

# Highlands Newspaper

Happy Memorial Day!

FREE Every Thursday

Volume 19, Number 21

Real-Time News, Weather & WebCams: HighlandsInfo.com

Thurs., May 26 2022

## Town issues its final word on STRs

The town's final word on Short-term Rentals was heard Thursday night at the May Town Board meeting with the passage of amendments to the Unified Development Ordinance which went into effect at the close of the

meeting May 19.

The Highlands Neighborhood Coalition – which wants STRs disallowed everywhere except business districts – says the amendment is a “good first step.”

“The Highlands Neighbor-

hood Coalition was formed by homeowners throughout Highlands to preserve the historic character of our Town and to ensure that there are neighborhoods in Highlands that are purely residen-

• See STRs page 4

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## A Pre-K facility at Highlands School is on the table

By Brittney Lofthouse

After receiving an initial request from stakeholders in Highlands for funding to expand Highlands School to provide pre-k services, Commissioner Jim Tate helped move the project forward during the May meeting of the Macon County Board of Commissioners by securing a unanimous vote to solicit bids for architectural services for the project.

Once bids for architectural services are secured, the county will decide, likely as part of the annual budget, a timeline or even the feasibility of a Pre-k facility at Highlands School and if the

• See PRE-K page 4

## This is bear country ... and they are out and about



This old bear crossed S. 4th Street (NC 28 south) near Highlands Plaza on its way to the Rabbit Hole.

– Photo by Olivia McClure

## Four in custody after missing person case turns into murder investigation

By Brittney Lofthouse

Derek McCrackin, Jessica Smith, and Christopher Shields

have all been arrested and are in custody in Rabun County, GA waiting extradition to Macon County,

NC in connection to a homicide investigation launched on Friday,

• See MURDER page 8

## Sheriff race hangs in the balance

By Brittney Lofthouse

On Thursday, May 19, 2022, the Board of Elections office received an official “Notice of Recount Request” from Sheriff candidate Derek E. Jones of the 2022 Primary Election ballots.

Unofficial election results on Tuesday, May 17 reported Derek Jones lost the Sheriff election to Brent Holbrooks by 54 votes. Holbrooks got 2,201 votes and Jones got 2163 votes. Since the margin of victory was less than 1 percent, a recount can legally be requested.

A recount cannot be performed until after the Canvass of an election, due to the candidates having until 5:00pm on the next business day after a canvass to request a recount. The Canvass of an election is held 10 days after an Election per general statute. Ma-

• See RACE page 4

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# • THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

## • MAYOR ON DUTY •

### Let's celebrate Memorial Day

The Highlands community has been polarized over short-term rentals. The amendments to the zoning ordinance concerning STRs that were passed by the board last Thursday night did not completely resolve this divide.

Some folks believe the board went too far in regulating and restricting STRs in R1 and R2. I know other people feel the board did not go far enough in restricting and even eliminating them in residential areas. Then there are those who will accept the new requirements and restrictions.

The grandfathering provision of the changes is illustrative of this polarization. Some people, especially in R1, did not want grandfathering of any kind. Their argument was that grandfathering would reward residents who had not followed the zoning restrictions of R1 and R2. They point out that by grandfathering STRs the town has created a new zoning overlay district in R1 and R2. The opposite view was that the R1 and R2 zoning ordinances did not expressly prohibit STRs, therefore property owners had the right to use their



Highlands Mayor  
Patrick Taylor

properties in that manner.

The Town Board engaged two excellent North Carolina law firms to review ordinances related to short-term rentals. While these two firms have a record of not seeing the STR issues through the same legal lenses, they both advised the board that our previous ordinances were not clear in addressing short-term rentals. Many towns and cities

across the country have had problems with ordinances not specifically prohibiting or allowing short-term rentals.

Based on sound legal advice, the board voted to permit grandfathering of residences that had previously been used as short-term rentals. There are other provisions such as intensification and capacity levels that some people opposed. Others think those parts were necessary to regulate and limit future proliferation of STRs in residential areas.

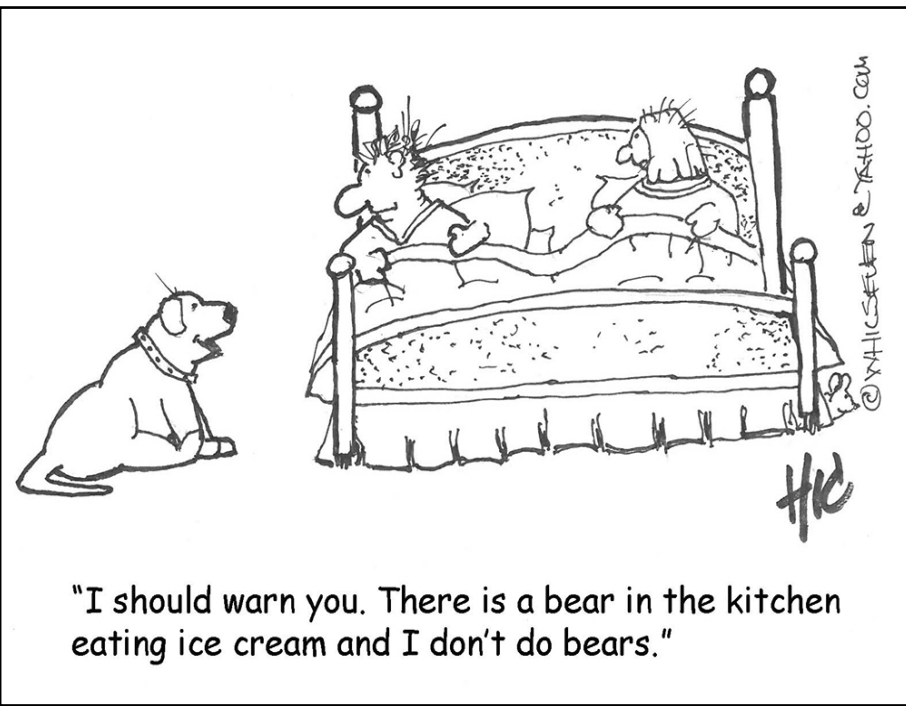
I know there will be questions, disagreements and some challenges to the new amendments as the town moves forward to implementation. I am realistic that some level of division and disagreement will continue. In the long run I hope these differences can be resolved for the long-term benefit of Highlands.

Memorial Day is on Monday. For the first time in many years, I will be visiting family out of town this weekend. But, there are several important events in Highlands to commemorate the fallen who have served our country.

On Monday, Memorial Day, American Legion Post 370 will be holding a public commemoration ceremony at 10 am at Veterans Memorial Park in front of the police department. The post will also be selling poppies in front of Bryson's Food Store tomorrow, Friday May 27, from 10a to 12 noon. The wearing of red poppies is a traditional way of remembering those who died in service to our country. At 5:30 pm on Friday the American Legion will also place American flags on the graves of veterans at the Highlands Cemetery.

I hope everyone will take time during this holiday weekend to remember our fallen heroes and their families.

## • HIC'S VIEW •



"I should warn you. There is a bear in the kitchen eating ice cream and I don't do bears."

