



**TOWN OF WENTWORTH  
MINUTES  
OF  
THE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
WENTWORTH, NORTH CAROLINA  
August 1, 2023  
7:00 p.m.**

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The regular monthly meeting of the Wentworth Town Council was held on Tuesday, August 1, 2023, at the Wentworth Town Hall at 7:00 p.m.

**Council Members Present:** Mayor Dennis Paschal Jr., Mayor Pro Tem Evelyn Conner, and Cheryl Moore

**Council Members Absent:** Daryl Crowder, Dennis Paschal III

A quorum was met.

**Staff Present:** Yvonne Russell, Town Clerk/ Finance Officer  
Hunter Wilson, Accounting Clerk/ Deputy Clerk

**Others Present:** Ellis Martin, Attorney, Fox Rothschild LLP –  
Town of Wentworth  
Lynn Cochran, Planner

**Article I. CALL TO ORDER**

Mayor Dennis Paschal Jr. called the meeting to order.

**Article II. INVOCATION**

Mayor Paschal gave the invocation.

**Article III. APPROVAL OF TOWN COUNCIL AGENDA**

**A. Requests and Petitions of Citizens**

There were no Requests or Petitions of Citizens.

**B. Approve/Amend Agenda**

Mayor Paschal made a **MOTION**, “*To approve the Town Council Agenda as written.*”

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

**Article IV. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**A. Town Council Meeting – July 11, 2023**

**Mayor Pro Tem Conner** made a **MOTION**, “*The minutes stand approved as written.*”

**Mayor Paschal** seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

**Article V. PUBLIC HEARING(S)**

**A. Consideration of Text Amendments to the Wentworth Planning and Zoning Ordinances Regarding Special Use Permits and Accessory Dwelling Units (Guest Houses).**

**Mayor Paschal** called the Public Hearing to order.

**Planner Lynn Cochran** introduced himself and referenced the attached memo regarding amendments to the Zoning Ordinance for Special Use Permits. He said, “As you can see, Ms. Russell put a very helpful memo in the board packet for this evening. She called in May to take a look at rearranging some of the language regarding Special Use Permit decision-making processes. Along the way, something came up about Accessory Dwelling Units...”

**Mayor Paschal** asked for clarification, “I see we have Accessory Dwelling Units also. Is that a separate issue within this or are we handling this at one time?”

**Mr. Cochran** replied, “You can vote on it either way. The Planning Board decided to vote on it separately...” **Mayor Paschal** agreed that he would also like to address Special Use Permits and Accessory Dwelling Units separately.

**Mayor Paschal**, wanting to clear up confusion from the previous Planning Board Meeting, commented, “The Town Council had a minor Special Use Permit come before us and we voted on it. As soon as we voted, I realized we don’t approve these. I mentioned that to you (Mr. Cochran) and you said you would check on that. I think it was the last case the Planning Board had, which was a Special Use Permit case. It was the mobile home that burned down. When the Planning Board started that meeting, you stated that it would go to the Town Council for approval. **Ms. Russell** then advised that it would not come to us for approval. After learning of this, I polled the Council and said that this needed to be looked at...I wanted to get that into the record. That is why we sent this over to the Planning Board, to see if we needed to take those up. However, the Planning Board ultimately voted to keep it how it was, which is okay, that is why we sent it to them. It appeared they had questions such as, ‘Did it match up to the County’... but it doesn’t have to be in line with the County because our ordinances are separate. We just need to make sure to keep that in mind. We have our ordinance book and we contract with the Rockingham County Planning Department to maintain it... The Planning Board had questions that Ms. Russell was not there to answer, but if she had been, she could have given them the answers...”

**Mayor Paschal** added, “You and Ms. Russell found a conflict in our Ordinance after she talked to you. When the state sent out those text amendments in 2021 they contracted with Roger Bardsley (SCEI Planning) to come in and do the text amendments for them. I believe we were contracting with him so he had to do them for us as well. It looks like he changed ours to match the County’s ordinance.”

**Mr. Cochran** stated that he could not be sure, but it appeared that something was missing.

**Mayor Paschal** continued, “It ended up matching the County and 160D didn’t say that we had to match the County. We just figured he had matched the County’s Ordinance and changed that specific part of Special Use Permits, Section 5.”

**Mr. Cochran** stated, “It very well could have happened that way, or it could have just been a complete omission.”

**Mayor Paschal** continued, “...we just want to change and address the difference between that. As far as the Planning Board, I don’t have a problem with them keeping the authority to approve minor subdivisions...” **Mayor Paschal** asked the Council if they agreed, and they acknowledged they were in agreement.

“Even after this was changed in 2022” **Mayor Paschal** continued, “the Town Council had to extend the Special Use Permit for the solar farm. Therefore, we were still approving Special Use Permits. It looks like what we need to do is change this...”

