

MINUTES OF THE WHITSETT TOWN COUNCIL
April 14, 2009
Whitsett Town Hall Building

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

The regular meeting of the Whitsett Town Council was held at 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, April 14, 2009 at the Whitsett Town Hall. The following members of the Town Council were present: Mayor Richard Fennell, Mayor Pro Tem Andy Brown, Council members Jerry Rice, Ken Jacobs, and Cindy Wheeler. Also present were Town Administrator Gary Deal, Planning Board Chairman Bob Maccia, Sheriff's Department officers Captain Lawrence Straughn and Corporal Jeremy Fuller, members of the media and three other citizens.

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

SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR

Mayor Fennell asked for any speakers from the floor; and recognized a representative from the Guilford County Sheriff's Department. Corporal Jeremy Fuller, who works out of the Greensboro headquarters office, introduced himself to the Council and those present; and explained that his primary responsibility is overseeing the Crime Prevention Program in the county under which falls establishing Community Watch efforts in the incorporated municipalities as well as unincorporated areas throughout the county.

Corporal Fuller asked the Town Council for concurrence in hosting a meeting at the Town Hall for Whitsett residents to hear a presentation by Corporal Fuller on the importance and impact of a Community Watch Program; and how to launch just such an effort. Fuller stated that he had contacted the Town Clerk for outreach assistance in spreading the word to residents expeditiously. Sources would be, of course, the news articles from media present, letters to local churches, postings at the Post Office and other local businesses, the town website, email messages, etc.

Corporal Fuller reported that he had implemented programs in Pleasant Garden, Oak Ridge, Jamestown, and some unincorporated areas in the county; and that now he was encouraging Sedalia and Whitsett to follow suit. Citizens need to be proactive in keeping eyes and ears open because the partnership among neighbors can make a difference for a safer community.

With that, it was suggested that a community meeting be scheduled at 7:00 p.m., on Tuesday, May 12, at the Town Hall, to precede the regular monthly meeting of the Town Council. Corporal Fuller would coordinate details with the Town Clerk.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Adoption of the Minutes

Mayor Fennell asked for any changes to the March 10, 2009 minutes for the regular monthly meeting; and there were none. Motion made by Council member Jerry Rice to adopt the minutes as written; motion seconded by Council member Cindy Wheeler. Approval of the minutes was unanimous.

2. 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 at the April Board meeting, there was not a quorum, so no actions could take place. Chairman Maccia noted that in addition to himself, Council liaison Jerry Rice, the Town Clerk and Rock Creek Record reporter Jamie Kennedy were present; reasons for “no shows” were out of town and job obligations. The scheduled meeting was officially dismissed at 7:20 p.m.

Chairman Maccia reported, however, that the Planning Board projects for next month’s meeting and beyond were (1) development of the future land-use plan for Whitsett, and (2) review of the permitted-use schedule, which would be slated for routine periodic review by the Board in the future to ensure it is current and accurate.

At this point, Mayor Fennell mentioned that at a recent Mayors meeting, he received a copy of an ordinance relative to solicitors or peddlers that Pleasant Garden had adopted; and would pass along a copy to Board Chairman Maccia for Planning Board review to see if a same or similar ruling should be considered for Whitsett. Mayor Fennell asked if, to date, had anyone been aware of a problem with in-town solicitation; answer was negative.

2. Enforcement Committee

Enforcement Officer Gary Deal stated there had been no committee activity this month.

3. Enforcement Officer

Enforcement Officer Gary Deal reported that no development permits had been issued since last month’s meeting.

4. Town Administrator

Town Administrator Gary Deal reported that the updated three-year Guilford County Solid Waste Management Plan had been the subject of a March 16 county-wide public hearing which he attended along with other municipal representatives, each having had a hand in the plan's development and completion. Before the Council tonight, Deal explained, would be the resolution for Whitsett to adopt the new county Solid Waste Plan as written; and that unanimous adoption and endorsement of the plan by each local government entity in the county is a required step before the plan can be submitted to the State for review and final approval.

Town Administrator Deal then announced that there would a Spring Clean-Up stationed in Pleasant Garden from 9:00-3:00 on April 17, where citizens could dispose of white goods, tires, electronic waste, pesticides and other hazardous materials, etc. Specific information had been posted at the Town Hall.

Town Administrator Deal continued with information on the annual Town Hall Day, to be held on Wednesday, May 6, in Raleigh; and asked that if any members of the Council were interested in attending, to contact him.

