Highlands Newspaper

FREE Every Thursday

Volume 19, Number 9 | Real-Time News, Weather & WebCams: HighlandsInfo.com | Thurs., March 2, 2022

Camps line up at Public Hearing to discuss PB's STR recommendations

The last step before the Town Board begins final deliberations about Highlands' Short-term Rentals was a Public Hearing on the Planning Board's recommendations for amendments to the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) concerning STRs.

Every time there is a proposed amendment to the UDO a public hearing must be held before the Town Board. Usually, the Town Board votes on the amendment at an subsequent board meeting and

• See CAMPS page 12

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The Highlands Parkside Center rendition by Hank Ross and Summit Architecture.

Conditional Zoning will help make Highlands Parkside Center a reality

If all goes as planned, the Bank of America building on Carolina Way and Pine Street will be no more.

At the February Planning Board meeting, members considered the conceptual plans presented by Jeff Weller of Summit Architecture regarding the Highlands Parkside Center.

"The plan is for the current building to be demolished," he said.

• See PARKSIDE page 10

Cawthorn seeking re-election in District 11 not 13

By Brittney Lofthouse

North Carolina Rep. Madison Cawthorn announced in a press release on Monday that he intends to seek re-election in North Carolina's 11th District.

While he has not yet filed with the North Carolina Board of Elections, Cawthorn made the announcement after his campaign submitted candidacy paperwork to the Federal Election Commission that showed the congressman would run in the 11th Congressional District.

"I am excited to run for re-election in North Carolina's newly solidified 11th congressional district and represent nearly all of my current constituents in the 118th

• See CAWTHORNE page 13

From Highlands is MC Commission Chair Jim Tate, far left and Highlands Mayor Pat Taylor, far right.

Officials meet with NC DMV Commissioner to talk 'problems'

By Brittney Lofthouse

North Carolina Representative Karl Gillespie was joined by Senator Kevin Corbin and other leaders across Western North Carolina last Monday afternoon to host newly appointed DMV Commissioner Wayne Goodwin and members of his staff to discuss issues with rural DMV operations.

"I believe this is the first time that the DMV Commissioner, let alone his top staff, has visited the offices here in Franklin and Andrews," said Senator Corbin.

•See DMV page 9

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• The Plateau's Position •

• Mayor on Duty •

STRs and the upcoming budget

Highlands Mayor Patrick Taylor

I want to thank everyone for a very successful and civil public hearing last Thursday night that addressed the Highlands Planning Board's recommendations concerning short-term rental amendments to the UDO.Over 30 people spoke at the hearing and expressed positions both for and against the recommendations being considered.

The Highlands Town Board of Commissioners have been given written public comments submitted for the hearing.Everyone on the Highlands Sunshine List has been sent a final agenda with those comments included. To join the Sunshine List contact Gibby Shaheen at 526-2118, or email her at Gibby.shaheen@highlandsnc.org.

I want to thank Gibby and our staff for organizing the hearing.The YouTube telecast that staff setup was free of the audio problems that were experienced at the recent Town Board meeting.

I also want to thank the Highlands Planning Board, and especially their chairperson Brad Armstrong, for developing the STR recommendations.They were given a draft proposal from the town attorneys who were working on the short-term rental issue.Members of this board spent many hours reviewing the draft. The planning board made some difficult decisions as community volunteers. I speak for the town board in expressing our appreciation for their service.

I want to express my gratitude to all who attended and participated in the hearing. The hearing was a candid airing of different views.In the great community spirit of Highlands we had a civil and respectful meeting. I came away from this meeting with the affirmation that the people of Highlands love this community and respect their fellow citizens.

The next step will be for the Town Board to begin addressing the recommendations. I anticipate holding special meetings as part of this process.The board's next scheduled meeting is the March 10 Highlands Town Retreat.The STR is will not be on the retreat agenda.The retreat agenda is reserved for budget and annual planning issues.

The retreat will be held at Coleman Hall at the Highlands Presbyterian Church this coming Thursday, March 10. The session will begin at 9 am and continue into the afternoon.

There will be a lunch break where staff and commissioners will enjoy a locally catered box lunch.I say this jokingly that the box lunch is the one big perk Highlands elected officials receive yearly.

The retreat is open to the public. Folks can come listen to the staff reports and discussion during the retreat.The retreat is not a time where public comment is taken. During the sessions no final budget actions are made.The retreat is actually a preliminary planning session for developing the town budget for fiscal year 2022-2023.

There will be several budget workshops this spring as the Town Manager and staff develop the new budget.At these workshops final priorities and adjustments will be set. At the June Town Board meeting, a public hearing will be held concerning the proposed new budget. The new budget will go into effect on July 1.

Highlands Newspaper
www.highlandsinfo.com
Phone: (828) 200-1371
Email:
HighlandsEditor@aol.com
Publisher/Editor: Kim Lewicki
Reporters: Brittney Lofthouse
Brian O'Shea
Digital Media/Circulation - Jim Lewicki
Locally owned and operated by
Kim & Jim Lewicki
Adobe PDF version at
www,HighlandsInfo.com
265 Oak St. PO Box 2703
Highlands, N,C 28741
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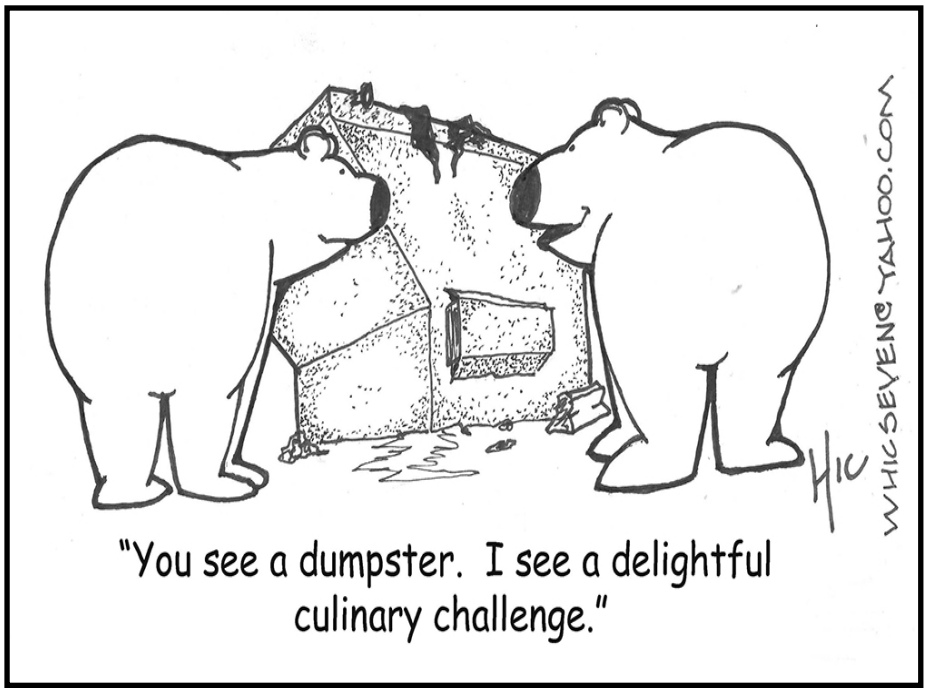
• Hic's View •



• Weather •

Thu, 3-Mar	Fri, 4-Mar	Sat, 5-Mar	Sun, 6-Mar
66°F / 37°F	61°F / 38°F	60°F / 44°F	64°F / 52°F
Mostly sunny and warm	Partial sunshine	Mild with clouds and sur	Partly sunny and mild
RealFeel® High: 70° Low: 41°	RealFeel® High: 66° Low: 40°	RealFeel® High: 63° Low: 46°	RealFeel® High: 67° Low: 46°

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• Letters •

The other side of the story

Dear Editor,

It is time for someone to stand up for Marc Hehn. I will be glad to do it.

The board, the mayor, and the media need to quit picking on him. Last week, both local papers devoted a record amount of space detailing the inconvenience in providing copies of contracts and other documents to Marc.

My question is—so what?

Is inconvenience more important than education of a board member as to a particular issue? My concern is why other town board members weren't asking for the same information. After all, it is the board's responsibility to make multimillion dollar decisions as to town projects, and to do so, they need to read and study the pertinent contracts and ask questions. Not do so is negligence.

Also, the alleged inconvenience can be eliminated by hiring a part-time filing clerk. If you can spend eight and one half million dollars for a new fire station, you can hire a clerk for $10 an hour.

The real problem is lack of leadership. Marc is a new member of the board. He does not have a full-time job, so supposedly has more time to devote to town issues than the other members. More importantly, Mark came to our board with 43 years of experience in municipal and county administration in positions of responsibility. I was taught that experience is the greatest teacher.

Wow! What a gift to our little town of 976 citizens. The leadership should have welcomed him with open arms. He could be a great resource to call upon for advice on a regular basis.

For example, our leaders, whoever they are, could have immediately handed Marc a copy of any of their expensive contracts for any ideas he might have. It is not too late for them to change their attitudes. Think positively.