## • WEATHER •

Thu, 26-May	Fri, 27-May	Sat, 28-May	Sun, 29-May
65°F 55°F	67°F 47°F	68°F 51°F	73°F 54°F
Heavy rain and a thunderstorm	Times of clouds and sun	Mostly sunny	Mostly sunny and pleasant
RealFeel®	RealFeel®	RealFeel®	RealFeel®
High: 65° Low: 57°	High: 71° Low: 59°	High: 76° Low: 52°	High: 82° Low: 64°

For Real-time Weather and the Extended Forecast, go to [www.highlandsinfo.com](http://www.highlandsinfo.com) and click on Weather

### Highlands Newspaper

[www.highlandsinfo.com](http://www.highlandsinfo.com)

Phone: (828) 200-1371

Email:

[HighlandsEditor@aol.com](mailto:HighlandsEditor@aol.com)

Publisher/Editor: Kim Lewicki

Reporters: Brittney Lofthouse

Brian O'Shea

Digital Media/Circulation - Jim Lewicki

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Kim & Jim Lewicki

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265 Oak St. PO Box 2703

Highlands, N.C 28741

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**The Godfather** – Sopressa salami, shaved ham, pepperoni, red onion, smoked provolone, shredded lettuce, banana peppers, onions with Italian dressing on a baguette. **\$13**

**The Muff** – Turkey, Sopressa salami, ham, cream cheese olive spread, smoked provolone cheese and shredded lettuce on a sub roll. **\$13**

**The Porker** – Shaved ham, Jarlsberg cheese, Djs pickles with homemade honey mustard on ciabatta. **\$12**

**The Hudson** – Turkey, provolone cheese (Have it your way – cucumber, lettuce, onion, banana peppers, black olives, Djs pickles ) **\$13**

### Salads

**Herby Summer Potato Salad**  
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## ...RACE continued from page 1

con County will hold its Canvass in the Board of Elections office boardroom at 11 a.m. on Friday, May 27, 2022.

The recount was initially scheduled to be performed on Saturday, June 4, 2022 at 9 a.m., however, due to the fact that the time overlapped with Franklin High School graduation, the recount was moved to Thursday, June 2. The recount will be held at the Macon County Community Building (1288 Georgia Road) in the gymnasium. All ballots cast in the 2022 Primary will be recounted.

A recount is open to the public.

If you have any questions, contact the Board of Election Office.

## ...PRE-K continued from page 1

project can move forward.

The lack of available early learning spots in Macon County is why the Advancing Highlands Education Committee (AHEC) made the initial request for more than \$8 million in renovations at Highlands School. The renovations would include space for two pre-school classrooms, which according to the AHEC committee, would be filled immediately.

According to the planning study conducted by AHEC earlier this year, space needs at Highlands School include the Pre-K as well as space for project-based learning and career technical education.

The two pre-K classrooms would be 1,200 square feet each to accommodate 36 students as well as a 2,700 square foot playground.

The planning study also found there needs to be project-based learning and career technical education labs spaces added to the elementary, middle and high schools at 1,200 to 2,000 square feet each as well as more square feet in the media center and independent learning areas.

The feasibility of the expansion will be discussed during the county's budget planning process.

## ...STRs continued from page 1

tial and free from commercial activity, specifically short-term rentals (STRs),” reads their statement submitted by Cathy Henson.

“We welcome the Town Board’s May 19 action of amending the current Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) as a good first step in halting the unchecked proliferation of STR’s in Highlands. The changes clarify what some saw as ambiguities in the previous language, which did not use the term “short-term rental.” Short-term rentals are now defined in the UDO as a Commercial Use and prohibited in certain residential neighborhoods - those zoned R-1 and R-2.

“The difficulty the Board has struggled with since last summer - as many, many communities have done throughout the country - is what to do with currently operating STR’s in these now prohibited residential zones. After consultation with two prominent land use attorneys, hours of public comments, a thorough review of state statutes, and an analysis of the recently decided Schroeder v. City

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# ...MURDER continued from page 1

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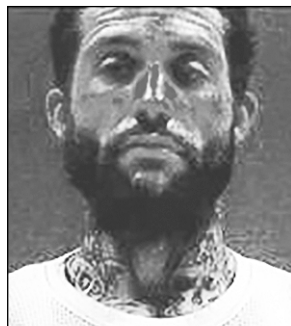
Lenore "Lenoka" Wilson of Otto, NC has been formally charged with two counts of Felony Kidnapping and was arrested Tuesday night in relation to the homicide.

The original "Missing Person" report was filed on Friday with the Macon County Sheriff's Office by a family member who had not heard from his sister for several weeks. Detectives with the MCSO worked with the family member and the Rabun County Sheriff's Office attempting to locate her and other individuals she was known to associate with.

Throughout the day, MCSO Detectives also communicated with other law enforcement agencies attempting to locate anyone who had seen or been with the missing person. The investigation eventually led detectives to two specific areas of Macon County.

"Based on credible information, two locations were considered to be possible crime scenes and meticulous searches would be conducted by our team," said Sheriff Robert Holland. "The first crime scene was a location where the missing person was last seen alive and the second is where the missing person may currently be located."

Both scenes were secured by deputies and additional assistance by the SBI was re-



**Derek McCrackin**



**Jessica Smith**



**Christopher Shields**



**Lenore Wilson**

quested. By late Friday evening, MCSO detectives along with assistance from the NC State Bureau of Investigations and the District Attorney's Office executed search warrants at the two locations. Members of the Otto Fire Department and the Chief Medical Examiner's Office also provided substantial assistance.

During the course of our investigation, Christopher Shields of Otto, NC, was identified by detectives as a person of interest and was located, interviewed and released as the investigation continued.

While conducting their investigation, additional interviews were conducted and it was not until later in the day that Christopher Shields would become a prime suspect in the

investigation. Following the field interview with Shields, Rabun County Sheriff's Office detained him during a traffic stop where he was the passenger in a vehicle entering into Rabun County. This traffic stop was a collaborate effort by detectives between Macon and Rabun County sheriff's offices.

Shields was charged with kidnapping, with additional charges expected pending positive identification of the autopsy results.

Felony warrants for desecration of a corpse were issued for the two other suspects, McCrackin and Smith, on Monday. McCrackin was apprehended in Rabun County on Monday and Smith turned herself in a short time later.

"Thanks to tips from citizens from both

Macon County, NC and Rabun County, GA we can confirm both suspects Smith and McCrackin are now in custody for charges related to the ongoing Macon County homicide investigation," said Sheriff Robert Holland. "As part of our investigation, we are continuing

to follow up with any and all information includ-

ing attempting to locate other individuals who may have knowledge about the victim in this case. We have information that leads us to believe there are individuals who saw the victim prior to her death with suspect Chris Shields and also after her death. Detectives from both Macon County and Rabun County sheriff's offices have worked tirelessly on this investigation since the case was initiated."

The victim has not been identified.

Anyone with information is asked to contact the Macon County Sheriff's Office at 828-349-2263.

"We are not playing games and now is the time to come forward," said Holland.

## HCCMF Feasts/Salons of the Festival 2022

Join us at this season's events by calling the Highlands-Cashiers Chamber Music Festival office at 828-526-9060 or email us at hccmfnc@gmail.com.

These annual Feasts and Salons provide important and vital financial support to the Festival which allows us to bring world-class chamber music to the mountains each year.

### 2022 Feasts



**"Dine with Sara!"**  
Saturday, July 9th - 7 PM  
\$125/Person - 12 Places  
Special Guest:  
Sara Sant'Ambrogio  
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Saturday, July 16th - 7 PM  
\$150/Person - 20 Places  
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**"Grammy Winner Bailey with Gold Medalist Gurt"**  
Saturday, July 23rd - 7 PM  
\$125/Person - 18 Places  
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Hosts: Martha & Al Pearson



**"Pasta Extraordinaire with the Kims"**  
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**"The Eminent Cellist"**

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Performing Guest: cellist Sara Sant'Ambrogio  
Hosts: Peggy & J. F. Bryan



**"Zuill Bailey and Bach's Six Suites - Part I"**

Thursday, July 28th - 5 PM  
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Episcopal Church of the Incarnation Chapel - Highlands  
Hosts: Lana Jordan & Nancy Gould-Aaron



**"Zuill Bailey and Bach's Six Suites - Part II"**

Thursday, July 28th - 7:30 PM  
\$75/person - 90 Places

Performing Guest: cellist Zuill Bailey  
"Bach in a Sacred Space"

Episcopal Church of the Incarnation Chapel - Highlands  
Hosts: Lana Jordan & Nancy Gould-Aaron





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This Memorial Day we honor the men and women who sacrificed so much so we could live free.