**Mayor Paschal** made a **MOTION**, “To add the following to the second paragraph under Section 5 Special Uses: Depending upon the potential impact of the use on an area, either the Planning Board or Town Council, as specified, shall grant the permit. Also, to replace all references to ‘Board of Adjustment’ in Section 5 Special Uses to ‘Planning Board or Town Council’.”

**Mayor Paschal** explained further that this motion would allow the ordinance to match our definition. **Mr. Cochran** agreed and also stated that he “strongly felt that the inconsistencies in the Ordinance were overlooked”.

**Mayor Paschal** said, “He shouldn’t have changed it because he told us that there were not any major changes to be made...” **Mr. Cochran** said, “It is identical except for what needed to be changed for 160D.”

**Mayor Paschal** went on to say the Town Council and the Planning Board have been handling Special Use Permits this way since 2002 and to change something such as this is considered a major change. He added, “We continued to do Special Use Permits the same way even after this change was made in 2021. For example, we signed off on the extension for the solar farm last year.”

**Mayor Paschal** asked **Attorney Ellis Martin** if this would cause an issue regarding the solar farm due to the conflict within the ordinance.

**Mr. Cochran** asked, “The Town Council extended it by resolution, correct?”

**Ms. Russell** confirmed that it was done by resolution.

“Only Council can pass things by resolution,” stated **Mr. Cochran**.

**Attorney Martin** stated that he does not think there will be any issues.

**Ms. Russell** said the Town Council would originally approve that type of Special Use Permit anyway.

**Mayor Paschal** made a **MOTION**, *“To add the following to the second paragraph under Section 5 Special Uses: Depending upon the potential impact of the use on an area, either the Planning Board or Town Council, as specified, shall grant the permit. Also, to replace all references to ‘Board of Adjustment’ in Section 5 Special Uses to ‘Planning Board or Town Council’, and I motion to recommend approval of this text amendment based on the consistency determination statement that is included in the board agenda packet submitted during the presentation and as may be amended incorporated in the motion to be included in the minutes.”*

#### ***TOWN OF WENTWORTH ZONING AMENDMENT CONSISTENCY DETERMINATION***

*The Board has reviewed Case W2023-04, including proposed text amendments to the Wentworth Planning & Zoning Ordinances to permit accessory dwelling units and determine procedure for special use permit decisions. As required by NCGS § 160D the Board makes the following findings:*

*1. The proposed action is found to be consistent with the Town of Wentworth Land Use Plan and other Adopted Plans.*

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

**Mr. Cochran** said, “...multiple issues came up as we started working through this...I will work on fixing the actual text.”

**Mayor Paschal** said, “Ms. Russell and I were both worried about what else he changed in the ordinance because our ordinances are different from the county’s and if he changed this, there are other things we’ve got to go back and check”.

**Mr. Cochran** said he had been reviewing parts of the Town of Wentworth ordinance but had not found any additional issues.

**Mayor Paschal** said we may need to go through the entire ordinance and **Mr. Cochran** agreed. **Mayor Paschal** also suggested getting someone like the COG to review it. **Mr. Cochran** stated that would not be a bad idea and that they may be the perfect organization to do it since they have people on staff who take care of that. (Note: Mayor Paschal is referring to Piedmont Triad Regional Council, PTRC. Council of Government, COG, is the former name.)

**Mr. Cochran** introduced the second part of the text amendment; to add Accessory Dwelling Units/Guest Houses as a new Special Use. He said, “Basically, what this allows is a smaller home that can be located on the same residential parcel as the principal structure, subject to either a 50% maximum square footage or 685 square feet, whichever is larger. So, anyone who owns a property, whether a site-built family home or a modular home placed on it, will be eligible for this permit, should they choose to set up an accessory dwelling unit. The unit itself must also be site-built to NC residential code or a modular. It can't be a manufactured home. It can't be one of the RV types that are on wheels. It has to be an actual permissible resident. These are just the guidelines that the county adopted in 2021; there were a couple of tweaks after that, but this is what we have been functioning under. I would say we have issued maybe 6 or 8 of these a year since 2021 including this year. For some people, it has worked out to be a pretty good thing. As you all know, housing prices are through the roof right now, so for a lot of people affordable housing options just aren't out there. These are just suggested standards for those people who have the extra land and want to do something like this. If you all feel strongly about any of these, we can change those. This would allow these only in the RA, RP, or RM District...only one per lot, so if someone were to own three at the parcel and they already had an established principal dwelling, they can also construct an accessory dwelling unit.”

