F	 43°F 18°F	 42°F 23°F	 47°F 26°F
Very cold; breezy in the a.m.	Sunny and not as cold	Mostly cloudy and chilly	Mostly cloudy
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### Highlands Newspaper

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# • INVESTING AT 4,118 Ft •

## Prey ... or ... Pray

When I moved to Highlands more than years ago, we were a “sleepy” little town where you felt safe. Most never felt the need to lock doors and some left keys in their cars. I sold a house a few years back on Lake Sequoyah where the sellers didn’t even have a key! That was a great feeling, having grown up in Macon,

GA where crime was in its prime. Feeling safe was a benefit of small-town living.

As Highlands grew in population and tourism began to increase, that safety factor diminished. We became known as a town of affluent residents who are targets for thieves. There are a few cases of robberies in stores, car theft, and burglaries. We now must be on

guard and lock our doors with many adding alarm systems that I never felt necessary when I first started selling real estate.

Many of my buyers from Atlanta and other crime-infested cities would tell me they HAD to be in a gated-community. Back then I convinced them it wasn’t necessary in our area. But now I am thankful for ring cameras and other outside cameras that allow you to see who approaches your home. At my Wildcat Cliffs cottage, I was alerted to see a daddy bear trying to turn the doorknob to partake of an apple pie sitting on my counter! It made for a great video to share!

Modern technology has helped us feel more secure regarding home safety and for that I’m grateful. But there is another form of thievery that we must now address in our area ... and that is scammers! They realize that we are a small town filled with affluency that makes us a target for grifters. A prime example was a charming designer who came to town and opened a shop. I used his services in a remodel of my home and thought he was excellent, honest, and ethical. I basically gave him a blank check and later realized I was billed eight thousand dollars for a sofa that was worth three thousand, at best!

I later learned, after a couple of years, he was taking deposits and never ordering the merchandise. Instead, as my mama would say, he was living “high on the hog” with other people’s money. When the word started to spread, clients realized they had been scammed and I’ve heard upwards of a million dollars. We then realized by Googling the name there was a mug shot from a previous arrest. Being the trusting people we are, we allowed he and his partner to live the



**Pat Allen BIC**  
Allen Tate Realtors/Pat Allen Realty Group.

good life in Highlands for a few years! I understand lawsuits were filed in hopes of being reimbursed but I’m not sure clients followed through due to time constraints or embarrassment. Allegedly, the designer has since fled to Florida as grifters do to start over. People should be warned.

There is another pair offering design/staging services trying to break into the Highlands/Cashiers market with similar intentions. No paperwork or contracts are signed, and it becomes your

word against theirs. Anyone who knows me will attest that I will not be scammed if it costs me money to warn others of dishonest people and keep them out of our area.

Similarly, my Facebook friends alerted me of a builder originally characterized as a nice young family man who took deposits and left town with their money. This shows a pattern that scammers prey on innocent victims thinking they will simply take the money and run!

So, protect yourselves by investigating people you are considering using, Google them, ask for references, have a signed contract written in your favor, and if scammed warn others and follow through with a lawsuit to stop them!

I pray that we don’t become a town of prey as we are a prime target by those wanting to take advantage of us. For grifters we have become “gifters.” Beware!

• *Pat Allen is Broker-in-Charge of Allen Tate/Pat Allen Realty Group. Allen has been a top producer and award-winning broker since her career began 20 years ago. She is author of Hurdles in a Girdle and a transformational therapist and certified hypnotherapist. She may be reached at 828-200-9179 or pat.allen@allentate.com*

## ...SHEARL continued from page 1

The board had previously issued a request for qualifications (RFQ) and a request for proposal (RFP) for the soccer field project. However, the board only received one response to the RFQ. Due to the lack of response, the board has decided to reissue the RFQ/RFP in the hopes of getting additional bids.

At the combo-meeting of the MC BOC, Franklin and Highlands boards, Thurs., Feb. 13 in Highlands, Commissioner John Shearl said “it’s time to move forward with the

Highlands School soccer field.”

“We have the money,” he said.

Meanwhile, the board will begin advertising for the project online this week and in the newspapers over the next two weeks. The project will be for design build services for dewatering, excavation and soil replacement.

Macon County School Attorney John Henning said after this round, if the school board doesn’t receive additional bids, it can

• See SHEARL page 14



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# • BUSINESS / ORGANIZATION NEWS •



## Happy Valentine's Day!

Highlands Community Child Development Center had a double celebration on Friday, February 14th. Besides enjoying treats and original Valentines boxes made by the children and their parents, it was HCCDC's 20th anniversary. Students, parents, teachers, administrators and board members all joined in the fun.

## McHan to retire June 30 from Chamber

Kaye McHan, Executive Director of the Highlands Chamber of Commerce/Visit Highlands,

NC, has announced her retirement, effective June 30, 2025. Under her leadership, the Chamber has expanded its mission to support local businesses, enhance community engagement, and preserve the unique character of Highlands. The Chamber's board of directors has established a search committee to identify her successor.

"It has been an honor to lead the Highlands Chamber of Commerce/Visit Highlands, NC, and I am proud of the growth and success the Chamber has achieved during my tenure," McHan said. "I've received tremendous support from our board, members, the community, and our dedicated volunteers."