Finally, Deal brought attention to the prospect of once again the county charging municipalities for Guilford County animal control/animal shelter services. The last year this had occurred was 2003 for a total of about \$3,500. The formula would be to prorate assessments to the towns and cities based on population. A fact of concern is that this would be one more service that Whitsett residents, as Guilford County taxpayers, already pay for; now it would be like paying twice for it.

Captain Straughn voiced that the animal control services provided by the County should not be looked upon as a non-essential service; and its understaffed, yet well-staffed group is committed to its mission. Sometimes responses to problems are handled by the Sheriff's Department, which may crisscross lines of responsibility with the county, especially if concerns arise after county office hours; but, at the top of importance, as Captain Straughn pointed out, is protect the citizens. First, alleviate a dangerous or potentially hazardous condition; later work out whose prime responsibility it would have been.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Adopt Resolution to Approve County Solid Waste Management 3-Year Plan

Mayor Fennell asked for any discussion on the solid waste plan; and with none, Council member Ken Jacobs made a motion to adopt the resolution approving the plan as written. The motion was seconded by Council member Jerry Rice; and the motion carried by unanimous vote.

2. Approve 2009 Contract for Concession Stand Operation

Mayor Fennell reminded Council members that at March's monthly meeting, the Council had concurred on verbal permission to the Ruritan to operate the concession stand, with a draft contract forthcoming.

In their mailed packages, Council members had been provided a draft revised contract that incorporated the adjustments suggested by the Ruritan, whose members would run the concession for the 2009 ball season. Primarily, those adjustments included that for the months of the contract, the Ruritan would reimburse the town for the electric costs that exceed minimum in lieu of donating to the town a portion of concession proceeds.

Mayor Fennell asked Council members if they had had an opportunity to review the proposed contract; and if there were any concerns with the stipulations. Council member Cindy Wheeler stated that the contract was a good one, and move forward with it. Hearing no objections or further comments, a motion was made by Council member Jerry Rice to approve the contract as written, and officially enter into contract with the Greater Whitsett Community Ruritan Club to operate the concession stand. The motion was simultaneously seconded by Council members Cindy Wheeler and Ken Jacobs. Motion passed by unanimous vote.

3. Preliminary Review of Draft Budget for FY 2009-10

Prior to this evening, Council members were provided spreadsheets of the 2008-09 revenues and expenditures with year-to-date actuals and 4th quarter projections resulting in the 2009-10 budget year forecast.

Town Administrator Gary Deal mentioned that the Council was receiving the budget earlier than in the past because with the strapped economy, the Town Clerk thought it best to get the Council involved in budget review and formulation as quickly as possible. The budget reflected a shortfall of over \$15,000, with that shortfall almost in total due to the devastating drop in rates for investment dividends.

Since some Council members had not been able to devote sufficient time yet to absorbing the proposed budget, the major discussion on the budget will take place at the May 12 Council meeting where the budget document will be formally presented with even more refinements and accountability.

4. Any Items from Council Members

Mayor Fennell asked for any items from Council members; and with none, Mayor Fennell reported that also at the aforementioned Mayors meeting, the "roads" issue was raised. That matter being, introduced legislation (SB 758) proposing to shift the NCDOT responsibility of maintaining secondary roads in municipal boundaries (now in the state highway system) to the cities and towns. Being all too great a burden, Mayor Fennell encouraged Council members to call State legislators to voice opposition to the bill; and asked the Town Clerk to draft a letter, as well, to legislators documenting the same for the record.

Mayor Fennell, in a final note, mentioned that also at the Mayors meeting, he learned of a Monday, May 11 Guilford County Elected Officials Breakfast/Forum at the Ag Center, which would include a panel discussion of representatives from the County Commissioners, NCLM, and PTCOG to take on the issue of the state highway system. The town was being asked for a \$50 donation towards the event; and Mayor Fennell directly made a motion to allocate the \$50. Motion seconded by Council member Ken Jacobs; and motion carried by unanimous vote.

5. Announcements

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

6. Speakers from the Floor

Mayor Fennell asked for speakers from the floor; and no one came forward.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Council, Mayor Fennell invited a motion to adjourn. Motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Andy Brown for adjournment; motion seconded by Council member Jerry Rice. By unanimous vote, the motion passed; and the April 14 Town Council meeting was adjourned at 7:45 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Town Council will be at 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, May 12, 2009 at the Whitsett Town Hall.

/s/

Jo Hesson, Town Clerk

/s/

Richard Fennell, Mayor

APPROVED: May 12, 2009