



Commissioners approve Bethlehem Community Plan

The Bethlehem Community Plan was approved by the Alexander County Board of Commissioners at their meeting on Monday, September 9. The plan has recommendations in the areas of transportation, resources and services, natural and cultural resources, economic development and tourism, and land use and growth management.

Jon Pilkenton, Director of Planning and Development, said there was a real need to develop a plan for the future of Bethlehem with the upcoming widening of NC Hwy. 127, housing projects, and more. In July 2018, commissioners approved a contract with the Western Piedmont Council of Governments (WPCOG) to facilitate the monthly meetings and to provide technical assistance in drafting the plan.

The Bethlehem Community Plan Advisory Committee was then appointed to draft a plan that would provide a vision for the future development of the Bethlehem Community. Committee members include: Bud Caywood - chair, Andi Jack - vice chair, Ryan Mayberry, Ashley Starnes, Betty Long, Jim Price, John Dahlstrom, Randy Bock, Steve Brown, and Susan Osborne. Meetings were held monthly for

one year to develop the plan.

"Many times, planners don't get to plan, but only react. This is an exception," Pilkenton said. "With this plan, we can see the future of this community come together."

Pilkenton said that every action item in the plan is a recommendation which would require action from the Alexander County Board of Commissioners, such as zoning amendments, public hearings, etc.

Two community meetings were held to allow public input and inspection. The December 2018 meeting attracted approximately 70 people who were asked to list the community's assets, as well as their concerns and vision. The September 3rd meeting attracted more than 125 people who were able to view the plan and ask questions. Pilkenton said they received a lot of positive feedback on the plan.

Here is an excerpt from the plan's introduction: "Bethlehem will be experiencing a great deal of change, due to the widening of NC Highway 127 and its proximity to the City of Hickory, the Catawba River, and Interstate 40. The plan will be a fundamental policy document that will help guide the community's growth and development over the next 20 to 30 years. The plan provides a vision of how the community should look in the future and clearly defines the steps that should be taken in order to realize that vision. By following this plan, Alexander County will continue to create the conditions that encourage orderly growth and economic development well into the future."

Transportation recommendations include: maintain a good working relationship with NCDOT Division 12 and WPCOG in order to coordinate land use and transportation planning for new and updated roadway corridors.

Resources and Services recommendations include: explore new recreational opportunities for the Community and its citizens; identify and acquire land in strategic locations to encourage open space preservation, greenways, parks, and other passive recreation opportunities; and maintain relationships with Alexander County, City

• See **COMMUNITY** Page 2

Bethlehem Ruritan BBQ planned for September 20

The Bethlehem Ruritan Club monthly BBQ will be held Friday, September 20, beginning at 11:00 a.m. and continuing until sold out at the Bethlehem Community Building. Cost is \$8 for chicken and \$9 for pork BBQ plates.

Plates include the meat, baked beans, slaw, pickles, and roll.

Pork BBQ sandwiches are also available for \$5. Soft drinks and water are also available.

Dinners will be delivered for pre-orders from community businesses or groups by calling (828) 238-0260.

Seating for lunch is available in the community building. Profits will be used for community projects such as scholarships, community benevolence, support of girl and boy scouts, needy families, etc. ★



DET. BENFIELD RETIRES — A retirement reception was held for Alexander Sheriff's Office Detective Robert L. "Bob" Benfield, of Bethlehem, on August 29, 2019. Benfield was surrounded by friends, family, and fellow officers. He has served 33 years in area law agencies and will continue in part-time work as an officer and department Chaplain, despite recently suffering a heart attack. Earlier, Bob lost his son Caleb, who died in a crash while responding to Bethlehem Fire Department. Pictured above, left to right: Benfield is shown with Alexander County Sheriff Chris Bowman. ★

Alexander Sports Hall to induct five new members

The Alexander County Public Education Foundation and the Alexander County Sports Hall of Fame have announced the eighth Hall of Fame Class of inductees.

The Hall of Fame was established in 2012 to recognize, honor and memorialize those individuals who have made noteworthy contributions to sports in Alexander County and who have lived a life of exemplary character.

The Alexander County Sports Hall of Fame Class of 2019 will be

inducted on Monday, November 25, at 6:00 pm at the Alexander Central High School Auditorium.

