



**TOWN OF WENTWORTH
MINUTES
OF
THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
WENTWORTH, NORTH CAROLINA
JULY 2, 2013
7:00 p.m.**

The regular monthly meeting of the Wentworth Town Council was held on Tuesday, July 2, 2013, at the Wentworth Town Hall at 7:00 p.m.

Council Members Present:

**Mayor Dennis Paschal, Jr.
Mayor Pro Tem Evelyn Conner
Councilman Robert Aswell
Councilman Dennis Paschal, III**

Council Members Absent:

Iris Powell

A quorum was present.

Staff Present:

**George Murphy, Town Administrator
Yvonne Russell, Finance Officer/Deputy Clerk**

Others Present:

**Brenda Ward, former Town Administrator/Clerk
Pat Kane, Attorney – Smith Moore Leatherwood
Jeff Johnson, Architect – AWCK
Lucas Carter, Planner – Rockingham County
Judy Wall – Wentworth Post Office**

Article I. Call to Order

Mayor Paschal called the meeting to order.

Article II. Invocation

Mayor Paschal gave the invocation.

Article III. Requests and Petitions of Citizens

Mayor Paschal announced that no one signed the speaker register.

Mayor Paschal made a motion, *“That we approve the agenda as written”*.

Mayor Pro Tem Conner seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

Article IV. Approval of Minutes for June 4, 2013

Councilman Aswell made a motion, “*They be approved as written*”.

Mayor Pro Tem Conner seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

Article V. Old Business

**A. Update on Post Office and Community Building
- George Murphy, Town Administrator**

Mr. Murphy informed council of the following tasks that have been completed:

- A North Carolina General Warranty Deed has been filed for the Community Building located at 200 County Home Road.
- Harold Vaden of Wentworth Community Improvement Group, Inc. has issued a letter to the current tenant of the Community Building, Pastor Gonzalo Mosqueda, advising that the property has been transferred to the Town of Wentworth and the tenant has sixty (60) days to exit the property. The tenant must exit by August 7, 2013.
- Jeff Johnson of Alley, Williams, Carmen & King has invited four (4) contractors to an asbestos removal pre-bid meeting scheduled for July 9, 2013 at 10:00am at the Community Building. The bid opening has been scheduled for July 23, 2013 at 2:00pm at the Wentworth Town Hall.

Mr. Murphy informed Council that in order to use the Community Building as a Post Office, the property will need to be rezoned to Office & Institutional. He added that using the building as a Post Office and a Community Building would require a Special Use Permit for a Planned Business Development which means the Wentworth Planning Board would need to hold two public hearings; one for the rezoning to Office & Institutional and one for the Special Use Permit.

Mr. Murphy noted that July 19, 2013 would be the deadline for submitting an application for a rezoning and/or a Special Use Permit to be considered at the August Planning Board meeting. The Council would consider a recommendation from the Planning Board at their September meeting.

Mayor Paschal asked if the Planning Board could have both hearings at the same meeting.

Mr. Murphy explained that the Planning Board could hold a public hearing for the rezoning and if a recommendation to rezone is approved, the Board could then hold a public hearing for the Special Use Permit and an approval would be contingent upon Council approval of the Board’s recommendation to rezone.

Mr. Murphy mentioned a possible issue regarding the front yard set back and asked Lucas Carter, Rockingham County Planner, to explain.

Noting that there has been some discussion about a possible awning on the building, **Mr. Carter** explained that if the Special Use Permit for a Planned Business Development is granted, an awning would be located within the 50 foot front yard setback. Mr. Carter further explained that a variance from the required setback would need to be considered by the Planning Board, and that could take place at the same time as the consideration of the Special Use Permit.

Jeff Johnson asked Mr. Carter, “If the other space isn’t being leased as office space do you have to have the Planned Business Development or could it just stay as O&I (Office & Institutional)?”

Mr. Carter answered, “It depends on the use. The Post Office itself is one use, and when you designate a portion of the other part of the building to be used as something else, even it’s another professional office, you do...unless it’s Post Office space. If it’s Post Office space then there is no need to do a Planned Business Development.”

Mr. Murphy said, “If we definitively are going to use the other part of the space as a Community Building then that would take care of it, but what if Council decided to use that space for something else other than that. Does Council need to define that more clearly?”

Mr. Carter replied, “That is one of the reasons why I would recommend that the rezoning be a straight rezoning. That way you are not necessarily tied to a use. It’s kind of understood that in a Planned Business Development you are going to have some turnover in the use. You don’t have to specify exactly the use that is required for the Planned Business Development, but certain things are associated with the uses that you choose...like your parking. Each use in the parking requirements has a calculation for the parking that is required. As uses change you may be required to have more parking or you may not be required to have as much parking. Those are the kind of things that may change as you change uses. You would try to get it so you don’t have to come back every time a use changes, and a straight rezoning would help with that.”

Mr. Murphy informed Council that the final site and topographical survey should be completed this week. He asked Mr. Johnson and Mr. Carter if they had any concerns about the project at this time.

