
**TOWN OF WENTWORTH
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
MINUTES
September 5, 2006
7:00 P.M.**

The Wentworth Town Council held their regular monthly meeting at the Town Hall meeting room in the National Guard Armory, on **Tuesday, September 5, 2006, at 7:00 p.m.**

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

Staff Present: Brenda Ward, Town Clerk / Yvonne Russell, Finance Officer / Fred Baggett, Smith Moore LLP

A quorum was present.

Article I. Mayor Dennis Paschal called the meeting to order.

Article II. Councilwoman Iris Powell gave the **Invocation.**

Article III. Discussion / Revision and Adoption of Agenda

A. Requests and Petitions of Citizens

Mayor Paschal made a motion, *“That we approve the Agenda and add, A Resolution for Rockingham County Big Sweep Week, under New Business Item D.”*

Councilman Nathan Hendren seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

Mayor Paschal, upon reviewing the Speaker Register, amended his motion, *“To include adding Chief Lee Bedell, Sheriff Sam Page, and County Manager, Tom Robinson to the Agenda also.”*

Councilman Hendren seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

Article IV. Approval of Town Council Minutes for August 1, 2006

There were no changes or corrections to the minutes. **Councilman Robert Aswell** made a motion, *“They stand approved as written.”*

Councilwoman Powell seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

Article V. PUBLIC HEARING(S)

Mayor Paschal made a motion, *“That we go into the Public Hearings part of our meeting.”* He asked **Ms. Frankie Legaux** with the Rockingham County Planning Department to address Council on the first item.

A. Consideration of Revision to the Town of Wentworth Planning and Zoning Ordinances:

Chapter I – Definitions: A request has been made to add the definition of “Public Utility.”

Chapter II. Article VII, Section 4.6:

A request has been made to change the Public Facilities Special Use Permit to include “Water Towers”.

Ms. Legaux commented, “The first revision you are considering is to add a definition for ‘Public Utility’ ...to clarify that a public utility can be a private business but operated for the public; such as, Duke Energy and Dan River Water. This would be added to your definitions section, and also, in conjunction with that, is a change to your Special Use Permit for Public Utility Facilities to add ‘water tower’ into that subsection of your ordinance. They would be allowed in all zoning districts except Residential Protected and Residential Mixed. Those are not involved in the Special Use District.”

Ms. Legaux asked if there were any questions concerning the amendments.

Mayor Paschal made a motion, *“That we approve the ordinance text amendment as presented, and that we also adopt the Statement of Consistency as required by NCGS 160A-382 and 383, because the amendment is reasonable and in the public interest and is consistent with our Comprehensive Land Use Plan as explained in the statement.”*

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

B. Consideration of Revision to the Town of Wentworth Planning and Zoning Ordinances:

A request has been made to add Chapter VII – Wentworth Farm District Ordinance.

Ms. Legaux advised, “As you are aware, you do have a Voluntary Agricultural District that allows for tax incentives and other benefits for people who own bona fide farms, for owners who choose to go into this program. However, the Mayor felt like there may be other farms and farmers who may want the advantage of having a sign on their farm; for example, when major subdivision plans are going in, people would be aware there are farm activities going on, even though the farm may not be part of the Voluntary Agricultural District. He suggested that we have something in place so that these farms can be noted on the maps without having to go through the requirements for a voluntary farmland district” (Chapter VI).

She continued, “The biggest difference is that this ordinance will not be sanctioned by the State, whereas Chapter Six that you added, is sanctioned by the State; and this one (Chapter VII) will not allow for tax incentives, either, but it will be available to people if they would like a sign to indicate that they are a farm, and, it will be on the tax maps as a farm district.”

Ms. Legaux noted, “A couple of changes were made at the Planning Board meeting that differ from what was proposed.” She advised that the acreage was dropped from ten (10) acres to five (5) acres, and that the amount of money the farmer has to earn from the land being farmed was also changed.

She explained, “The first change in acreage is under the definition of farmland in Section 2.A, and the second change is under Section 4. Qualification of Land.”

Mayor Paschal asked about the second change.

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Ms. Legaux replied, “Under Section 4. Qualification of Land, they changed the amount of income—\$1500 in gross income for the first two years, and after 3 years the farmland must produce \$1,000 in gross income per year; *or*, you could qualify if there is a \$2,000 agricultural investment per year in the first two years of production including but not limited to farmland operations; and, after five years, the land must produce at least \$1,000 in gross income thereafter.”

Mayor Paschal asked if anyone else had a question.

Councilman Hendren asked, “Will the timber land remain at twenty (20) acres?”

Ms. Leguax answered, “Yes...it will remain...and that is included in Section 2.A. Farmland (2)—*At least twenty acres used for the planting and production of trees and timber, or forestland.*”

Councilwoman Powell asked, “This isn’t going to make it harder on the farmer, is it?”

Mayor Paschal replied, “No, it’s not a set of rules they have to go by. If they just want to be listed on the plats (map), it is strictly voluntary.”

Mayor Paschal asked if there were any additional questions.

