

Towns County Herald

Legal Organ of Towns County

www.townscountyherald.net

Your Hometown Newspaper Since 1928

75 Cents

Publication Number 635540 Volume 95 Number 01

Wednesday, November 1, 2023

County Government, School Board lower tax rates

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

Both the Towns County Government and Towns County Schools lowered their respective millage rates in separate called meetings on Thursday, Oct. 26.

The new combined rate for property owners in the county is 10.738 mills, an 8.4% decrease over the 2022 millage rate. This includes the Fire Millage set by the county to fund Towns County Fire & Rescue.

Each year, the state re-

quires tax levying authorities like the county and school district to offset inflationary increases in the property tax digest by calculating a rollback rate.

If a taxing authority decides to set a millage rate above the rollback, it must advertise a tax increase and hold three public hearings to give property owners due notice that their taxes are going up. Fortunately, that was not necessary this year.

In addition to responsible budgeting, property owners are seeing a substantial decrease in the combined millage rate due to fair market values

having gone up recently from pandemic-era move-ins to the area inflating the property tax digest.

Even with decreased rates, the county and schools will be seeing tax revenues increase in 2023—about \$235,000 for county and \$309,000 for schools—thanks primarily to actual growth in the real property digest from new development, improvements and additions to existing properties.

“We have seen an increase in the tax digest over the past few years,” the Commissioner’s Office said last week. “We have also experienced a

growth in sales tax revenue and other revenue sources.

“This, along with conservative spending policies, have allowed the county’s governing authority to avoid a tax increase since 2008.

“Inflation and rising salary costs have driven the county budget upward; however, we have been able to meet the budgetary obligations.

“There are some funds available above the needed reserve that may be used in the case of any budget shortfalls in 2024.”

Commissioner Bradshaw said that his office was

“very thankful that, once again, this year we were in a position to accept the rollback.”

“Property taxes haven’t been raised since ‘08,” Bradshaw reiterated. “With all the inflation, we are working very hard to maintain.”

And for the second year in a row, the School Board decided to lower its millage rate beyond the rollback, giving property owners another small tax break and allowing the district to secure the lowest school millage rate in the state for another year running.

As previously reported, See *Millage Rates*, Page 14



Cliff Bradshaw
Sole Commissioner

Kelley talks development of ‘McTyeire Crossing’



Young Harris City Councilman John Kelley invited Planning Consultant Trey Crumley of Ron Cantrell Construction to speak with fellow council members and the mayor last month about the upcoming Kelley/Gibson housing development.

By Brittany Holbrooks
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

In their regular meeting last month, Young Harris City Council members heard from one of their own, Councilman Dr. John Kelley, about a housing development he has in the works.

“The name of the development is McTyeire Crossing,” Kelley said. “For those of you who may not know, a school was originally here that ultimately became Young Harris College, and it was called McTyeire. McTyeire School initially served eight grades.”

Kelley’s goal is to de-

velop a small neighborhood primarily for “young families” and “people just starting out.” The project is being developed by Kelley with Alvin Gibson and will not feature subsidized housing.

The development is projected to consist of 14 individual units.

See *McTyeire Crossing*, Page 14

Photo by Brittany Holbrooks

Early voting ends Friday; Election Day is Nov. 7

By Shawn Jarrard
Towns County Herald
Editor

Advanced in-person voting for the Hiwassee General Election and the county-wide Special Election for the Education Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax Referendum will conclude this Friday, Nov. 3, after three straight weeks and two Saturdays of early voting.

Between now and Friday, all early voting takes place from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. inside the Towns County Board of Elections Office located at

See *Early Voting*, Page 7



Castoff Pet Rescue hosts grand opening for new site

By Brittany Holbrooks
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

BLAIRSVILLE — Castoff Pet Rescue went to the dogs — and cats — on Saturday, Oct. 28, for the official Open House of their new facilities.

The organization’s new location at 240 Patton Place in Blairsville may not be finished yet, but it’s coming along nicely and will feature more than just a rescue serving the needs of Union and Towns counties in Georgia, as well as Clay and Cherokee counties in North Carolina.

The weather was gorgeous that day, the air filled with classic rock tunes courtesy of the Cletus Way band, and that’s to say nothing of the Blairsville Cruisers Car



Castoff Pet Rescue made plenty of cuddly critters available on Saturday for the grand opening of its Patton Place facilities.