Mr. Johnson expressed his concern that preparations would not be far enough along to be able to submit an application for rezoning and/or a Special Use Permit by the July 19th deadline for consideration at the August Planning Board meeting.

Dennis Paschal, III asked, “So we can’t begin anything until the permits are approved?”

Mr. Murphy explained that the Town is free to move forward on the asbestos removal, but the proper zoning and permits must be in place before the building is occupied by the Post Office or by uses other than what the property is currently zoned for.

Mayor Paschal asked Brenda Ward, former Town Administrator, when Ms. Larsen-Williams, USPS Real Estate Specialist, is scheduled to move to another department within the USPS.

Mrs. Ward replied, “She didn’t give me a date. She just said they had already told her that she was going to be transferred, and she told them that she would like to get this project off the ground first.”

Mr. Johnson said, “There is no reason we can’t go ahead and begin design work so that once the rezoning is done we are ready. I don’t think we should wait until the rezoning is done to start design work.”

Mayor Paschal pointed out that Council could call a special meeting if needed.

Mr. Murphy said, “Part of what I wanted everybody to understand is that I know we really want to push it and try to have it done as rapidly as possible, but also there are procedures that we have to follow. We’re trying to be as transparent about it as possible so that everyone is on the same page and sharing as much information as we can so that it gets done as quickly as possible.”

Council Paschal, III asked if the Town has to work within a specified time frame due to the lease the USPS currently has for space at the Wright Tavern.

Mrs. Ward said that she was not sure when the Wentworth Post Office’s current lease expires. She asked Judy Wall, Wentworth Postmaster if she was aware of when the lease is due to expire.

Ms. Wall answered, “I think it’s a five (5) year lease...that they probably have three (3) more years on.”

Ms. Wall informed Council that the Reidsville Postmaster is now in charge of the Wentworth Post Office. Ms. Wall indicated that the Postmaster may be more responsive to a Wentworth rural route now that the Wentworth Post Office is under her supervision.

Mayor Paschal said that it was his understanding that a rural route would require more space than the Wentworth Post Office currently has.

Ms. Wall asked Mayor Paschal if he thought the Community Building would be large enough to accommodate one or two rural routes.

Mayor Paschal said the first floor of the building could possibly accommodate the space that would be needed.

Mr. Johnson agreed and said, “We should think that way...that there is the potential of that happening.”

Councilman Paschal, III said that based on what he hears from local citizens he believes they are excited at the prospect of a new post office but they would also like to have a Wentworth address, which would coincide with having a rural route out of the Wentworth Post Office.

Mayor Paschal reminded Council that the USPS will only allow you to conduct one (1) bottom-line delivery survey per ten (10) years. If the majority of your citizens do not vote in favor of an address change, then you must wait another ten (10) years before applying again. He suggested that citizens who want a Wentworth address should go into the community and gather support for bottom-line delivery.

Councilman Paschal, III said he believed it would be wise to consider the possibility of rural routes while renovating the Community Building.

Mr. Murphy mentioned that the Town received an email from Roy Blankenship, a citizen of Wentworth, regarding the Wentworth Post Office. In the email, Mr. Blankenship expressed his opinion in favor of a new Wentworth Post Office as well as bottom-line delivery. (Note: A copy of Mr. Blankenship’s comments are herein incorporated and made a part of these minutes.)

Town Council

As a citizen of the Wentworth Township, I would like to express an opinion concerning the Wentworth Post Office. It is my opinion that a new post office would best service the citizens of our community. As the opportunity has presented itself to be able to move to a new location, we should take advantage of this opportunity to build the best post office we can at this time. We have previously “repurposed” buildings and it seems like the right time to build a new building. It is also my expressed concern for the Wentworth Post Office to have a rural route and that all citizens in the Wentworth Township to have a Wentworth address. For all the reasons that the Wentworth Township has been re-established, this is an important issue for our community. The Rockingham County High School, the Wentworth Fire Department, Rockingham Community College, Rockingham County Court house in Wentworth, and Wentworth Town Hall certainly needs to have and/or continue to be assigned a Wentworth address.

Thank you for your consideration of these important issues for our community.

Respectfully submitted:
Roy Blankenship

Councilman Aswell asked how much floor space would be necessary to accommodate a rural route.

Mayor Paschal said that in past discussions with the USPS regarding a new post office they considered plans for 1,500sf, which would have been more than enough space. He explained how there would be sufficient space in the Community Building as long as the Town does not enter into a lease with someone else for any of that space.

Mayor Paschal said that a rural route may be something Council should bring up at a later time. He asked Council if they had anymore questions. There were none.

Article VI. New Business

A. Appoint Yvonne Russell as Town Clerk and Budget-Finance Officer - Mayor Paschal

Mayor Paschal stated, *“At this time we need to appoint Yvonne Russell as Town Clerk and Budget-Finance Officer, and I would like to make that motion”*.