Councilman Hendren made a motion, “*That we approve the revision regarding the Wentworth Farm District Ordinance...that we approve the ordinance text amendment as presented; and that we also adopt the Statement of Consistency as required by NCGS 160A-382 and 383, because the amendment is reasonable and in the public interest and is consistent with our Comprehensive Land Use Plan as explained in the statement.*”

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

Mayor Paschal made a motion, “*That we move out of the Public Hearing portion of our meeting and consider Old Business.*”

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Article VI. Old Business

A. Update on Wentworth Post Office and U.S. Postal Service Appeals Process – Bailey King, Attorney / Smith Moore LLP, Greensboro NC

Mayor Paschal thanked **Mr. King** for coming and asked him to present his findings.

Mr. King said he looked into the appeals process and after talking with several individuals at the U.S. Postal Service, has concluded, “There is a better way to go about it than an actual appeal.”

Mr. King continued, “The reason for that is, in talking with them, the decision to build a post office has been made for the Town of Wentworth, so that is not a decision that y’all want to appeal, obviously. The problem is the time-line to do that, which is something the Post Office has almost unlimited discretion on.”

“As you already know, it’s tough to get a hold of people there. I tried to get in touch with someone who actually knew about this project and the decision that has been made. I know that Mrs. Ward had to talk to five or six different people and that’s about what I did, but I finally talked to a woman in Greensboro, **Opal Elder**, who is responsible for this project, and she knew immediately about the Wentworth Post Office project and what **Mr. Rizutto** had done, up to this point.”

Mr. King said **Ms. Elder** told him that the freeze that had been placed on all projects has been lifted, “...and the Post Office is building new projects as they determine they are ready to start those processes.”

“Unfortunately,” **Mr. King** said, “There seemed to be some confusion about the proposal Wentworth made to them to donate land. I think you first offered to build it for them and lease it, and then offered to donate the site...the land, and they say they weren’t clear on that proposal and because of that, it is no longer a priority.”

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Mr. King concluded, “The long and short of it is, if you will submit that proposal again, saying that you are going to donate the land for the site, those are the kinds of things that make it a priority for the Post Office, if they feel like they have a good deal to work on. So, I think at this point, the best thing for Wentworth to do would be to resubmit that proposal that you have already done before, and get a decision from them and possibly look into an appeal at that time. But, at this point, they haven’t made a decision yet that we would want to appeal.”

Councilman Hendren asked, “Did she tell you what their next tactic will be to stall it?”

Mr. King replied, “No, she did not, although I asked.”

Councilwoman Powell asked Mr. King if Ms. Elder mentioned anything about the Historical Society asking them to move out or pay more rent.

Mr. King said, “No, she did not tell me that.”

Mayor Paschal commented, “...we sent them a letter saying that we would give the land, but Mr. Rizutto also asked us to give him a lease price, so maybe they confused themselves there somewhere, but when he came back to us here (Council Meeting), he told us it had been approved, that they were going to build the post office, and that the next step for him was to run the ad in the paper (formal bid process) asking for land or a building that would be suitable for the post office. At that point in time, they seemed to know where they were with it—that we were going to donate the land and they were going to build the building. We will be glad to resubmit that, but we would like to hold their feet to the fire, and once we get that done, have you follow up with them as soon as possible.”

Mr. King referred Council to a letter, “...that I have written to confirm my discussion with Ms. Elder, and I would like for you to look at it very quickly; particularly, the first paragraph. I gave a quick review of the facts. It looks to me like the first efforts to secure a Post Office was around 2000, is that correct?”

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Mayor Paschal replied, “Yes, that’s when we started.” He said the letter looked okay to him.

Mr. King said the letter would go out the next day.

Mayor Paschal made a motion, “*That we have Brenda (Town Clerk) do a letter offering, again, the lot that we have cut out up there to the Postal Service for them to build a facility on.*”

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

Article VI. Old Business

B. Update on New Town Hall

Mayor Paschal asked Ken Stafford, with Alley, Williams, Carmen, and King, to address Council concerning the Town Hall.

Mr. Stafford said he noticed in going through his files that it was in September a year ago that his firm started to work on a new town hall.

Mr. Stafford commented, “As a result of the Town Council meeting in August, I received a phone call from the Town Clerk regarding your decision to consider moving forward with the plans for the Town Hall, based on the 5,000 square-foot-plan and a proposed budget of \$700,000. I met with Brenda and Yvonne and went over the plan previously identified as Alternative 11. In our drive to generate more and more options, we tweaked it somewhat and we now have Alternative 15.”

Mr. Stafford noted that there were a few minor changes—enlarging manager’s office and clerk’s office, and creating space for a service sink. He said the changes did not affect the overall size of the building.

Mr. Stafford passed out copies of Alternative 15 to Council. He noted that the latest site plan presented to the (Town Hall) committee was based on utilizing a 6,700 square foot plan. He said, “We have kind of re-centered the building and pushed it back a little bit to give us more space because we now have less space within the building.”

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Mr. Stafford continued, “Looking at what we brought before Council last September, I presented a proposal that described our services, going all the way through construction, but we basically entered into an agreement that took us through the schematic design phase. I have provided Mayor Paschal with an updated proposal that repeats some of the information that I had given to Council last year in terms of describing services, and it would take us on through the next phase, upon your approval.”