Photo by Brittany Holbrooks

By Brittany Holbrooks
Towns County Herald
Staff Writer

If there’s one message that Clayton Adams wants to impart upon the world after his parents’ life-changing car accident this summer, it’s simply that folks should hug their loved ones close.

After all, hugging his loved ones has been something Clayton has had difficulty doing himself, considering his father remains in in-patient physical therapy and his mother was just released from the hospital in August.

Union and Towns counties may recognize the names of Travis and Kathy Adams, especially if they attend Mountain Presbyterian Church or live at Branan Lodge; Travis preached at Mountain Presbyterian for over three decades, and Kathy served as Service Coordinator for Branan Lodge.

Travis retired from Mountain Presbyterian in 2020 but continued preaching part-time in Rabun County, and the couple were on their way there on July 23, 2023, when, through no fault of their own, they were involved in a three-car accident on US 76 near Waldroup Road in Hiwassee.

“The gentleman that caused the wreck was driving west toward Young Harris, and a car in front of him was



Travis and Kathy Adams have been enjoying quality time with their grandchildren while Travis undergoes in-patient physical therapy following a bad car wreck July 23.

Photo/Submitted

turning left into a private driveway,” relayed Clayton Adams, Travis and Kathy’s

youngest son. “He hit the car in front of him — the car that

See *Adams Family*, Page 6

July Term 2023 Towns County Grand Jury Indictments, continued

The following individuals were indicted during the July Term 2023 of the Towns County Grand Jury, which met again last month:

Samantha Aguirre Beck, aggravated assault; aggravated assault, Family Violence; battery, Family Violence; driving under the influence; failure to maintain lane; improper backing.

Dustin Shawn Bishop, possession of methamphetamine.

Rebecca Renee Eichholz, possession of a Schedule II controlled substance; possession of drug-related objects; interference with government property.

Erin Ashley Brown, furnishing prohibited items to inmates; violation of oath by

public officer.

Bradley Alexander Lafayette, aggravated assault on a peace officer; two counts obstruction of an officer; simple battery, Family Violence.

Carey Edward Kendall, arson in the first degree; arson in the second degree.

Hayley Mae Benson, public drunkenness.

Ben Cleveland Parks, interference with government property; battery; simple battery.

Dawson Wade Denmark, nine counts of sexual exploitation of children; possession of marijuana, more than an ounce.

Kayla Renee Campbell, possession of a controlled substance with intent to distribute;

possession of methamphetamine; driving under the influence.

Jonathan Matthew Groundwater, two counts of criminal damage to property in the second degree.

David Michael Bucaneli, theft by taking.

Jessica Marie Fernaays, theft by taking.

Nicholas Salard, two

counts obstruction of an officer; driving under the influence (per se); driving under the influence; operation of unregistered vehicle; open container; laying drags.

Kenneth James Peters, aka James Kenneth Peters, exploitation and intimidation of disabled adult, elder person or resident; battery, Family

See *Indictments*, Page 6

14 Pages

Vol. 94 No. 01



Arrests - 2
Chamber - 5
Church - 10
Classifieds - 13

Opinion - 4
Legals - 13
Obits - 11
Sports - 8

Lake Levels

Blue Ridge 1,672.30
Chatuge 1,919.47
Nottely 1,764.99

FOOTBALL
11/3 7:30 PM
@ Lincoln
County

ESPLOST Sample Ballot See page 5

Holiday Bazaar Nov. 4-5 See page 7

Young Harris Tax Digest See page 12



The support you need for your next big dream.
Talk to us today about your loan and line of credit options.

United
Community

Tina Denton | 706-435-1104
Hiwassee Main Office
NMLS# 744611

Matt Miller | 706-435-1106
Hiwassee Main Office
NMLS# 744609

Castoff Pet Rescue...from Page 1



The Cletus Way band performed live for guests of the Castoff Pet Rescue Grand Opening over the weekend. Photo by Brittany Holbrooks

Club coming out to show their support for the cause.

Folks were welcome to bring their own pets or adopt new furry family members as they explored the grounds and shopped for items from the Castoff Pet Rescue Thrift Store or browsed local handmade jewelry.

