

Watauga Commission to Beech Mountain: "NO"

Written by Steve Frank

Wednesday, 18 December 2013 07:17

The concerned citizens—concerned over a water intake proposal for the town of Beech Mountain—overflowed the Watauga Commissioner’s meeting room, forcing the move to the large courtroom in the Watauga County Courthouse. Then the crowd spilled out of that room. But what really spilled was the angst and anger over the proposal from Beech Mountain to tap into the water of the Watauga River. No one speaking at the public hearing was in favor of the project; Karen Merchant of Bethel, “My second and major objection is directed at the lack of what I consider to be common sense used by the town of Beech Mountain when coming up with solutions to their supposed water shortage. It’s well documented that there’s a major problem with their infrastructure delivering the water to homeowners. Studies show repair to existing infrastructure would cost less than building an intake, pump house, and pipelines. Why on earth would they want to waste the time, money, and most of all, a precious resource simply to deliver it to a decrepit, failing system.” She went on to point out conflict of interest with the county’s attorney also representing the town of Beech Mountain, and said, “Also when the Town of Beech Mountain radically changed their demand verses supply figures they filed with DENR recently, the new numbers showed an unbelievable 300% increase. Something just doesn’t smell right, and I urge you to vote ‘no.’” In the end, no commissioner was in favor, and the measure was voted down unanimously.