Griffin Bell
Highlands

• See LETTERS page 11

• Biz/Org News •

Last week Highlands School 5th Grade class created their own pizzas with teacher Ms. Cashion. "They all did such a great job and enjoyed eating their own creations!" she said. From left are Hudson Tilley an Josh Doerter

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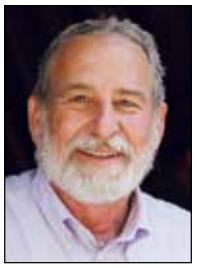

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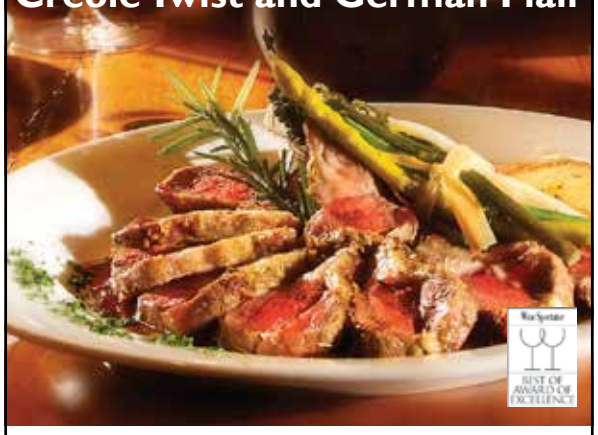

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• Biz/Org News •

Students from the 2-and 3-year-old class at the Highlands Community Child Development Center with Valentine boxes they and their parents made and brought to share with their classmates.

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• Past & Present •

Why Are People So Stupid?

And stubborn, too? In the face of overwhelming evidence both scientific and anecdotal that, yes, vaccinations do work and, yes, there is climate change, and, yes, the pandemic is not a hoax, and, yes, Joe Biden really is a legitimate President, a large segment of society nonetheless continues to deny all this and more. How could they be so stupid? And stubborn?

Milton Ready

Perhaps they aren't. Indeed, the very idea of telling anyone they are stupid not only is insulting but also condescending, arrogant, and probably not a good long term strategy. It's unlikely to soften hearts, change minds, or beliefs. Indeed, any argument that some are not as well educated, have some sort of information deficit inasmuch as they don't have access to diverse media sources, that they don't behave or think rationally, or that they are cranks who embrace crazy, even dangerous beliefs and conspiracy theories simply doesn't sufficiently explain why millions not only defend but proudly put forward, even act on patently false beliefs. Hydroxychlorquine anyone?

Like so much today, issues such as vaccination and mask mandates have become benchmarks in our endless culture wars and political debates. They're not just about facts and evidence anymore. Even Socrates, Galen, or Euclid would struggle with "facts" in our present chaotic world. Moreover, calling people stupid or ignorant simply feeds into deepening class divisions and social anxieties many have about being marginalized, disregarded, and dismissed by cultural and "other" elites. Business and military elites? Well, they're somehow OK while others aren't. Confused? Just ask Peter Thiel for an explanation.

Americans simply don't trust experts anymore. Or almost anyone. All the old markers of proficiency, degrees, qualifications, experience, and awards no longer guarantee anything. In fact, you can acquire them easily by going on the internet and purchasing them or joining any number of "scholarly" or "professional" associations and placing a plaque in your office that says "voted best in" whatever and wherever. When Rand Paul, Dr. Oz, Anthony Fauci, and Rochelle Walensky, all medically credentialed experts, give different opinions about Covid, its variants and treatment, who do you trust? If anything, the media only makes matters worse.

Frankly, I'd go with Rand Paul for ophthalmology but Tony Fauci for infectious diseases. Still, you might get the impression that science isn't "hard" but soft and always changing and, from that, you rationally can reject a medical and scientific consensus about vaccinations or anything. And if you do get sick? You then wholeheartedly insist that you're right because you went on the internet and know as much as the physician or nurse attending you. "Give me Ivermectin or I'll sue you for malpractice!"

Lastly, coming to your own conclusions and defensively wrapping them around you gives some element of control in these chaotic times. When confronted with a global pandemic, constant fear of death and illness, arbitrary lockdowns, differing masking policies, political upheaval here and worldwide, worsening income equality, periodic recessions, and a burning and drowning planet, small wonder that some embrace what little agency they have by being stubborn contrarians. Local institutions like family, schools, and religion thus take on an expanded role in lives while government and the media is much less trusted.

So what's the solution? Paraphrasing the Zen master Roshi, who said there is one? Indeed, it likely will take a precipitous even unanticipated event to change American's hearts, minds, and beliefs. Look for one sooner and not later. Until then, let's be kinder and less judgmental toward each other and, as Johnny Carson once said, laugh more. Lots more.

...DMV continued from page 1

Also at the meeting was Highlands Mayor Pat Taylor, Macon County Manager Derek Roland, MC Commission Chair Jim Tate, and Franklin Mayor Jack Horton to hear about issues and concerns about the Franklin DMV operations as well as answer questions on what solutions are in the progress.

Since taking over as Commissioner on Jan. 18, Goodwin now oversees the daily operations of the N.C. Division of Motor Vehicles, including vehicle registrations, driver licenses, vehicle safety, and emissions inspections as well as activities to halt vehicle theft and identity fraud.

With wait times and shortened operating hours being among the top concerns, not just in WNC, but across the state, Goodwin noted that addressing employment shortages would be the first step in addressing issues. Macon County's driving license office is intended to employ two people, however, they currently have a vacancy, meaning 50% of their workforce is missing. Andrews has three staff, however, with one vacancy, a third of the office's workforce is missing.

On Monday afternoon, if trying to book an appointment to be seen at the Franklin DMV office, the first available appointment was May 12– 80 days out. A sign hanging in the Franklin office said appointments are typically 45 days out — however with a staff vacancy, that wait time is currently almost double.

Yvonne Cano with NCWorks was on hand to brainstorm how NC DMV can work in conjunction with NCWorks to advertise job openings within the DMV and fill vacancies that cause longer wait times and reduced operating hours.

Before joining the N.C. Department of Transportation, Goodwin worked as president and CEO of Seaboard Strategic Consulting where he provided counsel to insurance entities, businesses, associations, and consumers.

Goodwin also previously served as state insurance commissioner for eight years, overseeing the agency that regulates insurance rates as products as well as investigating fraud. During his time as insurance commissioner, he also served as state fire marshal and chaired the national Antifraud Task Force for two years.

Prior to traveling to Andrews and Franklin, Goodwin attended a ribbon-cutting for the state's 117 DMV office in Marshall located in Madison County. Before this, Madison County residents have had to travel into another county for in-person service since the 2019 closure of the Main-Street DMV office. For a short time, there was a part-time office in Madison County, but that also closed during the pandemic. The new office marks the full-time return to service that has been needed for several years.

Sen. Corbin said that creating a part-time office split between Robbinsville and Murphy may be possible and would alleviate much of the capacity and delays being experienced at the Andrews and Franklin offices.

Goodwin, who will be back in WNC later this month, said that meeting with officials and hearing firsthand how he and his team can improve the department and operations for customers is a top priority and something he plans to continue doing.

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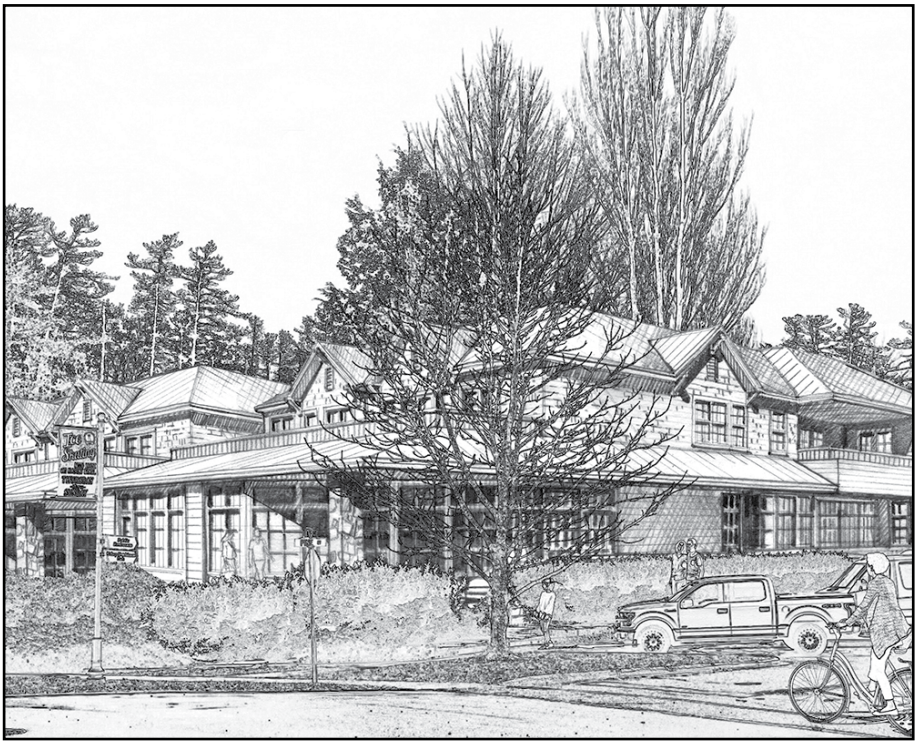
...PARKSIDE continued from page 1



The mixed-use project will have retail and residential units.