**Pat Allen**

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## Highlands, NC...where freedom rings!

*"Ask not what your Country can do for you – ask what you can do for your Country"*  
 – John F. Kennedy

The plaque pictured in this column stands proudly in the center of town at the Highlands Veteran's Memorial Garden and really says it all, "All Gave Some, Some Gave All." Thank you to all who served, who serve currently, and who paid the ultimate price by losing loved ones in service to our Country. We salute you today!

At this point, some of you are undoubtedly saying "Wait a minute Pat, this is a real estate column. What in God's name does this have to do with real estate?" I submit to you that it has everything to do with real estate!

You see the Declaration of Independence says this; "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness."

In the current culture, we're witnessing times of unquestionable division in our Country, our States, and yes in our Towns. There's a lot of uncivilized behavior out there that's dividing us instead of uniting us. I'm just a real estate broker in Highlands NC, but Memorial Day causes me to believe in the plaque, the Declaration of



Independence, and the faith somewhere in the middle we can embrace a spirit of compromise where the current cultural disruptiveness will lead to a unity and a one-ness about us. For all of you who are visiting this weekend, Highlands, NC is a shining light in the world, where freedom rings.

• In Highlands, if you own real estate, you are free to sell it for a profit.

• In Highlands, if you desire to own real estate, you are free to buy it at a fair price, and you have the right to profit from your investment by whatever legal means are available to you so long as it does not harm or damage your neighbor. "Love thy neighbor" (you can read all about it in the Bible).

• In Highlands, we embrace an "others first" mentality and freely welcome tourism, commerce, all races-religions-creeds, slow drivers, and yes... Floridians (I love Floridians).

• In Highlands, we are to free express ourselves, to embrace one another's differences and to do so with respect, dignity, politeness, and love for one another.

• In Highlands, we are free to gas up our cars without the fear of them being stolen, (thank you Town of Highlands for our incredible police & fire departments and for not defunding them).

• See INVESTING page 18

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## • LETTER •

### Town's deliberation of STRs fell seriously short

Dear Editor,

After almost nine months of meetings and draft proposals, the Town of Highlands Board made their final ruling on Short Term Rental (STR) regulation on Thursday night and it is beyond problematic.

I fully understand the concerns of certain citizens regarding the proliferation of STRs in Highlands as well as the direct impact certain STRs have on residential neighborhoods, but I also believe the Town Board exceeded its legal authority as well as its discretionary authority.

To be clear, prior to Thursday night, the Town of Highlands had no specific regulations relating to STRs in the Unified Development Ordinance, and this fact was proven out by their rescinding the prohibition of STRs in Residential District 1 (R1) that was made in August 2021.

The STR ordinance that was passed on Thursday night made some progress toward stopping the proliferation of STRs, but it also failed to respect the property rights of those who invested in homes when it was perfectly legal to operate a STR. I have several concerns with how the Town Board handled the final passing of the STR ordinance, and I believe they will be revisiting this issue after potentially spending hundreds of thousands of taxpayer dollars on legal fees. This legal battle is not necessary if an open and honest debate is reignited.

As a citizen of this community for more than 15 years, I have always been impressed with how we work together to solve our problems. I am proud of the openness of our Town Board meetings and the willingness of commissioners and the mayor

to consider various opinions and reasoning on issues. Unfortunately, with regard to the STR issue, I am not sure we followed that historic protocol. After a public hearing in February that addressed the Planning Board's revisions to the proposed STR ordinance, the community was provided very little information on the workings of the STR ordinance until the proposed STR ordinance was made public on Monday. This gave very little time for the interested parties to review and respond to the significant changes made by the town's attorneys and the working group.

As an owner of two STRs in R2, I was consistently told by members of the Town Board and other parties involved in the process that R2 would not be significantly impacted by the new STR ordinance. Based on the draft ordinance distributed on Monday, this was mostly true with a few caveats.

However, during the discussion on Thursday night, the Town Board decided R2 should be treated the same as R1 and the draft ordinance was amended to eliminate STRs in R2 moving forward. This caught property owners in R2 by complete surprise and the community was not even able to address this issue to the board in the public comment period because we were not aware R2 was on the

table for prohibition.

The ordinance that passed on Thursday night will not allow any new STRs to operate in R1 or R2, but it does provide for limited non-conforming use to those STRs already operational in these zoning districts. On the surface, this seems to be a fair remedy to individuals or entities who purchased property with the full understanding the law allowed for such uses in these zoning districts, including myself.

The main issue with the ordinance's application of non-conforming use is that in many instances it will significantly impact the property owners' ability to rent their property because of an "intensity" clause added to the non-conforming use provision. This provision is completely unfair and will impact some property owners more than others, likely creating an underground market for STRs. The "intensity" provision requires the property owner to look back over the last five years and determine the highest rental use in a one-year period and this will be used to determine the maximum number of nights allowed for STR moving forward. This will not significantly impact me, but it will likely harm those landowners who made a recent purchase for STR purposes or recently converted their property to STR use.

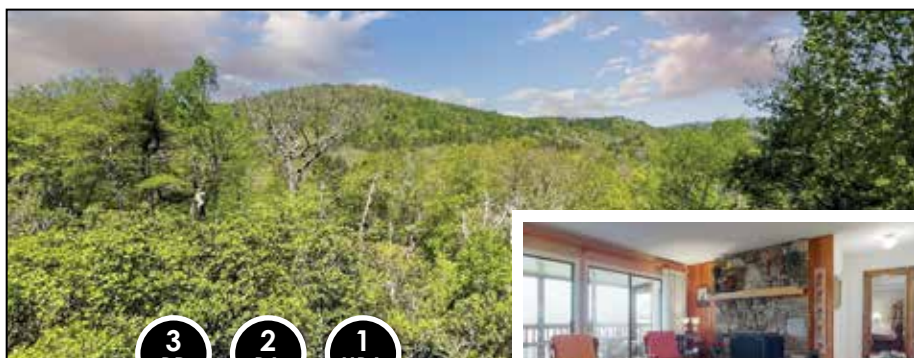
In conclusion, enforcement of the STR ordinance passed on Thursday night will require a significant amount of time and energy to ensure the new rules are being followed.

Additionally, it is unclear how the Town Board can single out STR properties to limit certain types of occupancy, require sewer and septic inspections, require a lease agreement addendum, gathering limitations as well as occupancy family relationship limitations.

I do not speak for all STR owners, but I know many of us have been willing to sit at the table with all parties and attempt to find some common ground to avoid making the lawyers rich and helping heal some of the wounds created by this issue.

We all love Highlands in our own unique way, and I hope we can move beyond the STR battle, but Thursday night's decision was clearly not a step toward the healing process.