Castoff Operational Manager Adam Payne sported some snazzy Dalmatian-patterned face paint complete with whiskers, fitting right in with the black and white dogs up for adoption out behind the cat barn.

Having volunteered for six months before his official hiring about a year ago, Payne was happy to give out information on the new property's process – an endeavor that several folks, like Vet Tech Supervisor Brittany Balsamo, refer to as "his baby" for the time and effort he's put into it.

"I've mostly been out here with this new construction project trying to bring this

together so we can get all the cats moved out here," revealed Payne, adding, "We've been updating all of our processes just to get modernized with everything."

Payne also mentioned plans to hire dog trainers certified to work with the public and rescued animals. Behavioral issues, whether rooted in aggression or rowdy behavior, are a common reason Payne has seen dogs given up by owners or continuously brought back to the shelter. "This is just the first step of what we plan to do out here," Payne said. "We're planning to open a private dog park that would be open to the public, and then just do a lot of education on animals out here. We're going to use this whole property for the most good we can do."

And that's not all Castoff has planned. Payne envisions a special fenced-in area for "dog picnics," a space that can be rented out for puppy playdates or meet-ups with human and

animal buddies alike. He hopes all these additions to the property will be finished within four weeks.

Vet Tech Supervisor Balsamo has been working for Nottely Oaks Animal Hospital since 2018 and specializes in pet physical therapy, especially for dogs. Last Saturday, she was out there with the rest of the Nottely Oaks crew providing reduced vaccination and microchip services.

"It is a really cool cause," Balsamo said. "We're supporting one of our favorite rescues in town, Castoff Pet Rescue, just being able to help the community (and) make sure our pets in the community are vaccinated and help preventing disease."

Nottely Oaks works closely with Castoff, and the hope is that once the facility is fully established, basic veterinary care can be provided at the shelter itself.

Not only would this be ideal for spays and neuters and immunizations, but it would

provide an opportunity for the public to have access to more low-cost vaccinations and microchipping.

The process of getting the entire shelter moved out to the new property is a gradual one, but there are already a few key structures standing.

Dogs will have access to special indoor-outdoor kennels, and the support beams of a sheltered run have already been put up and await covering for the day canine companions can exercise in it without having to go out in the rain for walks.

Cats will soon take up residence in the land's remodeled barn full-time, with room to roam in horse-sized stalls. Eventually, the lodging will include a protected outdoor space not unlike a "catio" so the friendly felines can get a breath

of fresh air once in a while.

There were already a few kittens and younger cats in the barn that day awaiting adoption in playpens, carriers and spacious cages. Quadruplet brothers Greyson, Timber, Odie and runt Opie were especially popular. The approximately 8-week-olds were born after their very pregnant mother was found by the husband of volunteer Sherry Williams.

"We named the cat Mama Lacy – that was on July 18. The babies were born on July 24, and they stayed at my house until they got a little age on them, and they're now in foster care," Williams said.

Construction has wiped out much of Castoff's funding, so monetary donations are always appreciated.

That said, for those who

feel led to do more, volunteer work is always a possibility. There are animals to be socialized, pens to clean up, and fosters to take in, among other duties; Castoff will be recruiting volunteers at additional off-site events in the future.

For folks with not a lot of spare time or change, consider stopping by the Castoff Pet Rescue Thrift Store at 19 Cobalt Street, Suite C, in Blairsville, or heading over to the Haralson Memorial Civic Center on Wednesday nights for Bingo.

"People can come to that – that helps us tremendously," said Payne, adding that online donations are the best way to provide funding. Just look for Castoff Pet Rescue's Facebook page and follow the PayPal link to donate.

Adams Family...from Page 1

was turning – and that car then went into the other lane of traffic and struck my parents (head-on)."

All three vehicles' occupants had to be airlifted from the scene and taken to Northeast Georgia Medical Center in Gainesville.

From that moment, Travis and Kathy had a long road to recovery ahead of them. After enduring a seven-hour surgery for a lower lumbar L4 spinal fracture, Travis will be wheelchair-bound for the rest of his life. Essentially, the nerves in his legs – especially around his feet – are severed.

"He's actually able to move his legs. They're just so badly injured that he will never walk again. He is not considered paralyzed," clarified Clayton. "The nerves are so shot – that is why he will never walk again."

