
**TOWN OF WENTWORTH
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES
July 10, 2007
7:00 P.M.**

The Wentworth Town Council held their regular monthly meeting in the Town Hall meeting room at the National Guard Armory, on **Tuesday, July 10, 2007, at 7:00 p.m.**

Council members present: Mayor Dennis Paschal, Mayor Pro Tem Evelyn Conner, Councilwoman Iris Powell, and Councilman Robert Aswell

Council members absent: Councilman Nathan Hendren

A quorum was present.

Staff Present: Brenda Ward, Town Clerk / Fred Baggett, Town Attorney / Mr. Tom Wiggins, Rockingham County Planning Department / Deputy Clarence Cheshire, Rockingham County Sheriff's Department

Article I. Mayor Paschal called the meeting to order.

Article II. Mayor Paschal gave the **Invocation.**

Article III. **Discussion / Revision and Adoption of Agenda**

A. Requests and Petitions of Citizens

The **Town Clerk** advised that no one signed the Speaker Register to address Council. **Mayor Paschal** made a motion, "*To approve the July Agenda as written.*"

Councilman Robert Aswell seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

Article IV. **Approval of Town Council Meeting Minutes for June 5, 2007**

Mayor Paschal asked for any corrections or approval of the June 5th, 2007, Town Council Meeting Minutes.

Mayor Pro Tem Conner made a motion, "*That the minutes stand as written.*" **Councilman Aswell** seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

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Article V. Old Business

**A. Celebration Ten Committee Update & Appointment of Member
- Mayor Pro Tem Evelyn Conner**

Mayor Paschal asked **Mayor Pro Tem Conner** if she found another person to serve on the Celebration Ten Committee, and said that he, "...never could find out who the person was at the April Council Meeting, that said they would like to be on it."

Mayor Pro Tem Conner replied that she is still looking (for another person), but said the committee is ready to begin... "Kay Hammock has a lot of ideas and said she is ready to get started. We have Judy Wall and you, Dennis, and Brenda and Yvonne will have input."

Councilman Aswell said, "I just want big fireworks..." Everyone agreed.

Mayor Pro Tem Conner asked, "If we find another person in the community who wants to serve on the committee, will it be okay to just add them?"

Councilman Aswell replied, "I don't see why not."

There was no further discussion on this item of Old Business.

**B. Update on Post Office
- Brenda Ward, Town Administrator**

Mayor Paschal asked Mrs. Ward to update Council on the Post Office.

Mrs. Ward advised that the memo she included in Council's packets, "...pretty much summarizes everything..."

Mayor Pro Tem Conner read the memo to everyone.

Mayor Paschal commented, "We had all the politicians in Raleigh and everywhere else pulling for us before...calling the Postmaster General and Jesse Helms and Howard Coble, but they just blew them off."

"Some of the letters they copied to us said the Post Office was not an arm of the government any more," **Mayor Paschal** added.

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Mayor Paschal suggested sending an official letter from the Town, to **Congressman Brad Miller** requesting his assistance.

The **Town Administrator** asked if the letter she had already sent to the Congressman's office was not official. "Or do you mean official, as under your signature?" she asked.

Mayor Paschal answered, "...from the Town Council...and request his help and see what happens between now and the next meeting..."

The **Mayor** then made a motion to, "*Have Brenda do an official letter from the Town Council requesting his (Congressman Brad Miller's) help and input.*" He added, "...and try to get some dialogue going with him; maybe he'll contact me or you, Brenda."

Mayor Pro Tem Conner seconded motion. There was no further discussion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

(**Note:** A copy of the letter to Congressman Brad Miller, is attached hereto as a part of these minutes: **Attachment A.**)

VI. New Business

**A. Consideration of Contract with Rockingham County for Planning and Zoning Services (\$52,000/Year)
- Tom Wiggins, Planning Director, Rockingham County**

Mayor Paschal introduced **Mr. Tom Wiggins**, Director of the Rockingham County Planning and Zoning Department, and invited him to address Council concerning the new contract, and to proceed with the next item of business, "...in Frankie Legaux's absence."

Mr. Wiggins thanked the Mayor and Council. He apologized that it had taken so long, explaining, "I wanted to make sure we spelled out what services we were going to provide y'all. You are paying a lot more money than you were previously and I think it is important that both sides felt comfortable with the contract...I appreciate Brenda's time...I know she expressed some concerns, and Mayor Paschal, you did. I also want to thank our attorney Eugene Russell and Tom Robinson (County Manager)."

Mr. Wiggins continued, "I am very pleased with the contract ...and I'm here to answer any questions or address any concerns that you might have. I would like to state that the County Commissioners approved the contract last night at the Board of Commissioners Meeting."