Weller went through the steps to hopefully get B2 Conditional Zoning (CZ) for the .977-acre property, which is currently zoned B3, to construct a commercial/residential building with a parking deck in its place.

Weller said they are requesting the zone be changed to B2 CZ so the new building can extend to the edge of the sidewalks which will be on three sides of the parcel including the existing Pine Street and N. 4th Street sidewalks and a new brick sidewalk to be laid along the north edge of the property along Carolina Way which will border a small parking lot.

B3 zoning requires a 25 ft. setback from the property lines which would mean the design would be grouped in the center of the parcel and would end up resembling a strip mall with parking around the building.

"The B2 CZ zone would enable the parcel to be much more functional as well as allowing the frontage on N. 4th Street as well as the park-side to be pedestrian friendly," said Weller. "Through the years, the development of this side of Highlands downtown area on Carolina Way has been widely developed similar to the B2 requirement, which is on the north side of the property. On the southside of the property the zoning is B1. To better blend into the location and the surroundings, the ordinances associated with B2 CZ would allow the property to better support the primary downtown business district."

At the meeting he said currently there is not transition in zoning. It's B1 on the part side, B3 on the bank side of Carolina Way and developed with B2 aspects on the north side of Carolina Way.

Plans are for the property, now owned by Pine Holdings, LLC, includes seven business spaces ranging in size of 1,600 sf. to 2,000 sq. ft. on the lower level of the building and seven apartments ranging in size of 1,600 sq. ft. to 1,800 sq. ft. on upper level, or one 6,000 sq. ft. residential unit, as well as a two-level parking garage with the top level accessed by Carolina Way and the bottom level accessed from Pine Street.

The recent Comprehensive Plan identified this area as a good spot for mixed-use with both businesses and residential units like what exists across the street on Carolina Way.

A total of 59 parking spaces are required so planned are 30 spaces on the upper parking deck, 15 on the lower deck and 14 in the parking area along Carolina Way.

Asst. Town Planner Michael Mathis said according to the master plan for the project, the built upon area will make up 68.6% of the overall lot. As per 8.41 of the UDO, when approved as a "Special Nonresidential Intensity Allocation," nonresidential uses may be permitted up to a maximum of 70% built-upon in up to 5% of the balance of the watershed which is outside the critical area.

"The master plan for this project meets the standards of the UDO. The recommendation is to approve the Conditional Zoning Request consistent with the town's Land Use Plan," said Mathis.

The Planning Board was for the plan with Chairman Brad Armstrong saying "To me this is exactly what we need for this property," but concerns brought up by Highlands Motoring Festival representatives Chairman Mark Chmar and Steve Mehder were taken into consideration.

The issue revolves around the ingress/egress point of the lower parking garage which is on to Pine Street and into the park.

Highlands Motoring Festival Chairman Chmar and member Medher both thought the idea was great and shows how a valuable piece of property can be put to a great mixed-use but worried an aspect of the design could hamper future events in the park.

"How the park is used is vital to me and more than just us, but last year we gave $81,000 to three local human-needs charities by putting on a first-class festival that has now attracted people from around the country who have never been here before. But the devil is in the details and one of the details is that lower parking garage that exits on to Pine Street – the park street.

"We use the park for the motoring festival but it's also used for the art and crafts festival, the concerts on Saturday nights, Christmas and Highlands Food & Wine, so if the only ingress and exit to that lower level of the parking garage is on to Pine Street, that forever changes the character of the park and how it can be used.

"I would say it's impractical to say that from now on and forever, if someone wants to use the park that area has to be blocked off, if that's the only exit provided," he said. "I would love to see the project, but I would love to see it with a different solution to the parking. I wanted to bring it up early so it's not a surprise in the end and everyone then realizes this is a problem."

Though it will take some reworking and consideration due to the lay of the land, Weller said the owners are three young men who love Highlands and who are very community-minded.

"We will certainly look at options to get that out of there," said Weller.

In the end the board voted unanimously to recommend B2 CZ for the parcel with conditions.

"We recommend approval of the Conditional Zoning with the additional condition that either there is a second point of ingress/egress for the lower parking deck that would not require exiting on Pine Street during events or an operational covenant be applied that says those spaces [in the lower parking deck] can't be utilized during town-sanctioned events with a strong preference that this be accomplished with the first part of the statement," said Armstrong.

Making the lower level of the parking garage inaccessible during town-sanctioned events could mean 2-6 days at a time during various times of the year depending on the event.

– Kim Lewicki

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Doing business at the human level

Pat Gleeson, BIC White Oak Realty Group

It's called anti-social media when two or more are seated in a nice Highlands restaurant all thumbing away on their phones (odds are pretty good at least one of them is a real estate broker); anti-social media is when checking the Instagram feed every morning happens before your first cup of coffee; or it's when you've been driving around the same town for years, but now need to turn on Waze or Google Maps in order to find the new bistro around the corner. And yet, many call use social media when they go about buying a house and rely exclusively upon Zillow, realtor.com. or Trulia as the "experts".

The late great Johnny Isakson, former United States Senator and Founder of Northside Realty in Atlanta, GA said it best: "In the real estate business you learn more about people and you learn more about community issues, you learn more about life, you learn more about the impact of government, probably that any other profession that I know of." What Johnny was embracing is that it's important that all of us do business at the "human level", especially in real estate where it's generally one of if the largest investments you'll ever make.

Zillow, Trulia, and realtor.com certainly serve a purpose. They inform buyers and sellers, period. I just cannot speak to the accuracy of all their data; especially the "Market Values" of real property. Remember, their information is extrapolated from the County records and then propagated based upon algorithms. When was the last time an algorithm told you about the sewage treatment plant just west of the property and when the wind blows you really know it? Did the online platform mention the fact that the neighbor's driveway encroaches by 20 feet onto the property you're considering buying? Do the beautiful photos show you the moisture in the crawl space? Let's face it you wouldn't buy a car from a vending machine would you (even though you can on Carvana), and WebMD cannot perform an appendectomy. The anti-social media is meant to inform. The human level is where you'll be advised and where you can learn about the local market, especially in the mountains.

Please do yourself a favor. The next time you're in Highlands, have that first cup of coffee with the best real estate broker you can find. With 312 Brokers along the Highlands-Cashiers Plateau, you have plenty of choices. Ask your friend about their experiences buying or selling property, and if they're willing to provide a recommendation, call that person for coffee. The Ritz-Carlton Hotel corporation was the finest hotel collection in the world, the winners of 2 Malcom-Baldridge National Quality Awards for customer experience. They had a very simple credo which was this "Ladies and Gentlemen Serving Ladies and Gentlemen", now that's doing business at the Human Level.

• Pat Gleeson, Bee, Tom, Christal, Susie and Gemma (Yellow Labrador) are Helpers and Brokers of White Oak Realty Group, in downtown Highlands (4th Street across from the Old Edwards Inn). Since 2009, White Oak Realty Group remains one of the leading boutique brokerage firms on the Highlands-Cashiers Plateau. You can reach all of us at 828.526.8118.

...LETTERS continued from page 4

Something is very wrong

Dear Editor,

I sat there and read with incredulity the recap of the 2/17/22 Town Board meeting described in last week's Highlands Newspaper. Has Commissioner Marc Hehn gone off the rails?

The Mayor and the other Commissioners, as well as the Town Managers and their staff all have the patience of Job!

Mr. Hehn has harassed, insulted, threatened to sue, and attempted to extort from a town employee no less, yet the town has offered to buy Mr. Hehn a printer and load it with paper and he still isn't satisfied?

What is the recall provision for a Town Commissioner of Highlands? If none exists, then when does his term expire?

Instead of someone owing Mr. Hehn money, he owes the citizens of Highlands reimbursement for his incredible waste of our human resources and surely limited patience with his obtuse behavior.

Bob McEver
Highlands

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...CAMPS continued from page 1

that's how the hearing closed Thursday night.

"There will be no final action tonight," said Mayor Pat Taylor.

About 50 people representing two camps – those for the continuation of STRs and those who want them eliminated – turned out for the meeting, but neither group was unequivocally in favor of the Planning Board's recommendations and stipulations allowing STRs in all residential districts – R1, R2 and R3.

Since that recommendation was the crux of the Planning Board's amendment, it was a no-starter for members of the Highlands Neighborhood Coalition. They adamantly believe STRs are commercial enterprises and as such aren't allowed in at least the R1 district where commercial enterprises aren't allowed. Soft commercial enterprises are allowed in R2 but those against STRs don't want STRs to be allowed to continue in the R2 zone either and some say anywhere in Highlands.