**Jerry Moore  
Highlands, NC**



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This one has it all. A almost flat 3.55 acres with end of the road privacy. Enter the home from a covered carport into a spacious den-living dining area, updated kitchen is located adjacent to the stone fireplace. Living and dining boast mountain views. Wing bedrooms floor plan with the master at the end of the hall and 2 guest bedrooms off the hall with baths. The cutest log guesthouse that you have ever seen. Offered at \$1,875,000. mls #96998



Mirror Lake Cabin. What everyone is looking for, old house charm with new house living. Main house has 2 bedrooms 1 bath, a real stone fireplace, wood floors and usable kitchen. Guest house has 2 bedrooms 1 1/2 baths with an enclosed outside shower. Offered at \$1,600,000. mls #97457



Easy intown living with this one level contemporary ranch which features 4 bedrooms, 2 baths plus a study and large 2 car garage/workshop. Open spaces with soaring glass, screened porch that has a grill with vent and connects to a conversation deck with firepit. The living area and screen porch overlook the noisy water of Millcreek. Update to your personal tastes and live happily ever after! Offered at \$1,195,000. mls #98604



Located in desirable Mirror Lake, this 3-4 bedroom, 2 bath Cottage is in move-in condition or ready to personalize to your specific tastes.. Light and airy, cathedral in living room, fireplace, cooks kitchen, 3 bedrooms, 1 bath on the main level with a deck that overlooks the small pond. Lower level has a sitting room, laundry, bedroom, bath and one car garage. A great setting with water and privacy. Offered at \$850,000. mls #98454



This is a great package, 3 bedroom, 2 bath fully renovated home with stone patio & firepit, outdoor pizza oven. Great rental or home for personal use, this is a large business condo space that makes a nice office, man cave, and car storage area. There is an additional .98 acre that would be great for retail, or storage buildings to be built. Offered at \$1,275,000. mls #98813



Great view in town from this three bedroom, three and 1/2 bath home newly renovated. Open kitchen / living/ dining room with gas fireplace, covered front porch with stone wood burning fireplace, and powder room. Main level suite has a full bath, walk-in closet and private deck to enjoy the view. Downstairs consist of two suites, one with a separate kitchenette. Covered parking space for those rainy days. Priced to sell at \$1,190,000. mls #98526



Great Family home has flat grassy spaces and lovely outdoor entertaining areas. View of Shortoff mountain from the historic outdoor fireplace. 3-4 Bedrooms, 3 baths, office, 2 car garage and a 2 car carport. A do not miss and in move in condition. Offered at \$1,174,000. mls #97458



Located on a gentle knoll of almost 3/4 of an acre this 3 bedroom 3 bath home is wrapped with a lovely covered porch to enjoy the cool Highlands air. The main level has 3 bedrooms and 2 baths. Updated kitchen with all new appliances opens to the dining and living room with a beautiful stone wood burning fireplace. Upper level has a large bonus room with a full bath. this home is walking distance to Apple Lake with deeded access dock for all property owners. Owners have encapsulated and dehumidified under the house and replaced all ceiling fans and exterior lights. Offered at \$895,000. mls #98680



Completely remodeled and updated 3 bedroom, 2 bath. Large master suite with his/her baths, double shower. Large deck, beautiful wood burning fireplace, end of the road privacy! Waterfall! Adjoining lot available for sale. Offered at \$1,347,000. mls #98596



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Located very close to town is this 2 bedroom 2 bath with cathedral ceilings in living room and additional sunroom. There is a large open deck that faces 10 acres of protected common area. This is a great starter home waiting for you to decorate with your own finishes and tastes. Offered at \$675,000. mls #98663



Front Face View of Whiteside Mountain in this 3 bedroom, 4 1/2 bath home, with bonus room close to town. Every room has unique features, 4 fireplaces. Main floor suite has a gas fireplace, sitting area, and an incredible bath with a view. Lower level has two suites with full baths, bonus work out room or mother-in-law suite, wrap-around deck with hot tub and small fire pit. 3-car covered carport. Furnishings negotiable. Close to town. \$3,900,000. mls #98524



This wonderful estate home is in Highlands Falls Country Club with a breathtaking view of Whiteside Mountain. A grand main level bedroom suite with walk in closets, a jetted tub and shower and a guest bedroom and bath. Also on the main level is the living room with a stone, wood burning fireplace, wet bar, dining room area and large kitchen. Upstairs has 2 large bedrooms and baths, a large entertaining area and office. Offered at \$2,100,000. mls #98322



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**...STRs continued from page 4**

of Wilmington decision by the North Carolina Court of Appeals, the Town Board determined that the best way forward is to allow these STRs in R-1 and R-2 to continue operating as long as they can provide proof to obtain a Nonconforming Use Permit (NUP) and then must operate strictly within the parameters of past use.

“In addition, all STRs, no matter where they are located in Highlands, must obtain a permit to operate a short-term rental (STR Permit). The standards for obtaining both permits are clear and reasonable, as are the compliance rules. For example, any STR attached to the Town sewer system cannot exceed 12 guests. All STR guests must comply with Town nuisance, noise and trash ordinances. Special events are not allowed. Vehicles cannot park on the public right-of-way. Contact information for the STR owner or operator must be posted on the premises.

“Permitting and enforcement will be time-consuming for the town and we trust that they are up to the task they have created for themselves. The Mayor accurately predicted that no one will be totally happy with these changes. For those of us who want to live quietly in our mountain homes, the option chosen by the Town still leaves many of us with mini-hotels operating next door. And so HNC remains concerned, but hopeful that this first step will allow the Town to fully understand and manage the problems created by commercial activities in residential neighborhoods.

“Commissioner Amy Patterson said it best at the meeting. ‘The future of the town is worth fighting for.’ We agree and will continue to support the Town’s efforts to preserve the character we cherish about Highlands.”

But Save Highlands – which believes STRs should be allowed throughout town – is now armed and ready to continue with its lawsuit with the town which had been “stayed” pending amendments to the UDO regarding STRs.

“The lawsuit is very much alive,” said David Bee of Save Highlands.

“The ordinance on its face clearly violates the law of the State of North Carolina. Here is an excerpt from the North Carolina Vacation Rental Act that was signed into law by Gov Cooper on July 1, 2019... ‘...cities and counties are not authorized to do any of the following, among other things: Adopt or enforce any ordinance that would require any owner or manager of rental property to obtain any permit or permission from the local government to lease or rent residential

real property or to register rental property with the local government.’

“This board has blatantly and recklessly dismissed the advice of the NC School of Government. They have ignored the legal advice of at least two reputable land use attorneys, including their own hired outside legal counsel. They completely scrapped and dismissed the proposal set forth by the Town of Highlands Planning Board -- the only officials who attempted to mediate instead of unnecessarily squandering taxpayer dollars on legal fees.

“In addition, Commissioner Patterson made it abundantly clear that spending in excess of \$200,000 of taxpayer money is a worthwhile use of taxpayer funds that could be better spent on items such as workforce housing solutions.

“Finally, after months of deliberation and awaiting a verdict in Schroeder v. Wilmington, the Town completely disregarded the judge’s ruling and decided to rush through an overreaching and invalid ordinance with no public comment. The entire thing is illogical and perplexing.”

Though commissioners hoped the amended UDO would clear up the STR debacle the town started last August when it systematically disallowed STRs in the R1 district effective Jan. 3, 2022, the amendments have made the issue murkier than ever.

Before the board considered the amendments, Commissioner Marc Hehn requested the board send the proposals to land use Attorney Craig Justice who first worked with the town’s STR committee made up of Commissioners Amy Patterson, Brian Stiehler and staff.

“I make a motion that we send this to Craig Justice and ask him to go over it with opposing council to talk about the lawsuit to see if there are any possible compromises,” said Hehn.

Commissioner Patterson led the discussion against the motion which failed 4-1 with Hehn dissenting.

“We’ve had eight months of lots of public comment and lots of opinions from lawyers. We have had emails and phone calls. I think we have done our due diligence here,” she said.

**Background**

Early on Justice told the STR committee that the town couldn’t abruptly prohibit STRs, that NC was a property rights state and grandfathering of uses would be allowed to continue even if properties sold because the uses follow the land.





