

August 10, 2015
Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes

The Wendell Town Board of Commissioners held their regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, August 10, 2015, in the Board Meeting Room at 7:00 p.m. with Mayor Timothy A. Hinnant presiding. Present were Commissioners Jon Lutz; John Boyette; Virginia Gray; James Parham; Teresa Piner-Manager; Jonnie Driver-Clerk; Tamah Hughes-IT; John Slaughter-Police; Butch Kay-Finance, and David Bergmark-Planning. Commissioner Sam Laughery was unable to attend the meeting.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Captain John Slaughter and the invocation was given by Commissioner James Parham.

Adjustment and approval of the agenda

Mayor Hinnant said the he would like to discuss Item #5 regarding the Retail Overlay District Boundaries proposed by the Economic Development Committee for Downtown Wendell. He said two weeks ago this was presented to the board and at that time the board stated the Town was not ready for a Downtown Retail Overlay District. Does anyone see a need to discuss this further, if not it will be struck from the agenda.

Commissioner Gray said at the Economic Development meeting, after the Town Board meeting, the people on that committee were disappointed that we had not discussed it further. They felt like this was something that needed to be done and they were in hope that the board would discuss it again and give it more time and consideration.

Commissioner Parham made a motion to approve the agenda as written. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 1 – Public Comment Period

Mr. Rob Morrison, Principal of Wendell Middle School introduced himself to the board. He stated that Monday was his first day as principle at Wendell Middle School. He said he was looking forward to working with the Town in showcasing the students and he would like to know how the school could help with events and create a partnership between the Town and Wendell Middle School.

Ms. Tracy Jackman – 1000 Hollypoint Dr. stated she currently had a state stream that drains into her backyard. She had pictures showing how her yard flooded when it rained and she stated it was washing out her bridge. She said on Boxley Drive, which is the street that backs up to her property, drains from the Town side. She said it was deviating from her property line and something needed to be done. She said she had brought this to Alton Bryant’s attention several times. She left him a message before he returned from vacation and he never called back so she called him the next day and he said he would be out there the next day. She said Alton had not called her back. She said something needed to be done. She said there was not a reason why she had to keep her son inside the house because of the big wash in the backyard. She said every time she brought it to someone’s attention they were like ok. She said she was a retired disabled veteran and asked if the Town could help her with this problem.

Mayor Hinnant told Ms. Jackman that the Town Manager would be in touch with her this week.

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Item 2 - Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of the Minutes from the Monday, July 27, 2015.

Commissioner Parham made a motion to approve the consent agenda as written. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

Item 3 – Review and action of Façade Grant request for 402 Old Wilson Road

David Bergmark Planning Director stated the Appearance Committee reviewed this Downtown Façade Grant application at its July 6, 2015 meeting.

He said the Appearance Commission members recommended to the Board of Commissioners by a 5-0 vote, approval of the Façade Grant application for 402 Old Wilson Road in the amount of \$1,335.89.

David said Jennifer and David Baratta were the building owners and the application was to replace the awning over the door and ramp, pressure wash, repair, and paint the exterior walls, and add decorative lighting for the building at 402 Old Wilson Road

David said staff had reviewed the application and it was deemed complete with the project costs indicated.

Commissioner Gray said for clarification purposes there was a paragraph in the information that stated that the property was owned by Shelton and Rebecca Bridgers and was currently occupied by Lynnette Pair Designs. She said this was from a previous request and she wanted to make sure everyone understood the location. David said that was from a prior request.

Commissioner Parham made a motion to approve the Façade Grant Application for 402 Old Wilson Road in the amount of \$1,335.89. The motion passed unanimously.

Item 4 – Presentation of property inventory located in the DMX.

David Bergmark stated this was an update from the last meeting where we discussed a request for information on the condition of downtown properties. He said staff had compiled a list of the properties within the DMX that were commercial properties. David said he also left the information in the packet concerning some potential incentive programs and some General Statues that could be investigated as well. He said we were looking for direction from the board.

Mayor Hinnant said as far as direction, he did not know what wanted the Board to do with the information. We do not have the power to take someone else's property and mandate what they do with that property. He said he was concerned with direction because he did not want the Board to overstep its boundaries. He asked what we were going to be doing with this information. David said Commissioner Laughery was the one that asked that it be placed on the agenda for tonight, so it may be best to wait until he returns to have the discussion.