**Mr. Cochran** continued, “In the past, there was something similar called a guest house in the county ordinance, but that has been updated since then. This was sort of adapted from that and made a little more flexible to give people a little more in the way of options. This is all approved at the administrative level at this point...there are some basic things in here: have to share a driveway unless the entrance is from a different street, and the owner must reside on the same lot. The legislatures are looking at perhaps changing up the language about how the state statutes govern it, to take away any requirement that one or both must be owned or occupied, but that they can both be occupied by different parties not necessarily related and can be leased also as opposed to just being an accessory dwelling unit. But that has not happened yet. That is just some discussion for your knowledge...the issue came up here in Wentworth and Wentworth didn't have any provision for it yet, mainly because it was not an expressed need...”

**Mayor Paschal** asked if a separate motion was needed to approve this.

**Ms. Russell** stated that it was the same motion.

**Mayor Paschal** made a **MOTION**, *“To recommend approval of this text amendment based upon the consistency determination statement that is included in the board agenda packet submitted during the presentation as may be amended and further incorporated in the motion to be included in the minutes.”*

**TOWN OF WENTWORTH ZONING AMENDMENT CONSISTENCY DETERMINATION**

*The Board has reviewed Case W2023-04, including proposed text amendments to the Wentworth Planning & Zoning Ordinances to permit accessory dwelling units and determine procedure for special use permit decisions. As required by NCGS § 160D the Board makes the following findings:*

*1. The proposed action is found to be consistent with the Town of Wentworth Land Use Plan and other Adopted Plans.*

**Councilmember Cheryl Moore** seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

**Mr. Cochran** stated that he would adjust the ordinance and add the approved text amendments. “I will stay in touch with Ms. Russell and see about contacting COG to review the ordinance if you want me to...”

**Mayor Paschal** said, “We need to contact them as far as finding out what we need to do regarding what to start with, and then I will bring it back to the Council.” **Mr. Cochran** agreed to get in touch with someone regarding reviewing the ordinance.

There was no further discussion.

**Mayor Paschal** made a closed the public hearing.

**Article VI. OLD BUSINESS**

There was no Old Business.

**Article VII. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Wentworth Historic Preservation Committee**

**1. Consideration of Amendment to Bylaws Related to Membership**

**Mayor Paschal** explained what was changed in the Historic Preservation Committee Bylaws. Changing the membership from 5 to a membership of at least 3 gives more flexibility. He explained, “This allows them to have meetings as long as they have 3 people, but they can have as many people as they are interested in having...”

There was no further discussion.

**Mayor Paschal** made a **MOTION**, “*That we adopt the new language under 5.1 under membership and terms of office to say the committee shall consist of at least three members.*”

**Councilmember Moore** seconded the motion. All voted in favor and the motion carried.

**Article VII. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Wentworth Historic Preservation Committee**

**2. Consideration of Appointments**

- a. Brenda Ward, 498 Spring Road**
- b. Michael Dove, 168 Dove Road**

**Mayor Paschal** made a **MOTION**, *“To appoint both Brenda Ward and Michael Dove to the Wentworth Historic Preservation Committee.”*

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

**Article VII. NEW BUSINESS**

**B. Resolution Honoring Mayor Dennis Paschal and Mayor Pro Tem Evelyn Conner for 25 Years of Service**

**Ms. Russell** said to Mayor Paschal and Mayor Pro Tem Conner, “I have a resolution here that I want to read and then I have a plaque for both of you if you both want to come down here to get a picture...”

**Ms. Russell** read the resolution.

**Mayor Paschal** made a **MOTION**, *“To approve the resolution.”*

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

**Ms. Russell** presented **Mayor Paschal** and **Mayor Pro Tem Conner** with their plaques.

(Note: The resolution honoring Mayor Dennis Paschal and Mayor Pro Tem Evelyn Conner is herein incorporated and made a part of these minutes.)



**RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION  
TO ROBERT DENNIS PASCHAL JR. AND EVELYN LEWIS CONNER  
FOR 25 YEARS OF SERVICE  
ON THE WENTWORTH TOWN COUNCIL**

**WHEREAS**, The Town of Wentworth, North Carolina, county seat for the County of Rockingham, is always appreciative of those who serve for the betterment and benefit of the Town and its people; and

**WHEREAS**, the Town Council of the Town of Wentworth, North Carolina, wishes to acknowledge and express appreciation to ROBERT DENNIS PASCHAL JR. and EVELYN LEWIS CONNER for their 25 years of dedicated service to the citizens of Wentworth; and

**WHEREAS**, ROBERT DENNIS PASHCAL JR. and EVELYN LEWIS CONNER have faithfully served the Town of Wentworth as members of the Committee for the Reactivation of the Town of Wentworth, as members of the first appointed interim Town Council in 1998, as elected members of the Town Council from 1999 through 2023, for a total of six terms so far, and elected by Town Council as Mayor and Mayor Pro Tem during each of those terms;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, by the members of the Town Council of the Town of Wentworth;

That ROBERT DENNIS PASCHAL JR. and EVELYN LEWIS CONNER are hereby acknowledged as being good, loyal, and faithful public servants to the Town of Wentworth; and

That this resolution expresses the deep appreciation on behalf of the citizens of the Town of Wentworth for the valuable service which they continue to provide to the Town; and

That this resolution is hereby presented to ROBERT DENNIS PASCHAL JR. and EVELYN LEWIS CONNER, and a copy of same shall be placed within the records of the Town of Wentworth.