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Mr. Wiggins said he would like to point out something on Page 3, Item 10 (of the contract). He advised, “This section talks about entering into a five-year agreement and it is automatically renewed each year; however you will notice that it says that after the second year, either party can give written notice at least 120 days prior, to either renegotiate the contract or to terminate it.”

Mr. Wiggins continued, “We are going through a hiring process to hire another planner, but the County wanted some guarantee that we are going to get some revenue for at least a couple of years...and you all said you were okay for a period of five (5) years, but we wanted to build in some flexibility. Maybe after doing the contract for a couple of years, we realize that there are some things we didn’t think about...and we say, ‘lets renegotiate and work those out...’ I just wanted to make sure you understand that section (of the Contract).

Mayor Paschal asked if anyone had any questions.

The **Town Administrator** asked the **Town Attorney, Fred Baggett**, if he was okay with the wording. She said she had not had a chance to discuss it with him, and wanted to make sure he was okay with everything.

Mr. Baggett replied, “I look forward, Tom, to hearing about your plans for staffing this, because I know it’s not spelled out here, which is understandable.”

Mr. Wiggins answered, “Our original intent was to create a Planner 3 position with the idea that that person would basically become Wentworth’s planner in addition to providing some services to the County, and in our contract we talk about sharing the position, about 20 hours per week. Long story short, due to some personnel issues....how my department is structured, and salary-wise, the Planner 3 position was not possible.”

Mr. Wiggins added, “What we state on the first page (of contract) is that you are entrusting me to designate which staff I feel can best provide the service you need. In most cases it is probably going to be Frankie Legaux... she is the Assistant Planning Director, she’s the most experienced person on my staff... certainly, Lucas Carter and some folks we are getting ready to interview are very qualified, but for the most part it’s going to be Frankie. I wouldn’t rule out that *I* might get involved, either in an ordinance issue or any other issue that may come up. The contract...lets me have flexibility to use what staff I feel can best provide the service. I give you my word, in no way would I every want to provide you with a lower (level) of service than you have had in the past...hopefully we will improve what you have had in the past. I don’t know if that addresses your concern...”

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Mr. Baggett replied, "I know you can't promise exactly because you don't know; but it's important that we have some continuity if possible...as you know, planning is a process and if the person changes every month, it's not good."

Mr. Wiggins answered, "Right, and I've been lucky...this is my fourth year and I haven't had a lot of turnover. Like I said, I wish I could guarantee that every single time it would be Frankie, but that's the intent at this point....I'm real pleased with some of the applicants we have had since we advertised, but I believe with you that continuity is important. So at this point, I would say for the most part, it's going to be Frankie."

Mayor Paschal said, "And we understood that ...I made everybody aware that we would be handling it like this and we have, in the past, had a couple of different people who worked on things when someone else was not available."

Mr. Wiggins said, "Right, if she is on vacation for example, or we have another project to come up and someone else, like myself, could come to your meeting....But again, I'm pleased with it. I'm sorry it took as long as it did, but I wanted to make sure we are all comfortable and wanted it to spell things out more than the previous or current contract does."

Mayor Paschal said he had, "...read through the Contract and Brenda (Town Administrator) has, and we have asked for some changes and these have been addressed."

Mr. Wiggins added, "We have a good relationship with y'all and if there are some issues that come up, I believe we can talk about it."

Mayor Paschal then made a motion, "*To approve the contract with Rockingham County for Planning and Zoning services in the amount of \$52,000.*"

Mayor Pro Tem Conner seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

VI. New Business – Continued

**B. Review and Approval of Plat Survey for Minor Subdivision / 6.78 Acres
- J. Randolph Cresenzo
(Berrymore Road / Parent Tract I.D. # 145062)**

Mayor Paschal asked **Mr. Wiggins** to proceed with review of the Plat Survey.

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Mr. Wiggins said he spoke with Frankie Legaux about the one-lot subdivision. He added, "It seems that the Cresenzo family wants to split off a lot for a home site...just under 7 acres; also, providing an exclusive-use easement or access just to this lot. You may be familiar with the property...there is already a gravel-base road there."

Mr. Wiggins continued, "You will notice the width is 50 feet and their intent is to allow the option...in the future, that if they wanted to split off another lot, they could upgrade this easement to a private road. The minimum standard for a private road is at least 50 feet of right of way. There are also other requirements, but at this point it is just an exclusive use easement with sole access to their lot...no other lots can use this drive unless they upgrade it to a private road. They just want to leave that option open in the future."

