

MEMORANDUM

December 9, 2010

To: Marcy Onieal, Town Manager
From: Mark Combs, Public Services Director
Subject: Analysis of Bagged Leaf Assistance Program & Options

I have performed a quick analysis of the Town's Bagged Leaf Assistance Program. Currently, a resident must be at least 70 years old with a maximum home valuation not to exceed \$200,000. For FY 10-11, \$2,500 was budgeted for this program, and to date 49 residents are on the list for service with 29 served (at a cost of \$1,038.75, or average of \$35.80 per household).

U.S. Census data for 2000 shows there are 3,340 total households in Black Mountain, of which 546 (16.3%) were listed as "householder 65 years and older". 347 homes (10.4%) were identified to be valued at or above \$200,000. Current Buncombe County tax information identifies 1175 parcels valued at \$200,000 or above; however, this number includes commercial properties.

Based on then perfunctory information above, I made the following assumptions:

- Property price escalation has tripled property values since 2000 (~1000 homes);
- If 16.3% of householders 65 years and older remains at the same ratio, the combination of age and ELIMINATION of home value threshold would potentially qualify only an additional 160 to 200 residents (based on age ONLY);
- Therefore, eliminating home value requirements is likely to incrementally increase expenses. I would conservatively recommend \$1,000 additional funding to absorb additional qualifying household and adjust the budget in successive years based on new historical data.

It has been shown and has been my experience that service programs designed for specific groups of citizens are subject to criticism by the population not served, thus a constant push to expand such programs to a broader population (ultimately not stopping until the entire population is served); therefore, to capitalize and implement a full-service in-house leaf collection program would cost approximately \$38,000 per year (assuming 5-year debt service for capitalization), or \$11.42 per household versus \$35.80 per household for leaf assistance program to the current target group.

Other options would include sub-contracting leaf collection to private sector companies such as GDS, Inc., First, Inc. and others. Further solicitation and financial analysis could be performed, as necessary.

Staff is poised and prepared to expand and provide additional services to our citizens; however, I am confident that if incremental expansion of services are enacted, new individuals or groups will likely surface to lobby for service expansion(s) for themselves or their target group.

Please let me know if I can do further analysis or program modeling.