Since joining the Chamber in 2019, McHan has guided the business community through unprecedented challenges, including the COVID-19 pandemic, ensuring that businesses and residents received the necessary support to navigate difficult times. Her tenure has been marked by the implementation of key initiatives, including board governance and organizational systems, the development of a new mission and values statement, strategic goals, impactful programming, and sustainable financial management.

Her impact on the Highlands community extends beyond her tenure at the Chamber. McHan was hired as the first full-time Executive Director of The Bascom, playing a pivotal role in its transformation from a single room in the library to its current location. She has also managed multiple non-profit organizations, always with a focus on strengthening their operational foundations and community impact.

"Kaye has done a great job during her tenure as Executive Director," said Blye Hunsinger, board chair. "She helped assemble a strong board, built a very capable staff and helped form a volunteer team that together created a stronger Highlands business community that is focused on the right things. I always encourage leaders to 'leave it better than they found it.' Kaye can be proud of her contributions to making Highlands a better place to live, work and conduct business."

"I am confident that my successor will bring fresh, innovative ideas to serve our members and the community, and I am committed to ensuring a smooth transition," McHan said.

To learn more about the Highlands Chamber of Commerce/Visit Highlands, NC, please visit [highlandschamber.org](http://highlandschamber.org) or call 828-526-5841.

## Poyner Spruill shuffles attorneys



Nick Tosco



Evan Lee

After a Closed Session of the Highlands Town Board February 13, Mayor Pat Taylor announced a change in attorney personnel for the town.

Robert Hagemann, the current town attorney, will be changing his status to a senior advisor with Poyner Spruill Attorneys at Law. He will continue in an advisory role for the Town of Highlands. His associate with Poyner Spruill, Nick Tosco, who has been providing legal representation for the

Highlands Zoning Board of Adjustment will assume the position as the town attorney for Highlands starting February 20th.

Evan Lee, an associate with Poyner Spruill, will provide legal representation for the Highlands Zoning Board of Adjustment. He made his debut at the February Zoning Board meeting representing Highlands Planning & Development Director Michael Mathis in an STR appeal case.

## Creel with Landmark Realty Group works with TRC removing hazardous trees

Volunteers from the Carolinas, California, Georgia, Virginia, Texas, and several other states made themselves available since the Hurricane Helene first hit our region.

Temporary Relief Centers (TRC's) organize case workers and crews, directing them to households in need of assistance. Projects range from home repairs, which include demolition, construction, roofing, and more, to hazardous tree removal and stabilization.

About 200 volunteers per day use their own resources to provide labor, and in some cases, even the equipment needed to restore properties.

Rick Creel, with Landmark Realty Group, was invited to assist one of these crews. Their job was to remove hazardous tree's using a lift with the goal to make sure no hazards such as large, hanging limbs, or uprooted trees could still fall and damage life or property.

"The joy was working with like minded people and sharing in getting to know some of those we worked with and the families



that were affected," Rick said. "There was even a mural painted at the TRC to show the overall joy that was shared by all. It helped all of us to appreciate that there truly is more happiness in giving than receiving."

While Rick worked with the Augusta DRC, there were other centers nearby. Swannanoa, near Asheville, is a main hub for volunteers as well. Recent reports show that the majority of these stabilization efforts expect to end in April. However, the work of local volunteers may continue for some time to come.

# • HIGHLANDS DINING •

## ...EVENT SPACE from page 1

Michael Mathis recommended approval of the SUP which the Zoning Board had to ultimately approve.

An indoor recreation and entertainment facility is permitted in the B3 zone and requires one on-site parking space per each, 200-sq. ft. Each private building on Carolina Way is deeded six spaces – three in front of each building and three behind each building. But as it turns out, the communal dumpster for the complex is kept on one of the spaces behind 442 Carolina Way leaving five spaces for that business.

What should have been a cut and dry case became the subject of a prolonged discussion with neighbors wondering if the use should be permitted due to the available and required parking.

Chad Garner and Ashby Underwood – owners of Yoga Highlands on Carolina Way – and Heather Winkler, owner of the building between the proposed event space and the brew pub, who is making her building into a residential townhouse.

Underwood began by presenting each of the five board members three various views of the property show-

• See **EVENT SPACE** page 9



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# ...COLLABORATE continued from page 1



Photo by Kim Lewicki

Members of the MC BOC, the Franklin Board and the Highlands Board gathered for a combo-meeting last Thursday.

cially started up again with the first meeting for 2025 hosted by Highlands.

After dinner provided by Old Edwards Inn, the group of about 25, which included elected officials and staff from each entity, began brainstorming about the state of Macon County and its environs Franklin and Highlands.

Franklin Mayor Jack Horton, who has also served on the county side, began the discussion saying what everyone echoed throughout the night, "that this is a good thing for us to do."

"Counties and municipalities have a lot in common. And we have to remember that we serve the same people whether they live inside the city or outside the city. They all need the services we provide. County commissioners should be called County Connectors because you connect the services with the people who need them," he said.

Horton said several things of note are going on in Franklin starting with the award of the \$500,000 matching PARTF grant for its new inclusive \$1.2 million playground set to be on the Whitmire property.

"We would appreciate any help you can give us in that regard," he said to the BOC members. "This is a good project for us to work on together to provide something for the folks so they see their local government working together."

He said the \$4 million Clearwell Project is in the works and will give Franklin three times the water capacity increasing its ability to deliver potable water.

