

November 23, 2015
Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes

The Wendell Town Board of Commissioners held their regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, November 23, 2015, in the Board Meeting Room at 7:00 p.m. with Mayor Timothy A. Hinnant presiding. Present were Commissioners Sam Laughery; John Lutz; James Parham; John Boyette; and Virginia Gray; Teresa Piner-Manager; Jonnie Driver-Clerk; Butch Kay-Finance; Bill Carter-Police; David Bergmark-Planning; and Allison Rice-Planning.

Mayor Hinnant called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Chief Bill Carter led the Pledge of Allegiance and Invocation was given by Mr. Errol Briggerman.

Adjustment and approval of the agenda

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

Item 1 – Public Comment Period

Mr. Don Mallard – 246 W. Third Street - said he wanted to make the board aware of the increased traffic on Third Street. He said there seemed to be more big trucks hauling equipment and other things that were coming down the street and that the street was starting to get in bad shape. He said with the Christmas traffic for the light show and the events the town had planned throughout the Holidays, the traffic would increase even more. He said he was concerned from a safety standpoint, because the street was dark on that end and when Strickland Funeral Home had visitations at night it was hard to see people crossing the street. He said he just wanted to make the board aware of the traffic and maybe word could be spread to slow down and watch for people crossing on the street, especially during the Holiday season and at night.

Item 2 – Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of the Minutes from Monday, November 9, 2015.
- b. Approval of the Wake County Tax Report – Tax Relief Exclusions

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

Item 3 – Recognition of Wendell Police Sergeant Jody C. Wall for receipt of Rotary International Paul Harris Fellow.

Chief Bill Carter stated on Wednesday, November 11, 2015, Sergeant Jody C. Wall was awarded the Paul Harris Fellow by Wendell Rotary Club President Larry Vaughan, at the Wendell Chamber of Commerce Annual Banquet.

Chief Carter said service continues to be the cornerstone of Rotary International and the Wendell Rotary Club. He said in 1957, Rotary International established the Paul Harris Fellows program and thru that program recognizes outstanding commitment to the community by either its members or members of the community.

Chief Carter said Jody Wall has been a member of the Wendell Police Department since July 14, 1995. Jody was promoted to Sergeant in 1996 and currently serves as a patrol supervisor which allows him wonderful opportunities to interact with members of our community including our youth.

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Chief Carter said Sergeant Wall had coached Wendell Rams Football for over a decade, and served as both a baseball and basketball coach with the Wendell Parks and Recreation Department. In the past two years, the baseball teams he had coached won back to back state championships. He spent more than 400 hours a year of his own time volunteering in those roles and often took personal leave to travel with "his" teams.

Chief Carter said Sergeant Wall utilized his role in the Police Department to foster opportunities for our youth and to instill the importance of that commitment to the town's young and upcoming officers. He served as onsite coordinator for Camp Choices which was a weeklong camp for youth ages 9-12 that utilizes classroom learning and athletic events to teach the importance of sound decision-making for younger children. He said the camp also allowed older youth to serve as camp counselors and model good decision-making for younger children.

Chief Carter stated the Wendell Rotary Club noted the above mentioned activities, combined with a friendly personality, and commitment to the community are but a few of the traits that had turned Sergeant Wall into one of the most recognizable, most appreciated people in Wendell.

Chief Carter said in presenting Jody Wall the Paul Harris Fellow; the Wendell Rotary Club had donated \$1000 to the Rotary International Foundation in honor of our very own Jody Wall.

Jody Wall said it was a great honor to receive this reward. He thanked his wife and family, the Rotary Club, and the citizens of Wendell. Jody received a standing ovation from the board and the citizens in attendance.

Item 4 – Update by Chamber President, Traci Hicks on events and news from the Wendell Chamber of Commerce.

No one was in attendance to give an update.

Item 5 – Discussion and action on landscape updates to property owned by the Town of Wendell.

Manager Piner stated the Town of Wendell worked with the North Carolina Department of Commerce approximately 15 years ago to develop a planting plan for the property located at 10 South Cypress Street. She said the plan was developed with the idea of providing a mixture of flowering shrubs and trees along the perimeter of the property as funds became available. Over time, trees and shrubs have been planted by the Town and other civic organizations and some of the plant material has reached significant size and is in need of pruning and/or removal.

Mrs. Piner said Hicks Landscaping had volunteered to assist the town with the improvements. It was being recommended to remove two trees in addition to the pruning of other trees and shrubs located on the property. She said a crepe myrtle and holly tree were being recommended for removal due to their shape and location, and three Magnolia trees would be replanted as replacements on the property but not at the same location.

Mrs. Piner said with events like the harvest festival, international food festival, and the Lake Myra Light Show, concerns in regard to visibility and access had been received.

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Mr. Piner said the Tree Board had reviewed the request and was not in objection as long as trees were planted as replacements. Hicks Landscaping was recommending to plant the trees along Baugh Street which would also provide for additional buffering for the funeral home.

Commissioner Boyette asked if there were any plans to do something about the low brick walkway in the Square. He has noticed several people trip over it. Mrs. Piner said that was a project that was taken on by a civic organization and we do need to do something. She said in the meantime, we can border it off because it was a problem.