Mr. Stafford asked if anyone had any questions.

Mayor Paschal said he assumed the proposal presented by Mr. Stafford, “reflects what we have done initially—the payment provisions for architectural services is based on a percentage of the construction costs, so if construction costs are held below \$700,000, then your percentage would be based on whatever that figure is, correct?”

Mr. Stafford replied, “We understand your concern about dollars, as with all small towns we work with, and will do whatever we can to hold the line on costs. As I had mentioned earlier, we probably would like to build in some alternates—we may consider some items that are kind of nice...Evelyn (Mayor Pro Tem Conner), you had talked about a stained glass window, and we can look at individual prices on that and if they are affordable, at the pleasure of the council, we can build them in. If they're not, we leave them out. So we give you some flexibility during the selection process.”

Mr. Stafford said that before moving into construction, he would come back with building elevations so that Council could take a final look at what the building will look like. He advised of several things that would take place during the process:

- Council would take a final look at what the building is going to look like before working drawings are begun.
- “Put together what we call working drawings—construction documents that a contractor could use to build the building and get the permits needed.”
- Approval of Council to go out for bids.
- Publicly solicit bids for contractors.

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Mr. Stafford continued, "There are certain procedures we have to follow because it is a public process. And because we are looking at a project of over \$300,000, we do have to go through a formal bid process. We have to publicly advertise, go through some regulations relative to minority business participation, and a number of other requirements we have to meet to satisfy the State."

Mr. Stafford said his firm has experience with the Local Government Commission relative to private placement loans and that they provide assistance in that area as well, in terms of the paperwork that needs to be filed with the LGC.

Mr. Stafford said Council approval would be required before proceeding with the start of construction. "You're going to want to know how much it is going to be, who the contractors are, and you're going to want to get us to take a look at their credentials, abilities and track record to make sure you enter into an agreement with somebody you are comfortable with."

Thinking ahead to possible construction of a town hall, **Mr. Stafford** reasoned, "Right now, it is September and the time of year it would seem to me that if we were to push a project like this along as fast as we could, we could probably be starting construction in January. But I don't think any of us want to start in January. It would be more reasonable to look at bidding the project sometime soon after the first of the year, and begin construction when weather breaks in March or April. And again, all of this at the pleasure of the council."

Mayor Paschal asked "And again, everything that we would be paying y'all would be a percentage of the total amount there?"

"That is correct," **Mr. Stafford** replied.

Mayor Paschal asked, "What was the most drastic change you made in this (floor plan)?"

Mr. Stafford pointed out that the lobby was "tightened up" to give the manager's office a little more space. He said they moved a wall back "about a foot, and widened the clerk's office by just a little bit, and if you look, we moved this door down, and put a little janitor closet in there." He also said they put a set of double doors in the storage room so there would be room to move large items in and out.

"Otherwise", **Mr. Stafford** said, "It is pretty much identical to Alternative # 11."

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He added, "With a 5,000 square-foot floor plan and a budget of \$700,000, that's \$140/square foot, but that includes site work, and we know that we have parking lots to pave and entrance roads to do, so it's an aggressive budget...but I think it is one we can make work."

Mayor Paschal asked, "And we still have to approve it once it goes out for bids..."

"That's correct," **Mr. Stafford** replied, "and once we get bids in, even if they come in within our budget, and we say, 'Yeah, that's wonderful, the prices are perfect, we like our contractor,' I would still advise that we sit down with the contractor before we sign and say, 'Okay, you bid this job, you looked at it close, what opportunities do we have here to save money without compromising the job?'"

Mayor Paschal asked if anyone had a question for Mr. Stafford. There were no questions.

Mayor Paschal made a motion, "*That we approve the agreement with Alley Williams Carmen and King, and proceed with the building of the Town Hall to be paid for with \$500,000 out of our reserve and the rest to be financed over a two-year period; and, this is for Alternative 15 that he has presented to us tonight.*"

Mayor Pro Tem Conner seconded the motion. There was no discussion.

Mayor Paschal asked for a show of hands from all who were in favor of the motion to build the Town Hall. (Let the record show that **Mayor Paschal** and **Mayor Pro Tem Conner** voted in favor.)

Mayor Paschal asked for all opposed to do likewise. **Councilwoman Powell** said, "I think that's too small a building." **Councilman Hendren, Councilman Aswell, and Councilwoman Powell** voted against the motion.

Mayor Paschal stated, "It did not pass." The Mayor thanked Mr. Stafford, commenting, "We may look at it again later, and see what we can do."

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Article VII. NEW BUSINESS

A. Audit Report for FY 2005-2006

- Rex Rouse

Rouse, Rouse, Penn and Rouse, Eden, NC

Mayor Paschal invited **Mr. Rex Rouse** to present the **2005-2006 Audit Report** for the Town of Wentworth.

Mr. Rouse referred Council to Page 1 of the audit, for the auditor's opinion, stating, "We have audited the financial statements of the Town of Wentworth for the year ended June 30, 2006, and conducted the audit in accordance with auditing standards generally accepted in the United States of America."