Like Highlands did some years ago, Duke Power is helping Franklin replace all the globes in the streetlights downtown with energy efficient LED lights which will

decrease the town's electric bill.

Horton touted the town's new "Downtown Social District" where people can have alcohol beverages on the street in a certain area.

"It's been in existence for 6-8 months and we haven't had a single problem, and our merchants and restaurants appreciate it," he said.

He said there had been high hopes for the old hospital building and property, but possibilities were stymied by the Hospital Corporation of America (HCA). Evidently, HCA's bylaws prohibited any "medical type service" – EMS, health department – to occupy the building.

When Horton learned the monthly utility bill was \$30,000 to \$40,000 he said it wasn't something the town could take on anyway. Consequently, the building was razed and now it awaits a different purpose.

Franklin Council Member Rita Salain, who has been working on the town and county's housing crisis said it would be a great spot for housing for working people and seniors.

"We have to come together to do something about housing," she said. "It's critical."

Highlands Chamber of Commerce Director Kaye McHan agreed.

"This is an entire county problem, and everyone needs to be involved," she said. "We have great examples and solutions in places similar to our county, so stay tuned."

David Culpepper, Franklin Council Member talked about completing the Bartram Trail which will connect Franklin and Highlands but with the NC 106 sidewalk a no-go for now, learned that might be a while. He wants a trail from the library on Siler

• See COLLABORATE page 8

## • OBITUARY •

### Douglas F. Heinemann



Douglas Fred Heinemann, 83, of Tarpon Springs, FL, passed away on February 8, 2025. He is survived by his children, Janine (Steve) Martin, Lisa (Murray) LeBlanc, William (Cathy) Murray, Robert (Shannon) Murray, Larry Murray, and Martin (April) Murray; 16 grandchildren; 14 great-grandchildren; as well as sister, Sharon Bowman. He was a resident in Highlands, NC from 1998 to 2022

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# • HERE'S THE THING •

## Talking about politics

When I was but a lad, my late mother was, and remains to this day, the dominant influence on my way of viewing the world. I recall her once telling me that when interacting with others, I should try to avoid talking about politics. "Unless you know the person or people you're talking to and how they think," she'd said, "the chances are excellent that on this subject you'll ultimately find yourself in disagreement." And, as I subsequently learned, it's a short trip from even modest disagreement on some sensitive issue, to something approximating armed combat.

Over time, I've learned that some people are very, very pas-

sionate about their politics. In some cases, it's become central to their own identity. I have people in my life with whom I share a close and caring friendship. We don't ever discuss politics. Why? Simple. The friendship is more important. Often, people are so invested in political dogma that even a casual comment on some third-rail issue, possibly misconstrued, can result in the end of a relationship, instead of it being set aside with something like, "You know, on this, let's agree to disagree."

I've heard that politics in America is essentially the art of compromise. Ideally, elected representatives with different opinions would, at least metaphorically, lock themselves away and negotiate a solution. Yes. I said negotiate. These days, unfortunately, there's not a lot of that happening on even the local and state levels, never mind in the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate. And thanks to the scorched



**Bud Katz**

earth activities of the two major parties there's not much if any appetite for compromise, on anything. In fact, on both sides, adherence to every party-approved position on every major issue leaves no room for individual thought. It's either get in line or get out.

I grew up in a politically active home environment. I've been aware of the political differences people hold onto since the Eisenhower administration. Not a lot has changed about the substance of these divergent philosophies, but the tone, at least since the late 1980s, has deteriorated into something between finger pointing and raised voices, and an all-out, schoolyard brawl. It seems intelligent and otherwise polite conversation leaves the room as soon as

the first contrary notion make its entrance.

The question, of course, is why. Why can't even the well-intentioned among us talk about politics without fear things will deteriorate into shouting matches or, in the extreme, a permanent dissolution of the relationship? Families have come to blows over support for different political candidates or parties. Neighbors have walked away from both existing and potential friendships over placement of a yard sign. Parents have told their children to no longer associate with children of folks on the other side of the spectrum.

A lot of this is the result of way too much information, mostly opinion as opposed to fact, and much of it just incorrect, from too many fractured sources. We're bombarded in both traditional media as well as on social media platforms and smart phones. This ends up doing nothing more than confirm existing biases and differences.

All of this saddens me. If people can't discuss political differences like adults, what hope is there for our future? I worry not for myself, or even for my adult children, but for my grandkids and their children.

Here's the thing: our personal political affiliations, if any, are choices. We're not born Democrats or Republicans, or, for that matter, Independents. Many of us have been handed a place to first land, but at some point, don't we arrive at an age where we can decide this for ourselves? If we choose to surround ourselves with people who believe only as we do, in this case regarding politics, don't we risk missing out on ideas and relationships that might positively impact our lives?

Am I missing something here? Do our political affiliations and ideas matter more to us than our families, our friends, and our neighbors? Even our own best interest? I hope not.

• Bruce F. "Bud" Katz, and his wife, Lynn, have lived year-round in Highlands since 2011. Bud is the author of four novels and a work of non-fiction. He facilitates the Highlands Writers Group and spends much of his time in front of a computer making words into sentences, sentences into paragraphs, ... etc. You can get to know Bud better by visiting his website, [brucefkatz.com](http://brucefkatz.com), and you can contact him, regarding this column, his books, or for information about the Highlands Writers Group, at [brucefkatzauthor@gmail.com](mailto:brucefkatzauthor@gmail.com).

