
**TOWN OF WENTWORTH
TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
JULY 6, 2010
7:00 P.M.**

The Wentworth Town Council held their regular monthly meeting in the Town Hall Council Chambers, on **Tuesday, July 6, 2010, at 7:00 p.m.**

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

Council members absent: Councilwoman Evelyn Conner

A quorum was present.

Staff Present: Brenda Ward, Town Administrator - Town Clerk
Fred Baggett, Town Attorney / Yvonne Russell, Finance Officer, and Deputy Clarence Cheshire

Article I. **Mayor Robert Aswell** called the July 6th, 2010, Wentworth Town Council Meeting to order.

Article II. **Councilman Dennis Paschal** gave the **Invocation.**

Article III. **Approval of July Agenda**

A. Requests and Petitions of Citizens

Mayor Aswell advised that Deputy Clarence Cheshire, Melissa Seiler, Beverly Wilcox, and Harry Rakestraw signed the Speaker Register to address Council.

Mayor Pro Tem Belcher made a motion, “...*that these citizens be added to the Agenda under Item VII. Public Comments.*”

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

Article IV. **Approval of Minutes**

- 1) **Town Council Meeting: June 1, 2010**
- 2) **Town Council Special Meeting: June 14, 2010**

Mayor Aswell asked if there were any corrections to the Minutes.

Mayor Pro Tem Belcher made a motion, “*That the Minutes be approved for both meetings as presented.*” **Councilman Paschal** seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

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Article V. Old Business – There was no Old Business for discussion.

Article VI. NEW BUSINESS

**A. Consideration of Plat Approval for Secondary Subdivision:
Tax PIN 7966-01-97-9391 (6 Acres) on Foch Farm Road;
One 3-Acre Lot out of 6-Acre Tract
Property Owner: Harry Rakestraw**

- **Frankie Legaux, Assistant Director / Rockingham County
Planning and Zoning Department**

Councilman Paschal made a motion, *“That we approve the plat for a secondary subdivision, PIN # 7966-01-97-9391 on Foch Farm Road.”*

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

**B. Consideration of Funding Request for World Changers 2010
(\$2,500.00) - Harold Vaden**

Town Administrator, Brenda Ward, advised Council that Mr. Vaden could not be at the meeting. She said the Funding Request Form included all the information, and explained further, “We didn’t get a request for funding early-on because no home in Wentworth had been selected for repairs...but in the last few weeks a home was put on the list, so we can justify the expenditure if Council wants to approve the request.”

Councilman Paschal made a motion, *“That we approve the request for World Changers for \$2,500.00.”*

Mayor Aswell seconded the motion and asked for discussion. There was no discussion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

C. Consideration of Budget Amendment No. 1 for Fiscal Year 2010-2011 / Yvonne Russell, Finance Officer

Mayor Aswell asked the Finance Officer to present the information on the Budget Amendment.

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Mrs. Russell referred Council to a memo in their packets, explaining, “We talked about this at the last meeting. We are appropriating Fund Balance for the purchase of property at 8286 NC 87. I’ll be glad to entertain any questions that you have.”

Mayor Pro Tem Belcher said, “I assume now, that the transaction proceeded smoothly and we now have a closing date.”

“Yes,” replied **Mrs. Russell**.

“I also notice,” said **Mayor Pro Tem Belcher**, “that we received all the DENR (NC Department of Environmental and Natural Resources) information that we had requested, as well.”

“Yes,” replied **Mrs. Russell**.

Mayor Pro Tem Belcher made a motion, “*That we approve Budget Amendment No. 1 for the Fiscal Year 2010-2011.*”

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

Article VI. NEW BUSINESS - Continued

**D. Consideration of Reappointment of Dessa Scheffer to the Town of Wentworth Appearance Committee for a Two Year Term:
(July 2010 – July 2012)**

- Brenda Ward, Town Administrator

Mrs. Ward advised Council that Ms. Scheffer’s term on the Appearance Committee expired June 30th, 2010, but that she was willing to be reappointed.

She added, “Ms. Sheffer has done a good job so I would recommend reappointment.”