Mr. Rouse continued, "In our opinion, based on our audit, the financial statements present fairly in all material respects, the financial position and results of operations."

Mr. Rouse noted the key points of information in the audit report:

- Cash balance up from \$748,000 on June 30, 2005, to \$1,023,000 on June 30, 2006.
- Accounts Receivables were up from \$82,000 to \$101,000.
- Liabilities remain about the same.
- Fund Balance up from \$827,000 to \$1,120,000.
- Local Option Sales Tax up from \$436,000 to \$475,000.
- Beer and Wine Tax and Franchise Tax were up from \$89,000 to \$93,000.
- Interest on Investments was up significantly from \$14,593 to \$34,882.
- Total Revenues were up from \$542,000 to \$603,000.
- Total General Government Expenditures were down from \$203,735 to \$173,404.
- Current Operating Expenditures were up from \$141,000 to \$158,900 (Most significant change was in salaries, which were up from \$59,000 to \$67,000) **Mr. Rouse** noted that the Finance Officer came under the Retirement Plan for the first time.

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Mr. Rouse said, “The most significant change in the entire income statement was that last year you had \$62,500 in road paving and you only had \$10,000 this year.”

Mr. Rouse continued, “The biggest change in the financial statements is that last year you made a donation to the County for water and sewer extensions, and this year you finished paying that off at \$1,774.00. You also had an allocation to Rockingham County High School last year for \$9,000 which you didn’t have this year.”

“And this year,” said **Mr. Rouse**, “you paid \$12,000 for architectural engineering and planning—one of the few increases you had. \$12,000 this year and zero last year.”

- Total expenditures were down from \$466,000 to \$310,000.
- Excess revenues over expenditures last year was \$76,000 and this year it was \$293,580.

Mr. Rouse explained, “That’s why your cash balance and fund balance were up so much. Your fund balance of \$827,000 last year added to the \$293,000 this year comes to \$1,120,000.”

Mr. Rouse called attention to the “Management Letter,” commenting, “You are very fortunate to have the Finance Officer and the Clerk that you have. **Brenda** and **Yvonne** both continue to do an outstanding job.”

Mr. Rouse noted the one suggestion for improvement, as mentioned in every audit—lack of division of duties—regarding the limited number of personnel, making it impractical to have an adequate separation of duties. He commented, “But this is mitigated by the Town’s dual check-signing requirement, and because of the budgetary controls you have in place. There are very few cash receipts, as almost all receipts are direct deposits from the State.”

In conclusion, **Mr. Rouse** added, “The books are in real good shape, you are in a very sound financial position for a town this size, and it’s been a pleasure to do the audit.”

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Mr. Rouse asked if there were any questions. There were none.

Mayor Paschal thanked Mr. Rouse for coming and made a motion, *“That we accept the audit from Mr. Rouse.”* **Mayor Pro Tem Conner** seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

Article VII.

New Business - Continued

**B. Implementing the Land Use Plan—A Central Business District for the Town of Wentworth
- Hanna Cockburn, Piedmont Triad Council of Governments**

Mayor Paschal invited **Mrs. Cockburn** to the podium and noted that **Tom Robinson**, Rockingham County Manager, was also present to speak regarding this agenda item.

Mrs. Cockburn suggested that Council move to the audience in order to view the Power Point presentation.

Mrs. Cockburn began by saying, “We have devised an implementation strategy for what we think is a real time-sensitive and important step for implementing the land use plan here in Wentworth, and that is to devise a way of creating a Central Business District that does not currently exist in Wentworth.”

Mrs. Cockburn explained that everything in the presentation came from the Land Use Plan. She mentioned the elements of division and the values in the Land Use Plan, “...that talk about creating new development, that mimic the historic qualities of the community, and better local street connectivity to address the congestion concerns we have on NC 65/87. Also, to create some places to accommodate pedestrian movement between locations in the Town limits. All of these go back to those underlying values of having rural heritage in the community, having a high value on aesthetics, and having a strong community identity.”

Mrs. Cockburn continued through the presentation, discussing the information relative to each frame.

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Mrs. Cockburn elaborated, “What we are proposing is that there be a two-tier Central Business District—a primary area where you have standards for new development on new, secondary roads. You have design standards for what those roads will look like, what their cross-section would be, and some standards for what the buildings look like. And then, a secondary area of the Central Business District where you have standards for redevelopment, new development on existing roads, and some façade standards as well that blend the two together.”

“The primary CBD area will be the focus of the design charette that we are talking about hosting later in the month. We hope to do a much more finely-grained concept of the land in the area to see how we connect the new Town Hall with the new courthouse, and provide opportunities for open space and new development off of NC 87/65.”

Mrs. Cockburn said, “These are some of the things we will be discussing:

- Set backs for buildings
- The kind of walkways or pedestrian accommodations to be provided or required
- What the road would look like
- Whether or not to have on-street parking
- Accommodations for things like lighting and street trees
- What sort of materials and design would the façades be required to incorporate
- Where would be good opportunities to provide public open space

Mrs. Cockburn reviewed an excerpt from the NC Department of Transportation’s Roadway Design Guidelines, noting a “traditional neighborhood development design of a main street-type alignment.”