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## ...COLLABORATE continued from page 7

Road to the Franklin Rec Park. He asked about the trail from Highlands to Cashiers, too.

"Connectivity is critical," he said.

Horton closed by congratulating the Franklin Council for being the first municipality in the state to have 100% participation in the League of Municipalities CityVision program.

CityVision calls on governing boards to be civil to each other and with citizens who attend their meetings.

"The idea is to deal with issues and the public in a civil matter and to discuss things making reasonable adjustments and expectations without losing your temper and getting way off track," said

Horton.

Mayor Pat Taylor said these meetings are held "so we so we can build partnerships and communicate with one another and work together to the benefit of our constituents."

While acknowledging that Highlands was not hit anywhere nearly as hard as neighbors to the north by Hurricane Helene, Taylor outlined the impact the hurricane had on Highlands.

"We suffered about \$1 million in damage to our electric grid, where utility poles were literally snapped in two throughout town. We had to bring utility crews in from elsewhere because it can take a day to right one pole and get everything connected.

"We had a huge debris field, but Commissioner John Shearl helped us get fees waived for our private providers to help get the debris transported. And Warren Cabe as director of Emergency Management Services at the time, helped us coordinate with the Corps of Engineers and FEMA with road issues and he got us access to Starlink which enabled citizens to communicate. We lost communication because we never imagined that the cell system would be down in WNC due to the loss of fiber connections. It was a team effort," he said. "We realized we need to improve our communication system because it was hard to get information out to



## ...EVENT SPACE continued from page 6

ing the front of the building, the back of the building, and the placement of parking spaces, etc.

"I have no opposition to parties and weddings, the town needs places to gather, but if you take a close look at the parking, I can't see it from being completely confusing," said Garner. "The B3 zone connotes mostly cars, so if you have an event, and catering, where is everyone going to park? If there is a band, where are they going to park? Who is going to monitor the comings and goings? How can parking for the public be in the back of the building? How does this work?"

Underwood stressed the importance of private property and questioned who would manage the outcome.

"Carolina Way isn't owned by the town. The businesses are individually owned by private property owners and the parking itself is also owned by that business. The sidewalk is etched in asphalt – that isn't well marked at all – and is for people to traverse. So, what happens is people walk across private property lines to get from one establishment to the other.

"So if this is approved, people will then park and walk to the next business up, which is the brewery and up to the next bar which is the High Dive so it becomes a bar crawl so that everyone in between is stuck with managing that kind of traffic that comes across our private property lines where people loiter, they smoke, the drop cigarette butts, they drop trash and it becomes a movement pattern that's not managed by any one person other than the next day when they are picking up trash and cleaning up.

"So, it's a matter of managing. It's not about what's just inside a building ... there is so much more going on around that one place that the neighbors have to facilitate," she said.

Garner brought up the alley behind Carolina Way that runs the length of the property.

"This seems like a huge ask to turn that into an event space where there could be, I don't know how many people according to the fire marshal. Where are they going to park? How are you going to manage coming down the alley with equipment and food. It's a legitimate ask," he said.

Chairwoman of the Zoning Board, Margot Teed, suggested moving the communal dumpster so 442 Carolina Way has six spaces like everyone else, and also said it was likely that people would park in KH Founders Park like the Catholic Church is doing during construction.

"Parking will spill over and doesn't

just have to be in the assigned parking in the front and the back," she said.

Garner insisted they weren't "parking Nazis" but continued to question the logistics.

"Our spaces are taken up by FedEx, Bobby Grace and people come and go all the time. But if I turn my back on my parking spaces to go to lunch and I come back and they are full from an event, what should I do?" he asked.

Teed said his spaces were his and the availability of parking is unpleasant for everyone along Carolina Way not just them and suggested Mull and Cahill might ask people to park in the park or elsewhere and not in their spaces in front of their business or anyone else's.

Board members Rick Siegel said he understood their concerns, but the Zoning Board must rule based on specific requirements regarding the B3 zone:

- That the use will not materially endanger the public health or safety if located where proposed and developed according to the plan as submitted and approved.

*Mull said the space is intended for gatherings inside, it will not endanger the public health or safety.*

- That the use meets all required conditions and specifications.

*Mull said the use meets required conditions. That the application for 1,000 sq. ft. of patron space with space for storage of gathering supplies and five parking spaces per each 200 sq. ft.*

- That the use will not substantially injure the value of adjoining or abutting property.

*Mull said the exterior of the space isn't being altered. It will be only be cosmetically upgraded so it will financially increase the value of surrounding properties. It will bring more foot traffic and, therefore bring more patrons to the retail area of town.*

- And that the location and character of the use, as developed according to the plan as submitted and approved, will be in harmony with the area in which it is to be located and in general conformity with the plan of development of the Town and its environs.

*Mull said the building will not change, It is located in a business district and fits the SUP guidelines.*

Underwood questioned the word "harmony."

"Harmonious? We're talking about the potential of 100 people; we are talking about noise and respect. Who will manage them as they leave and traverse over private property?"

The town's Zoning Board attorney Nick Tosco with Poyner Spruill Attorneys at Law who has been attending all Zoning Board meetings since his firm was hired to

represent the town, said if a special use is allowed in a zoning district, it is by default in harmony with the area.