Those who align themselves with Save Highlands liked the idea of STRs being allowed to continue in the residential districts, but they didn't like the limitations assigned to each district regarding length of stay – less than 14 days in one area, a minimum of 14 days in another, etc.

In general, they voiced concerns over the ordinance's enforceability and the economic impact of disallowing vacation rentals which according to speakers has been allowed in Highlands for about 40 years, if not longer.

Of the 29 people who spoke, 24 spoke for STRs and five spoke against. Of the 79 emails/letters received by the town, 56 were against STRs. 30 were for them and 4 weren't totally for them, nor totally against them.

Most of the people who spoke for STRs were under retirement age; most who spoke against were older and most were permanently established in Highlands.

Derek Allen with Allen, Stahl & Kilbourne is the attorney representing Save Highlands which has filed a lawsuit against the town for disallowing STRs and he spoke first.

Allen has been a land-use attorney for 25 years and has dealt with the STR issue all over the state and acknowledged it is a difficult one.

He said Highlands, like other towns in Western North Carolina, has been a vacation spot for generations and said his group feels that the proclamation disallowing STRs effective Jan. 3, 2022 came out of the blue, was invalid and was an attack on their private property rights and the investment they've made in their homes.

The Community Building filled up quickly as the Public Hearing was about to start last Thursday night. – Photo by Kim Lewicki

"We think that the commissioners' action was wrong because it was beyond their authority and the town council has said as much. We think the current UDO does not prohibit STRs in any form or fashion. We think prior town representation has confirmed that," he said. "We think there are constitutional issues out there as well. And maybe the biggest thing, that has been talked about in the different silos that has evolved in the last couple of months is this idea of grandfathering

"To be real clear about that, there is a principle in land use about private property rights that is based in constitutionality. It says that if you are doing something on your property that is a valid authorized use and a town or a county comes in afterward and says that is now illegal, you are permitted to continue doing that. It's called valid nonconforming use or grandfathered use. That's what we are talking about when we talk about vesting it's a valid nonconforming use – that's what these folks felt like was in jeopardy.

"On the backside of the lawsuit we filed, this town hired outside counsel in Mr. Justus. He knows his stuff and I think he provided correct counsel saying you can't disallow STRs. So, that Aug. 24 proclamation was walked back, and the lawsuit sits out there with a motion to dismiss. We just let that sit. We are letting this ordinance process play out and Mr. Justus and I talked about that, and we think that is the right thing to do," said Allen.

Allen pointed to several areas of the ordinance with which he had concerns specifically references to commercial uses, registering STRs and vesting or grandfathering and suggested that all passages in every context in which those subjects are written should be struck.

He said that NC case law 160D-108 has already determined that vacation rentals are not commercial uses and the wording in the ordinance regarding that doesn't change that fact.

He said NC General Statute 160 D 1207 C says registering an STR with a zoning certificate is prohibited and the current law doesn't allow it though it is currently in the court of appeals.

"We will wait and see from the court of appeals if that stands, but we think that the current state of the law doesn't allow that, also vested rights, referred to as valid nonconforming uses is allowed [grandfathered] by law, and that's just what it is," he said.

David Hagaman spoke next and out of the gate he voiced every issue spoken by subsequent speakers – the fact that people are renting out their home part-time until retirement in Highlands is possible full-time, the enforcement of existing ordinances, the economic impact of prohibiting STRs, and property rights.

"I learned in law school a phrase that applies to this situation. Bad facts make bad law. Sure, there are a small number of STR renters who make noise, who leave trash out, and understandably that annoys the neighbors. I get that totally. But those bad facts don't require a bad law which I believe this proposed ordinance is. If renters make noise, enforce the noise laws. If they leave trash out, fine the owners. I think that this STR proposal is a drastic answer to a problem that would make bad law," he said.

He said after reading the emailed letters from those opposing STRs it appears to him that they only care about themselves and not the other people involved.

"They don't care about my housekeeper who broke down in tears because she is going to lose the income from cleaning houses that she now has from STRs. I don't think they care about the workers who fix our plumbing. The retail people who sell us things in stores, many of whom will lose their jobs because of the loss of business that will probably occur if this ordinance is adopted. They certainly don't care about me and my property rights. And the income that I receive from the STRs to maintain my house.

"These people want to turn the clock back to what they refer to as the old Highlands. They are comfortable, they've made it. They have a summer home here or they have a permanent home here; they are up on the ladder and now they want to pull the ladder out so no one else can get up here," he said.

The economic loss to the town and its citizens who live and work in Highlands was repeated throughout the night – something several folks suggested the town study before making drastic changes to the ordinance.

"People want weekend rentals and I expect the negative economic impact of greatly restricting STRs in R1 and R2 could be catastrophic to the town, and the merchants concerning the loss of revenue," said Hagaman. "Do you know that economic impact? Before you take the drastic step of adopting this very restrictive STR ordinance, you should conduct an economic impact study. You need to know the affect on the town and the merchants and the people who live here and make their living here. Anything less than that, in my opinion, would be a serious dereliction of your duties as elected officials."

Pat Allen said real estate brokers have sold homes acknowledging rentals were allowed for years and years – a fact that was echoed throughout the hearing.

Kristy Jones Favalli with the Save Highlands group believed people crying for workforce housing were suggesting that no STRs meant there would be available workforce housing.

"STRs are being used as a scapegoat

• See CAMP page 15

...CAWTHORN continued from page 1

Congress. The counties I had previously lost in redistricting are now included in the new maps that will be used in the 2022 election cycle, and today, I filed to represent them again," said Cawthorn.

In November, Congressman Cawthorn announced he would seek reelection to the U.S. House of Representatives in North Carolina's 13th congressional district under district maps originally proposed by the N.C. legislature.

While Rep. Cawthorn's announcement said his decision was due to the map changes — the actual maps don't support that statement.

When Cawthorn announced he would not be running for election in his current district — he claimed that half of the counties that were originally moved in to District 13 were counties he currently represents in District 11.

Polk and McDowell counties and a slice of Rutherford County would have moved from District 11 to District 13 and accounted for around 100,000 residents. The remaining area of District 13 would have included Burke, Cleveland, Gaston, and a slice of Mecklenburg County all of which would have been new territories for Cawthorn.

Although Cawthorn planned to seek election in a new district, it was a district he didn't live in.

Now, Rep. Cawthorn says because Polk, McDowell, and a piece of Rutherford County are back in District 11 — despite now losing Mitchell and Avery— he will run in District 11.

"Western North Carolinians want a fighter in Congress. With their support, I look forward to returning to Washington as a sophomore member and helping enact major change with a historic Republican majority," Cawthorn said in a statement.

Rep. Cawthorn faces several primary challengers including Bruce O'Connell, Wendy Marie-Limbaugh Nevarez, Matthew Burrill, and Chuck Edwards.

The state Supreme Court struck down the General Assembly drafted district maps in early February, saying they were illegal partisan gerrymanders. The GOP-controlled General Assembly passed a new map Feb. 17, but a special three-judge panel in Wake County reworked it again last week, saying it didn't meet fairness standards mentioned by the state justices.

Candidate filing under the map adopted by the trial judges resumed Thursday. The next day, Republican legislative leaders asked the U.S. Supreme Court to block the use of the court-adopted map. The case is pending.

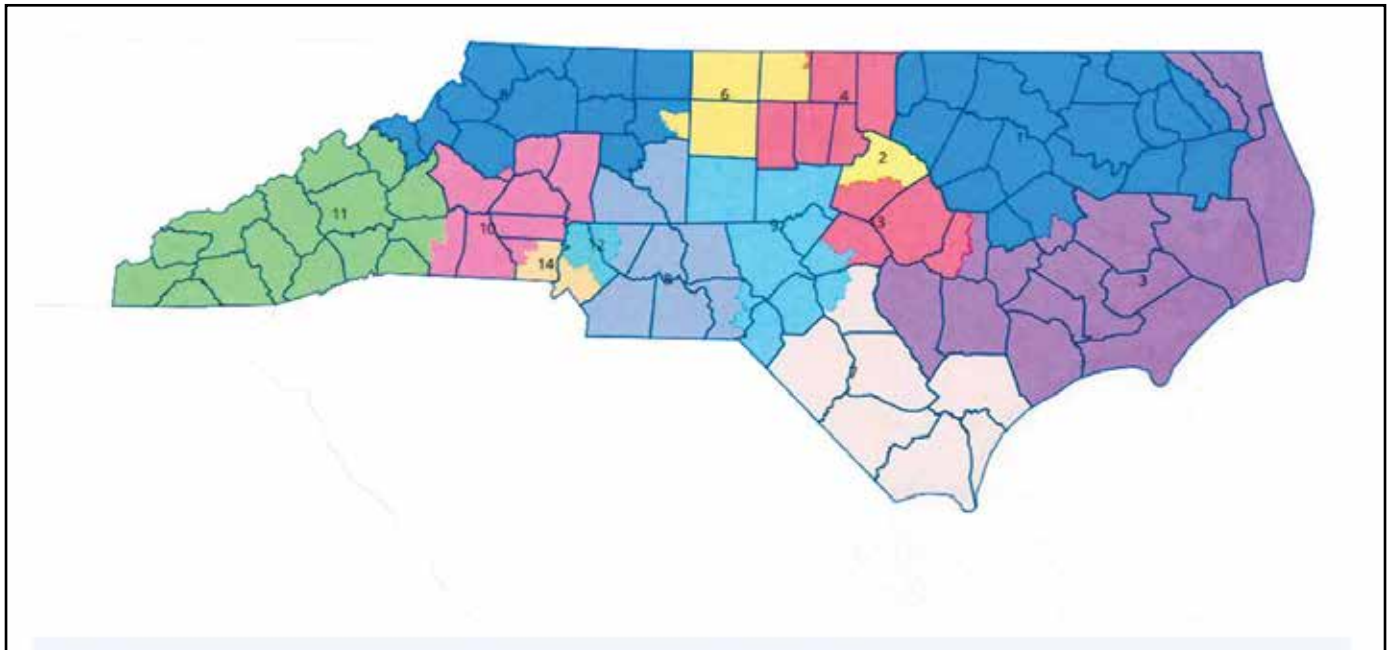
The court-mandated redistricting adjustments also derailed, for now, an effort by some voters to challenge Cawthorn's candidacy qualifications based on the U.S. Constitution.