Meanwhile, Kathy has had her own health hurdles to clear. Upon initial examination at the hospital, her only recognized injury was a fractured wrist, but it quickly became clear something was very wrong.

On the evening of July 23, she experienced worsening stomach pain, and an X-ray revealed internal bleeding.

As Travis underwent his own surgery, Kathy was rushed into the operating room "because what they thought was a puncture to the liver was actually a considerable puncture to her small intestine." Doctors believe her injuries were caused by

the seatbelt.

"For a moment there, it got pretty scary for my mom just because of the internal bleeding, but she has made a full recovery," Clayton reassured. "She had stomach surgery as well as (surgery for) a fractured wrist."

After a two-week stay in the hospital, Kathy was released on Aug. 2 and currently lives with Clayton in Athens for the time being. From there, she has made the difficult but necessary decision to retire in order to care for her husband as they adjust to this new normal.

"Life changes so quickly, you know? I mean, here were two people that were headed to church in the morning on a Sunday, and their lives changed forever," Clayton observed, admitting that while "anger would set in at some point" because of the accident's circumstances and his father's lack of mobility, he and the rest of the family are just glad the outcome wasn't even more dire.

"The emotion is, we are so thankful that my parents are alive, and we are so thankful that they will be able to go home and live their life," added Clayton. "They just need all the support. My father, just because he's wheelchair-bound, does not mean that he is incapable of living a life that is worthy. He will be able to have a life in which he gets fulfillment."

On that note, the couple has already seen a phenomenal amount of support manifest in

the form of needed changes to their home. The doors and hallways have been widened to accommodate Travis' new wheelchair, and the addition of indoor and outdoor ramps along with a new toilet and shower have done much to increase accessibility.

According to Clayton, it's likely that Travis will come home sometime at the beginning of November. Until then, he continues to build up his strength and adjust to his new perspective in an in-patient therapy facility in Commerce.

As the family prepares to welcome him home, they ask that the community keep him and Kathy in their prayers.

"My parents are of course firm believers in the power of prayer, and we believe in miracles," Clayton said.

At the time of publication, the Adams' GoFundMe page had raised over \$34,000 of a \$50,000 goal. Medical expenses have, for the most part, been covered by insurance, and most of the house renovations have been completed, yet many expenses remain.

To help cover the costs of car modifications, including hand controls, an electric seat, portable ramps and an outdoor wheelchair, check out www.gofundme.com/f/help-travis-and-kathy-adams to show your love.

If nothing else, open up a line to the Lord and ask that He continue to watch over such beloved members of the community.

Indictments...from Page 1

Violence; battery; two counts simple battery.

Roberto Leonardo Carvajal, burglary in the first degree; burglary in the second degree.

Tristan Syllas Malone, burglary in the first degree; burglary in the second degree.

William Cannon Miller, aka Cannon William Miller, burglary in the first degree; burglary in the second degree.

Severo Escorza Tapia, aka Severo Corza Tapias, Margarito Muira, three counts fleeing or attempting to elude a police officer; driving under

the influence (less safe) (alcohol); driving with expired license; driving on wrong side of roadway.

The above individuals have been charged only and are presumed innocent until found guilty in a court of law.

Huge Patriotic Event supporting local Veterans at Union County Farmers Market Saturday, Nov. 4



Last chance to get donation tickets on this car...drawing held Saturday, Nov. 4th at the end of the Veterans Car Show



The Blairsville Cruiser 6th Annual Salute To Veterans Car Show and Raffle will take place Saturday November 4th from 11 AM - 4 PM. The event will feature up to 300 classic cars and trucks from all over the area with many coming hundreds of miles to honor our Veterans. There is a \$20 vehicle registration fee for vehicles entering the show. All proceeds from the event go to local veteran organizations.

There is no entry fee for spectators who want to come support our veterans and see a great car show. This is an ideal family event for all ages to enjoy while thanking our veterans.

Awards for show vehicles include TOP 20 trophies, Best In Class trophies for 15 different vehicle classes and a Best Of Show Gold Cup Trophy. Thanks to club member Jeri Forrester of Hiawassee for sponsoring the trophies and to Dick Couture of Young Harris for sponsoring the Best of Show gold cup trophy. O'Reilly's Auto Parts deserves a big thanks for its sponsorship all year long for our Club Choice trophies which are given during our 14 cruise-ins held during the season.

