

MINUTES OF THE WHITSETT TOWN COUNCIL
April 8, 2008
Whitsett Town Hall Building

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

The regular meeting of the Whitsett Town Council was held at 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, April 8, 2008, at the Whitsett Town Hall. The following members of the Town Council were present: Mayor Richard Fennell, Mayor Pro Tem Andy Brown, Councilmembers Jerry Rice, and Cindy Wheeler. Absent was Council member Ken Jacobs.

Also present were Town Administrator Gary Deal, Planning Board Chairman Bob Maccia, members of the Whitsett Ruritan, Ms. Tiki Bigelow, Guilford County Planner, members of the media, and residents.

Mayor Fennell called the Council meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., and noted that a quorum was present. Councilmember Rice offered the invocation.

SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR

Mayor Fennell asked for any speakers from the floor. Lora Cubbage, a District Court Judge candidate, who had asked to be on the Council's agenda, was not present; and so the second speaker, Tiki Bigelow, Guilford County representative, took the floor and introduced a discount prescription drug program to benefit County residents.

Ms. Bigelow explained that the program is available to all Guilford County residents with no enrollment fee, no age or income limit, and no medical condition restrictions. One card will cover an entire family or household; just present the card to a participating pharmacy and receive up to a 20% discount on prescribed medications. Finding a participating pharmacy can be done via the internet or by calling a toll-free number.

Ms. Bigelow left information sheets and a supply of the free discount cards with the Town Hall. The Council thanked her for her time and information.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Adoption of the Minutes

Mayor Fennell asked for any changes to the March 11, 2008 minutes for the regular monthly meeting; and there were none. Motion made by Councilmember Jerry Rice to accept the minutes as written; motion seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Andy Brown. The minutes were approved by unanimous vote.

2. Continued Discussion on Ruritan Request for Cafeteria Improvements

Mayor Fennell asked for anyone from the Ruritan to take the floor; and Patty Luna, current president of the organization returned to the floor to continue discussion of the Ruritan's request from last month's meeting.

Last month, when the community group first approached the Town Council asking for permission and financial assistance to improve conditions in the Town Hall's cafeteria, where the Ruritan meets monthly, the Council members asked for an itemized list of repairs and upgrades that the Ruritan would like to have done. The Ruritan produced just that tallying around \$940 not including a service call for Piedmont Gas to repair valves, lines, and extend a gas line to hook up a donated gas range from Jim Griggs. The list consisted of paint supplies for cabinetry, replacement of counter tops, a new sink, a new low-hanging light fixture to replace bare bulbs there now, cleaning supplies for an overall sprucing up of the area, and the major purchase of a second stove (likely electric, since there are those who are apprehensive to cook with gas).

Terry Call, the club's Vice President, joined Patty in explaining the Ruritan's plight. He stated that members intended to give a facelift to the entire cooking area, going in every cubbyhole and crevice to sanitize, brighten, and beautify, so that the group could hold most of their fundraisers and other events at the community center. Lately, they had relied on satellite facilities, e.g., churches, to hold their breakfasts and other activities; but would like to fix up their meeting place to do so.

Further, the Ruritan members would provide all the labor for the overhaul except where a professional or certified tradesman would be required. Additionally, the time and cost for a licensed electrician to improve circuits and install the light fixture was also being donated.

The Council asked if funds existed in the Town's budget to appropriate help to the Ruritan; and was told \$1,500 earmarked for Public Building repairs was available. This would cover the \$940 estimate from the Ruritan and the work to be done by Piedmont Gas.

Council members agreed that this was a project well worth funding. Having said that, a motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Andy Brown to allocate \$1,500 to Ruritan; motion seconded by Council member Jerry Rice. The motion passed by unanimous vote of those present.

The Town Council commended the Ruritan for their remodeling plans. Terry Call, in closing, stated that if the total \$1,500 is not used, what is left will be returned; and then thanked the Council for their gesture.

3. Any Other Old Business

Mayor Fennell asked for any other old business; and there was none.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Planning Board

Board Chairman Bob Maccia reported that the Board had completed an amendment to the Landscaping Buffer and Barrier ordinance, which had expanded to over 2 pages now due to adding some elements from other municipal regulations. Maccia stated that he and the Board felt good about the ordinance change because it achieved the Board's objective to protect current residential properties, and yet did not discourage commercial development by being too stringent.

Chairman Maccia further reported that the voluminous draft ordinance for commercial architectural design standards was into another draft by incorporating some final comments from Town reviewers and Guilford County—the County being the enforcement authority for the commercial design standards in Whitsett.