## SAVE HIGHLANDS

SAVEHIGHLANDS.COM

**The STR ordinance passed by the Town of Highlands violates the law of the State of North Carolina.**

**“...cities and counties are not authorized to do any of the following, among other things: Adopt or enforce any ordinance that would require any owner or manager of rental property to obtain any permit or permission from the local government to lease or rent residential real property or to register rental property with the local government.”**

**The Town Board did not conduct an economic impact study to determine what this would mean fiscally for town businesses. Save Highlands did an independent draft study.**

- An annual direct spend in Highlands of \$165,600,000 would be lost if short term rentals did not exist.**
- This translates to a final demand loss to business' in town of \$19,320,000. - That is approximately a \$121,000 per year loss per business downtown.**

**Save Highlands is committed to protecting the integrity of Highlands as well the property rights for all Highlands homeowners.**

**By voting for this ordinance, the Town Board**

- ignored the advice of the NC School of Government**
- ignored the legal advice of at least two land use attorneys**
- ignored the recommendations of the Town of Highlands Planning Board**

**• Statistics from Daniel J. Stynes's 52 research works with 557 citations and 1802 reads, including: Impacts of Visitor Spending on the Local Economy, Highlands Chamber of Commerce, NC GS 42**

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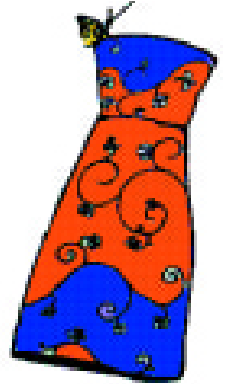


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# Come kick off summer this weekend!

...INVESTING  
from page 10

• In Highlands, we are free to carry one another's burdens. As our friend Andy Stanley so appropriately says "when we choose to carry someone else's burden, what divides us diminishes and what unites us surfaces."

So, as we gather this weekend, we once again salute those who "gave it all" and those active service women and men who are giving now for the cause of freedom. Thank you Lord, for Highlands, NC, a place that is a shining light on the mountaintop, where we strive to be quick to listen, slow to talk, and a town that practices doing what's responsible instead of what's permissible.

• Pat Gleeson, Bee Gleeson, Christal Green and Gemma (Yellow Labrador) are proud to be a team of "Helpers" and Real Estate Brokers at Highlands-Sotheby's International Realty in downtown Highlands (Kitty Corner from Old Edwards Inn). You can reach all of us at 828.526.8300. Please stop by for coffee and conversation.

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# ...STRs continued from page 14

This didn't sit well with some members of the committee, so the town hired attorneys from Poyner Spruill, Chad Essick and Bob Hagemann who helped the committee come up with the STR amendments to the UDO which went into effect Thursday night – which, as it turns out, permits STRs

to continue in all zones as a vested interest, with limitations.

Those “limitations” involve the requirement of three permits from STR owners across the spectrum – a Zoning Compliance Permit, a Short-Term Rental Zoning Compliance Permit and a Non-Conforming

Use Permit for those in residential districts where STRs are grandfathered.

The amount of information required on all three permits is a lot and only a few aspects were discussed at the meeting – namely the relation of occupants of the STR and the requirement of liability insurance.

First, STR rentals allow two people per bedroom plus two additional people. But the number of bedrooms can't exceed the number of bedrooms approved for the dwelling in an improvement permit issued for the property by the county.

For properties served by a public wastewater system, overnight occupancy shall not exceed 12 people.

In residential zoning districts, the total number of overnight occupants who are not related by the fifth degree of consanguinity, blood, marriage, or adoption can't exceed three.

Commissioner Patterson said the purpose of that stipulation was to prohibit party houses.

“If there are three unrelated couples and they're not causing a disturbance and no one is complaining then no one is going to knock on doors to see how many are related there,” she said. “But if eight occupants are allowed and they aren't related then it's a party house and that isn't allowed. The renter can be held accountable for renting to unrelated people. Party houses aren't allowed and that's the only way we could figure out how not to allow party houses. But if you have two families with two kids apiece and they don't disturb the peace, no one is going to report them so it's not going to be a problem.”

Regarding liability insurance, the proposal said: The owner or operator shall maintain general liability insurance on the property, which covers the short-term rental use and guests – but with the urging of Commissioner Dotson the board unanimously struck it.

“If someone gets hurt on the property it would be a civil problem; it's not the town's responsibility. It would be a civil issue between the tenant and the landlord,” said Dotson.

Commissioner Patterson said it was a way to protect everyone.

“The insurance is to cover the town, and as a government we are trying to protect visitors and citizens alike,” she said.

Town Attorney Coward said the provision didn't have to be in the ordinance, but it didn't hurt either. It would only matter to the town if a town employee got hurt on the property.

Commissioner Dotson said that wasn't justification to require liability insurance for STRs and it would become onerous for the town to require a landlord to buy insurance.

In the end everyone agreed the liability insurance wasn't necessary.

The ordinance goes on to say STRs can't be used for special events or gatherings in excess of the overnight occupancy limit; occupants of STRs must comply with the town's Nuisance Ordinance, Noise Ordinance, and its General Code of Ordinances.

In addition, the name and phone number of the owner, operator or an agent of the owner operator shall be conspicuously displayed inside near the main entrance of the short-term rental.

Every contract for a STR must have a signed acknowledgment from the renter(s) that they have received and understand the rules in Highlands ordinances concerning noise, trash, parking, etc.; exterior rental signage is allowed and temporary signs are allowed without a permit.

Failure to comply with the standards and regulations can result in remedies and penalties. If three violations are committed by the owner or operator within a 12-month period, the Short-Term Rental Zoning Compliance Permit may be revoked by the Planning and Development Director for a period of one year.

But there's more.

In the Zoning Compliance Permit a site plan is required drawn to an appropriate scale of the parcel showing its actual dimensions and indicating the size, location, and distance from property lines of the proposed building, any other existing building(s), and any other improvements proposed to be accomplished, including but not limited to driveways, sidewalks, and parking areas.

Everything about the property must be included on the STR permit – the address of the property; name and contact information etc., including a copy of the Macon or Jackson County Tax Department property information card, a copy of the Macon or Jackson County Occupancy Tax Registration Form for the property and much more.

Two requirements – one regarding septic fields and one regarding sewer connections may be problematic.

Proof must be provided of an improvement permit issued by Macon County Environmental Health Services or the Jackson County Department of Public Health and a certificate issued within the preceding 60 days from a qualified licensed sanitarian

• See STRs page 24



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## Consignment Home Furnishings Store Art Gallery

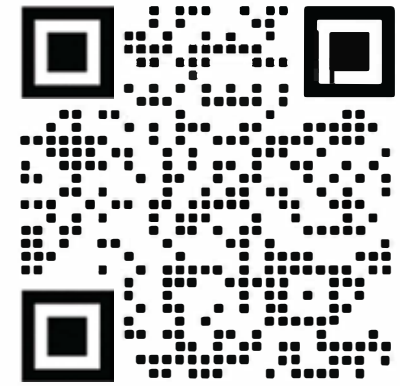
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• Lap Swim Monday-Friday 6am-10am, Monday and Thursday 11:15am-7pm and Tuesday and Wednesday 11:15am-3:30pm 6 lanes AND 3:30-7 (shared Pool) and Saturday 10-11am 6 lanes. Adult Swim Monday-Thursday 11:15am-7pm. Call ahead for Public Swim Weekend schedule due to staff shortages. 828-526-1595.

## Pickle Ball

• There are three indoor Pickle Ball courts and six outdoor Court open once again. Pickle Ball will be played in the gym every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 10am-1pm (days and times have changed).

## Nature Center Spring Hours

• Friday & Saturday: 10 AM to 4 PM. Closed.: Sunday - Thursday

## Mondays

• ESL classes are held at the Presbyterian Church in Highlands from 5:30-6:30pm. No reg-

istration required – just show up and participate. Questions? Visit [www.maconncliteracy.org](http://www.maconncliteracy.org), call 828-526 – 0863 or email [info@maconncliteracy.org](mailto: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.

## Tuesdays

• Covid-19 Testing at Village Green in Cashiers every Tuesday from 9-5. Walk-ins accepted, but you can schedule an appointment by calling (877) 562-4850 or going on line at [lhi.care/covidtesting](http://lhi.care/covidtesting).

