

February 24, 2014

Wendell Town Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes

The Wendell Town Board of Commissioners held their regularly scheduled board meeting on Monday February 24, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. in the Town Boardroom with Mayor Timothy A. Hinnant presiding. Present at the meeting were Commissioners Sam Laughery, Jon Lutz; James Parham; John Boyette; Virginia Gray; Manager Teresa Piner; Town Clerk Jonnie Driver; IT Administrator Tamah Hughes; Finance Director Butch Kay; Police Chief Bill Carter; Public Works Director Alton Bryant; Interim Planning Director David Bergmark; Planner Patrick Reidy, and reporter for the East Wake News, Johnny Whitfield.

Mayor Hinnant called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. and thanked guests for their attendance.

Police Chief Bill Carter led the Pledge of Allegiance and Mr. Bob Clemmons of Covenant Presbyterian gave the invocation.

Adjustment and approval of the agenda

With no adjustments being recommended to the agenda Commissioner Parham made a motion to approve the agenda as written. The vote was unanimous.

Item 1 – Public Comment Period

No one wished to be heard.

Item 2 – Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of the Minutes from the Monday, February 10, 2014 Board of Commissioners' meeting.
- b. Approval of the Wake County Tax Report for December 2013.

Commissioner Parham made a motion to approve the consent agenda. With no further discussion the vote was unanimous.

Item 3 – Presentation by Director Darryl Blevins, of the Eastern Regional Center and Mrs. Debra Davis Manager for the Wendell Public Library.

Mr. Blevins stated that an article in the newspaper made a statement about affordable housing and we received a lot of phone calls about that article and we wanted to come back and provide some clarity about items we are working on. We have around 5,000 families around the eastern part of the county that receive some kind of government assistance, whether food stamps, Medicaid or other assistance. He said Passage Home's plan was to work with families and help them become self-sufficient. He said the plan calls for building a strong network of resources to work with these families. Recently an opportunity to work with Pleasant Grove presented and Passage House presented itself. Passage Home was a recipient of CSBG funds. Our vision was to equip the Old Carver School with some community service provisions to help them work toward self-sufficiency.

Mr. Blevins said assistance would be everything from someone needing help paying their utility bill to completing job training, receiving their GED, job placement, youth services for kids and other things. We have worked with a lot of partners like Wake Tech and they are interested in coming down and offering HRD classes, and working with businesses in the communities to find out what they need in

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future employees and incorporating those programs into developing a coalition. We have also worked with the Work Force Development Board and are in the process of trying for a Level 2 Certification which is a way of getting employment across the state.

Commissioner Laughery said his church was starting a program mission to help people called Teaching How to Fish and he would like to talk with Mr. Blevins about this program.

Mrs. Debra Davis said she was the new Branch Manager at the Wendell Public Library and would like to invite everyone to come out to visit the library and get a library card. When gets out into the community and introduces herself she often hears that residents used to go to the library when their kids were little, but not so much anymore because there were so many other places and ways to get information. Mrs. Davis asks those to visit the library if it has been a while because many things have changes. The library still has all the traditional books, audio books, CD books which can be downloaded at home to your system. The library also has e-books and once a library card is received, one can use the library without stepping a foot inside the building itself. The library also has a web site with lots of data bases, from after school programs, story time at the library and a learning express which is online sample test for SAT, PSAT, college admission SA writing, practice test for GED which one can access from home if they have a library card.

Item 4 – Request for the Town Board to direct the Planning Board to review potential ordinance changes regarding nuisance vehicles and front yard parking.

Mayor Hinnant stated that this item was for tracking purposes, and asked the board if they were ok with requesting the Planning Board to review potential ordinance changes regarding nuisance vehicles and front yard parking and send us their recommendation. Everyone was in agreement to have the Planning Board review this item and give the board their recommendation.

Item 5 – Update of garbage collection containers at curbside.

Manager Piner stated this item came about around the same time that the nuisance vehicle parking issue surfaced in December of 2013. At that time we put a hold on the enforcement of all items with wheels. Since that time, staff has been working with Waste Industries on a pick up schedule, but we do not have all the details at this time. Currently Wendell has a Monday and Tuesday pick-up and Waste Industries would like to change that to Monday pick-up for the entire town starting in April. We thought it would be a good time to bring this back up because we are not planning to start enforcing garbage cans not being returned at this time but would like to begin educating citizens of the change that would take place. Staff will continue to collaborate with Waste Industries to inform residents of the change once a date has been set. We will tag garbage cans that are not removed from curbside with information on the pickup schedule. She said we will tag the cans for 2 months following the change in collection before issuing Notices of Violations. She said following the two month grace period, the Code Enforcement Officer will not issue Notice of Violations (NOV) until Tuesday afternoon at the earliest.

Mayor Hinnant said the ordinance states not to put the garbage containers out before 7:00 p.m. the day before the pick-up and he said thought that was too short of a window. He said if it was a Monday pick-up it needs to be anytime on Sunday and it has to be removed from the street by the end of Tuesday. He said he thought those times need to be looked at.

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Item 6 – Economic Development and Wendell Welcome Sign Update.

David Bergmark said at the last meeting staff was directed to follow up with Mr. Paul White on the placement of the Welcome to Wendell Sign at the southwest corner of Wendell Boulevard and Highway 97. He stated Mr. White does not want to grant a permanent easement because he is concerned that could cause some difficulty with development, but that he is willing to agree to a two year agreement and he will be willing to talk to any potential developer trying to keep it there. He said we have contacted Broach Custom Design and it calls for a 10 foot tall sign not including the base.