More than 15 local veteran organizations will have display and informational booths set up at the Farmers Market. Patriotic music, great food and many raffle items will be offered.

All proceeds from the event will be distributed to local veteran organizations and to individual veterans who may need a helping hand. The annual event is held each November by the Blairsville Cruisers Car Club whose over 100 member include a great number of veterans. Vietnam veterans compose the majority of the veterans who belong to the club.

In addition to fees from registration of vehicles, a 50/50 drawing, food sales, and donations from attendees and the public the club raises funds by holding raffles during the event.

This year we have several very desirable items to be raffled. The raffle is open to the general public as well as car show participants and

club members. Raffles include a 55 inch smart TV donated by Blairsville Walmart, a laptop computer donated by Circuit World, a beautiful rustic porch/patio bench donated by Something Special Furniture of Hiawassee, a 10 drawer Husky tool chest donated by members Hoz Compton and Rob Compton of Lake Placid, FL and Hiawassee. Also raffled will be a Golf package featuring several free four-somes with cart donated by local courses Butternut Creek, Chatuge Shores, Brasstown Valley and Mountain Harbor golf courses. Also raffled will be a "car guys" package which includes a 90 piece tool set from Auto Zone and a hose reel and air hose combo donated by Home Depot. Raffle tickets are \$5 each for each item you desire to try to win. Drawings for all items are held at the end of the car show and you need not be present to win. So come get several tickets on the items of your choice and help support our veterans.

Door prizes are abundant for registered vehicles and drawings will be held all during the event. We want to thank the many businesses who donated door prize items for this veterans event. Donors include O'Reilly's, Auto Zone Blairsville and Hiawassee, Car Quest Hiawassee, Hayesville and Blairsville, and Jackie Jones Ford Quick Lube and Jackie Jones Dodge/Jeep/Ram/Chrysler in Hayes-

ville. Mikes Seafood donated gift certificates for door prizes as well.

Club sponsor Chick-fil-A donated 100 chicken sandwiches for the event in honor of our veterans. All funds raised by food sales at the event will go to veterans. Chicken sandwich plates which include a drink, chips and a cookie will be available all day for \$10 a plate. Coffee and hot chocolate will be available earlier in the day for a \$1 donation.

This is your last chance to get donation tickets for the 1995 Z-28 Camaro convertible that we have been featuring all season. The raffle car raises funds for our needy children's programs. The drawing for the car is at the end of this car show so get your \$10 donation tickets on this last day for a chance to win the car. We give away a car every year with the drawing always held at the Salute to Veterans car show. Thanks to all who help us out all year raising funds to take kids Christmas shopping. We will take 100 children shopping this year who may otherwise not have much of a Christmas.

Don't miss this chance to honor our veterans by attending and supporting the Annual Salute To Veterans Car Show. The Blairsville Cruisers Car Club is a 501(c)3 non profit club supporting local children and veterans all year long.

Early Voting...from Page 1

67 Lakeview Circle, Suite A, in Hiawassee.

Through the morning of Friday, Oct. 27, 88 voters had participated in the Hiawassee election, and by Friday afternoon, 357 voters had cast ballots in the countywide ESPLOST referendum.

For reference, there are 756 active registered voters in the City of Hiawassee, translating to about 11.6% of the active electorate voting in person for the Hiawassee election as of Friday morning.

And countywide, the number of active registered voters is 10,551, meaning just 3.4% of active voters had participated in person for the ESPLOST referendum by Friday afternoon, so it is safe to say early voting has been slow.

Election Day voting is next Tuesday, Nov. 7, from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. On Election Day, people will need to report to their designated precinct either in Hiawassee or Young Harris for the countywide election, and municipal election voting will occur inside the Elections Office. The Hiawassee Precinct

is located at the Towns County Civic Center in the same building as the Elections Office on Lakeview Circle, while the Young Harris Precinct is inside Stephens Lodge at 135 Murphy Street.

Only registered city residents may vote in the municipal election, while the ESPLOST referendum is open to all eligible county residents. The registration deadline to cast ballots in the elections was Oct. 10.

Requested absentee ballots started hitting the mail on Oct. 16, and the deadline to request an absentee ballot from the Elections Office was on Friday, Oct. 27. All absentee ballots must be received at the Elections Office by the end of Election Day voting.