Roughly a dozen voters from the anticipated 13th District filed challenge requests, but the State Board of Elections said last week those challenges wouldn't go forward now that the 13th District had shifted 200 miles (320 kilometers) east.

The voters argued Cawthorn was disqualified from running because he fails to comply with a portion of a post-Civil War amendment to the Constitution pertaining to insurrections because of his involvement in the rally that preceded the U.S. Capitol riot.

When Cawthorn was no longer running for the 13th District, the lawsuit was dismissed by the court.

Filing across North Carolina closes at noon on Friday, March 4.



The new 2022 congressional map approved by Wake County court.

Current Candidate List for Macon Counties:

MACON COUNTY:

Board of Commissioners District 1:

Don Wilis - Republican

Board of Commissioners District 2:

Ronnie Beale - Democrat
Gary Shields - Republican
Richard Lightner - Republican
Danny Antoine - Republican
Danny Reitmeier - Republican
Gregg Jones – Republican

Clerk of Superior Court:

Justin Stamey - Republican
Shawna Then Lamb - Republican
Mike Trammel - Republican

Register of Deeds

Toddy Raby - Democrat

Macon County Sheriff

Bob Cook - Republican
Dereck Jones - Republican
Chris Browning - Republican
Brent Holbrooks - Republican
Clay Bryson- Republican

WNC RACES

Senate District 50:

Kevin Corbin - Republican- Franklin, NC

NC House of Representatives District 119:

Mike Clampitt - Republican - Bryson City, NC

NC Superior Court Judge District 30A Seat 01:

William (Bill) Coward - Republican

NC District Court Judge District 30 Seat 01:

Kristina Earwood

NC District Court Judge District 30 Seat 02:

Roy Wijewickrama

District Attorney District 43:

Ashley Hornsby Welch

U.S Congressional District 11

David Adam Coatney- Libertarian- Fletcher, NC
Bruce O'Connell- Republican- Candler, NC
Wendy Marie-Limbaugh Nevarez- Republican- Asheville, NC
Matthew Burril- Republican- Fletcher, NC
Chuck Edwards- Republican- Flat Rock, NC
Rod Honeycutt- Republican- Alexander, NC
Madison Cawthorn- Republican- Hendersonville, NC
Michele V. Woodhouse- Republican- Hendersonville, NC
Katie Dean- Democrat- Swannanoa, NC
Jasmine Beach-Ferrara- Democrat- Asheville, NC

• Highlands Area Events •

Ice Rink Schedule thru Sunday, March 6

• Thursdays 1-8pm, Fridays and Saturdays 1-10pm and Sundays 1-5pm,.Cost is $5 per skater.

Rec Pool Schedule:

• Lap Swim Monday-Friday 6am-10am, Monday and Thursday 11:15am-7pm and Tuesday and Wednesday 11:15am-3:30pm 6 lanes AND 3:30-7 (shared Pool) and Saturday 10-11am 6 lanes. Adult Swim Monday-Thursday 11:15am-7pm.

Call ahead for Public Swim Weekend schedule due to staff shortages. 828-526-1595.

• Tickets for Bear Shadow Music Festival are on sale now. For more information, visit https://bearshadownc.com/information/.

Mondays

• ESL classes are held at the Presbyterian Church in Highlands from 5:30-6:30pm. No registration required – just show up and participate. Questions? Visit www.maconncliteracy.org, call 828-526 – 0863 or email info@maconncliteracy.org

Second Mondays

• The local chapter of PEO, an off-campus sorority founded in the 1800s that provides grants and loans to women who want to return to school or further their education and have a financial need, meets at 10 a,m, If interested, please call president Paula McDonald at 706-372-3004 for meeting places.

Mon-Fri

• Water Aerobics 18 years plus 10:15-11am.

Mon., Tues., Thurs.

• The Food Pantry behind the Methodist Church on Spring Street is open from 10a to 6p,

Mon. & Wed.

• Cardio Kickboxing with Crystal Corbin 5:30-6:30 p.m. A full body workout that engages every muscle in the body.

• New Mobility Class with Anna Norton It's all about movement. 5:30-6:30pm and Wednesday 6:45-7:45. For more information, call Anna 267-825-0716.

Mon, & Thurs,

• Drive-thru flu clinics at the Public Health Center at 1830 Lakeside Dr. in Franklin from 1–4 pm $36 for the regular dose and the $73 for the high dose (recommended for those 65+). Insurances will be filed; please bring your insurance card with you. Questions? Call 828.349.2081.

Mon, Wed, Thurs

• Indoor and outdoor Pickle Ball 10:30 am-1 pm.

Mon, Wed, Fri

• Heart Healthy Exercise Class 8:30-9:30am. $25 a month, The class is led by Cathy Hodgson. Contact the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more information.

• Aerobics with Tina Rogers 8-9 am.

Tues. & Thurs.

• Pilates-Strength and Stretch with Autumn Lucas

• New Zumba class with Gay Chalpin from 4:30-5:30p.

• Exercise Class with Michelle Lane at 5:30. A combination class with many different types of exercise.

1st Tuesdays

• Indivisible Highlands from 5-6:30 pm at the Hudson Library.

Tuesdays

• Strength Training 8:15-9:15am. Aim for strong, lean muscles using light weights, body weight, and high repetition to shape and tone.

First Wednesdays

• Highlands-Cashiers Hospital is featuring "Walk-in Wednesdays" Hiring Event. Interviewing for RNs, CNAs, Allied Health Professionals and Support Services Professionals, 1-3:30 pm. 190 Hospital Drive, front entrance. On the spot offers, Sign-on bonuses offered for select positions, Bring updated resume. Casual wear.

Thursdays

• Kickboxing 8:15-9:15am. An exhilarating and fun mix of martial arts for a calorie-burning workout.

• Free Covid vaccination clinics – 9 am to 5pm at the Rec Park. (Closed for a half-hour lunch break) Location subject to change. please check https://myspot.nc.gov/ for the latest location information. Walk-ins are accepted, however we encourage residents to pre-register and schedule an appointment at https://myoptumserve.com/covid19 or by calling (877) 505-6723 if you do not have internet.

2nd Saturdays

• The Western North Carolina Woodturners Club meets in Highlands at The Bascom at 10 a.m. March and November.

3rd Saturdays

• The American Legion Post 370 meets on the 3rd Saturday of every month at the First Methodist Church at 315 Main Street in their Community Room/ 909 Chapel. We serve breakfast at 9AM and hold our monthly meeting at 10AM We invite ALL Veterans to attend. Contact Ed McCloskey, Commander for any information @828-787-1660

Thurs. March 10

• Winter stories will be held at the High Dive from 2-4 , a casual gathering of story swapping. Come, Tell, Listen.

Tues. March 15

• Highlands School Kindergarten Registration is on. Children who reach the age of 5 on or before August 31, 2022 are eligible for admission into the Class of 2035 Call 828-526-2147 for more information.

Thurs. April 14

• Winter stories will be held at the High Dive from 2-4 , a casual gathering of story swapping. Come, Tell, Listen.

April 29-May 1

• Bear Shadow Music Festival. For tickeets go to bearshadownc.com.

Thurs., May 12

• Winter stories will be held at the High Dive from 2-4 , a casual gathering of story swapping. Come, Tell, Listen.

Mon. March 14

• High Mountain Squares will start Modern Western Style Square Dance classes from 6:30-8:30 PM on Monday evening. Classes will be at the Environmental Resource Center, 1624 Lakeside Dr, Franklin, NC. For more info call: (727) 599-1440. (828) 332-0001, or (828) 200-0674.

Sat., March 19

• The March 2022 meeting of the Western North Carolina Woodturners Club Inc. will be on Saturday at 10 AM at the Bascom in Highlands The Bascom is located at 323 Franklin Rd, Highlands, NC, Just north of Downtown Highlands, NC (heading toward Franklin). Drive across the covered bridge into the parking lot and come into the main entrance near the covered patio. There will be directions on how to get to the wood turning studio. Visitors are always welcome.