Councilman Hendren asked, “Does it take up that much more space for diagonal parking?” **Mrs. Cockburn** replied, “It does. You’re talking about 8 feet for this design and you would need to double that for diagonal pull-in. If you stripe the spaces with enough space between, you can make people feel more comfortable with the parallel parking.”

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Mrs. Cockburn said that in planning for the secondary CBD, “We need to consider areas where there may be redevelopment occurring, which would have a different set of setbacks that would not be as stringent. You need to provide standards for internal connectivity between those individual lots that are already fronting on NC 87 and 65; and standards for off-street parking—where it’s located, how many spaces—providing some flexibility there; standards for lighting and landscaping so you have a more seamless transition between the more intensely developed CBD—the primary and secondary areas. You want to have a gradual change from that to the very rural areas that surround it. Again, we would also be talking about requirements for the types of façade materials to be allowed, how many windows you need, the types of height restrictions, etc.”

Mrs. Cockburn said that the next step is to have the design charette for a more detailed look at the Central Business District. “We want to involve key participants from elected officials in the Town, the Planning Board, folks from the County, also including some of the local developers and land owners in that area who will have a lot to say about this as it goes forward. Then we want to bring back a concept for the Town to consider for adoption that would show a general outline of the grid of streets, some design standards for what those streets would look like.”

Mrs. Cockburn said the proposed (CBD) boundaries need to be reviewed so that everyone agrees. She mentioned the potential mixture of uses—“What types of things do you want to see in that area? Do you want an emphasis on housing, a mixture of business and housing, or no housing at all? These are the kinds of things we would sort of hash out in this design charette, along with that (street) grid.”

Mrs. Cockburn noted that no decisions have been made about anything covered in the Power Point Presentation—“These are just things that we need to consider in a detailed fashion and bring back for your consideration—design standards about the roads, what the setbacks should be, how often you want street lighting, what kind of landscaping standards there should be, what the façade should look like.”

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Mrs. Cockburn added, “This is where the creation of the Appearance Committee becomes real crucial because they would be the main actors when it comes to nailing down some of those more detailed things.”

In conclusion, **Mrs. Cockburn** reviewed the “timeline” as presented in the last Power Point slide, noting that the Design Charette would take place in September, with the design standards to be developed in the following months.

She explained, “We would wind up with a public workshop to get public input on these recommendations, probably in January, and move forward with recommendation for adoption through the Planning Board and the Town Council, probably in February.”

Mrs. Cockburn said, “What we are looking for tonight from the Town Council is authorization to proceed with this strategy for making some decisions about creating this new downtown area. What I heard at the last workshop that we facilitated between the Town Council and the Planning Board, is that there was an interest in pursuing this. This gives us a way for addressing some of the concerns that have been voiced over, and over again about the highway—taking that into your own hands instead of waiting on NCDOT.”

Mayor Paschal said he would like to hear from the **County Manager, Tom Robinson**, “So we have all the information.”

Mr. Robinson said he was asked to comment on the Central Business District as it may relate to the County’s plans for the new courthouse and jail.

“I can give you an update as to where we are and reiterate some points as County Manager and also as a professional, trained planner. I commend you for looking at a downtown area. I think it could be a very special place to be.”

Mr. Robinson shared with the Council and audience a tentative design of the courthouse and how it could be situated on the property. He said they would soon be meeting with architects and engineers to, “validate everything from square footage, to façade for the courthouse and jail—traditional, classical, contemporary, modern, whatever.”

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Mr. Robinson said the building that the County Commissioners like is the Henry County Courthouse. “Not necessarily the front façade, but the quality and appearance of the building.”

He pointed out the location of the new courthouse in relation to the Town’s property on Peach Tree Road. He said the County hopes to retain the oak trees in the circular drive in front of the current jail annex, but commented, “However, I have a little bit of a problem spending the taxpayers’ money and they are not able to *see* what they’ve bought.”

Mr. Robinson said the courthouse facility will be a three-story building with room for expansion. He said the Commissioners voted to, “consolidate both jails into one brand new facility.” He said it would be “labor intensive, operated twenty-four-seven,” and that having one facility will mean a savings over operating two separate ones.

The jail portion will have room for expansion, “...at a later date, and room for the sheriff who will remain in his current location for the time being.”

Mr. Robinson said the proposed 911 / EMS center will be separate from the courthouse and located on land nearby. He said the County has acquired adjoining property from Rockingham Community College.

Mr. Robinson then presented another concept of the courthouse, “losing the existing circular drive and including more parking,” but noted this may not be aesthetically pleasing.

He also addressed the possibility of a connector road between the new courthouse and the proposed Central Business District, saying this would help to create the downtown area.

Mr. Robinson said there is a demand for office space in Wentworth—“Lots of people want to be in Wentworth. It is a good opportunity for a business person to come in and develop commercial space and do quite well with it, and it would be a good opportunity to help establish your downtown area.”

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Mr. Robinson also suggested the realignment of Peach Tree Road with High School Road to, “help traffic flow immensely.”