Adopted this the 1<sup>st</sup> day of August, 2023.

ATTEST:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Yvonne Russell, Town Clerk

\_\_\_\_\_  
Cheryl Moore, Councilmember

\_\_\_\_\_  
Daryl Crowder, Councilmember

\_\_\_\_\_  
Dennis Paschal III, Councilmember



## **Article VII. NEW BUSINESS**

### **C. Discussion of Wentworth Consolidated School 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary**

**Ms. Russell** spoke on behalf of Councilmember Dennis Paschal III, “He said that he talked to Kay Hammock and thought she would recommend postponing the celebration until the gym is finished so we could have it at the school.”

**Mayor Paschal** agreed along with the Town Council. “It would not be the same if we had it at the Town Hall...” stated Mayor Paschal.

**Ms. Russell** also said Councilmember Paschal III would let the Wentworth Elementary School staff know after the Town Council decided on whether or not to postpone the event.

**Mayor Paschal** said, “We have the ballfield finished and once we have the gym done, we can spread the event out over both areas. Even if it takes until the 101<sup>st</sup> anniversary, I think it would still be a better idea to have it at the Wentworth School Site.” He said that there would be updates along the way.

**Ms. Russell** said, “We will hold off on putting any information out about it or planning a date until the gym gets done.”

**Mayor Paschal** said, “We will be lucky if it gets done in 6 months due to any potential issues. Similarly, when we did the abatement they ran into more things that needed to be addressed...”

There was no further discussion.

## **Article VII. NEW BUSINESS**

### **D. Discussion of Wentworth Christmas in the Park 2023**

**Ms. Russell** said she talked to Councilmember Paschal III about this as well, and he said Wentworth Elementary School teachers are still on board to participate in this event. It was also mentioned that the first Friday in December is good for them. “I thought we could go ahead and set the date,” said Ms. Russell.

**Mayor Pro Tem Conner** asked if that was the 1<sup>st</sup> of December.

**Mayor Paschal** said, “We have some parking issues. Is that going to coincide with any games going on at RCHS?”

**Ms. Russell** said she was going to go ahead and request the parking lot from the principal before they make their event schedule.

**Mayor Paschal** stated that the date could be left undecided until the RCHS parking lot can be secured.

**Ms. Russell** agreed and answered yes to Mayor Pro Tem Conner’s previous question regarding whether the first Friday in December was the 1<sup>st</sup>.

**Councilmember Moore** asked, “Is anyone interested in having a parade again?”

**Mayor Paschal** stated that he thought everyone seemed to get more enjoyment out of Christmas in the Park. “You get to mingle with everybody whereas the parade you aren’t able to as effectively. But we can have a parade. We can have more discussion on it.”

**Councilmember Moore** stated, “Even the second week in December could be an option for Christmas in the Park because it coincided with a lot of other activities going on, which I think affected our attendance. We didn’t have the attendance last year that we had the first year.”

**Ms. Russell** stated that other municipalities probably plan their events ahead and that she can check out what may be going on around that time.

**Mayor Paschal** agreed, “We need to shoot for a date when others aren’t doing anything. Also, I talked to the contractor about looking at the four acres of our property to see about having the land cleared off... so we will have additional parking there behind the Town Hall. I will bring it to the Council once I get a quote on how much that will cost...If it rains, we will have a rain date anyway, so we can still park in the grass.”

There was no further discussion.

#### **Article VIII. PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no Public Comments.

#### **Article IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Mayor Paschal** gave the following announcements:

- The next regular meeting of the Wentworth Planning Board is scheduled for Tuesday, August 15, 2023, at 7:00 pm at the Wentworth Town Hall.
- The next regular meeting of the Wentworth Town Council is scheduled for Tuesday, September 5, 2023, at 7:00 pm at the Wentworth Town Hall.
- The Wentworth Town Hall will be closed on Monday, September 4, 2023, in observance of Labor Day.

#### **Article X. ADJOURN**

**Mayor Paschal** made a MOTION, “To adjourn”.

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

**Respectfully Submitted by:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Hunter Wilson, Deputy Clerk**

**Approved by:** \_\_\_\_\_  
**Robert Dennis Paschal, Jr., Mayor**