Board member Jim Ward pointed out that there is a bar [High Dive] and a brew pub in the same group of buildings on Carolina Way, so it would appear to be "harmonious."

Heather Winkler, who is renovating the building between the old Custom House building and the brew pub said allowing the event space impacts her the most and said it would affect her property's value.

"I have put a sizeable amount of money into a remodel to turn it into a townhouse. They are not putting in a fire wall or insulation. I will be able to hear every band, every drink. This is a nondescript space without any nuts and bolts inside," she said. "Who

### • CHHS NEWS •



Photo by Marty Boone


Meet the official rockhound of the Cashiers-Highlands Humane Society! Rock is a five-year-old Bluetick Coonhound mix. He is very friendly with everyone he meets and Rock gets along great with other dogs. Rock would thrive best in a calm and quiet environment. To give this handsome hound a forever home, please visit [chhumaneociety.org](http://chhumaneociety.org) or call (828)743-5752 for more information.

is going to regulate the alcohol, what about the food? How is this going to affect the neighbors, the businesses, and everyone else?"

Mull said they haven't begun outfitting the space since they needed the SUP first, but she was told a fire wall wouldn't be required because there won't be a kitchen and the walls are cinder block.

The Zoning Board unanimously approved the SUP.

Mull and Cahill will now move forward and may request the communal dumpster be moved off their property.



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# SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING

## The Desert Sea



**Jacob Tedder**  
**Congregational Pastor**  
**Christ Church of the Valley**  
 jacob@cashiers.church

Three ragged men emerged from the Allardyce Mountain Range and strode into the Stromness whaling station on South Georgia Island on May 20, 1916. They were met with puzzled faces from the whalers stationed there because they had come from the mountains which, up until that point, no one had ever traversed. Upon meeting the whaling manager, the leader of the group spoke up and said, “My name is Shackleton.”

My love for the stories of the great polar explorers was born out of this story. I have read the book *Endurance* by Alfred Lansing many times. It’s the best kind of story – a true one with a happy ending. Believe it or not, it’s also a story that continues to this day in Highlands. You can go the ABC store and buy a bottle of the same whiskey the men drank on that trip. Ironically, it is now simply called “Shackleton.”

The story of the ship *Endurance* is about the heroic deeds of Ernest Shackleton to lead his men to safety after being stuck in the pack ice off Antarctica in the Weddell Sea for 10 months. Unbelievably, not one man was lost despite atrocious conditions and unbearable cold. While Shackleton gets much of the deserved praise, salvation possibly belongs in higher regards to another man, Frank Worsley.

Frank Worsley was the ships navigator and throughout the entirety of the voyage home, he displayed his extraordinary skill of navigation. He navigated through the most treacherous passage in the world, the Drake Passage, for over 800 miles and 16 days in a 22.5-foot boat called the *James Caird*. All he had for navigation was some charts and a sextant. Paired with Shackleton’s leadership, this undoubtedly saved the lives of all the men.

We all go through times when life is hard, when things are disorienting and confusing. We feel stuck in the ice, unable to move and just drifting along. We know we’re going somewhere but we don’t know where or in which direction. What is your navigational tool you use to guide when you feel lost? Or, the better questions may be, who is the navigational tool you use?

This same dilemma happened to a prophet named Elijah. He had just battled the prophets of Baal and watched the fire from Heaven consume them because they called on and offered sacrifices to the false god, Baal. Jezebel, the wicked queen, was incensed by his actions and vowed to kill him. So, Elijah escaped into the wilderness and wandered around destitute and discouraged, unsure of the purpose and direction of his life. He was not wandering in a frozen sea, but a desert sea. God asked him to journey 40 days and nights into the wilderness to Mount Horeb, the “mount of God” because something was about to happen to Elijah.

• See SPIRITUALLY page 11

# • PLACES TO WORSHIP •

**BLUEVALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH**  
 Rev. Oliver Rice. Pastor (828) 421-1315  
 Sundays: School: 10 a.m., Worship: 11  
 Sunday night services every 2nd & 4th Sunday at 7  
 Wednesdays: Mid-week prayer meeting: 7 p.m.

**BUCK CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH**  
 828-269-3546 • Rev. Jamie Passmore. Pastor  
 Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11

**CASHIERS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
 Rev. Aryn Williams-Reubel. Pastor 828-743-5298  
 Sundays: School at 9:30; Worship 10:30

**CHAPEL OF THE SKY**  
 Sky Valley, GA • 706-746-2999  
 Sundays: 10 a.m. Worship; Holy Communion 1st & 3rd Sundays

**CHRIST ANGLICAN CHURCH**  
 The Rev’d Dr. Michael Matlock, Rector  
 464 U.S. Hwy. 64E, Cashiers, NC  
 CAC@christanglicancashiers.org • 828-743-1701  
 Sunday: 9a Fellowship; 9:30a Adult Christian Ed; 10:30a Holy Eucharist Tues., 9a; Thurs., 12p Prayer & Book Study

**CHRIST CHURCH OF THE VALLEY. CASHIERS**  
 Pastor Jacob Tedder • jacob@cashiers.church • 743-5470  
 www.cashiers.church

Sun. 10:45a; Wed Study 5:15p supper and childcare.