Spring Sports Registration

Macon County Youth Sports Registration is underway for ages 5-15 year olds.

Franklin Little League Baseball registration is underway for ages 4-14 year old. Registration Open Now through March 7, 2022. Register online at www.fllbaseball.com.

Franklin Little League Softball registration is underway for ages 4-14 year old. Registration Open Now through March 7, 2022. Register online at www.franklinlittleleaguesoftball.com .

...CAMPS continued from page 12

for workforce housing needs," she said.

"This UDO will not be a step closer to creating affordable housing in Highlands. Even if every STR owner flooded the market with their property, the time has long passed that an in-town property will sell for less than $400,000. People making $15 to $20 simply will never be able to afford a house in Highlands, regardless of this UDO passing, without some sort of subsidy from the town of Highlands.

"Inflated real estate prices is also not related to STRs yet it's another issue the UDO is supposed to correct. This is not a Highlands specific issue, it's a nationwide issue in all desirable areas. Corporations giving the greenlight for their employees to permanently work remotely has caused an exodus from the major cities to rural towns," said Favalli.

She said enforcement of ordinances in place is the answer, but enforcement should be unilateral and not targeted to a segment of homeowners who rent their properties.

"I have rented for years without harassment yet from the moment my property was ID'd as a rental I've had my exterior breakers manually shut off on two occasions which can be verified by Edward Electric, and other homeowners have had reports of their bear-proof trash cans being thrown open overnight just waiting for the bears to help themselves. We are homeowners here, too, and deserve to be protected by the same laws and ordinances that govern us and not simply targeted by them," she said.

Kathy Smith said she was in the camp against uncontrolled growth of STRs in Highlands and blamed the Chamber of Commerce for the influx of tourists who use STRs.

"The Highlands Chamber of Commerce is a major driver in the demand for STRs. Our little town is being promoted all over this country. And our chamber is developing new events and festivals and so forth that attract people and each one of these need an STR. I know that more visitors mean more visitors for Main Street and that's the goal of the chamber; that's their job. But we have a conflict of interest. The residents who support a healthy community need to consider our support of the current direction of our chamber. I realize that OEI and our real estate agents promote our town nationally, too, that's private enterprise. But I don't think Highlands owes the wedding industry our town or our way of life.

"I think we need to let our leadership know that not all of us are in favor of developing more and more events and promoting them all over the country. Highlands has families who have been here for generations – all kinds of people from all economic backgrounds – and that's the community that we invest our lives and hearts into. Uncontrolled growth of STRs is a threat to that. It's not the same old game of 'come up and rent a house for a couple of weeks.' We are into something different here and if we aren't careful Highlands will be a revolving door of transient weekend or week-long visitors," she said.

David Bee owner of Highlands Vacation Rentals said the board made a knee-jerk reaction of prohibiting STRs without doing the proper due diligence for the proper fiscal impact to its decision.

"This knee-jerk reaction has created division, false accusations and hateful discourse between its citizens and neighbors. No one in Highlands area who has a STR or manages a STR was contacted for input on issues and concerns about how to make things overall better. That's not proper due diligence. This process should take at least a year to do proper due diligence for discussion and proper legal examination.

"You have placed yourselves and others in a position of having to spend thousands of unnecessary legal dollars. You are creating an ordinance that has future legal ramifications for the town. You are creating an ordinance that takes away, the owner's property rights. I am in favor of STRs in all residential districts within the town. They are not the detriment or negative impact as has been portrayed. I am not in favor of the removal of owners' property rights, your's or anyone else's. Before making this decision, there needs to be a true diverse panel with discussion," he said.

Alice Phillips who has managed STRs for 22 years and sells real estate said the majority of her sales are to renters who fell in love with Highlands as renters and decided to purchase a home for themselves.

"This decision has been made in haste any there needs to be additional due diligence and discussion on both the impact this will cause and the true issues that are the reason for this change. I am in favor of STRs in all of our Highlands residential districts. I have great concern about the impact of this decision on future values and marketability of the properties of Highlands," she said.

Cal Stephens and others feel as STR owners they are being vilified.

"We are renting our place short-term. We are not faceless, nameless horrible people. We have a piece of property, we rent it and we enjoy staying in it, too. I would encourage you all to push forward with this ordinance. It recognizes our vested property rights."

Laura Puckett said she has been coming to Highlands since she was a little girl and has been renting. She has since bought a home she rents part-time but now people are suggesting that renting shouldn't be allowed.

"Given that rationale, wouldn't that mean a regular rental [long-term, annual] wouldn't be allowed because it isn't specified as an allowed use anywhere specifically. Saying an overnight accommodation is a commercial use – well isn't any single-family home an accommodation?"

Caroline Ragsdale who is renting her home part-time until she retires here said renting homes gives an affordable option to staying in a hotel which doesn't always work with young children.

Scott Vuncannon who said no matter how many people come and stay in STRs Highlands will never be Gatlinburg.

"I don't know where people get that idea – constraints just wouldn't allow that," he said.

Local resident and business owner Stephanie McCall agreed.

"We have rules and regulations to keep our town the way it is. We aren't going to lose our town because of STRs. Our town is us, the people. We aren't going to lose who we are. We have an amazing community, and we lift each other up and allowing renters in isn't going to change that," she said.

She also said many people buying homes to live in and to rent are doing it to make money but they are also making the area, the neighborhoods look better when they renovate.

That was an issue Michael Ackerson brought up about his property on Mt. Lori that was in massive distress.

"We invested significantly into the property, almost to the tune of $200,000. I can assure you that our neighbors on Mt. Lori are very appreciative of the improvements we've made to that property. I think we have made a significant contribution to Highlands with the investment we've made," he said. "I hate the proposed restrictions on R1, 14-day minimum. I love the enforcement idea, for noise and trash. It's an enforcement issue. You are moving quickly on something you don't have the facts on. The impact study is a must. Go STRs we will fight it until the end."

Jennifer Huff with Save Highlands

• See CAMP page 16

• Biz/Org News •

Tom Graham, Rotary Club of Highlands President and (R) Mark Chmar, Rotarian and speaker on February 15

Rotarian Mark Chmar demonstrated his knowledge about and love of fast cars when he traced the history of endurance racing from 1955 into the 1980s. In Mark's opinion the greatest automobile race in the world is the 24 Heures du Mans (or Le Mans) which lasts 24 hours, with the winner completing the most laps in that time, a true test of automobile and drivers' endurance. In America, our 24-hour race is the Daytona 24 Hours. Chmar ended his talk with the exciting announcement that the first three of these amazing race cars, and possibly the last as well, will be featured in the 2022 Highlands Motoring Festival, scheduled for June 9-12, 2022. Porsche is the featured marque. For more information visit www.HighlandsMotoringFestival.com.

...CAMPS continued from page 15

said she appreciates the legally recognized nonconforming use language in the proposed ordinance and looks forward to continuing to be allowed to use her property in Highlands.

"I am a supporter of STRs but more importantly property rights. STRs owners overall are good honest people, and we want to continue to provide a place to stay for our guests who want to stay in homes, not hotels for various reasons. There has been talk that we aren't part of this community. But many of us live here full-time and others have been coming up here for years if not generations. We have local friends and neighbors. We have a large positive economic impact in the community; our collective community," she said.

June Wise a real estate broker who rents her home about six-months out of the year, said renters are responsible for 9.75% taxes which go to the state with 3% of that coming back to Macon County.

"These renters are contributing in that way, and they flood these beautiful little boutiques and restaurants. I would really like to know what in the world happened that here we all now sit. If there were problems with renters, why wasn't something done at the time? if you have a problem, deal with it," she said.

However, local full-time resident Frieda Bennett said Highlanders don't complain and she can't express the changes that have taken place.

"We have people on our hill that have lived here for decades who have now decided that the quality of life just isn't what they want to experience. Are we going to punish the people who obey the law, by not turning their homes into STRs? And according to the proposed ordinance, going forward, you can't convert a home into STR but a neighbor can transfer ownership of the STR property?" she asked. "Someone who didn't obey the ordinance would be rewarded while those who did conform to the ordinances would be punished," said Bennett.

Local full-time resident and STR owner Jerry Moore said more research is needed before drastic changes are made that will change some people's lives significantly. He said there are a lot of unanswered questions.

"We don't even know exactly how many STRs we have in the town limits. How many are owned by corporations? How many individuals own one STR and rent it out and come up here for a short period of time so they can enjoy our community just like we do who live here year-round. How many complaints have we had concerning STRs? How many ordinance violations have we issued to people who own a STR. Have we fined these people? Have we enforced our current ordinances to the fullest extent before we make any drastic changes on something that has been going on for some time in this community? This is problematic. I would propose occupancy limits are enforced; parking enforced, trash and noise, too. Call police. Fine the homeowners. Keep it simple. This current ordinance isn't simple, it's going to be impossible to enforce," he said.