In the Hiawassee election, one the City Council seat will appear on the ballot in a contest between Jonathan Wilson and Elizabeth "Babette" Dunn. City voters will also see the ESPLOST referendum on their ballot.

Regarding the 1-cent Education Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax ref-

erendum, the Towns County Board of Education has put another ESPLOST before voters to raise money for needed capital improvement projects at the schools, like floor replacements, HVAC and more.

At the Elementary School alone, ESPLOST would pay for new flooring, playground restrooms, school-wide restroom renovations, roof and HVAC renovations, and new technology, software and educational supplies.

As previously reported, should voters approve the referendum next month, the local sales tax rate would increase in April 2024 by one penny on the dollar to 8%, replacing the longstanding 7% sales tax on eligible goods and services.

If passed, the local sales tax rate would remain 8% for at least two and a half years starting next April, and the Commissioner's Office would have to decide in 2026 whether to seek renewal of the county SPLOST, which is currently paying for the massive courthouse renovation/addition.

Millage Rates...from Page 1



Towns County Board of Education Chair Stephanie McConnell in a recent meeting to discuss the school district's 2023 property tax rate. Photo by Shawn Jarrard

consistent growth in the digest has increased the amount of property tax revenues available to the schools to educate the community's children.

But growth is a double-edged sword for the School District particularly, as higher local property values mean the schools – and by extension taxpayers – are expected to pay more in “local fair share” money that is in turn withheld by the state.

And because of the way the state funding scheme works, the district is now in the position of losing more state money than it is collecting in additional tax revenues, School Superintendent Dr. Darren Ber-rong said, all during a time of extreme economic uncertainty.

One of the reasons the schools have been able to continue lowering the millage rate, despite less money coming from the state, is all the

pandemic-era federal funding that has shored up the district's coffers.

However, no additional COVID-linked federal dollars are forthcoming, and the schools still perceive needs for students in the district, which is why the Board of Education is asking voters to support the Education Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax Referendum Nov. 7.

Without ESPLOST, the growing deficit in state funding and other budgetary setbacks

will prevent the district from completing multiple capital improvement projects at the schools, in which case the board has signaled it may have to look at raising property taxes starting next year.

Now that the millage rates have been set, property owners should keep an eye on their mailboxes in the coming weeks for their tax bills.

Joining the county and schools in lowering their 2023 millage rates are the cities of

Hiawassee and Young Harris, which levy taxes for property owners inside their respective city limits.

The Hiawassee City Council was expected to adopt the city's rollback millage rate in a meeting that occurred after press time on Monday, Oct. 30.

Likewise, Young Harris City Council members are expected to adopt their rollback rate in a meeting on Tuesday, Nov. 7, at 6:30 p.m. inside City Hall at 50 Irene Berry Drive.

McTyeire Crossing...from Page 1

ual homes on individual lots, to be built on the 5.21 acres formerly known as the Kaiser-Dean property that Kelley and Gibson previously purchased from the city, located on US 76 at the southern edge of Young Harris city limits.

There will be a mix of 2-bedroom/2-bath and 3-bedroom/2.5-bath houses between 1,300 and 1,600 square feet apiece, Kelley said. Most of the homes will have a carport or garage, and a homeowners association will maintain the development once all the properties are sold.

The city will provide sewer and water to the properties, with a road for the development coming off the new roundabout that is planned for construction soon by the Georgia Department of Transportation.

Additionally, Kelley said the development will contain lots of greenspace, with a 50-foot section adjacent to a stream that runs along the edge of the property.

“The plan is to start housing construction in 2024,” Kelley said. “We first have to get the site plan approved so we can get the property ready for homes. And once we do that, we can get bids on the site plan. Once we get those bids, we'll know what our costs are and get that property ready.”

“Thereafter, we'll have probably three or four different house plans, and hopefully, once we get three or four (homes) up, we can pre-sell them and get that area built out. It'll be a beautiful entrance and gateway to the city.”

As noted by Kelley, the development is being named after Methodist Bishop Holland McTyeire, a philanthropist who donated the money for the school that eventually became Young Harris College: “We wanted to pay homage to the history of Young Harris,” he said.

