

MINUTES OF THE WHITSETT TOWN COUNCIL
September 13, 2011
Whitsett Town Hall Building

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

The regular meeting of the Whitsett Town Council was held on Tuesday, September 13, 2011 at the Whitsett Town Hall. The following members of the Town Council were present: Mayor Richard Fennell and Council members Cindy Wheeler and Lee Greeson. Also present were Planning Board Chairman Bob Maccia, reporter Tomas Murawski from the *Creekside Chronicle* and six area citizens.

Absent were Mayor Pro Tem Andy Brown, Council member Jerry Rice, and Town Administrator Gary Deal.

Mayor Fennell invited those present to observe a moment of silence and subsequently called to order the Council meeting at 7:07 p.m., noting 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 August 9, 2011 minutes; none made. Motion made by Council member Cindy Wheeler to accept the minutes as written; motion seconded by Council member Lee Greeson. Adoption carried by unanimous vote of those present.

2. Water System Update

Representing Town Administrator Gary Deal, the Town Clerk reported that the process to attain easements from the property owners where the public water lines will run had been set in motion. Initial packages had been mailed to nine property owners along highways 70 or 61 informing them of their rights and explaining the procedure the Town will follow in acquisition of the easements.

3. 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 reported that the Board is working on a plan with the objective to alleviate the chronic overcrowding and misuse of the recycling bins located on the Town Hall grounds. Town officials suspect this negligence may be due largely to area residents who live outside the Town corporate boundaries using the drop-off site—whether intentional or because they are uninformed—and methods needed to be devised to deter this activity.

Chairman Maccia proposed several documents to the Council members for reaction, which included a draft of rules and regulations, a notice of warnings and violations, and two forms by which citizens could: (1) report a recycling violation that they witnessed, or (2) make suggestions to improve to the recycling program.

The rules and regulations, in addition to setting operating hours for the site, listing acceptable items for bins, listing prohibited items, and reminding residents of common courtesies, also allowed for imposing fines for violations, which Board members had suggested range from \$50 to \$500. Council member Lee Greeson preferred that penalties wording read “up to \$500” to get attention.

Some thought was also given to converting the half-page notice of warnings and violations to a sign to be erected on the drop-off site; but, the stipulations would need to be even less “wordy” to maximize the effectiveness of the sign.

Board Chairman Maccia stated that perhaps the best suggestion made by the Planning Board was to coordinate with the Whitsett Post Office a mass mailing to all Whitsett PO postal route customers. One mailer would be geared to customers who are non-residents of Whitsett and who are not allowed to use the Town containers, explaining the Town’s implementation of its plan to control recycling problems. The other mailer would go to those who live within the Town’s corporate limits and pay Whitsett property taxes—and for whom the site was created.

Chairman Maccia, in closing, stated that the major element of this plan needing resolve is who is going to enforce the rules, and how will violators be prosecuted. Mayor Fennell stated that if the Town decides to take this proposal further, the Town attorney will need to be consulted; and for enforcement, etc., the Sheriff’s Office will need to be involved.

2. Enforcement Committee

In the absence of Enforcement Officer Gary Deal, the Town Clerk reported that with regard to the abandoned, rundown Belton property at 578 NC highway 61, the Town had requested assistance from Guilford County to condemn the

property. A member of the county Planning Department had inspected the residence and grounds; and planner Randy Stanley then sent a certified letter to the Beltons notifying them of the numerous violations that pose hazards and would require correction within 60 days.

Demands to eradicate the dangers include: (1) demolish the residence, (2) remove the debris, (3) remove the mobile home, or (4) obtain a permit to remodel the residential structure. Failure to comply with the notification of condemnation within the 60 days allotted, would necessitate legal action to insure compliance with the NC General Statutes and Building Code.

3. Enforcement Officer

The Town Clerk reported that two development permits had been issued since last month's Council meeting to: (1) Shehzad Quamar, the new owner of the [former] Whitsett Mini-Mart located at the corner of highways 61 and 70 for ground improvements, installation of underground fuel tanks, and construction of covered gas pump islands; and (2) Home Depot agent for roof repairs and shingle replacement at the property of Denise Duff, 801 Woodard Drive.

4. Town Administrator

Other than the water system update reported earlier, there was no further activity to report.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Any Items from Council Members

Mayor Fennell asked for any items from Council members; and Council member Cindy Wheeler spoke up to state that she will no longer be able to serve as the Town's delegate on the newly merged Piedmont Triad Regional Council (PTRC), primarily due to the established 7:30 a.m. start time and Kernersville location for the Regional Council meetings.

Additionally, the Town only days ago received the invoice for the \$550 annual membership dues; and was holding payment until the PTRC dilemma could be discussed and resolved. Council member Lee Greeson was asked if he could or would be interested in being the Town's representative; he could not.

This led Mayor Fennell to wonder if the benefits could justify the membership, especially with no representation, no participation, and no vote from Whitsett. Mayor Fennell recognized the [formerly known] Piedmont Triad Council of Governments (PTCOG) for being instrumental in originating the Town's development ordinances when Whitsett became incorporated in 1991. Since that time and that undertaking, however, had the Town partaken of many other PTCOG services.

The largeness of the new PTRC raised some concern among the Council, and Council member Cindy Wheeler reminded members that Guilford County opted to withdraw its membership in PTCOG/PTRC once the merger became approved—although the Regional Council maintains that this decision by the County is still inconclusive.

Council member Lee Greeson made the comment that if Guilford County did not join the Regional Council, he does not see why it would be important for the Town of Whitsett to join. Mayor Fennell stated that even if the Town chose to not join the Regional Council at this time, it could always rejoin later if there were to be a change of mind or a change of circumstances.

With that said, Mayor Fennell made a motion to discontinue membership in the Regional Council; motion seconded by Council member Lee Greeson. Motion carried by a unanimous vote of those present.

The Town Clerk will contact the PTRC to deliver the news.

2. Announcements

Mayor Fennell asked for any announcements; and there were none

3. Speakers from the Floor

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

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Council, Mayor Fennell invited a motion to adjourn. Motion to adjourn was made by Council member Cindy Wheeler; motion seconded by Council member Lee Greeson. Motion passed unanimously; and the September 13 Town Council meeting was adjourned at 7:22 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Town Council will follow the continued Public Hearing to be held at 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, October 11, 2011, at the Whitsett Town Hall.

/s/

Jo Hesson, Town Clerk

/s/

Richard Fennell, Mayor

APPROVED: October 11, 2011