Speaking about the Department of Transportation maintenance lot, **Mr. Robinson** said, “If a developer doesn’t buy it, you may want to consider having the RCC landscape/architect students take this on as a class project to come up with concepts of how to hide the maintenance facility so it looks more attractive. They could do the design work and for very little money you could turn it into a nice space.”

Mr. Robinson suggested designating the area around Wright Tavern and the old county courthouse as “Old Wentworth.” He said planning is underway for a celebration (2007) of the fact that the current courthouse has been in continuous use for 100 years. He added, “Not many places in North Carolina can say they have used their courthouse for 100 years.”

Mr. Robinson said, “All of this lends itself to the possibility of identifying that area around the courthouse as “Old Wentworth” and reusing the property for a historical museum, or arts council, and leave your property and this area around the new courthouse for your business district.”

Mr. Robinson asked if anyone had any questions for him.

Mayor Paschal asked Mr. Robinson, “As far as the new courthouse and plans for construction, where are you in your schedule as far as actually getting started?”

Mr. Robinson replied, “The County Commissioners have, as you know, put on the additional tax rate of five (5) cents. That will build the courthouse, jail, EMS center, communication tower, and the entire communication system, in addition to a western EMS station.”

He said the commissioners signed the contract with the architect on Monday, and that the courthouse committee will be meeting with them soon. He said a construction manager will be hired to do a building review to see where some money could be saved up front.

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“This is a big facility—100,000 square feet—and while we don’t want it to be too small, we don’t want it too large, either.”

Mr. Robinson said, “It is unreal how much space is required for records.” He said that even though these records are beginning to be handled and archived electronically, “It will be a while before you could cut down on the space for records.”

Mr. Robinson then answered the Mayor’s question about the timeframe for the courthouse, stating, “Once all these things have been addressed, we hope to get the courthouse built in about three (3) years.”

Councilwoman Iris Powell asked Mr. Robinson what he thought about the Town’s chances of using the D.O.T. maintenance property.

Mr. Robinson said that the same developer who talked with the Town Administrator also talked with him and that the developer indicated that his conversation with DOT was somewhat receptive. “But they will need a place to go,” said **Mr. Robinson**, “so the key is to find some other location central for them, so they could move.”

Mayor Paschal said, “But even though we might find some land, all those buildings will have to be moved. We could be talking about a lot of money.”

Mr. Robinson commented, “What we have to remember as a county and as a municipality, is that we are in the *forever* business in what we’re doing. You can build cheaply, but you’re not doing the public a service. As we build and design this courthouse, we need to be thinking of 75 to 100 years out, just like we are using the existing courthouse that is a hundred years old. It is going to be what everyone thinks of as the center of the county. You guys are right here with us and we want to partner with you.”

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“Another thing I have talked to Brenda about,” **Mr. Robinson** said, “is the Wentworth School. We would love to partner with you guys on that building. We want to see about getting Dixie Penn from the Madison/Mayodan Recreation Department to meet with us. She has good ideas on how to do things and is familiar with grant sources. We want to talk to her about doing some master planning for recreation in the Wentworth area, to tie in some nature trails with the Community College and the 140 acres the County has, to really enhance the quality of life in this area.”

Mr. Robinson had no additional comments but asked if anyone else had any questions or comments.

The **Town Administrator** asked Mr. Robinson to try to “save the trees” in front of the jail annex, saying that she could see the current annex building, “just fine through the trees.” He said they would try, but that some of the trees may have to be removed.

Mayor Paschal asked Hanna Cockburn to explain again what she would like for council to do next regarding the Central Business District.

Mrs. Cockburn reviewed a tentative agenda for the Planning Charette on September 18th, and said she would like to get the okay from Council to proceed, “...so we can contact the key players and do some more detail work on this. We are looking at meeting at the Community College...Brenda has reserved a room. We would anticipate this consisting of 15 to 20 people.”

Mayor Paschal asked, “Is Council going to attend?”

Mrs. Cockburn said, “We would like for a couple of representatives from the Town Council to be there, but it is not necessary for every council member to be there.”

Mayor Paschal said he would not be able to be there on the 18th, and asked **Councilman Aswell** and **Councilman Hendren** if they could attend. They both said they could.

Mrs. Cockburn reminded Council that any information coming out of the charette will be brought back to them at a meeting.

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Mayor Paschal made a motion, *“That we proceed with the Town of Wentworth Central Business District Charette on September 18, 2006, between 1:00 and 5:00 p.m. at the Rockingham Community College Lifelong Learning Center.”*

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

Note: Councilman Hendren could not attend the Charette. Mayor Pro Tem Conner and Councilman Aswell attended, along with the Town Administrator and Finance Officer.

Article VII. New Business – Continued

C. Consideration of Speed Limit Ordinance to Declare the Following Speed Limit(s):

- **40 mph from a point 0.08 mile north of SR 1998 (Wentworth Street) north to a point .05 mile north of SR 2010 (Talley Road) in Wentworth;**
- **45 mph from a point 0.05 mile north of SR 2010 (Talley Road), northward to SR 2203 (Ashley Loop) in Wentworth.**

Mayor Paschal introduced the next item of New Business concerning speed limits on Camp Dan Valley Road, SR 2009.