The city will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, Nov. 7, for the purpose of hearing feedback from residents regarding rezoning Kelley and Gibson's property from Residential to PUD, or Planned Unit Development.

Also Nov. 7, council members will hold a separate public hearing on amending the text for PUDs in the development ordinance. The hearings start at 6:15 p.m. at City Hall.

PUDs allow municipalities better developmental control by requiring the submission of complete site plans up front, so communities know exactly what they're getting, and the development process is streamlined by cutting down on the need for variance approvals during construction.

Councilman Steve Clark said the city has had a PUD classification for years that has never been used to his knowledge, and Young Harris wants to clean the ordinance text up to better fit the city's needs.

The main ordinance amendment will be adding another PUD classification known as “Infill Residential,” where developers fill in vacant spots based on a site plan. The goal is to make it easier to build “starter homes” in the city to promote needed workforce housing development.

Infill Residential will be a third PUD classification in addition to the already existing Mixed Use and Conservation classifications.

Clark, who worked for years as a civil engineer designing residential subdivisions in Atlanta and has extensive experience with PUDs, said the new PUD zoning classification will enable Kelley and Gibson's project, which will then become the model for other developers going forward.

“What John's project would do is provide a need for the community that we don't currently have,” Clark said.

Also in the Oct. 3 meeting, Mayor Andrea Gibby responded to rumors that the city was not working under a valid wastewater permit, which she forcefully rebutted.

Gibby shared a letter from the Georgia Environmental Protection Division stating that while the previous permit had expired in April 2020, it was “automatically administratively extended” because the permit renewal application had been submitted on time.

“We don't do anything in this city without permission,” Gibby said. “We don't do anything in this city without a permit. We do have a new one if anybody wants to read it. We have it here, we've got it at the plant, we've got it online.”

The mayor also brought documentation for the Annual Watershed Report as proof of the city's extensive testing regarding not only water con-

sumption safety but also on the wellbeing of the environment.

“We pay an outside, independent laboratory,” Gibby said. “There's only like eight of them in the United States that are licensed and can do this kind of testing, and we pay for that because we care about the water and our community. It really infuriates me when people say that we don't.”

“We do not keep things from people, and when people start spreading rumors because you don't understand something, come and ask. Don't spread rumors. And anybody that you hear in the community talking about it – you tell them to come and talk to me. You tell them to come and talk to our wastewater people. We have all kinds of information.”

The Young Harris City Council meets on the first Tuesday of every month at 6:30 p.m. inside City Hall at 50 Irene Berry Drive, barring delays or rescheduling for holidays. These meetings are open to the public, and the community is encouraged to attend.



November is National Caregiver Month

November is National Caregiver Month. Caregivers lay down their lives for someone who cannot care for themselves. You could make their day with a card, a thoughtful gift, or flowers, or an encouraging telephone call to tell them what a great job they are doing. “When caregivers are shown appreciation, it enhances their experience,” says Tracy Brower Ph.D.

Scripture teaches that each person retains inestimable value because we are all created in God's image. The Lord Jesus notices when a person cares for another. In fact, this is of such great delight to Him that He says, “I tell you the truth, when you did it to the least of these my brothers or sisters, you were doing it to me!” Matthew 25:40

You may have been a caregiver once. You know it can be the most unimaginably difficult job that a person could ever experience. So, please take time this month to help a caregiver feel appreciated as well as to find the deeper meaning of caregiving by pointing to them the value there is in one person caring for another.

Now, is there a caregiver you know who needs an encouraging word from you this month? Perhaps they are a friend, relative, or an acquaintance of yours. You may invite them to a support group for caregivers, which would be a great benefit for them. Perhaps, you may volunteer to sit with their loved one while they attend the meeting. You decide how you want to minister to them during National Caregiver Month and beyond. They usually don't ask for the help they need, therefore, you will have to make the first move... you will be blessed!

Consider We Care as one of your options. We meet the first Friday of each month at Redeemer Baptist Church Fellowship Hall at 39 Youngstown Church Road, located 1.3 miles from the red light at KFC. Redeemer prepares a delicious meal for our caregivers. This month is our Thanksgiving meal. Come and enjoy the fellowship around our table.

If interested, please contact Doug and Rebecca Collins at 706-897-5221. We will meet this month on November 3, 2023 at 11:45, come early to meet and mingle with the caregivers.