Mayor Aswell made a motion, “*That we reappoint Dessa Scheffer to the Appearance Committee for another two years.*”

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

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Article VI. NEW BUSINESS - Continued

**E. Consideration of Bids for Lawn Care (as needed) at Town Property
Located at 8286 NC 87, Next Door to Town Hall**

- 1) Perennial Landscapes / Jimmy Jones**
- 2) Chris Witherspoon**

- Brenda Ward, Town Administrator

Mrs. Ward said, "As you know, Perennial Landscapes is under contract with the Town for mowing the area around the Town Hall and up to Peach Tree Road, but Chris Witherspoon has been taking care of the McCollum property next door...the property that we just purchased. He asked if he could continue taking care of the lawn, and Mr. Sands also mentioned that Tink and Chris have been doing a good job. He also said there are some rare plants and shrubs on the property that the Witherspoon's are familiar with."

"I explained that we already have a contract for mowing, etc., but that I would let him bid on it, along with Perennial. I explained, though, that it would still be up to Council," **Mrs. Ward** said.

Mrs. Ward noted that she also explained the situation to Mr. Jones at Perennial and asked both parties to bid on the job. She added, "Mr. Jones said that whatever Council wants to do is okay with him...you can see that Mr. Witherspoon came in \$5.00 cheaper, but it's just whether or not you want to have one person doing it all, or two different people."

Councilwoman Powell asked, "How much trouble would it be to have two of them?"

"It's just a matter of bookkeeping...writing two checks instead of one," said **Mrs. Ward**.

"Witherspoon is \$5.00 cheaper," said **Councilman Paschal**.

Mayor Pro Tem Belcher said, "This would be where we would let him know when we needed him, and in Perennial's case, we would let them know not to make a special trip but to work it in when they come to do the other."

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Councilwoman Powell said, “*I make a motion we hire Chris (Witherspoon).*”

Mayor Pro Tem Belcher said, “I would like to second the motion. His bid is less than the other bid and he is already familiar with the property.”

Councilman Paschal asked, “Does he have a certificate of insurance?”

“Yes,” replied **Mrs. Ward**.

Mayor Aswell asked for further discussion. There was none. Everyone voted in favor and the motion carried.

Article VI. NEW BUSINESS – Continued

F. Consideration of Proclamation Declaring July as Lyme Disease Awareness Month in the Town of Wentworth

- **Brenda Ward, Town Administrator**

Mrs. Ward said that several towns were posting questions on the ListServ about a request from retired U.S. Marine Lt. Col. Dave Tierney of Cary, North Carolina, to have town boards or city councils enact a Proclamation Declaring July as Lyme Disease Awareness Month.

Mrs. Ward referred Council to the information she provided in their packets concerning this disease and Lt. Col. Tierney’s own experience with Lyme Disease.

She noted that several towns and cities have done the Proclamation, and said she wanted to present it to Council for their consideration, as well.

Mayor Pro Tem Belcher commented, “I do remember that in the past this was something you would see mentioned in the news, but when I read this information, I was reminded of how bad it can be, and the fact that I haven’t heard much about it in a while.”

“It is a serious thing,” said **Mayor Pro Tem Belcher**, “and I would like to make a motion *that we approve the Proclamation Declaring July as Lyme Disease Awareness Month.*”

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Mayor Aswell seconded the motion, and asked for discussion.

Mayor Pro Tem Belcher offered to read the Proclamation, and afterwards, all voted in favor and the motion carried.

Article VI. NEW BUSINESS – Continued

G. Questions for Council

- 1) **Water / Electricity, etc. at 8286 NC 87**
- 2) **Right-of-Way Encroachment Agreement (New Highway Construction at NC 65/87 Intersection)**

- Brenda Ward, Town Administrator

Mayor Aswell invited Mrs. Ward to ask her questions.

Mrs. Ward said that Mr. Sands asked her if the Town wanted him to leave the electricity and water connected at the McCollum house. She said she would need to have everything put in the Town's name, but that she wanted to be sure that Council is okay with leaving everything connected, "...for a few months...or whatever you think?"

"I would go ahead and put it in the Town's name and leave it on but turn everything up or down...the air and what have you," said **Councilman Paschal**, "so it isn't on full blast."

Council agreed that the water and electricity (lights/heat/air) should be left on, but no telephone is needed.

