

MINUTES OF THE WHITSETT TOWN COUNCIL
July 12, 2011
Whitsett Town Hall Building

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

The regular meeting of the Whitsett Town Council was held on Tuesday, July 12, 2011 at the Whitsett Town Hall. The following members of the Town Council were present: Mayor Richard Fennell, Mayor Pro Tem Andy Brown, Council members Cindy Wheeler and Lee Greeson. Absent was Council member Jerry Rice.

Also present were Town Administrator Gary Deal, Planning Board Chairman Bob Maccia, an officer from the District II Sheriff's Office, two members of the media, and nine area residents.

Following the public hearing, Mayor Fennell called to order the Council meeting at 7:05 p.m., and noted that a quorum was present.

SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR

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

OLD BUSINESS

1. Adoption of the Minutes

Mayor Fennell asked for any changes to the June 14 public hearing minutes or the regular meeting minutes; none made. Motion made by Council member Lee Greeson to accept the minutes as written from both the public hearing and the regular Council meeting; motion seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Andy Brown. Adoption carried by unanimous vote of those present.

2. Action on Proposed Development Ordinance Amendment on Canopy Structures

Mayor Fennell asked Council members for any further discussion on the Planning Board's proposed recommendations under consideration for inclusion in the town's development ordinance.

With none forthcoming, Mayor Fennell asked for a motion to adopt the ordinance additions on canopies as presented. Motion made by Council member Cindy Wheeler to adopt the ordinance amendments as recommended by the Planning Board; motion seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Andy Brown. Motion carried by unanimous vote of those present.

2. Any Other Old Business

Mayor Fennell asked if there were any other old business to be discussed; there was none.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Planning Board

Planning Board Chairman Bob Maccia stated that the matter of canopies presented during the preceding public hearing was the focus of the July Board meeting.

2. Enforcement Committee

Enforcement Officer Gary Deal stated that no Enforcement Committee activity had taken place.

3. Enforcement Officer

Enforcement Officer Gary Deal reported that since last month's meeting, one development clearance permit certificate had been issued to Jason Wright at 6908 Stella Drive to install a 16 x 43 foot fiberglass in-ground swimming pool in the backyard, and erect appropriate fencing with latch and lock.

4. Town Administrator

Town Administrator Deal reported that the Town Clerk and he had attended a lengthy meeting in Greensboro hosted by the Guilford County Planning Department and NCDENR relative to stormwater management and the Jordan Lake rules. Representatives from several other municipalities and from local outreach organizations on stormwater protection also participated.

Deal explained that the bulk of compliance requirements pertinent to Whitsett concerning Jordan Lake is handled by way of contract with Guilford County, but that municipalities (including Whitsett) have been asked to develop and report on public education and outreach programs for their communities. These efforts could include partnering with neighboring municipalities to disseminate information to residents and/or posting prime links on the town website for easy access to regulations and violations reporting.

Town Administrator Deal then gave an update on the recycling drop-off site, stating that once again the bins had been overloaded with debris sitting outside of containers. In addition, some contamination in the bins had been spotted, meaning a few are ruining the diligence of most others. The town should probably look into getting some signs stating, for example, “for use by Town of Whitsett taxpayers only...” or “leaving articles on the ground around the bins is considered littering and offenders will be subject to a fine...”—whatever it takes to deter the recent messes that occur usually following weekends. It was also suggested that surveillance tactics, e.g., faux cameras be considered.

On a similar matter, Town Administrator Deal reported that as of July 1, electronic waste, such as computers, televisions, cell phones, etc., had been banned from landfills. Links would soon be posted on the town website directing citizens to the Bishop Road facility in Greensboro for disposing of e-waste (as well as appliances and tires); and the town recently learned that e-waste only is being accepted at the nearby Prison Farm 7 days a week.

Then, with regard to the proposed water system, Town Administrator Deal was pleased to report that a commitment from Jim Barnwell of Huffman Oil to provide a site for the master meter had been executed. This land acquisition for meter location has been a major hurdle; and now surveyors could proceed with legal descriptions of the property to be transferred to Whitsett.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Any Items from Council Members

Mayor Fennell asked for any items from Council members; and Mayor Pro Tem Andy Brown stated that a resident had expressed concern about the rundown, overgrown condition of property located at 578 NC highway 61. Town Administrator Deal stated that for many years, there had been confusion over ownership of the property, which remains to be listed in the name of Richard Belton.

The property owner of record had been in arrears for 5-8 years on Guilford County property taxes; and the county had not been interested in pursuing legal action. Now, with the town having levied a property tax starting in 2008 and the owner delinquent on payments, the town could possibly take action.

Numerous attempts to contact Richard Belton and reckon the matter had been made; but to no resolve. Mr. Belton continues to contend that he even owns the property. His current whereabouts are a mystery; and Council member Lee Greeson offered to find out more. Town Administrator Deal will also once again consult the town attorney on the matter and if the town has any options of responsibility or opportunities to even attain the property.

5. Announcements

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

6. Speakers from the Floor

Mayor Fennell asked if there were any speakers from the floor; and Clara Clapp, who purchased the property at 705 NC highway 61, but who resides in Connecticut, asked about the timeline and other aspects concerning the planned water system. This NC 61 property is one of the 20 some households with contaminated wells scoped out for connection to the new public water system. She was informed that it would likely be another year before her Whitsett property would have potable water.

The next speaker from the floor was Eric Barber of 613 NC highway 61, who asked if there were any credence to the rumor that the Shell/Mini-Mart property would soon be up for sale. Mr. Barber stated that he heard that the current manager of the mart, who leases the business had been given a final workday of July 25. Mayor Fennell stated that the town could speculate as a result of the [earlier discussed] engineer renderings submitted to the town for property improvements including new fuel tanks and covered gas pump islands; but, all the town can substantiate is that the current owner—Berico Oil—has made a request to NCDENR to reinstate gasoline sales.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Council, Mayor Fennell invited a motion to adjourn. Motion to adjourn was made by Mayor Pro Tem Andy Brown; motion seconded by Council member Cindy Wheeler. Motion passed unanimously by a vote of those present; and the July 12 Town Council meeting was adjourned at 7:40 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Town Council is scheduled for 7:00 p.m., on Tuesday, August 9, 2011, at the Whitsett Town Hall.

/s/

/s/

Jo Hesson, Town Clerk

Richard Fennell, Mayor

APPROVED: August 9, 2011