**CHRISTIAN SCIENCE CHURCH**  
 283 Spring Street - Sunday Service: 10:30 a.m.  
 Testimony meeting: 3rd Wednesday at 5:30 p.m.

**CLEAR CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH**  
 Pastor Jim Kinard  
 Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11 a.m.  
 1st & 3rd Sunday night Service: 7 p.m.  
 Wednesdays – Supper at 6 p.m.

**COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH**  
 www.cbchighlands.com • 526-4685  
 3645 Cashiers Rd. Highlands, NC • Sr. Pastor Gary Hewins  
 Sun: Service 10:45am, Children’s 10:30am  
 Wed.: Youth 5:30-7pm; Women’s Bible Study: Mon. 4:30pm, Tues. 10am; Men’s Bible Study: Wed. & Thurs. 7am @ Zookeeper Bistro

**COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH OF SKY VALLEY**  
 706. 746.3144 • 696 Sky Valley Way #447  
 Pastor Steve Kerhoulas  
 Worship: Sun. 10:30 a.m. Holy Communion 2nd Sunday

**EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE INCARNATION**  
 Rev. W. Bentley Manning, Rector • 526-2968  
 5th and Main streets • www.incarnationwnc.org  
 Sunday: Rite I, spoken, 8 am in Chapel, Rite II with Choir 10:30 am in Sanctuary, Wed: Healing Eucharist 12 pm in Chapel, Morning Prayer: Mon-Thurs 8:30 am in Chapel

**FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH HIGHLANDS**  
 828-526-4153 • www.fbchighlands.org  
 Dr. Mark Ford, Pastor • 220 Main Street, Highlands  
 Sun.: Worship 10:45 am; Sun.: Bible Study 9:30 am  
 Wed.: Men’s Bible Study 8:30 am; Women’s 10:30 am

**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
 Emily Wilmarth, pastor, Kelley Connelly Asso. Pastor  
 828-526-3175 • fpchighlands.org  
 Sun.: Adult Ed.: 10 a.m.; Worship 11 a.m.  
 Tues: Men’s Group 10 a.m. Wed: Bell Choir 4 p.m.. Choir: 6p

**GOLDMINE BAPTIST CHURCH**  
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 Sunday School: 10 am. Worship Service: 11 am

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 Services: Sundays 10am - Wed. - 7pm; Dinner - Wed. 6pm

**HAMBURG BAPTIST CHURCH**  
 Hwy 107N. • Glenville, NC • 743-2729 • Nathan Johnson  
 Sunday: School 9:45a. Worship 11a & 7p. Bible Study 6p  
 Wed. Kidsquest 6p.; Worship 7p.

**HIGHLANDS ASSEMBLY OF GOD**  
 Randy Reed. Pastor 828-421-9172 • 165 S. Sixth Street  
 Wed. Bible Study: 6 p.m.; Sundays: Worship: 11

**HIGHLANDS CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH**  
 Pastor Dan Robinson • 11339 Buck Creek Road  
 The Highlands Central Baptist Church is temporarily sharing the facilities of the Shortoff Baptist Church.  
 Sunday Worship is at 9a. Wednesday Worship is 6:30p

**HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH**  
 Rev. Dr. Randy Lucas. Pastor 526-3376  
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**HOLY FAMILY LUTHERAN CHURCH: ELCA**  
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 Rev. Ken Langsdorf  
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**MACEDONIA BAPTIST CHURCH**  
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 Pastor Zane Talley  
 Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11. Choir: 6 p.m.  
 Wed: Bible Study and Youth Mtg.: 7 p.m.

**MOUNTAIN SYNAGOGUE**  
 Franklin • 828-634-1312 • mountainsynagoguenc.com.  
 Services: 1st Fri. and 3rd Sat. and Rosh Hashanah & Yom Kippur.

**MOUNTAIN BIBLE CHURCH**  
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 Weds: Youth Group 6 p.m.; Bible Study 6:30 p.m.;

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**SCALY MOUNTAIN BAPTIST CHURCH**  
 Rev. Marty Kilby  
 Sundays: School – 10 a.m.; Worship – 11 a.m. & 7  
 Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg.: 7 p.m.

**SCALY MOUNTAIN CHURCH OF GOD**  
 290 Buck Knob Road; Pastor Donald G. Bates • 526-3212  
 Sun.: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 10:45 a.m.; Worship: 6 p.m.

**SHORTOFF BAPTIST CHURCH**  
 Pastor Rev. Andy Cloer  
 Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11 a.m.  
 Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study: 6 p.m.

**ST. JUDE’S CATHOLIC CHURCH**  
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 www.goodshepherdofcashiers.com

**UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP**  
 85 Sierra Drive. Franklin • uufranklin.org  
 Sunday Worship - 11 a.m.

**WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**  
 Rev. Sam Forrester/Cashiers • 828-743-2122  
 Sunday School: 10 am. Worship Service: 11 am

# • POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

**Highlands Police entries from Feb. 14. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a summons/citation, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or those of public officials have been used.**

**Feb. 14**

- At 7:37 a.m., officers responded to

a one-vehicle accident on US 64 east (Cashiers Road) where a vehicle traveling on the Cashiers Road hit ice hit the embankment.

- At 7:37 a.m., another vehicle also traveling on US 64 east (Cashiers Road) collided with a van that had previously wrecked and was on the side of the road.

**The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from Feb. 11.**

**Feb. 11**

- At 8:55 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Country Club Lane.