Mr. Bergmark stated the initial sign estimate was \$10,500 and includes construction, installation of the sign and base and it would need electricity run to it for lighting. He said Mr. White stated he would be willing to help with fund raising efforts. The Town needs to decide how we want to proceed. Do we allow for a certain amount of time to pass to see if funds can be raised or does the town want to move forward with the sign while Mr. White is trying to raise funds?

Mayor Hinnant said he thought it was wonderful that Mr. White wanted to help, but he did not think he should have to bear that burden. He said the cost of installation of that sign should be the Town's. He said in his mind if the Town chose to go ahead with the sign, we should take the money and pay for the sign.

Mayor Hinnant said one thing he would like for us to think about was when we originally got the message board that we have, it was inexpensive because we wanted to see if citizens would take notice and interest in the content on the sign. He thought the sign has been extremely helpful for the citizens. He said we need to get a professional message board close to Broach Signs. He said maybe we could do a \$10,000 sign and a \$30,000 message sign. His only reservation was he did not know what type of signage Wendell Falls would use and he did not want their signage to be inconsistent with what we have installed.

Commissioner Parham said when you talk about inconsistency, are you referring to height and color. Mayor Hinnant said yes, because it would be a struggle to merge these two areas into one Wendell and if our signage was different it might lead people to thinking one area is getting more attention than the other. Commissioner Parham said he thought the manager would try to keep the signs consistent and he also thought we should not look a gift horse in the mouth if we had a citizen willing to raise money for the sign.

Commissioner Gray asked where exactly the sign would be because if it were 30-40 feet from the edge, would that not be in the woods. Mr. Bergmark said not at the intersection of 97 Highway and Wendell Boulevard, it was where the Welcome to Historic Downtown Wendell is now.

Commissioner Gray said as far as consistency of the sign, has anyone talked with Wendell Falls about signage, we have spent a lot of money coming up with a plan for signs and don't want to throw it out the window. Mrs. Piner said Wendell Falls is working with their architect now and one thing we had expressed to them was we do not want the signage to clash and we hope they will use some of the elements we have in our design. She said she had let them know that we wanted the signage to complement each other. Commissioner Gray asked if they had given any kind of indication as to when

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they will have an idea about their signage. Mrs. Piner said we are thinking that within a month they will have something nailed down.

Commissioner Boyette asked if Broach gave an estimate with the electronic message board on the sign. Mr. Bergmark said not on this sign, this would be a Welcome to Wendell sign, but there is still the possibility of having another sign at the Broach location that would be the message board sign. Mr. Bergmark said because it is a bigger sign and the speed limit is faster in that area, you would not be able to read the message board sign at Highway 97. Commissioner Boyette said he was just wondering if it would be feasible to combine the two signs.

Commissioner Gray said another reason we had gotten to that point was because traditionally the sign has been at the Fire Department and most citizens, unless they leave downtown, might not go that far to see the messages on the board.

Commissioner Lutz asked if the sign would be interior lit. Mr. Bergmark said it would be.

Commissioner Laughery said he thought we should not have to wait for Wendell Falls, we have been waiting a long time for this sign and he thought if we could get citizens involved with raising some funds for the sign we should do that.

Commissioner Parham asked Mr. Bergmark if he and Mr. White had talked about what would happen with the sign after two years. Mr. Bergmark said the purpose in limiting it for two years was that he did not want to block development. Mr. White said if the property develops, whoever develops it would want signage as well. Mr. Bergmark said he would try to work with the buyer to leave the sign in place.

Item 7 – Commissioners Comments

Commissioner Boyette thanked Darryl Blevins and Mrs. Debra Davis for coming speaking to the board. He said he was excited to see some signage coming and that we brand out town to try to tie it together with Wendell Falls and keep it consistent. It shows that we are thinking ahead as well as it looks nice.

Commissioner Parham said we recognized heart week at the Eastern Regional Center and we had a chili cook-off and Darryl Blevins was the winner of the chili cook-off. He said the Wendell Senior Citizens has scheduled several new program activities for people who attend. He said he attended the CHC meeting and someone spoke on well water and how to protect oneself.

Commissioner Laughery said he felt that at a lot of the board meetings we were just doing routine things and being status quo. We are not coming up with initiatives and plans. He said Commissioner Boyette made a nice point when he said how to connect Wendell and Wendell Falls. He said we have talked about that since Newland bought the property and we have no plans to improve the traffic, no one out there beating the bushes looking for businesses, who is trying to promote development, and where are our Shovel Ready Sites. He said we are in dire need of some imagination and forward thinking. We have an Economic Development meeting Wednesday and he was looking forward to seeing what they come up with. He said he knew that all of this routine stuff has to be done, and Teresa and her staff do a good job in keeping the town moving. We have such a great opportunity in front of us, but he does not see us doing the planning, imagination and thinking out of the box that we need to do.

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Commissioner Laughery said last month when he was stating some new businesses in town he got his vintages mixed up and said Vintage Dreams was a new business and it has been there over a year, but there is a new company called Vintage Moxy that was supposedly coming to Wendell as well as the tap room. He hopes that our citizens will support our businesses because that was the only way the businesses can survive. We have to give the people moving to Wendell Falls a reason to come into Wendell rather than go to Knightdale.

Commissioner Gray and Lutz had no reports.

Item 8 – Mayor’s report.

Mayor Hinnant stated the board had a retreat on Saturday, February 22, and all the commissioners seem to be on the same page as to what we want to accomplish for Wendell.

Item 9 – Adjourn.

Commissioner Parham made a motion to adjourn at 7:55 p.m. Everyone voted in favor of the motion.

Timothy A. Hinnant, Mayor

Attest:

Jonnie S. Driver, Town Clerk