## Wednesdays

• Covid-19 Testing at Highlands Community Building every Wednesday from 9-5. Walk-ins accepted, but you can schedule an appointment by calling (877) 562-4850 or going on line at [lhi.care/](http://lhi.care/)

covidtesting.

## 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+). Insurance 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.

## 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.

## 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.

## 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://myoptum-serve.com/covid19> or by calling (877) 505-6723 if you do not have internet.

## Fridays

• Friday Night Live Concerts in Town Square on Main Street. 6-8:30 p.m. Bring chairs.

## Every Fri., Sat, & Sun.

• 1st run movies at the Playhouse on Oak Street. 1 and 4 p.m. [www.mountaintheatre.com](http://www.mountaintheatre.com)

## Saturdays

• Saturdays on Pine in K-H Founders Park on Pine Street. 6-8:30 p.m. Bring chairs, blankets and a picnic. 1st Saturdays

• Visit Highlands hosts the Highlands Bagpipers for a Town Square performance 4:30-5p the first Saturday of each month through October.

## 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.

## Fri., Sat., Sun., May 27-29

• The movie Downton Abbey - A new era at the Playhouse 1 & 4 p.m. [www.mountaintheatre.com](http://www.mountaintheatre.com)

## Fri., May 27

• Highlands American Legion Post 370 will be selling poppies this Friday, May 27th in front of Brysons grocery store from 10a to 2p. The red poppy is a nationally recognized symbol of sacrifice worn by Americans since World War I to honor those who served and died for our country in all wars. It reminds Americans of the sacrifices made by our veterans while protecting our freedoms. Wear a poppy to honor those

who have worn our nation's uniform. All donations received will be used by the American Legion family for their programs that support veterans, the military community and their families.

• At Cabin Couture on Carolina Way, 10-year Anniversary Reception and Grand Opening of The Gallery at Highlands featuring original art by regional artists from 4-7 p.m.

• Live music in Town Square on Main Street featuring Sycamore Flats.

## Sat., May 28

• Mountain Garden Club Plant Sale 91 to noon at the ball field on N.4th Street (US 64 east). Check or Cash only.

• Live music at K-H Founders Park 6-8:30p. Featuring Continental Divide. Bring chairs, blankets and a picnic.

• Comedy at the PAC at 7:30 p.m. Lucas Bohn will bring his hit one man multimedia show "Lesson Plans to Late Night" for one night only. This show combines stories from the classroom, stand-up comedy about teaching and examples of student work that will leave you in stitches. For ticket information go to [www.HighlandsPerformingArts.com](http://www.HighlandsPerformingArts.com)

## Sun., May 29

• The Church in the Wild-wood opening summer hymn singing service will be held this Sunday, May 29 at Highlands United Methodist Church due to maintenance issues at the church on Horsecove Rd. All are welcome for an hour of singing from 7-8 pm in the old fellowship hall. Enter off Main Street. Call Les Scott if questions at 828-200-9532.

## Mon., May 30

• The Highlands American Legion Post 370 will conductor a Memorial Day service at 10a at the Veterans Plaza across from the Highlands Police Station and the Playhouse. The post cordially invites post members, families, and friends to join the Memorial Day ceremony honoring the brave men and women who gave their life so we may live free.

## May 31 and June 2, 6, 11

• Beginner Drawing Workshop, 4 sessions. 1-4pm Cost: \$35/\$45 each class Instructor



**Special Memorial Day Sale!**  
25% off cleaning & repairs

Our 37th year in Highlands  
**Hand Cleaning Restoration Appraisals**

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Other locations: Naples, Sarasota, Orlando, Tampa



# • HIGHLANDS EVENTS •

Freddie Flynt. To register: Office: 828-526-8811. Email: [office@clehighlands.com](mailto:office@clehighlands.com)

## Tues., May 31

• Village Nature Series at The Village Green in Cashiers from 5-6pm: Mountain Wildlife, live animal presentation by Balsam Mountain Trust, hosted by Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust and The Village Green. Free, family-friendly program. No registration needed. [www.hicashlt.org](http://www.hicashlt.org)

## Wed., June 1

• The Placemakers Academy of Garden Design: A 3-Part Series in Home Landscape Design, Part 2: Bring Your Garden Design to Life! 10a-noon. \$60/\$70 Presenters Mary Palmer Dargan & Arielle McIntyre. To register: Office: 828-526-8811. Email: [office@clehighlands.com](mailto:office@clehighlands.com)

## Fri., June 3

• Live music in Town Square on Main Street featuring Will and Lindsey Thompson.

## Sat., June 4

• Kids fish day at Cliffside lake will be Saturday from 8am-12 Noon. Ages 1-15.

• Live music at K-H Founders Park 6-8:30p. Featuring High Five. Bring chairs, blankets and a picnic.

## Sun., June 5

• Auditions for HCP's production "Night Watch" from 2-5 p.m. at Highlands Methodist church. Please use the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street entrance to the Fellowship Hall. The play calls for five men and four women between the ages of 30 to 50. Scripts are available at the Highlands and Cashiers libraries. The performances are Aug. 25-28 and Sept. 1. Call backs will be Monday, June 6 from 6-8 p.m.

## Fri., June 10

• Live music in Town Square on Main Street featuring Ol' Dirty Bathtub. 6-8:30p.

• Chef Dinner at OEI's The Farm, Red, White and 'Que with the Fox Brothers. Book at [OldEdwardsHospitality.com/chefdinners](http://OldEdwardsHospitality.com/chefdinners)

## Sat., June 11

• Live music at K-H Founders Park 6-8:30p. Featuring Rocksteady@8. Bring chairs, blankets and a picnic.

## Fri., June 17

• Live music in Town Square on Main Street featuring McIntosh and the Lionhearts. 6-8:30p.

## Sat., June 18

• Live music at K-H Founders Park 6-8:30p. Featuring Firecracker Jazz Band. Bring chairs, blankets and a picnic.

## Fri., June 24

• Live music in Town Square on Main Street featuring Southern Highland Band. 6-8:30p.

## Sat -Sun, June 25 & 26

• Highlands Mountaintop Rotary

Art & Craft Show will be held in Kelsey-Hutchinson Park on Pine Street in downtown Highlands from 10a to 5p. Now in its 17th year, this popular event showcases talent from the area and features fine art, folk art, crafts and furniture. Attendance is free, dogs are allowed, and food will be available. For info contact coordinator Cynthia Strain at (828) 318-9430 or visit: [www.mountain-topshow.com](http://www.mountain-topshow.com)

## Sat., July 9

• Low Country Shrimp Boil to benefit K-H Founders Park at the park. Doors open at 5p and Dinner is at 6p. Rain or Shine. \$70/person. Live music. Tickets are available at [www.foundersparkhighlands.org](http://www.foundersparkhighlands.org) and The Dry Sink on Main Street.

## COREY JAMES GALLERY & Estate Consignments

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On the corner of 3rd & Spring

## Cabin Couture

Join us Friday, May 27  
for our  
10-year Anniversary Reception  
celebrating the  
Grand Opening of  
The Gallery at Highlands  
featuring original art  
by regional artists.  
4pm - 7pm.

465 Carolina Way • Highlands  
(Between N. 4th & N. 5th)  
828-526-3909



To all the people in Macon county who voted for me, thank you for believing in me. To my dad, Charles Thun, and Edna Morgan, a special thank you for all the time spent at the polls.

Most importantly, thank you to my family for being so supportive. I couldn't have done this without you.



ARBORCOAT® Exterior Stain in Solid brings beautiful Benjamin Moore® color to outdoor wood surfaces while letting a hint of the natural wood grain to still show through. The waterborne stain offers maximum protection against the elements while creating a striking aesthetic.