Mrs. Ward asked, "It's usually just 20-feet wide, right?"

Mr. Wiggins replied, "Yes, an exclusive use easement is a minimum of 20 feet, but they are going ahead with 50 feet at this time so that in the future they could upgrade to a private road."

"Other than that," he added, "it's pretty straight-forward...we are prepared to recommend that we would sign the plat, obviously."

Mayor Paschal asked if there were any questions from Council. There were no questions.

Mayor Pro Tem Conner made a motion, "*To approve the plat.*"

Mayor Paschal seconded the motion. There was no further discussion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

Article VI. New Business – Continued

**C. Consideration of More Extensive Clearing of Town Property
- Councilwoman Iris Powell**

Mayor Paschal asked **Councilwoman Powell** if she would explain to Council what she had in mind.

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Councilwoman Powell replied, "Clearing it off enough to sow grass. I'm not talking about putting a bulldozer in there and tearing all the trees down...but have someone go in and clear out the little trees, the bushes and pines...everything that is small. Sow some grass and mow it...so it will look like a little park in there until we get ready to build a town hall."

Mayor Paschal said, "But not the big trees...it's full of little ones, though."

Councilwoman Powell: "Not the ones you tagged to keep. Just so we can visualize what it will look like. When they took the house down, I was disappointed that it wasn't cleared more, but I realize that's all they were hired to do, is take down the buildings."

Mayor Pro Tem Conner said she has noticed that people going to the Employment Security Commission office are using the old driveway (on Town property) for parking.

Councilwoman Powell asked town resident and Planning Board member, William Totten, if he does that kind of work (clearing land/undergrowth).

Mr Totten said he does some, "on a small scale...I could look at it."

Mayor Pro Tem Conner said, "We probably need somebody with a Bobcat."

The **Town Administrator** said, "If there are people parking over there, we will probably see more trash. Even after it was mowed the other day and trash was picked up, somebody had thrown out a bunch of papers or else they must have blown off someone's car. The whole front of the lot was covered in paper."

Councilwoman Powell said she is talking about, "going as far back as the little building...where that little roadway is back there." She said she was not interested in going any further back...

Mayor Paschal: "So you're just talking about a couple of acres up there..."

Councilwoman Powell: "In the front, the very front."

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Mayor Pro Tem Conner: “Oh, I thought you were talking about going on back...”

Councilwoman Powell: “Well, I wasn’t saying that, but I guess it doesn’t matter. There is a little road back there where I am talking about...”

There was concern and discussion about using a bulldozer. **Mayor Paschal** explained, “If you don’t get those pines up by the roots...you haven’t done the job. We could just get a price per acre for clearing it off.”

Town Administrator: “We don’t have to solicit formal bids, but if you know somebody, you can let us know and we’ll give them a chance to submit an estimate.”

Mr. Totten submitted a name for consideration—**Jimmy’s Landscaping**.

Councilwoman Conner said that **Nelson Moore** may have a small dozer.

Councilman Aswell mentioned that he has talked with the Department of Transportation about going ahead with a survey on moving Peach Tree Road over...“so we will have some idea of where it’s going to go.”

Mayor Paschal said the road would probably “...go to the right of where the old house was.”

Mayor Paschal made a motion, “*That we get some prices on per acre-land-clearing then we can decide how many acres we want to clear, once we get that.*”

Mayor Pro Tem Conner seconded the motion. There was no additional discussion. All voted in favor and the motion carried. **Mayor Paschal** added, “Everybody put out some feelers and if we don’t get anything, we’ll run it in the paper.”

Article VI. New Business – Continued

**D. Consideration of Street Lights Along NC 87/65 Corridor
- Councilman Robert Aswell**

Mayor Paschal acknowledged **Councilman Aswell** and asked him to elaborate on the street lights. “Where or what area are you talking about?”

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Councilman Aswell replied, “When I talked to Brenda (Ward) about it, I was thinking about going the full length...from Calvary (Baptist Church) to the creek (Rock House Creek).”

Town Administrator: “But you’re not talking about every single pole, just in certain areas, right?”

Councilman Aswell replied in the affirmative.

Mayor Paschal: “Some residential areas may not want them or may be selective *where* they want them...we could probably go with tighter spacing through the commercial area and institutional area.”

Councilwoman Powell: “If we’re planning the Town, shouldn’t we decide what’s best...If Duke Power decides to put one up, they don’t come out to your house and ask if you like it or not...”

Mayor Paschal: “But if you put one near somebody’s house and they don’t want it there, you’re going to get some resistance...”

Councilwoman Powell advised, “We used to have street lights in Wentworth that the County paid for. Do you remember that?” **Mayor Paschal** said he did not remember it.

