

Road Issues Before Watauga Commission

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Discussion of roads was an important part of the Watauga County Commissioners meeting Monday evening. The first item pertaining to roads was a request by Mr. Ralph Yates to rename a portion of Hwy 194 after his father, Mr. Ed Yates, "He was involved in building 321 to Blowing Rock, 88 in Warrentonville to the Trade Tennessee line, 194 from Todd all the way to Elk Park." Yates told the commission that his dad ran the only steam shovel for state projects in Avery, Ashe, and Watauga.

Chairman, Nathan Miller, reflected the general sentiment of the commissioners about Mr. Yates request, "I think it's great to honor local people with their accomplishments that they did while they were here. That's just one stretch of road that he helped build, and he helped build this community." After brief discussion the Commissioners directed that the request be placed on the agenda for public comment during their October 16th meeting thereby meeting one of the states' requirements for naming a road. The other item pertaining to roads was one that will make improvements in the future for those needing to travel west of Watauga County. Mr. Craig Hughes presented a request from the Watauga County Comprehensive Transportation Planning Committee asking the Commissioners to pass a resolution endorsing the designation of Hwy 421 from Vilas to Tennessee as a Strategic Highway Corridor and Intrastate Trust Fund Project, "Strategic Highway Corridors was adopted by the North Carolina Board of Transportation in 2004 and seeks to identify, protect, and maximize use of highway corridors that play a critical role in regional and statewide mobility." Mr. Hughes further explained that the Transportation Planning Committee, upon reviewing the Comprehensive plan, determined that Hwy 421 was better suited to meet the goals of the Intrastate and Strategic Corridor roads than Hwy 321. The Commissioners discussed the proposal and agreed to support the recommendation of the Transportation Planning Committee by unanimously adopting the resolution.