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Highlands, NC 28741  
828-526-3571  
[www.HighlandsDecorating.com](http://www.HighlandsDecorating.com)

## ...STRs continued from page 20

professional that the septic system serving number of bedrooms as reported.  
the property is safe and adequate for the If the property is served by a public

**LOW COUNTRY SHRIMP BOIL**  
to benefit  
**Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park**

**SAVE THE DATE**

**SATURDAY, JULY 9<sup>th</sup>, 2022**

**Doors Open at 5, Dinner at 6**

Rain or Shine at Oak & Pine Streets, Highlands, NC

\$70 Ticket includes tasty low country boil dinner, dessert, and two drinks.

Live Music by Back Porch Orchestra

Tickets available at [www.foundersparkhighlands.org](http://www.foundersparkhighlands.org) and  
The Dry Sink on Main St.

Hosted by Friends of Founders Park, a 501(c)3 organization, [www.foundersparkhighlands.org](http://www.foundersparkhighlands.org)



## Our 41st Season of bringing you World Class Music!

Presented by the  
**Highlands-Cashiers  
Chamber Music Festival**

**July 1 – August 7, 2022**

[www.h-cmusicfestival.org](http://www.h-cmusicfestival.org)  
[hccmfnc@gmail.com](mailto:hccmfnc@gmail.com)  
(828) 526-9060



wastewater system, a written statement from a licensed plumber is required saying that the connection to the system is operational and free of detectable leaks. The trouble is area plumbers are said to be booked solid.

Plus, plumbers aren't typically qualified licensed sanitarian professionals with the authority to sign off on a septic system, so the county would have to check and sign off on a septic system – a process that could take months.

According to county staff, the issuance of new septic field applications is three months out in Macon County so getting people to come up to Highlands to check on existing septic fields in a timely manner is unlikely.

As it is now, the county has two people on staff and has had to contract out septic system field work from adjoining counties – two from Swain and two from Jackson County.

Commissioner Hehn voiced his concerns over the amount of paperwork and verifications the town is requiring for STRs.

The recent court case Schroeder vs. Wilmington clearly said the registration of properties wasn't allowed and according to Commissioner Hehn the town's proposed permitting process smacked of "registration."

"I am concerned that all of this might be considered registration and registration is in violation of Shroeder vs. the City of Wilmington," he said.

But Mayor Pat Taylor said their legal advisors said the proposed permitting process doesn't contradict Schroeder vs. Wilmington.

Commissioner Patterson said the committee considered that but said since the town had zoning there can be rules attached to those zones.

"We have zoning, and we have rules about uses in zoning and we have to have some way of knowing and letting people know what those rules are so they will comply. It doesn't do any good if we have no way of knowing if they are complying," she said. "This is just like a Special Use Permit or building permit or a land disturbing permit, or a county permit. There are rules so everyone complies. This is not a registration. This is simply, in the light of zoning, how we figure out if someone is complying with the rules of the community they have decided to live by."

Mayor Taylor said the town's legal advisors said the permits don't constitute registration.

### Major Changes

The amended UDO was distributed prior to the Town Board meeting in the

agenda packet. At the time, Town Manager Josh Ward said he didn't expect very many, if any changes to the proposed and delivered UDO but as the meeting progressed, that wasn't the case.

There were two big unannounced changes regarding STRs allowances – the first in B4 and the second in R2.

Since the proposed ordinance permitted STRs in commercial zones B1, B2 & B3, it followed they should be permitted in B4 which is a buffer zone between residential areas and whose intensity is greater. So, the board quickly agreed that STRs should be permitted in B4.

The next unannounced change regarded STRs in the R2 zone.

In a surprise move, the board decided to treat R2 like R1 when it came to STRs.

Initially, Commissioner John Dotson said Tourist Homes have always been allowed in R2.

"Historically we have allowed Tourist Homes in R2, so the perception of real estate agents is that R2 historically has been rental available," he said.

Commissioner Marc Hehn agreed saying Highlands needed to take some ownership considering what it has allowed in the past.

But Commissioner Amy Patterson disagreed.

"STRs are not conducive to what Highlands is," she said. "Allowing STRs in R2 will drag down the rest of Highlands with it."

The mayor agreed.

"I have gotten feedback from the folks in R2 who would like the zone to be treated like R1 which will guarantee there won't be a transition of all STRs in R2," he said. "If grandfathered, all the people in R2 who are doing it can continue; this just won't allow a rapid expansion of them."

Commissioner Stiehler said R2 should have the same protections as R1.

"The future of Highlands shouldn't be a STR venue. We need to protect what we have in the way of neighborhoods and residents who contribute to our town in so many different ways. I doubt STR people who come here for 3-5 days for a wedding attribute to Highlands," said Commissioner Patterson.

She questioned what the district might turn into.

"We don't know how many are out there and if we don't put something in here then that district will become entirely STRs," she said. "STRs are not conducive to what Highlands is. Rentals might be fine, but STRs that are used weekends for



# HS Class of 2022 Graduation



The annual Senior Vehicle Parade took place on Main Street on Friday, the last day of school.



David Parrish delivers the benediction.



Chief Marshal Riley Connor leads the graduates from Class of 2022 into Highlands graduation ceremony.



Valedictorian Jeffrey Olvera delivers the farewell address at graduation on Saturday.



Highlands Math Teacher Gina Billingsley delivers the Commencement Address.

Photos by Brian O'Shea  
Plateau Daily News

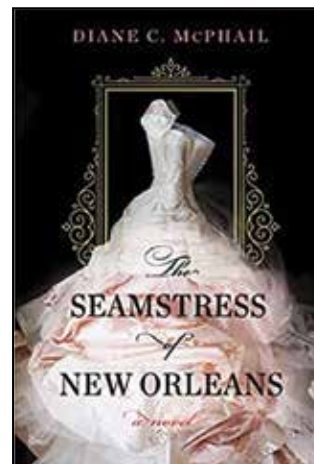


Salutatorian Hayley Borino welcomes those in attendance and reflects upon her time at Highlands School.



Highlands Class of 2022 toss their caps in the air after graduation on Saturday, May 21.

Local author  
**Diane McPhail's**



*"The Seamstress of New Orleans"* is releasing May 31 and can be found at

**The Book Nook**  
inside  
**The Toy Store**

364 Main Street • Highlands, NC  
828-526-9415

*Mountain Garden Club*

**PLANT SALE**

Memorial Day Weekend  
**SATURDAY May 28, 9am - 12pm**  
The Ball Field On HWY 64



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# • SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING •

## A God That Weeps



**Pastor Mark Ford**  
**First Baptist Church**  
**Highlands**

There is much to burden the human heart at this time. Our world is awash in bad news and worrisome prospects for the future. We are inundated with news of inflation and recession, wars and conflicts, droughts and famines around the world, shortages from fuel to baby formula, corruption and ineptitude in government, and failures of religious institutions and leadership. There is a growing moral vacuum that has been replaced with narcissistic forms of self-actualization. We wonder privately and aloud if God sees, does God care.

It may come as a surprise to you, but as you and I grieve and feel oppressed by all of this, God is equally feeling the pathos of our times. It was this divine pity, merciful compassion, and sympathy for the condition of humanity that moved God before the foundation of the world to ordain the sending of His Son to be a sacrifice for the sins of His people and accomplish the redemption of creation, which even now awaits the full expression of that deliverance in His second coming.

