TO: Richard Hicks, Interim Town Manager; Mayor and Town Council

FROM: Michelle Kennedy, Planning Director

DATE: 07/07/26

SUBJECT: BearWise

In an effort to protect people, property and bears and in alignment with BearWise and the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, staff has implemented the following initial steps:

- **Citizen Engagement** - Black Mountain has for many years had a voluntary group of residents utilizing BearWise best practices. Members of that group have now become the inaugural Town BearWise advisory group. This group will work alongside Town staff to establish a community action plan that includes community based educational programming, outreach materials, establishment of a bear sighting/encounter protocol and other BearWise practices. It is the goal of the advisory group to work with Town staff in helping Black Mountain become a Recognized Bear Wise Community.

- **BearWise Ordinances** – After discussion with NC Wildlife Resources Commission staff, the Planning Department recommends establishing ordinances that are consistent with existing ordinances in the City of Asheville and Buncombe County. These ordinances include trash regulations, nuisance and wildlife feeding ordinances. We anticipate final ordinance recommendations to Council for the August 2026 meeting, to include
    - Bear resistant trash container requirements
    - Time restrictions on placement of trash placed on curb for collection
    - Construction site trash containment
    - Wildlife feeding protocols
    - Progressive fines – beginning with education and warnings and progressing to fines for repeat violations



Examples of BearWise marketing materials