In closing, he reminded the audience that STRs aren't all bad.

"They become your neighbor when they come … you don't like them, they leave. You can't always get that with your full-time neighbors!"

Local full-time resident and business owner Jeannie Chambers said STRs should be allowed in any residential zone in Highlands and she disagreed with the ordinance regarding minimum and maximum stays.

But full-time resident and business owner Gary Bogan said people who are for STRs – most of the people in the audience Thursday night – have never lived next door to one.

"Two doors down from us, the house sold two years ago. It's a 3-bedroom house. They put 12 beds in it. They have parties every weekend there. It's ridiculous. A corporation just bought five lots on Sherwood Forest. They are building STRs. They've made it known already. That's just not right."

But full-time local businessman David Bock said he lives next door to a STR and had a bad experience only once.

"I called David Bee and he was out there at 11:30 and solved that problem immediately and that was one time over the last 5-6 years. STRs are important to the town," he said. "They support our businesses. I hope the board will work to help bring this town back together because I think this was allowed to get out of hand with neighbors against neighbors and that upsets me more than anything."

Gary Hester who drove up from Orlando to attend the meeting said he has owned his R1 property since 1980 and rents it when he can't be in Highlands.

"There aren't enough hotel rooms available for all the tourists who visit Highlands so STRs help keep the Highlands economy growing. I can't believe you are considering cancelling or restricting our guests or our livelihood. Please allow us to continue our STRs," he said.

Andrew Kaiser who said he is 10 years away from retirement said he rents his house when he can't use it and there haven't been any complaints.

"So this doesn't seem like something that is screaming to be solved," he said.

Charles Nalbone, who heads the Highlands Neighborhood Coalition, spoke for the group at the beginning and end of the meeting. He zoned in on what the coalition has based its case on – their view that STRs are a commercial activity and commercial activity isn't allowed in the residential districts in any form.

He consistently referred to STR owners as investors and business people, who own, operate and profit from STRs in single family neighborhoods and who want to make as much money as possible.

"Remember, overnight accommodations are defined in the UDO as a commercial use. Tourist homes, are a commercial use, bed

• See CAMP page 19

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The Highlands School Dive Team back from practice at the Jewish Community Center in Asheville. From left: Head Coach Steve Hott, Margaret Cole, Tate Wilson, Connor Hughes, ChaseKenter, Tucker Wilson, Trinity Faust and new Diving Coach Stephen Julka.

Asst. Coach for HS Dive Team is All American Diver

Steve Hott
Head Coach
HS Swimming and Diving

The Highlands School Swimming and Diving Team is pleased to announce the addition of 2x NCAA All American Stephen Julka to its coaching staff.

Julka dove for Denison University and is the former Head Diving Coach at the College of Charleston. He achieved NCAA All American Status on both the 1-meter and 3-meter springboard. One-meter springboard diving is 1 of 12 events at a North Carolina High School Swimming and Diving meet.

Current members of the Middle School Highlands School Diving Team are 8th graders Margaret Cole, Conner Sadler, and Tate Wilson, 7th graders Trinity Faust, and Chase Kenter, and 6th grader Tucker Wilson.

A Highlands High School or Middle School student does not have to be on the swim team to be on the diving team. The diving team currently travels to the Asheville Jewish Community Center on a Saturday once a month to practice.

• Biz/Org News •

From left is Andy Chmar, Carlyn Morenus, and Tom Graham.

Rotarian Andy Chmar introduced Carlyn Morenus, Branch Librarian at the Hudson Library, at the Highlands Rotary Feb. 22 meeting. Morenus reviewed the history of Hudson Library, the second oldest public library in NC. The library offers many services to the Highlands community through programs and resources for youth and adults. Hudson Library is part of the Fontana Regional Library System and is also supported by Hudson Library, Inc., a nonprofit that raises funds for the library.

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• Spiritually Speaking •

Remember, there are those who can help

Dr. Curtis Fussell
Co-Pastor
First Presbyterian Church
Highlands

It happens with a car. One day, it won't start up. I had a problem with my car. So, I opened the hood hoping to find the problem and fix it.

A few hours later I still could not locate the problem. A friend came along who works on a farm and he helped me. After another 30 minutes we finally found the problem. Then he stayed and with his help the problem was solved.

So much time was spent probing and scratching our heads to try to figure out the problem and solve it. I said to my friend, "This has been a frustrating day."

He replied, "Well, to me it's just another day. We have problems every day on the farm and we have to figure out how to fix them ourselves."

My friend's remark highlights how true it is that life is a series of problems to deal with and to solve. Too often we don't want to face this reality. Too often we think life should not have problems. When problems do arise, we want quick fixes and ready answers for them.

We forget that life requires determination and even suffering. We forget too that there are others who can help us through our problems, just as my friend helped me.

One day Jesus was threatened by a King. Instead of turning tail and running off, Jesus said, "Tell that fox that I must continue on my journey and do what is required." Jesus knew what he had to do. He knew what was required of him and set out to accomplish it, even though he knew it meant hardship. His determination was instilled by his vision to live rightly as a child of God.

Whatever problem or ordeal you might be experiencing today, it doesn't mean you are defeated. Set your heart, mind, and life on going through the problem and beyond it.

Everyone faces challenges and difficulties. Your problems may be more or even less than someone else's, but it is still yours to deal with and to persevere through to a good end. It is part of the sum of your gift of life from God.

Seek help from those who can help you. Pray for God's guidance as you tackle your problems and find solutions.

Remember this reality: life is full of problems -but become a person who finds solutions. Don't wallow in self-pity. Don't give up. Deal with the ordeals of life with determination, with vision, and with hope. Seek the sum of your gift of life from God.

Proverbs 3:5 • Places to Worship • **John 3:16**

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Rev. Oliver Rice. Pastor (706) 782-3965
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
Wednesday night Dinner and Service 5:30

CHAPEL OF THE SKY
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Holy Communion 1st & 3rd Sundays

CHRIST ANGLICAN CHURCH
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www.christanglicancashiers.com
Sun. - 9:30am Worship (no music); 10:30am Sunday School;10:30am Worship Service.
Mon. Night Bible Study & Dinner. 6pm. call for details.

CHRIST CHURCH OF THE VALLEY. CASHIERS
Pastor Brent Metcalf • 743-5470
Sun.10:45am. S.S 9:30am. Wed. 6pm supper and teaching.
Tues. Guys study 8am. Gals 10am.

CLEAR CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH
Pastor Jim Kinard
Sundays: School:10 a.m.;Worship:11a.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:: 9:30am - Adult Sunday School;Worship Service 10:45am; 10:45am Children's Program.Youth-12:15 – 2:30pm Tues: Women's Bible Study 10am-noon
Thurs: Men's Bible Study 7:30-8:30 a.m.

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 Services in the Chapel: 8 am Rite1spoken, 10:30 Rite II with Choir; Morning Prayer Mon-Thurs 8:30 am in the Chapel
Ash Wed. services March 2, 12 p.m., & 5 p.m.

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; Choir 5p; Prayer Mtg 6:15p

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Tues: Men's Group 10 a.m.Wed: Bell Choir 4 p.m.. Choir:6p

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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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Wed: Bible Study and Youth Mtg.:7 p.m.

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Rev. Marty Kilby
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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
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WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Rev. Sam Forrester/Cashiers
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• Fire Reports •

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from Feb. 23

Feb. 23

• At 6:55 a.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on NC 106.

• At 9:49 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Main Street.

• At 5:58 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at the hospital.

Feb. 24

• At 9:01 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on US 64 west.

Feb. 27

• At 5:45 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Kettle Rock Road.

Feb. 28

• At 9:22 a.m., the dept. investigated the source of smoke on Horse Cove Road.

• At 9:03 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Big View Drive.

...CAMPS continued from page 16

and breakfasts are a commerial use, hotels and motels are a commercial use and even though it has been Highlands' long-term policy that these commercial activities create an intensity of use that is not compatible with our single-family neighborhoods, the Planning Board's proposal opens up every single one of Highlands neighborhoods to these commercial activities."

But Jerry Moore brought up an interesting point while questioning business limitations in the various residential zones.

"Will you be able to be an Ebay seller in R2? Can you sell stuff out of your home? Is that allowed? That's commercial activity. Can you run an art studio out of your home in R1? Can you run a construction company out of your home? What differentiates that type of biz from STRs?

"I think we have to ask ourselves these questions because if we go to court, those are the analogies that are going to be brought up. How are you going to enforce this is the big question," said Moore.

Nalbone said all his group is asking is that the long-term, close to 50-year prohibition on commercial activity and overnight accommodations in residential districts be maintained and enforced.

"One of the arguments hear from STR investors, is that the UDO doesn't specifically say STR. Is doesn't have to. STRs are overnight accommodations. Overnight accommodations are designated as a commercial use. Any claim that a STR isn't an overnight accommodation is simply absurd," said Nalbone.

Nalbone said allowing vested right status of STR investors, who have been operating overnight accommodations in Highlands residential neighborhoods rewards unlawful behavior and punishes Highlands' law-abiding homeowners. In addition, he said to grandfather this use would require that it was previously legal.