But as the Lord feels our pain and knows our suffering as our great high priest (Heb. 4:14-16), we need to realize that His grief goes beyond the present repercussions of a fallen world that itself is groaning under the weight of sin (Rom. 8:22). He grieves over the sin that has marred his world and destroys the souls of people. That is why we read such verses as Luke 22:44, when in the Garden Jesus “prayed more earnestly, and offered strong crying and tears, even to the point of bleeding.” He wept as Lazarus’ tomb, though He was about to raise him from the dead. He wept over the city of Jerusalem because of the darkness they were in spiritually. This sorrow even took Him to the point of wrath as “He looked around about them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of people’s hearts” (Mk. 3:5). These passionate sentiments of Divine grief and anger are given prophetic expression by the Psalmist who said, “I was grieved with this generation, and said, ‘It is a people that do err in their heart, and they have not known my ways.’”

You see, the Lord in His grief looks beyond the chaos and pain of the present and grieves for the cause of it all – the sin and rejection of human hearts for a God who loves His people so much He died for their sins and pleads with them to come to salvation in Christ. So, as you wrestle with the oppressive news and condition of our world today, find solace in the fact that God in heaven grieves with us – He grieves because we have rejected His Word and ways, and bring much of this grief on ourselves through disobedience and rebellion against His Truth. But know also, that in great love and mercy, He offers us salvation from our sins and self, and promises us great hope for the future when He will return and make all things new. And by the way, He also promises to wipe away all tears (Rev. 21-22).

## Proverbs 3:5

# • PLACES TO WORSHIP •

## John 3:16

### BLUE VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

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

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

### CHRIST ANGLICAN CHURCH

828-743-1701 • 464 Hwy 64E. Cashiers, NC 28717  
 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.

### 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.: 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 Chapel: Rite I spoken, 8a. Rite II with Choir in  
 Sanctuary 10:30a; Morning Prayer Mon-Thurs 8:30a 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; Choir 5p; Prayer Mtg 6:15p

### FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Curtis Fussell & Emily Wilmarth, pastors  
 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

(Off Franklin/Highlands Rd)  
 Sunday School: 10 am. Worship Service: 11 am

### GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH OF CASHIERS

Non-Denominational-Contemporary Worship  
 242 Hwy 107N. 1/4 miles from Crossroads in Cashiers

www.gracecashiers.com • Pastor Steve Doerter 743-9814  
 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  
 In-Person and live-streamed Worship Services

909 Bluegrass and 10:50 Traditional

www.highlandsmethodist.org

### HOLY FAMILY LUTHERAN CHURCH: ELCA

Rev. Angie Ballard • 2152 Dillard Road • 526-9741  
 Worship/Communion: 10:30 All are welcome.

We wear masks and social distance.

### MACEDONIA BAPTIST CHURCH

8 miles south of Highlands on N.C. 28 S in Satolah  
 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  
 Services 2x/month May-Sept.; 1x/month Oct. -April

mountainsynagoguewnc.com.

### MOUNTAIN BIBLE CHURCH

743-2583 • Independent Bible Church  
 Sun: 10:30 a.m. at Big Ridge Baptist Church.

4224 Big Ridge Road (4.5 miles from NC 107)  
 Weds: Bible Study 6:30 p.m.; Youth Group 6 p.m.

### OUR LADY OF THE MOUNTAINS

### CATHOLIC CHURCH

Rev. Fr. Jason K. Barone - 526-2418  
 Mass: Wed. noon (Latin); Thurs. noon; Sun. 11a

### 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

Mass: Tues. noon (Latin). Thurs. 9a.; Fri. noon;  
 Sat. 5:30p; Sun. 9a

### THE CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD

1448 Highway 107 S.. Office: • 743-2359 • Rev. Rob Wood  
 June-Sept: Sunday Services: Rite I. 8a. Rite II. 9:15 & 11a

Nursery available for Rite II services

Thursday: Noon Healing Service with Eucharist.

### UNIVERSAL UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

85 Sierra Drive. Franklin • ufranklin.org  
 Sunday Worship - 11 a.m.

### WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rev. Sam Forrester/Cashiers  
 Sunday School: 10 am. Worship Service: 11 am



# • POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

**Highlands Police entries from May 13. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or public officials have been used.**

## May 13

• At 10:50 a.m., officers responded to a 2-vehicle accident at NC 106 and Munger Road.

## May 14

• At 4:13 p.m., officers responded to a report of trespassing at a residence on Pine Lane where someone opened a gate and tried to enter a home.

## May 15

• At 7:30 p.m., officers responded to a report of a Breaking and Entering without

force and damage to property at a residence on Talley Road where a cabinet was damaged.

## May 16

• At 9:18 a.m., officers responded to a 2-vehicle accident in the parking lot of Bock Builders and Carolina Way.

## May 19

• At 9 a.m., officers responded to a report of a larceny where a hard drive was taken from a home on Sagee Woods Drive.

## May 22

• At 2:15 p.m., officers responded to a report of trespassing at a residence on Paul Walden Way.

## The Highlands Fire & Rescue log

from May 17.

## May 17

• At 9:35 a.m., p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Falls Drive West.

## May 18

• At 4:19 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm on Main Street.

• At 6:17 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Cullasaja Drive.

• At 6:50 p.m., the dept. provided public assistance on Main Street.

• At 7:43 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Spruce Street.

• At 10:16 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Blue Valley Road.

## May 19

• At 4:51 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Buck Creek Road.

## May 21

• At 11:21 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Clear Creek Road.

• At 12:10 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on N. 5th Street.

## May 22

• At 9:01 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Half Mile Drive.

## May 23

• At 10:35 a.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on S. 4th Street.

• At 12:13 p.m., the dept. responded to a call of a downed tree on N. 4th Street.

## ...STRs continued from page 24

destination venues is not what we are. If we don't prohibit new STRs in R2 then STRs will explode in R2 regardless of what we have done in R1 and it will drag the rest of Highlands down."

Commissioner Hehn reminded the board that the town has allowed STRs.

"When the UDO was amended in 2012, regulations weren't clear and it didn't prohibit STRs," he said.

Commissioner Patterson agreed saying the town should have done something years ago.

"But that doesn't mean we shouldn't do something now," she said.

With a 4-1 vote with Hehn dissenting, new STRs are not allowed in the R2 district but they are grandfathered in as a nonconforming use like in R1 with stipula-

tions outlined in the Non-Conforming Use Permit.

That permit must be submitted to the Planning & Development Director no later than September 1, 2022, or within 90 days of the use becoming nonconforming which is May 19.

If an applicant is unable to provide evidence concerning the STR history or that the level of intensity is less than 30 days, the property shall not be used as a STR for more than 30 days per calendar year.

Hehn voiced concern for the property owners who invested money in their homes who don't have "history" to account for their efforts.

"There is the case where someone hasn't rented yet but made an investment and is ready to go but doesn't have the his-

tory. Making this so restrictive, will invite a lawsuit," he said.

Attorney Coward agreed saying that may be a common law vested right case.

"I don't want a lawsuit, but I think some things are worth defending," said Commissioner Patterson. "We pay \$200,000 every year to keep the pool open so we are talking about the future of Highlands and what we want Highlands to be and the protection of the character of Highlands and the character of our neighborhoods."

Patterson said she knew nobody in the room was happy with what they did.

"But we have to move forward," she said.

Town Manager Josh Ward said the amended ordinance is on the town's website and the forms for the three required permits will be posted online by the end of the week.

— Kim Lewicki



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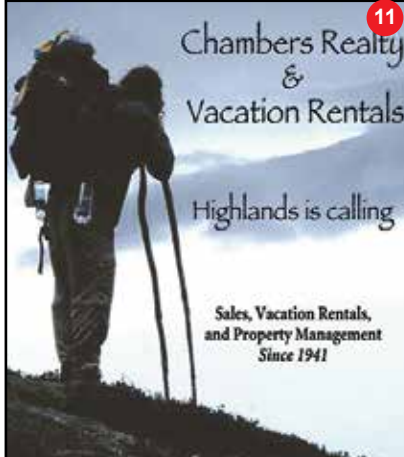


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