Mayor Pro Tem Conner seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

B. Old Fashioned 4th of July Celebration Update - Yvonne Russell, Finance Officer

Mrs. Russell gave an update on the event. (Note: A copy of the memo read by Mrs. Russell is herein incorporated and made a part of these minutes.)

JULY 4th Celebration UPDATE

Thursday, 2-6pm

We will begin with ...

**Patriotic Medley
Welcome
Pledge of Allegiance
National Anthem**

**Bryan Jones
Kim Proctor
Sheriff Sam Page
Anthony Hearn**

Then the...

Reading of the Declaration of Independence by Elected Officials around the County.

*Beginning at 3pm we will have musical performances by...
Song Bear, Piney Forks, and The Rorrers*

*The Home-made Ice cream contest will take place from 3 – 3:45pm
Folks can stop by and taste samples of ice cream and vote for their
favorite. 1st place wins \$100 ; 2nd place wins \$50.*

*(If you would be interested in competing, we would like to have more home-made
ice cream contestants.)*

*Participants can play BINGO from 3-5pm. Prizes will be awarded to the
winners.*

*There will be free sno-cones, cotton candy, popcorn, lemonade and watermelon.
The first 500 guests will receive a rolled museum miniature replica of the
Declaration of Independence. Kids and adults can cool off and have fun on the
water slide that will be operating all afternoon. The Wentworth Volunteer Fire
Department has graciously agreed to supply the water.*

*We have 12 confirmed vendors (we expect to have food, jewelry, birdhouses,
wreaths, soaps, greeting cards, quilts, wood turning & caning, and gourd art...just
to name a few). There are more vendors that Kim's staff is in the process of trying to
get confirmation from.*

We have several non-profits that will have display booths set up as well.

VOLUNTEERS:

I would like to thank those that have already volunteered to help:

- *Mayor Paschal has volunteered to set up American flags along County Home Rd.*
- *Dennis Paschal, III will recite the section of the Declaration of Independence designated to Wentworth.*
- *Jason Rakestraw has volunteered to ice down the water and carry it to the event Thursday morning.*
- *Lee Templeton and George Murphy will set up the Welcome tent and tables*
- *George, Brenda Ward, and myself have volunteered for shifts at the Welcome tent.*
- *Lee, Brenda, and myself have volunteered for shifts at the BINGO tent.*

We need more volunteers to help with:

- *Booth patrol (walk around the tents and assist vendors/organizations and guests, give other volunteers breaks)*
- *Games at the Grassy Springs Schoolhouse (read books & play historic games with children, ie: jump rope, jacobs ladder, cat's cradle, quoits)*
- *Ice cream making contest (Oversee the contest, stock the sampling materials, tally votes)*
- *Taking down the Welcome tent and cleaning up*

So...if you can spare one hour out of your day, we would greatly appreciate it!

Attorney Pat Kane volunteered to preside over the Home-made Ice Cream Making Contest.

Mayor Pro Tem Conner reminded Mrs. Russell that she had already volunteered for an hour at the Welcome Tent. (Note: After the meeting adjourned, **Councilman Aswell** volunteered to meet Jason Rakestraw at the Town Hall on the morning of the event to put the bottled water on ice and deliver it to the event location.)

Article VI. New Business (continued)...

C. Recognition of Brenda Ward's years of service with the Town of Wentworth
- **Mayor Paschal**

Mayor Paschal presented a plaque to Brenda Ward in appreciation for her years of service to the Town and read the following inscription:

"In appreciation of Brenda Ward who, as the first, full-time employee of the Town of Wentworth, has provided over fourteen years of consistent, courteous, dedicated, dependable, quality service to a grateful town, people, and representative council in her roles as

*Town Clerk
Finance Officer
Town Administrator*

April 6, 1999 – June 28, 2013

*Mayor Dennis Paschal, Jr.
Mayor Pro Tem Evelyn Conner
Robert Aswell, Sr.
R. Dennis Paschal, III
Iris S. Powell"*

Councilman Aswell thanked Mrs. Ward for the help she has given him over the years and said he has enjoyed working with her.

Mr. Murphy referred to an article in the News & Record detailing Brenda's years of service to the Town and her retirement. Mr. Murphy informed Council that a commemorative framed copy has been ordered and will be placed in the Town Hall.

Article VII. Public Comments

No one signed the speaker register.

Article VIII. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mayor Paschal made the following announcements:

- The next regular meeting of the Wentworth Planning Board is July 16, 2013, at 7pm in the Town Hall Council Chambers.
- The next regular meeting of the Wentworth Town Council is August 6, 2013, at 7pm in the Town Hall Council Chambers.
- The Candidate Filing Period for 2013 Municipal Elections begins July 5, 2013 at noon and ends on July 19, 2013 at noon.
- Everyone is invited to the 2nd Annual Old Fashioned 4th of July Celebration at the RCC Historical Village on July 4th from 2 – 6pm.

Article IX. A D J O U R N

Mayor Paschal made a motion, "*We adjourn*".

Councilman Aswell seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted by: _____
Yvonne Russell, Town Clerk

Approved by: _____
Robert Dennis Paschal, Jr., Mayor