

175-A Kriskell Lane  
Boone, NC 28607  
October 17, 2014

Kim Westbrook Strach, Executive Director  
North Carolina Board of Elections  
Post Office Box 27255  
Raleigh, NC 27611-7255  
VIA EMAIL: [joshua.lawson@ncsbe.gov](mailto:joshua.lawson@ncsbe.gov)

Re: Watauga County Board of Elections  
Resolution to Re-combine Boone Precincts

Dear Ms. Strach,

Thank you for your letter of October 16, 2014 regarding the recent Order of Judge Stephens and the opportunity to provide information to you regarding a potential location of early voting sites on the campus of Appalachian State University.

It is my opinion that the two most suitable sites for a One-Stop Absentee Voting location on the campus of Appalachian State University would be either the Legends Building or the McKinney Alumni Center. The following paragraphs provide some background on these locations.

The Legends building, located at 190 Hardin Street/U.S. Highway 321, is the present voting location for the Boone 2 precinct. The Legends building is a former grocery store building that has been converted into a special event venue for Appalachian State University. It is highly visible from the main highway corridor, has a large flat parking lot that immediately adjoins the building, and could be used exclusively by the Board of Elections as a voting precinct with no other activity being conducted in the building. Located immediately across this flat parking lot are Hoey, Lovill, Cannon, and White Residence Halls. There are a number of other residence halls and student housing apartments located within close proximity to this site. It is within approximately 150 yards of the Plemmons Student Union and within 3/4 of a mile of the One-Stop Absentee Voting location at the Board of Elections office. Paved sidewalks are located in front of this building which connect to all of the main campus, as well as to the One-Stop location at the Board of Elections office. The local bus service, Appalcart, has a nearby pick-up and drop-off location near the corner of the Legends building and in front of the dormitory across the parking lot from the Legends building. As the Legends building is a single use/special event venue, the Board of Elections can maintain a proper buffer zone around the site in compliance with GS 163-166.4. The curbside voting location is visible to election workers from within the voting enclosure. The Legends building has previously been certified to be ADA compliant for election use. The building also has a large changeable marquee which can be used to advertise its use as an early voting location.

The McKinney Alumni Center, located at 553 Blowing Rock Road/U.S. Highway 321, is another alternative for a voting location on the campus of Appalachian State

University. It is located in the Boone 2 precinct and is located directly across from The Holmes Convocation Center, the event venue for Appalachian State University Basketball. It is highly visible from the main highway corridor, and has a large conference room which could be used for voting. It has ample parking in a flat parking lot that immediately adjoins the building. It houses the offices of several staff persons for the Appalachian State University Alumni Association, which are separated from the Conference Room by a large foyer and entrance area. The McKinney Alumni Center is located near a number of student housing apartments, as well as being in proximity to the residence halls and the Pan Hellenic dormitory. It is within approximately one mile of the One-Stop Absentee Voting location at the Board of Elections office, and is located on the other side of the main campus from that location. Using the McKinney Alumni Center would place almost any location on the main campus of Appalachian State University within one-half mile of a One-Stop Absentee Voting location. The curbside voting location is visible to election workers from within the voting enclosure. Paved sidewalks are located in front of this building on both sides of its corner lot. It has a signalized traffic light to assist motorists entering and exiting the parking lot. Paved sidewalks are located in front of this building which connect to all of the main campus, as well as to the One-Stop location at the Board of Elections Office. The local bus service, Appalcart, has a nearby pick-up and drop-off location located directly in front of the building and across the intersection from this building at the Holmes Convocation Center. With the small number of offices located in the Alumni Center building, the County Board of Elections can maintain a proper buffer zone around the site in compliance with GS 163-166.4. As a State-owned building, the McKinney Alumni Center Conference Room is ADA complaint for election use.

I do not believe the Linville Falls Room at the Plemmons Student Union is a manageable site for One-Stop Absentee Voting or as an election day voting precinct. The Plemmons Student Union is a four story building with entrances on multiple levels and multiple entrances and exits. While parking may be available, curbside voting is not visible to election judges from within the voting enclosure. The Plemmons Student Union is not visible from a major roadway in Boone. For those unfamiliar with the building, it would be easy for a potential voter to become confused or discouraged from finding the appropriate location to vote within this building. Additionally, the County Board of Elections would have to add dedicated manpower solely for the purpose of attempting to enforce the buffer zone required by G.S. 163-166.4, which would not be required at either of the two locations recommended above. While the Plemmons Student Union has many people in the building during the day and was one of my favorite places to go while I was a student at Appalachian, it is a problematic voting location.

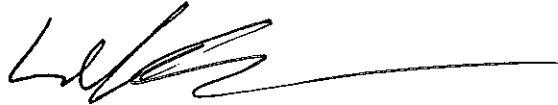
By way of illustration, Ms. Molly Hundley, an octogenarian who has resided in the Boone 2 precinct for almost all of her adult life and is a regular voter expressed great frustration at the difficulties she experienced in reaching her voting place in the Plemmons Student Union. While I understand the desire of some to create a "student site," I believe voting opportunities should be accessible to all voters. I am aware that prior to my tenure on the Watauga County Board of Elections there were other complaints about the accessibility and buffer controls at the Plemmons Student Union site.

I would be hesitant to recommend placing a voting location at any residence hall, as those buildings are all locked and key-card entry controlled to ensure the safety of the residents and prohibit unauthorized access by unknown individuals.

As to the hours to be allocated this site, I would suggest that they would mirror the hours provided at the four other remote One-Stop Absentee Voting locations approved in the 2014 General Election Plan. I am aware that we have already allocated all funds which were unanimously requested and approved by the Watauga County Board of Commissioners for voting sites in our budget, but if necessary will petition for a budget amendment in order to fulfill the requirements of Judge Stephens Order. As the existing sites and hours have already been advertised in accordance with State law, I would not want to cause voter confusion by altering those hours and times. Since the statutory deadline has already passed regarding advertising One-Stop Absentee Voting hours and locations, I would appreciate any advice or direction as to how we should proceed with advertisement of any additional location.

Again, I appreciate the opportunity to provide my thoughts to you on the possible selection of an additional early voting site. Please rest assured that the Watauga County Board of Elections will follow all directives provided to it by the State Board of Elections.

Very truly yours,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Luke Eggers', followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Luke Eggers  
Chairman, Watauga County Board of Elections