The Alexander County Public Education Foundation is pleased to announce the selection of the following persons for induction in the Class of 2019: Elaine Seter Bolick, Jeff Fox, Richard Gwaltney, Harold Odom, and Stan Thomas.

ELAINE SETER BOLICK

Elaine Seter Bolick was a standout women's basketball and softball player during her prep

career at Alexander Central High School. A native of the Bethlehem Community, she was a three-time All-Conference softball performer for Coach Monte Sherrill during her playing days in Taylorsville.

Bolick also played on three state championship winning softball teams while at ACHS. She was a member of the NCHSAA slow pitch state title teams in 1994 and 1995. In her senior season of 1996, she was the pitcher for the Lady Cougars' first ever fast pitch state title team.

That year, Bolick led Alexander Central to a state title win over Wilmington Laney High School. A standout in the pitching circle, Bolick was voted the Most Valuable Player of the NCHSAA state finals series.

She is a member of the ACHS Softball Wall of Fame to recognize standout players. During her senior year in softball, she earned All-American honors and was voted the Pepsi Scholar Athlete Award winner. She was also

• See **HALL OF FAME** Page 7



ELAINE SETER BOLICK



JEFF FOX



RICHARD GWALTNEY



HAROLD ODOM



STAN THOMAS



NEW GYM, BODIES OF STEEL, HOLDS RIBBON CUTTING — The Bethlehem Community has a new gym with the opening this month of Bodies of Steel Personal Training and Fitness Center. A ribbon cutting took place August 16, 2019, for the facility and was well attended (above). ★

Ribbon cutting held August 16 for Bodies of Steel Personal Training

A large crowd turned out for the ribbon cutting ceremony at Bodies of Steel Personal Training and Fitness Center in Bethlehem on Friday, August 16, at 4:00 p.m.

Bodies of Steel is located at 9611 NC Hwy. 127 in Bethlehem (between Blondeez and Taylorsville Savings Bank).

Owners Karen and

Chris Rix offer a unique style of low-impact strength training along with nutritional coaching to increase metabolism and promote longevity.

Their diverse clientele includes body builders, pageant queens, and regular people striving to stay fit.

The couple provides the knowledge their clients

need through specialized training to meet their personal best with each visit. A wide selection of training equipment is found throughout the gym.

For more information, or to set up an appointment for personalized training, text or call 828-838-1748. "Like" them on Facebook at www.facebook.com/bodiesofsteelpt. ★



Annual Bethlehem Day Festival is September 21

The Bethlehem Community Development Association's 10th Annual Bethlehem Day Festival is set for Saturday, September 21, 2019, 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., features fun for everyone! Located at the Mt. Bethel United Methodist Church in Bethlehem (Alexander County), the annual fall event features live music all day, inflatable entertainment and activities for children, more than 50 arts, crafts, and information vendors, all kinds of foods and drinks. For information, call 828-234-6690 or www.bethlehemcda.org or email bethlehemday@gmail.com. ★

Mt. Bethel UMC plans Fall Barbeque Oct. 5

The Mt. Bethel United Methodist Men will host their annual Fall Barbeque Saturday, October 5, 2019, beginning at 11:30 a.m.

Barbeque pork or chicken will be served with baked beans, cole slaw, roll, and drink. The cost per plate is \$9.00. Sandwiches and plates

will be available for carry-out at lunch beginning at 11:30 a.m. (but if you wish to dine-in you will be welcomed).

Mt. Bethel United Methodist Church is located on Hwy 127 in Bethlehem. Beginning at 4:00 p.m., you may dine in and enjoy good food and fellowship or carryout

plates will also be available. Proceeds from this fundraiser are used for community outreach projects. ★

Shiloh Luth. to hold chicken pie supper Sept. 14

Shiloh Lutheran Church will hold a chicken pie supper on Saturday, September 14, from 5:00 - 7:00 p.m. or until sold out. All proceeds will go to Hospice of Alexander County. The menu will include chicken pie, green beans, slaw, desserts including cobblers, and drinks - coffee, tea, or water. All dine-in and carry-outs will be \$8.00. A 9 x 9 chicken pie can be purchased for \$12.00. For more information, contact Nancy Bowman at 381-2637 or Helen Bowman at 308-3393. ★

Next Star prints Oct. 17

The next issue of The Bethlehem Star will be printed on Thursday, October 17, 2019. The deadline for advertising and correspondence is Tuesday, October 15, 2019, before 5 p.m.