Commissioner Parham made a motion to accept the landscaping plan for 10 South Cypress Street and along Baugh Street. The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

Item 6 – Update on Temporary Sign Regulation

David Bergmark said staff had been requested to provide an update on the current status of the Town's temporary sign regulations, both in terms of policy and enforcement. He said we passed some new rules about a year ago that essentially set no time limit on small ground signs as well as allowed a greater number of them. He said almost a year has passed and we have been receiving some complaints from signs that were put out without permission from property owners.

He said our Code Enforcement Officer was out checking for signs that might not meet the dimensional requirements, or properly located, but had not penalized those individuals that erected signs without first obtaining a temporary sign permit. David said one that was not clear when the ordinance was passed was whether or not they should be getting a permit from the town and paying the fee.

David said the Supreme Court recently ruled on a case that specifically dealt with temporary signage and first amendment rights. He said the ruling of this case has far-reaching implications for municipalities' authority to regulate temporary signage and makes many common features of sign ordinances arguably unconstitutional.

Commissioner Lutz said he was asked to bring this up at the request of a citizen, and he felt there was the need to request information that would be useful to the town, maybe fill out a form, have it in a file so the compliance officer would know where and what to look for and that a time limit should be established. He said maybe when we had our work session in January we could talk about this issue.

Commissioner Laughery said this sign ordinance had been bouncing around for six or seven years now, and if our goal was to get it perfect, it was not going to happen.

Item 7 – Commissioners Comments

Commissioner Gray stated since we last met, a lot of us attended the Chamber Banquet and it was a nice evening and she wanted to thank them for that. She said she also wanted to thank the Wendell Woman's Club for inviting the board and employees to lunch last Wednesday. She said it was a nice event and gave us an opportunity to talk without having any business to take care of. She said she also attended the Eastern Wake Education Workgroup since the board last met. The group had met since March 2015 and had assembled their report of recommendations that would benefit the schools in eastern Wake County. She said they range from teacher retention, discipline, facilities, ground improvements, and other things. She said Knightdale did this very same thing, so she was looking forward to seeing how Wendell Schools was going to benefit from this process. She said on December 4th there would be a lot going on in town, a cookie walk at the Methodist Church, the trolley rides along

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Main Street, and various businesses would be open. The Economic Development Committee had a little program where you could get a ticket punched and signed as you go to the business and if you visit all of them you get to register for a Yeti Cooler. Santa would be coming to town, there would be wood carving, ice carving, the Woman's Club would have a silent auction and open house and there was a lot going on. It would start at 4:00 and Santa would arrive at 6:00 pm.

Commissioner Boyette said Santa would arrive on the Fire Truck on December 4th. He said he was looking forward to all the activities that would be going on. He was unable to attend the Chamber Banquet and the Woman's Club Luncheon because he was on working at the Fire Station. He said today was the birthday of Franklin Pierce who was a president of the United States.

Commissioner Laughery said he would probably not be here at the next meeting. He just became a step-grandfather on Saturday and we were not sure what our schedule would be like for the next several weeks. He said he did want to congratulate the winners of the recent election and wished them the best as the town continues to grow and we keep the Small Town Charm as our motto. He said he would caution the four commissioners that would be voting to appoint a new commissioner, that it was a close race and the person in third place was less than ten votes away. He said it was just too easy to say we know better than what the voters pointed out to us. He said he would think long and hard about that. He said he enjoyed working with the current board and even though we did not always agree, we had the best interest of Wendell in mind. Commissioner Laughery said even though we accomplished a lot, there were things that did not get done and he would just like to list them as a possible challenge for the new board. The intersection of Wendell Falls Parkway and Wendell Boulevard is a disaster and now Wendell Falls Parkway and Third Street had become a problem with several accidents there. We failed to get a Transportation Plan and to get some projects on the county and CAMPO TIP and we had nothing on the plan. We failed to get money from CAMPO where other surrounding areas have gotten millions of dollars through LAPP. He said we have sidewalks that need repairs and areas where there were no sidewalks. He said we failed to get some real emphasis on the downtown property owners and some of the owners need to be told to get out of their slum mentality and do something with their buildings. Hopefully some board member would take this up as their personal challenge. He said if we want Wendell to be a viable town, we have to support our businesses.

Commissioners Parham and Lutz had no comments.

Item 8 – Mayor Comments

Mayor Hinnant said this would be his last full meeting and that he served the town 12 years and it had been an honor and privilege. He said one thing the new board might want to work on was that the East and West Boundaries have been set for the town, but North and South Boundaries had not been established. He said staff had met with Rolesville and Archer Lodge. He said we need to do it before so much growth took place and made it a real challenge to reach some kind of cordial agreement. He said another thing he had asked the attorney to look at was the voting to have districts and at large and this would allow the representation to be more spread out. He said also in the near future this board was going to need to take a look at bonds. We would have needs for a new town facility, additional employees, and needs that would come up that the revenue does not allow for. We need to figure out where the new town complex would be and how we would pay for it.

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Item 9 - Adjourn

Mayor Hinnant adjourned the meeting at 7:30 p.m.

Timothy A. Hinnant, Mayor

Attest:

Jonnie S. Driver, Clerk