"On another matter," said **Mrs. Ward**, "Tommy Wagoner from the county Environmental and Engineering office, brought by a revised map of the intersection at NC 87/65. This is the entrance to the new courthouse, and it is going to come further over towards the convenience store. I think this was at Mr. (Jimmy) Thompson's request, to allow him more space for possible development on the other side of the new road. The County is still trying to work out something with Mr. Thompson who is the owner of the property where the new road will be."

Mrs. Ward said that in addition to the map, Mr. Wagoner also brought by an Encroachment Agreement for the Town and NCDOT to sign.

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Article VI. NEW BUSINESS – Continued

She explained, “I thought at first it was some sort of right-of-way agreement for future sidewalks or whatever, but Mr. Wagoner mentioned that this was for the sidewalk to go along the existing road, Prison Camp Road. I told him that I didn’t think we would be the ones to sign for that road or sidewalk, since that was something the County was taking care of. I understood that the County decided not to make that a private road, but to leave it as a State road to be maintained by them.”

“At any rate,” said **Mrs. Ward**, “I thought I would ask our attorney to look at this Agreement. Also, I wanted to mention that the County, NCDOT, and Davenport Engineering will be having a meeting next week to talk about this construction, and I think it would be good if Robert (Mayor Aswell) or any of you could attend. I have another lunch meeting that day, so I’m not sure I can make it to both meetings.”

Mayor Aswell said he thought someone from the Town should attend the meeting and that he hoped to be able to go.

Mayor Pro Tem Belcher suggested that Mrs. Templeton or Mrs. Legaux (Planning Department) also review the map.

Mrs. Ward said she did not have anything further for Council.

Article VII. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mayor Aswell referred to the Speaker Register and invited Deputy Clarence Cheshire to address Council.

Deputy Cheshire thanked Council for the opportunity to speak. He read a prepared statement:

“Wentworth Town Council members, bail bond agents, and public present, I hereby apologize for my statement concerning my opinion on bail bond agencies doing business in the Wentworth Town Hall. The statement made was of my own opinion out of concern for safety and security for the Town Hall. My opinion is just that—mine, and not of the Sheriff’s office. The statement was not made out of ill will or disrespect for any bail bond agencies or their employees. Thank you again for the opportunity to address you.”

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Mayor Aswell and **Council** thanked Deputy Cheshire for his comments and, "...for all your help."

Mayor Aswell invited Melissa Seiler of "Angels Bail Bonding" to address Council.

Ms. Seiler commented, "I, too, thank you guys for allowing me to speak for a few minutes. I gave you some information regarding what the more than 1200 bail agents in the State of North Carolina and the agents in Rockingham County do, not just for the community but for our public school systems as well."

"I am obviously here because of the remarks that were made by Mr. Paschal (Councilman Paschal) in particular, regarding the discrimination, possibly, of leasing guidelines for the Town Hall space. I think it was unfair. I think it singled out a particular industry when there are so many of us that contribute to the tax base, especially inside Wentworth."

Ms. Seiler advised that she is the President of Angels Bail Bonding and serves as Secretary to the North Carolina Bail Agents Association. She said there are some good bail agents in Rockingham County, "who do a great job working with the court system."

Ms. Seiler added, "We are very conscientious about our defendants and have control over those people, and as you can see from the statistics that I gave you, the return rate to court is very high."

Ms. Seiler continued. "All the money from our bond forfeitures that are paid into the court system go directly to the Rockingham County School System...and lots of tax money paid, by me individually..."

Ms. Seiler said, "We harbor no ill will towards Deputy Cheshire. We have worked with him on a daily basis. I did speak with the Sheriff and he confirmed that this was not the opinion of the Sheriff's Department towards our industry because he used to be a bondsman and he promotes that in his training."

"As far as the element, I understand from talking to Brenda (Ward) (Town Administrator) that a decision has *not* been made whether to lease the space at all, *or* who to lease it to, and I do understand that."

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“The only concern I have,” **Ms. Seiler** explained, “is that if we were left out of the selection process, then it would be a discriminatory process like Mr. Paschal had made the comment to that effect. So I would request from the Town reconsideration in the event that you lease the property because I understand that you, Mayor (Aswell), brought that as a viable tenant because there had been some interest.”

Ms. Seiler concluded, “My only goal here is to educate the Town Council on what we do and that we do a good job and are very much a part of the community and do a great job being involved in the community, and we would like our names kept in the hat. Thank you.”

Mayor Pro Tem Belcher thanked Ms. Seiler for her comments.