Chairman Maccia stated that this draft in progress he hoped would be completed in time to present a draft #5 to the Council by next month's meeting in order to get the design standards on the docket for the June public hearing. This would then make two ordinances—the buffer amendment above and this design standards document—scheduled for public comment and possible adoption in June.

2. Enforcement Committee

Enforcement Officer Gary Deal stated that there was no report from the Committee.

3. Enforcement Officer

Enforcement Officer Gary Deal reported that 4 development clearance permits had been issued since last month's meeting: (1) to Dixon Pool and Spa to construct an above-ground pool at the residence of Steve McHone at 218 Brightwood Church Road, (2) to B.C. Alcorn Construction to add a family room, a new deck area, and an attached garage to the residence of David Peterson at 920 Penn-Lo Drive, (3) to John Snyder at 6789 Kelsey Court to have Dutch Barns build a utility shed in the backyard, and (4) to Martha Moss at 520 NC Hwy 100 for a total kitchen remodeling.

4. Town Administrator

Town Administrator Gary Deal reported that relative to the recreational areas, the weeds in the playground were finally dying out and the planned load of sand to replenish the fenced playground area would be arriving soon and would be dumped on the basketball court until it could be transferred to the playground, which Richard Brothers offered to help with Deal stated.

Deal further reported that after he had reported at last month's meeting that Duke Energy would not be removing the dead trees endangering electric lines along the ballfield's 3rd base line, making the Town to pursue getting estimates for the work, he admittedly had been misinformed by a citizen. Duke Energy did, in fact, contact the Town Hall and handled the job at no cost to the Town.

Town Administrator Deal then reported that he had learned from Susan Heim, the County Solid Waste manager, that grant dollars were available from the NC Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance (DPPEA) for recycling efforts. Deal thought that possibly this could help Whitsett launch and fund at least part of its recycling program; but after researching the criteria, discovered that the grant monies could not be used for contracted services.

Deal stated that the purchase of bins could possibly qualify or DPPEA could help with educational materials; but after filing through the paperwork and red tape that usually comes with a government grant process and especially given the short deadline of May 9, he questioned whether it would be worthwhile for the Town to pursue. The Town decided to not apply.

Town Administrator Deal reported that he had attended a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) workshop as an initial step towards applying for grant funds for a Town water system. He stated that there are a host of steps that need to be taken in qualifying to even apply for aid; and this workshop was only the beginning of a long, complex process.

The CDBG has \$2 million for infrastructure of which municipalities may receive up to a maximum of \$750,000 with a 5% match of local funds. This vehicle seems to be the best chance for now that the Town has for any funding help, even though the process will be arduous. The next step is for the Town's intent to apply for these grant dollars to be laid out at a public hearing, which is likely to be one of the many issues open for public input in June.

As the Town goes through the process, it will learn at each stage whether it qualifies to move to the next, which makes it difficult to predict the probability of making it to the application completion itself.

One of the requirements is to conduct a door-to-door survey of those households with contaminated wells—about 40 homes—to determine household income, since income is one of the qualifying factors—and also to get a feel for if the

homeowner is willing or even interested in being hooked up to a public water system. Tap fees and hookups to accommodate what may seem like so few relative to the Town's population will be extremely costly, not even to mention the monthly usage billing.

This qualifying process has so many arms and legs and hurdles, that if the Town is not successful, it would be such a waste. Even so, Deal believes it is the best shot the Town has right now. The application is due in July with more intense steps to follow if the Town is determined eligible at that point.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Any Items from Council Members

Mayor Fennell asked for any items from Council members; and the Mayor asked the Town Clerk about a request received from the Softball League Director. The League would like to erect a fence down the 3rd base line as a safety precaution. Labor and materials would all be handled by the ball league, and therefore, at no cost to the Town. The League simply wanted the Town's approval—so given.

Mayor Pro Tem Andy Brown then stated that the Ruritan would like to build some type of flower and shrub bed beneath and around the Ruritan sign to add some aesthetics to the Town Hall's front yard. Town Council agreed.

2. Announcements

Mayor Fennell asked for any announcements; and there were none.

3. Speakers from the Floor

Mayor Fennell asked for speakers from the floor; and there were none.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Council, Mayor Fennell invited a motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Councilmember Jerry Rice; and seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Andy Brown. Motion passed unanimously; and the March 11 Town Council meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Town Council will be at 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, May 13, 2008 at the Whitsett Town Hall.

/s/

/s/

Jo Hesson, Town Clerk

Richard Fennell, Mayor

APPROVED: May 13, 2008