**Feb. 14**

- At 7:35 a.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on N. 4th Street.

**Feb. 15**

- At 1:20 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Main Street.
- At 11:59 a.m., the dept. responded to a call of a power line down on Satulah Ridge.
- At 4:30 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Panther Mountain Road.
- At 5:08 p.m., the dept. responded to a

fire alarm at a location on Chestnut Street.

**Feb. 16**

- At 10:49 a.m., the dept. responded to a call of a tree down on US 64 west (Franklin Road).

**Feb. 17**

- At 8:20 a.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on US 64 west (Franklin Road).

## Mountain Findings is accepting donations

Your donations of furniture, housewares, artwork, rugs, and more, accepted at 452 Spruce Street, Highlands, or by scheduling a pickup at 828-526-9929, help Mountain Findings provide life-changing grants and scholarships.



## New tanker truck arrives

Last week HF&R took ownership of their new 2,500-gallon tanker which has been on order for two years. Pictured is Chief Ryan Gearhart, Asst. Chief Robbie Forrester, Clay Gibson and the salesman.

## ...SPIRITUALLY continued from page 10

God himself came to Elijah. It happened in a way that Elijah did not expect and it changed Elijah forever. God orders Elijah to stand on the mountainside, a violent wind came and tore upon the mountainside; but God was not in the wind. Then, there was an earthquake but God was not in the earthquake. Next, there was a fire but God was not in the fire. Last, came the sound of a "low whisper" – the voice of God himself, and it tore Elijah to

pieces. God revealed himself and his power to Elijah. Elijah came out of his depression because he finally had the direction he so desperately wanted.

Wandering is not always a test: it is sometimes a guide to get you from a place where you depend on yourself to a place where you meet God. And just like Elijah, when you meet God, it will tear you to pieces. Because, you'll realize that all paths in your life were always leading to him.

## Prepare for the Feb. 26 power outage

The town will experience a planned power outage on February 26. The outage is planned because several problem trees must be removed to ensure they don't later fall onto the transmission lines coming into the town. There will be no power within the city limits during this time.

The Highlands Police Department wants to remind residents and visitors that the traffic lights will also be out. NC General Statute 20-158 (b) (6) states:

"When a traffic signal is not illuminated due to a power outage or other malfunction, vehicles shall approach the intersection and proceed through the intersection

as though such intersection is controlled by a stop sign on all approaches to the intersection. This subdivision shall not apply if the movement of traffic at the intersection is being directed by a law enforcement officer, another authorized person, or another type of traffic control device."

In short, all traffic must come to a complete stop at the intersection, and all vehicles must take turns proceeding through the intersection.

The Highlands Police Department asks for your assistance during this outage to ensure the safety of all residents and visitors.

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### SERVICES

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## ...COLLABORATE from pg. 8

the public especially with people on social media putting out crazy stuff, which needed our verification and correction," he said.

Taylor explained about the formation of the new comprehensive website and phone app that will help the town get current information out to the public.

He said like everyone else in WNC Highlands' tourism industry suffered and is still in the midst of recovering.

"We encourage our state leaders and our governor to understand that people really need help in this region. Our small businesses, in particular, might need some cash which will mean they can stay in business which will generate some tax income for us," he said.

Though the overall population hasn't increased substantially over the years, Taylor said Highlands is no longer deserted during the winter months which means the town's infrastructure, particularly the electric grid, must be expanded to keep up.

"With new homes begin built that depend highly on electricity we are being challenged to keep up. We have seen the handwriting on the wall and are putting \$2.8 million into expanding the grid over the next two years.

"Twelve years ago, it took 10 MW to power the town now it takes 16 MW. Same thing with water and sewer. We used to use 200,000/gallons/day and that's gone way up. In the past, our biggest peak time for water and electricity use was around July 4th, now it's Christmas and New Years. So, we are challenged to keep everything upgraded."

Taylor acknowledged the town's partnership with the county regarding recreation - the county matched the town in giving \$250,000 toward the new playground - but said with inflation he hoped the county's annual allotment for the Rec Park facility might be increased because the Rec Park is for Macon County residents in Highlands and beyond.

• See COLLABORATE page 14

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## • HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

### WINTER POOL SCHEDULE

Lap Swim: Mon.-Fri. 6am-9:45am, and Saturday 10am-11pm - 6 lanes.

Water Aerobics: 18 y+ Mon.-Fri. 10-11am with Karen Chambers.

Adult Swim: 18y+ Mon.-Thurs. 11am-3:30pm, Friday 11am-1:30pm

Public Swim: Mon. thru Thurs. 3:30-7pm, Saturday 11am-6pm and Sunday 1-6pm

### ALL WEEK

• Alcoholics Anonymous: "Open Meetings" are for anyone who thinks they may have a drinking problem or for anyone interested in the A.A. program of recovery. Highlands Mountain View Group holds open meetings in Highlands at the First Presbyterian Church, 471 Main St., on Monday at 5:30 PM and Wednesday and Friday at noon. Women's Group 5:30, Tuesdays. The Cashiers Valley Group holds open meetings at the Albert Carlton Cashiers Community Library Monday at 8:30 AM, Tuesday at 7 PM, Friday and Sunday at 5 PM, and Saturday at 9 AM. For more info, please visit [www.aawnc80.org](http://www.aawnc80.org) or to speak with a member of AA 24/7 at 828-349-4357.