Mayor Pro Tem Conner asked, “What about the lights we want to put up, that we’ve been talking about...like lamp post lights, along sidewalks...?”

Town Administrator: “I thought that was primarily in our Central Business District, and of course, as things progress, if we ever have sidewalks...but we’re just talking about the main thoroughfare, for safety reasons. You may remember, a few years ago now, that the manager at Fidelity Bank asked for street lights along the road where the bank is...”

Mayor Pro Tem Conner: “You used to have to sign a contract with Duke Power...if you wanted a light in your yard, you had to contract for say, five (5) years.”

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Mayor Paschal: There probably has to be a contract for a certain length of time...I can't imagine that we could put them up and then take them right down again....

Town Administrator: "We need to do a study to determine *how many* we need and exactly where we are going to place them?"

Mayor Pro Tem Conner: "Do you not want to go down 87, too?"

Mayor Paschal: "No, don't bring them down by my house..."

Councilman Aswell: "This is just a starting point (NC 87 to NC 65 and down 65 to Rock House Creek).

Councilwoman Powell: "Most everybody down in Wentworth (Courthouse area) has a street light."

Town Administrator: "That's why I say somebody needs to take a look at it and decide *where* they are needed."

Councilman Aswell: "Find out who wants one and who may not."

Town Administrator: "The gentleman from Duke Power told me that we should look at the ones in the City of Reidsville...they have the cobra necks...that is the kind they generally put in at the prices quoted. You have choices as to the mercury vapor, the orange or blue...If we select different type hooks and covers, we will pay more..."

Councilman Aswell: "*I make a motion we do some more research on them to see what we can come up with.*"

Town Administrator: "Who is 'we'? I would like you to be more specific in your motion."

Town Attorney Fred Baggett said, "Hanna Cockburn (PTCOG) may have some ideas about this..."

Town Administrator: "We have talked with Hanna about lighting, but more for our Central Business area...what Robert is talking about is regular street lights down the main street for more visibility and safety."

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Mayor Paschal: “The biggest thing...is coming up with the spacing down through here—the Employment Security Commission and the Courthouse wouldn’t be any problem, but we may need to put some feelers out as to how folks would feel on the other side of Wentworth Methodist Church.”

Town Administrator: “But if you space them first, and say we need one here and here and here, and then if one of them is near or in someone’s yard, go talk to them and tell them what we want to do and see if they’re okay with it.”

Mayor Pro Tem Conner: “If you go talk to them and they say, ‘Yes, it will be fine,’ but then next month they don’t like that, do we take them down?”

Town Administrator: “I don’t know, because the existing poles, which are what we would use, may or may not be in somebody’s yard...”

Deputy Sheriff Cheshire: “The best thing to do is to ride through the area at night and see where the darkest places are and then map it out...that will give you a better idea of what you actually need.”

Town Administrator: “That’s what I have tried to do on several occasions, even before anyone brought it up about street lights, because I have noticed how dark it is in some places.”

Mayor Pro Tem Conner: “What if we put them on the main drag and then somebody calls and wants them on a side street?”

Mayor Paschal: “We’ll cross that bridge when we come to it...”

Town Administrator: “We’ll tell them we are putting them where they are most needed...on the Main Street...we’re not obligated to put them anywhere...”

There was no further discussion, and **Mayor Paschal** seconded **Councilman Aswell’s** earlier motion...

All voted in favor and the motion carried.

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Article VII. Public Comments – There were none.

Article VIII. Announcements

- **The Town of Wentworth Planning Board** will meet on **Tuesday, July 17, 2007, at 7:00 p.m.** in the Town Hall Meeting Room at the National Guard Armory.
- **The next Town Council Meeting** will be held on **Tuesday, August 7, 2007, at 7:00 p.m.** in the Town Hall Meeting Room at the National Guard Armory.

Town Administrator, Brenda Ward, said she would like to add a couple of announcements:

- **“Rockingham County** has notified us that they will host the next **League of Governments Dinner** and the tentative date is **Monday, August 27th**. They have not yet advised the location, but I thought you may want to keep that date in mind.”
- **“Also, I wanted to remind you that the last day for filing for the 2007 Municipal Elections is Friday, July 20th at 12:00 noon.”**

Councilman Aswell said for everyone to remember Deputy Cheshire’s birthday party on Friday, July 13th.

Article IX. A D J O U R N

Mayor Paschal made a motion, *“That we adjourn.”*

Councilwoman Powell seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted By: _____
Brenda Ward, Town Clerk

Approved By: _____
Dennis Paschal, Mayor