"It is not. Overnight accommodations cannot be grandfathered," he said.

Assuming the the only issue that elected Commissioners Amy Patterson and Eric Pierson and Mayor Pat Taylor was their alleged stance against STRs, Nalbone said the residents' and voters' opposition to STRs was clearly expressed in the election results where the candidates won by and overwhelming landslide majority.

He also said the community's position was also clearly expressed in the response to a Comprehensive Plan question where he said more than 62% of respondents expressed opposition to STRs.

But Matt Bunny who spoke in favor of STRs had another view.

"Regarding the Comprehensive Plan, the question wasn't 'are you against STRs?' it was, 'Are you concerned about STRs.' 62% answered that they were concerned. There is a big difference between being against something and being concerned about it," he said.

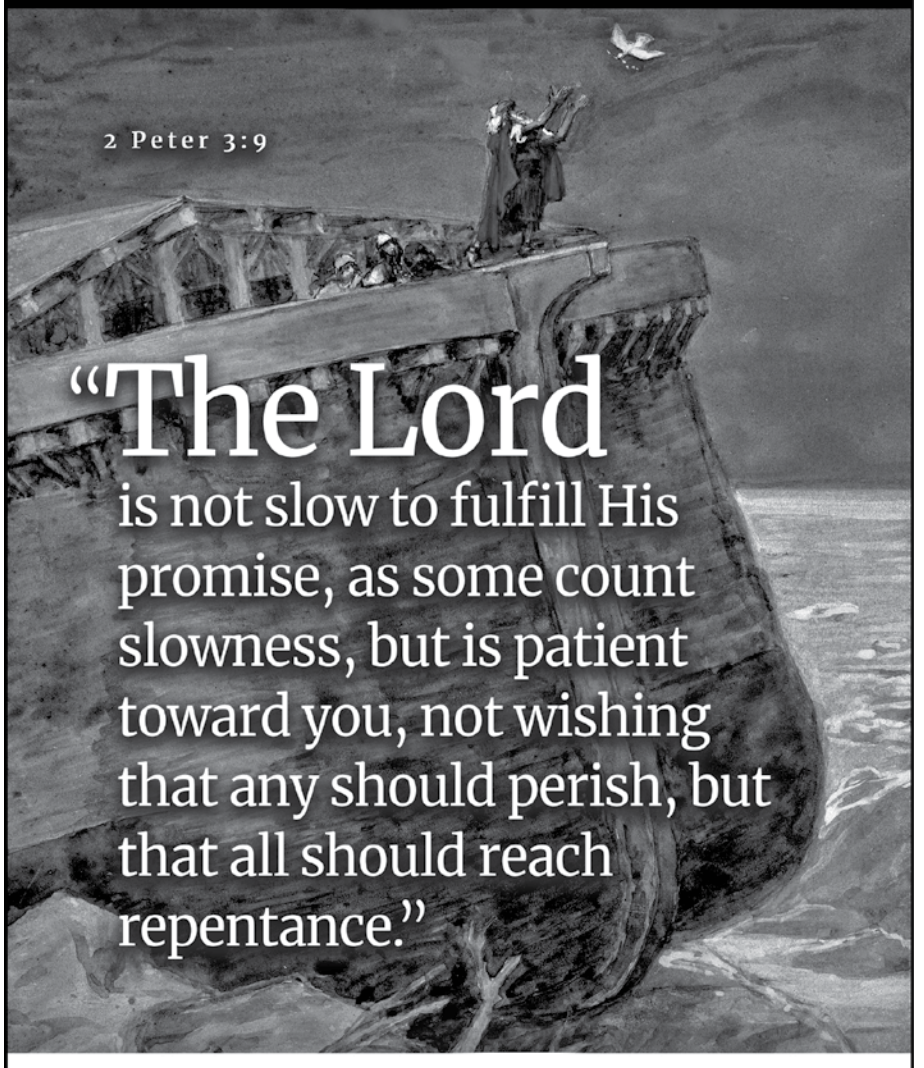
However, Nalbone was persistent.

"At the end of the day, what STR investors are doing is running hotels, motels, tourist homes, overnight accommodations, which in fact are a commercial business. Which for greater than 50 years have been prohibited in single-family neighborhoods. Our simple request is that we maintain that prohibition and we enforce the existing rules against these kinds of businesses in our single-family neighborhoods."

Mayor Taylor said the board will begin deliberating about the issue.

– Kim Lewicki

March Regional Prayer Event



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LAKESIDE RESTAURANT in Highlands, NC is looking to hire a full time dishwasher for the upcoming season. Hours are dinner only, Tuesday-Saturday. Starting pay is $15 per hour. Please call or text Laura Huerta at 803-617-8484. (st. 2/17)

WOLFGANGS RESTAURANT Looking for full-time hostess (great pay) dishwasher, prep cook, pantry and waitstaff. PM shift only. Call Jacque at 828.526.3807 or email wom2@me.com. (st. 2/17)

HIGHLANDER MOUNTAIN HOUSE DINING ROOM SUPERVISOR – HMH is seeking a full time shift supervisor to coordinate reservations and oversee all aspects of service in the front of the house at TRG.This role will act as Maitre' D to the dining room, work service for lunch, dinner and brunch and be responsible for the proper execution of each service period.This position will begin as an hourly position and has the potential to grow into a salaried position based upon performance. This candidate should be positive, reliable, hard working, have a love of people, service and have aspirations to lead and grow with the company. (st. 12/16)

CHESTNUT HILL OF HIGHLANDS is an Upscale, Small Assisted Living Facility looking for Med Aides, CNA's, Housekeeper and Dietary Staff,. You may apply in person at 24 Clubhouse Trail, by Phone at 828-526-5251 or by email to ce.chestnuthill@yahoo.com or lindabtiff@aol.com.

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Lady Highlanders lose tough third round of NCHSAA playoffs

By Brian O'Shea
Plateau Daily News

Highlands girls varsity basketball team travelled to Burnsville, N.C. on Feb. 26 to take on Mountain Heritage for round three of the North Carolina High School Athletic Association Women's Basketball 1A Championships, but didn't pull of a win with the Lady Highlanders losing 42-27.

Highlands advanced to the third round after defeating Avery County at home on Feb. 24 with a final of 69-32.

Highlands Coach Brett Lamb said the girls basketball team has made it to the third round of the state playoffs three times, in 2011, 2018, and 2020.

The closest the Lady Highlanders have ever come to the championship game was in 1981 when they made it to the regional finals.

This year, Highlands wrapped up the season with an 18-10 record and Lamb said it's the most wins he's had throughout his tenure as coach of the girls varsity basketball program.

"The girls had a great season," said Lamb. "Of those 10 losses, 5 came down to less than 6 points. So, we were extremely competitive against all schools. Winning our conference and conference tournament was a big goal of ours that was accomplished. This team gelled at the right time and made a great run."

With the season's conclusion, Highlands loses five players and a team manager to graduation. Seniors include Hayley Borino, Bella Branham, Ava Schmitt, Julia May Schmitt, Reese Schmitt, and Team Manager Maddie Webb.

Lamb said their contributions to the team both on and off the court will be missed.

"With five seniors graduating it will be a big transition, but we are looking forward to watching this next group grow into a championship team," said Lamb. "The seniors have meant so much to our team, school, and community. Their success and mark they left will be one that teams in the future will strive to reach their standards."

How is Highlands looking next year? Lamb said they're looking good with 9 returning players and more moving up from the 8th-grade squad.

"The returning players have a ton of potential and a good summer of basketball will help them move into their new roles on this team," he said.

Lamb added that community's support for the team throughout the season makes a big difference and is greatly appreciated.

"I would like to thank our 5 seniors and senior manager for their hard work and dedication to our program," he said. "And to the parents and fans, thank you for your great support on a great year."

Highlands Abbie Doerter drives along the baseline during round 2 of the NCHSAA playoffs at home against Avery County on Feb. 24. – Photos by Brian O'Shea

Highlands Ava Schmitt passes the ball to Julia May Schmitt under the hoop for 2 points.

Highlands Julia May Schmitt grabs a rebound against Avery County.

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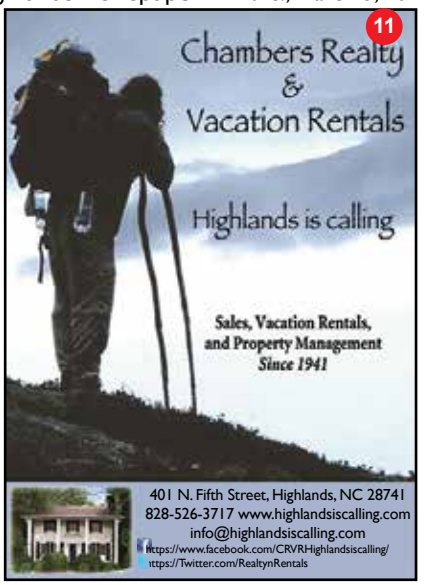

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