### PICKLE BALL

• At the Recreation Dept. every Monday - Friday 10am-1pm indoors for the winter (notice the days and time has changed).

### MOVIES

• No Movie this week due to staffing issues and predicted weather.

### MOUNTAIN FINDINGS

• Open: 10 am - 1 pm, Feb. 21-22, March 7-8 and 21-22, April 4-5 and 18-19.

### Fri., Feb. 21

• At the Rec Park, Senior Luncheon at noon in the meeting room.

• The Mountain will be hosting a screening of the new documentary film: **COMMON GROUND**. Be inspired by the possibilities and potential of regenerative agriculture. Admission is sliding scale and youth are welcome.

### Wed., Feb. 26

• The Cashiers Historical Society will host author and photographer Chris Aluka Berry at the Albert Carlton-Cashiers Community Library from 3-4p. This event is free and open to the public, with a Q&A and book signing to follow. For more information, contact the Cashiers Historical Society at (828) 743-7710

## ...COLLABORATE continued from page 13

He said the town appreciated the county's support of Highlands School.

"We aren't directly involved with that, but it's a very valuable asset to the Town of Highlands to have the school here," he said adding that the Highlands Police Dept. might need some help funding the School Resource Officer position due to inflation.

Josh Young, chairman MC Board of Commissioners said taxpayers and citizens see elected officials as "the government."

"They don't see the Town of Franklin or the Town of Highlands, they just see us," he said. "It's important to have a good working relationship. This engagement is important so we can work together. I feel like we all know each other, but we don't KNOW each other, and I think breaking the ice will mean capability on projects."

Young ticked off projects in the works and projects on the drawing board.

Macon County schools – Highlands, FHS, Macon Middle School, MEC, Nantahala WWTP – were highlighted while suggest-

ing money to upgrade the Buck Creek soccer field might become a reality as well as the Franklin Greenway, to connect the town of Franklin via Siler Road with the library and the Rec Park for which big plans are brewing.

"We have concepts of putting new life into Robert Carpenter Park: a 24-court pickle ball facility directly below the Wendys, enhanced tennis courts, and maybe an area for outdoor concerts where the old baseball field was, since that has been moved to Parker Meadows. Macon County is changing and we need to steer the ship in the direction we want it to go."

MC Commissioner Danny Antoine said the county can capitalize on moving forward by progressing in the right way.

"We have the opportunity to control how growth happens. It's coming anyway, but if it happens correctly, we have nothing to worry about," he said. "I look forward to working together so we can get a lot more done in the direction that benefits families and kids."

He said there is the potential for many more ideas.

"If we get together more often, those ideas can become a lot more solid and more than just ideas," he said.

Highlands representative on the MC Board of Commissioners John Shearl said the current board has the entire county at heart.

"We have to move forward on the Highlands School soccer field. The money is there. We got the property for the WWTP for the Nantahala School, the community center and library there with broadband. Scaly Mountain needed heat in their community center because kids were using the internet there for school-work," said Shearl. "The sheriff said he needed a body scanner to make sure drugs aren't getting into the detention center and we got him that. A lot of work is going on behind the scenes."

Shearl said the county has everyone's vision at heart.

"This is our county, and we want the best because this is where we live so if we can work together, we can make it better," he said.

## ...SHEARL continued from page 4

move forward with the project.

"This is not a simple project, somebody's going to have to study the hydrology of the creek up above it and how it filtered down," said Henning. "It is a very complex problem."

Hilary Wilkes, School Board member who represents the Highlands district spoke at length about the Highlands School soccer field.

Wilkes explained that there are several factors affecting the school's soccer field. First, she spoke of the damage that has existed with the field that the sports teams have been dealing with for many years. She attributed some of this to the irrigation issues.

"There's water that is not being properly diverted from that area," said Wilkes. "We have some severe water mitigation issues that need to happen. Another piece is that to have sod up on the mountain is very detrimental to the sports season, especially for the spring soccer season which is

starting right now with practices. The ground is just a frozen tundra, so if we look into getting a turf top that would help make that a more year-round purpose field for us."

Wilkes also reminded the board that fixing the field is also a curriculum issue as it is used for classes.

Wilkes spoke of the yearlong study that was completed at the request of the MC commissioners. While the study gave a good read on what happens to the field during the year it didn't give any answer on how to get the water out of there.

"The study didn't give us an answer on how to rid of the water," said Wilkes. "I do think it brought to life that was there's a lot of water coming up from under the field; it is not just water coming off a mountain or from the rain. It is also that it's pooling up there because groundwater

coming up from the bottom."

Other options for Highlands School soccer included the discussion of fixing a soccer field at the Buck Creek fields.

At the combo-meeting last Thursday, MC Commission Chair Josh Young said there was \$200,000 available for Buck Creek, but didn't elaborate on what it would be for and how it would be spent.

As it is now, the soccer field isn't regulation-size and when it was used prior to the development of the soccer field at Highlands School, special permission had to be sought and granted prior to school games.

Wilkes said the Buck Creek solution is not ideal as it is also used for the recreation soccer program, and it would be hard to add the school teams. She said transportation to the Buck Creek fields would also be an issue for students practicing after school.



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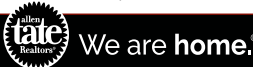
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