Councilwoman Powell asked what the speed limit is now.

Mayor Paschal said he did not know for sure, but he assumed it is 45 miles per hour.

The **Town Clerk** said she thinks the speed limits are already in place as shown on the ordinance, but that N.C.D.O.T. may have missed Camp Dan Valley Road when they went through the ordinance process after the Town incorporated.

Councilman Aswell said a representative from D.O.T. had told him they do not like to go to just a 5 mile per hour change...“so I would recommend that instead of 40 mph, we ask for 35 on that short distance from Wentworth Street past Talley Road.”

Mayor Pro Tem Conner replied, *“I make a motion that we table this until we check it out.”* **Councilman Aswell** seconded the motion.

Mayor Paschal asked for discussion.

The **Town Clerk** wanted clarification on the motion... “You want to table it until what?” There was discussion about the motion, and **Mayor Pro Tem Conner** explained, “*Table it until Council goes out and actually measures and sees the exact area and what the present speed zones are.*”

“*And talk with D.O.T.*” said **Councilman Aswell**. **Mayor Pro Tem Conner** agreed.

The **Clerk** asked, “You are going to talk to D.O.T.?” **Councilman Aswell** said, “I’ll talk to D.O.T.”

Mayor Paschal announced, “There is a motion and a second. Is there any more discussion?” There was no further discussion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

Article VII. New Business – Continued

D. A Resolution of the Wentworth Town Council Declaring September 30 – October 7, 2006, as Rockingham County Big Sweep Week

Mayor Paschal noted that Mrs. Lindley Butler asked Council to consider a resolution supporting Big Sweep, and that this item was added to the Agenda at the beginning of the meeting.

Mayor Paschal read the Resolution and made a motion, “*That we approve the Resolution supporting Rockingham County Big Sweep Week.*”

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

Article VIII. Public Comments

Mayor Paschal invited **Wentworth Fire Chief, Lee Bedell**, to address Council.

Chief Bedell commented that the make-up of Council has changed since he last made a report on the Fire Department’s efforts to obtain a grade reduction. He said they have been working on the grade reduction since 1999, and that the Wentworth Fire Department, along with several others in the County, received a letter from Insurance Commissioner Jim Long. **Chief Bedell** read the letter, which stated in part, “Congratulations on your recent improvements to your fire suppression rating. We commend you and your department for your commitment to making your community a safer place to live.”

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Chief Bedell said he was hoping for a better rating—“We got a seven (7). The entire fire district was originally a nine (9) as established in the late '60's and early '70's. About 98% of the district is now a Class 7. The only thing the State of North Carolina and ISO will rate for one fire department to cover is a five-mile district.”

Chief Bedell said, “We thought we only had a five-mile district, but thanks to GIS, we found out we were wrong, and the inspectors found this. The majority of the Fire District will have the “7” rating, but those outside the five-mile area will not see the same reduction in their fire insurance.”

Chief Bedell reviewed some examples of the differences in insurance costs due to the better rating. He estimated a savings of approximately \$100.00 (depending on property value, etc.) which he said could be considered a “swap” for the fire tax citizens are paying, or “breaking even.”

Using another example, the **Chief** estimated an approximate savings of \$300.00 for commercial establishments in the Town.

Chief Bedell said the Fire Department was rated in several different areas of fire safety. The “down side” of their rating was due to “water supply.” He explained, “Out of a possible forty percent (40%), the Fire Department received only 10.83 (percent). We were penalized because of the (lack of) water. Everything else looked real good, but the water issue was the key.”

Chief Bedell advised, “Dan River Water says they are going to put up a tank, but we don't know exactly where that stands. Our board and their board have talked and I think they decided to put it beside the original tank for elevation purposes. They say this will help the pressure.”

Chief Bedell continued, “If they come in and put the tank up, and all the hydrants improve greatly, I have asked the inspectors if they could come in and just grade us on the water only. What I wanted was a grade reduction six (6), which is the best you can do for residential.”

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Chief Bedell said the needed fire flow for Rockingham County High School is 4,500 gallons a minute. The most we can supply is 300 gallons. The Rockingham County Governmental center requires 2,000 gallons a minute and if we use the water that is available, using what water is there at the hydrant and hauling water from the lake at the College, we only have a supply of 350 gallons a minute, with us and two other fire departments supplying.”

“I made the remark to **Mr. Robinson (County Manager)** that they do not need to build a courthouse until we get this water problem straightened out. Right now, we have two schools in the district that are sprinkled but have fire pumps on them. This is what we have to do...if there is a fire in the school...we cannot use any water coming in to that school because it would rob from those pumps. So we have to bring water in, and this is one of the things that hurt us on our rating.”

Chief Bedell said the Fire Department just wants to be able to keep up with the projected growth in the Town.

Chief Bedell said State inspectors gave the Fire Department a list of additional equipment they needed. “For one thing, it was counted against us that we did not have an aerial ladder. That’s a \$500,000 truck or \$750,000 depending on what you get.”