David said that he and the Manager had scheduled a meeting with the Deputy Chief Fire Marshall for later this month to discuss the conditions of the properties in the downtown.

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Item 5 – Discussion regarding the retail overlay district boundaries proposed by the Economic Development for Downtown Wendell.

Commissioner Gray said she was at the Economic Development Committee meeting after this was on the agenda and they were very disappointed that we had not discussed it further. She said it did go by really quickly that night. She said there was some conversation about such a district creating a separate tax district. She said the Town previously had an overlay district in the zoning code but when we adopted the UDO, nothing like this was added. She said it may be that we intended not to do this, or it could have slipped through the cracks, but it was something that a lot of other towns have established. She said she did not think it was necessarily a vehicle for taxation. You know I don't like taxes and she would be the first one to say no, don't increase taxes. She said she thought we needed to talk about it.

Mayor Hinnant said when it was originally presented to the board the reason the board did not seek further action was because the downtown overlay district could possibly increase taxes. He said he did not know why this was put back on the agenda, but he did know that the reason he had some reservations was when he spoke with a member of the Economic Development Committee, this particular business was being looked at and considered and he told me that he informed staff that he was for the district as long as his business was excluded. He said he definitely was against special interest.

Commissioner Gray said she did not know that and was against special interest and would never recommend something that was for special interest.

Mayor Hinnant said Commissioner Laughery was the one that asked for this to be on the agenda and he was not present, so unless this board wishes to talk further, this item would be tabled.

Commissioner Parham made a recommendation to table discussion on the retail overlay district boundaries until Commissioner Laughery could join in on the discussion. Everyone was in agreement.

Item 6 – Commissioner Comments.

Commissioner Boyette said he saw another fine article in the East Wake News on Thursday, August 13, 2015, bringing attention to National Lefthanders Day. It was the only holiday of importance in August.

Commissioner Boyette said several things on the agenda were asked to be put there by Commissioner Laughery and that was fine. He was all about business and thought we needed that. He said he did not think we should gloss over items just because he was not present. He was not the Board; we all make up the Board. He said he thought business owners could be against certain districts or regulations but that did not necessarily make them a bad thing. If this town was going to survive and grow, everybody here was going to have to be invested. He said he was looking forward to tackling some of these issues whether or not Commissioner Laughery was here.

Commissioner Gray said she wanted to remind everyone of the Food Truck Rodeo on Tuesday, August 11, 2015 at the Wendell Community Center. She said she would like to thank Mr. Robert Morrison, the new principle of Wendell Middle School, for coming by and introducing himself. She said she was real excited to hear about all the plans he had for the school. She said East Wake High School had a newsletter that was sent out by Mr. Stacy Alston the new principal, and he would be coming to a Board meeting to introduce himself. She said the newsletter was full of information, such as rules that were needed. She said Mr. Alston wanted her to tell everyone that at the first football game, they would be

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having a big tailgate party and everyone was invited. She said Mr. Alston was real anxious to establish a relationship between the high school and the community. She said she would also like to congratulate the 7-8 and 9-10 Wendell All-Star State Champions. She said we would be honoring them here soon and also at the Town Square September 12th. She said the other 7-8 year old team did not win, but they played real well and she would like to congratulate them also and wish them good luck next year.

Commissioner's Lutz and Parham had no comments.

Item 7 – Mayor Comments

Mayor Hinnant said on the retail overlay district, his biggest concerns were the vacant buildings and a couple of businesses that had been trying to get open for a year, but were not yet open. He said districts like this were created for two purposes, one was to create another mandate through ordinances and rules and regulations. He said the other was to create another layer onto properties that were already vacant and not able to get up and running. He did not see where that would do anything except deter economic development in the downtown district. Also, if those buildings were in need of some tender loving care, you would be able to create a special tax on those blocks. He said in his mind, if you create another tax, you would create higher rents and would make it much more difficult to get businesses into the downtown. He said when he heard that the Town approached the Economic Development Committee and they want to bring it back as long as it does not affect them. He said he did not like special interest and for that reason we do not need to be addressing anything that was not completely unbiased.

Item 8- Adjourn

Mayor Hinnant adjourned the meeting at 7:19 p.m.

Timothy A. Hinnant, Mayor

Attest:

Jonnie S. Driver, Town Clerk