Councilman Paschal responded, “When I made my comments, I was talking about the hours of operation (for bail bondsmen). We have several (bail bond) offices here in Wentworth so it’s not so much *who*, but the hours of operation. I think that if someone rode by the Town Hall and the lights were on at night, and somebody needed a bond, they would go up and knock on the door to see if someone was here. And that was my concern...if the ladies here are working late, they are trying to get things done, uninterrupted, and get home to their families. But if there is a bail bondsman sign up and the lights are on and cars are here, inevitably you will have foot traffic at night, with people knocking on the doors and asking about a bond. When I made the statement in the meeting, I mentioned the hours of operation as a reason, but I don’t think everything got in the newspaper.”

Councilman Paschal added, “You know how folks are, even if you had a sign on your door with hours of operation, if people see a car in the parking lot or lights on, they’re still going to knock and want you to help them. That’s the angle I was looking at, but thank you for coming tonight.”

Ms. Seiler asked to respond to Councilman Paschal’s remarks, and said, “I completely understand the issue with the hours of operation and all of us are a twenty-four-hour business, but we are certainly not the only business that is a twenty-four hour business.”

“That’s what I mean,” said **Councilman Paschal**, but somebody at the meeting mentioned bail bondsman and I knew *that* to be a twenty-four-hour business, but I would have the same concern about any twenty-four-hour business...”

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“But ours is the only one that made the paper...and this in itself was the problem.” said **Ms. Seiler**.

“I understand,” said **Councilman Paschal**.

Ms. Seiler thanked Council again.

Mayor Aswell recognized Beverly Wilcox and asked her to come forward.

Ms. Wilcox commented that she may not get to be “the most controversial speaker tonight.”

Ms. Wilcox noted that, “About two meetings ago you all discussed a report on countywide recycling. It does seem that recycling is now the rage. Everyone needs to *feel green*. Just so you don’t misunderstand where I’m coming from, I was recycling back before it was cool. I was part of a group that started the first recycling collective in Connecticut when my children were younger than my grandchildren are now. So I have been doing it for a long, long, time...so living green isn’t new to me.”

Ms. Wilcox continued, “Your report detailed ways that the government is going to try to get more people involved in recycling...make it easier for everybody...even if it costs more...it doesn’t make practical sense and is not resource efficient, but it still makes everybody feel good.”

“It is today, all about the three “R’s”—Reduce, Reuse, Recycle. Notice that recycle is last. Recycle is what you do when you can’t reduce or reuse. *Then*, you recycle. So I *really* wish that we would do more on the reduce, and then maybe we won’t have to worry so much about recycling.”

“While you were presenting the report on recycling and everybody was feeling green, if you look out, I’ll bet you will see that your outside lights are on. I ask that you please reduce. It is interesting that you are worried about lights on late at night, they are on here *every* night, all night. This building and this parking lot are lit up like a Christmas tree, and I can’t come up with a reason for it except maybe you’re going to rent to the bail bondsmen and you want to light up the parking lot.”

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Ms. Wilcox concluded, "Recycling is going to fix itself a lot faster if we use less of everything. I meant to bring my Agenda up and use it as an example. My goodness, what an amount of paper...reduce comes first, not recycle, not reuse. We need a lot less paper...it can be printed in regular, normal type...we can all read it. I can read some of those pages from across the room. That's a serious waste, so before we come up with good, fuzzy, warm feelings about how we can recycle county-wide, please, please, please, reduce. Thank you."

Mayor Aswell thanked Ms. Wilcox and recognized **Harry Rakestraw**, who said he no longer needed to address Council.

Article VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Paschal made the following announcements:

- The next regular meeting of the **Town of Wentworth Planning Board** will be held on **Tuesday, July 20, 2010**, at **7:00 p.m.** in the Town Hall Council Chambers.
- The next regular meeting of the **Wentworth Town Council** will be held in the Town Hall Council Chambers on **Tuesday, August 3, 2010**, at **7:00 p.m.**

Article IX. A D J O U R N

Mayor Aswell made a motion, "*To adjourn the meeting.*"

The motion was seconded by **Councilman Paschal**. All voted in favor and the meeting was adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted By: _____
Brenda Ward, Town Clerk

Approved By: _____
Robert P. Aswell, Mayor