He suggested the County and Town “partner and get the Fire Department a used aerial. That’s twelve (12) points just for truck equipment. We missed the six (6) rating by 12 points.”

Mayor Paschal asked, “Would the water give you the six (rating)?”

Chief Bedell: “The water will help.”

Mayor Paschal said, “As you know, we were working with Dan River to get the water tower, but all at once they were dealing with y’all, but I understood that the money for the water tower had been approved and that they were proceeding with construction. What have they told you?”

Chief Bedell: “They haven’t drawn up any paper work about the land. They asked if we were going to give them the land. Our board met with them and talked about it and I thought everything was a go. He told me the other day that they bought the tower, but that they were going to have to approach the school about additional property because some trees were going to have to come out for some crane work.”

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Chief Bedell said he hasn't heard any more from Dan River... "I thought they would come back to us with some paperwork to sign, but that hasn't happened."

He concluded by saying, "When I started the ISO rating process, I told Council that I would come back when we have some information. So we have saved you some money, but if you get your insurance bill and it is the same as last year, you need to tell them that's not right."

Mayor Paschal: "And we appreciate that. I don't want to get between your board and Dan River since they have taken over negotiations with them, but if we need to call Dan River and ask them if they need our land now, then we can get involved again."

Chief Bedell: "I don't know how the tests they were doing turned out, but Mike (Lemons) (Dan River Water, Inc.) talked like this could be a year-long process. It may be that they have to go through some kind of State approval to get this thing up."

He added, "I just wanted to give y'all the report on the ratings, and if the Town and County want to get together to get us a piece of equipment, we would be more than happy."

Mayor Paschal: "How much is a used ladder truck?"

Chief Bedell: "For a used ladder truck, you are probably looking at about \$150,000."

The **Clerk** asked, "If you don't have the water, what good is the ladder?"

Chief Bedell: "They still count it. We would get a better rating."

There was some discussion on the fire hydrants the Town purchased.

Chief Bedell said all of them were installed and had improved things greatly.

Councilman Hendren questioned whether or not the County is thinking the water tower will be constructed before the courthouse is built.

Mayor Paschal asked what the college did about the water problem at the new Bishopric Learning Center. **Councilman Hendren** said they put in a "bladder system—a booster pump."

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Chief Bedell: “We are going to continue to work to get the grade lowered. I commend all my guys for the work they did. It was a lot of paperwork and a three day-inspection.”

Mayor Paschal thanked Chief Bedell and told him to, “Keep Council posted on the situation with Dan River Water...and we will keep in mind that you need the ladder truck too.”

Article VIII. Public Comments – Continued

Mayor Paschal invited **Sheriff Sam Page** to address Council.

Sheriff Page said he wanted to thank Council for their response to **Deputy Tony Walker**, “...when he came before you asking for your support toward some training for our Special Response Team. Because of your \$2500 donation to the Sheriff’s office, we are going to be able to attend the Blackwater Training out of Currituck County. Most of the guys doing the training are Special Forces operatives who have come out of the military and provide training for civilian law enforcement and other specialized groups. But we are able to attend this training because of your support, and we appreciate that.”

Sheriff Page said, “**Travis Loftis**, one of our officers who was shot a few months ago, is doing a lot better and we hope to see him return back to work, maybe in a few months. He has come a long way. In that situation, he did everything he was supposed to do. He did as he was trained, but again, there are some variables you can’t call. But we want our guys to receive the best training they can get. We can’t always resolve everything peacefully, as we would like.”

Sheriff Page concluded, “I can tell you this, I only get about \$7500 for ammunition and equipment purchases in a year, so the money you donated is going to be well spent and I appreciate it.”

Mayor Paschal thanked the Sheriff and commented, “We have tried to help out when we could and we appreciate everything the Sheriff’s Department is doing for us, too.”

Article IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS

- **The NIMS training session is going to be held in the Commissioners' Chambers on September 19th from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at the Governmental Center.**
- **Grand Opening—Rockingham Community Kitchen—September 12, 2006 at 3:00 p.m. at the Rockingham Opportunities Corporation** (*Note: A brochure has been included in the Agenda Packet.*)
- **NCDOT Litter Sweep Fall 2006 Annual Roadside Cleanup is scheduled for September 16-30, 2006, by order of the Governor.**
Note: A copy of Governor Easley's Proclamation has been included in the Agenda Packet.
- **The next regular meeting of the Wentworth Planning Board will be held on Tuesday, September 19, 2006, at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall meeting room at the National Guard Armory.**
- **The next regular meeting of the Wentworth Town Council will be on Tuesday, October 2, 2006, at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Hall meeting room at the National Guard Armory.**

Mayor Paschal said he would like to encourage all council members to attend the NIMS training.

Attorney Fred Baggett noted that the next council meeting date should be October 3rd. The Clerk said she would note this correction in the minutes.

Article X. A D J O U R N

Mayor Paschal made a motion, "*That we adjourn.*" **Councilman Hendren** and **Councilman Aswell** seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted By: _____
Brenda Ward, Town Clerk

Approved By: _____
Evelyn Conner, Mayor Pro Tem