

**TOWN OF WENDELL
BOARD OF COMMISSIONER WORK SESSION MEETING MINUTES
SEPTEMBER 17, 2020**

The Wendell Town Board of Commissioners held their virtual, special-called work session on Wednesday, September 17, 2020, in the Town Board Room, Wendell Town Hall, 15 East Fourth Street.

PRESENT: Mayor Virginia Gray; Mayor Pro Tem John Boyette (virtually);
Commissioners: Jason Joyner, Joe DeLoach, Jon Lutz, and Philip Tarnaski

STAFF PRESENT: Town Manager Marc Collins, Assistant to the Manager Stephanie Smith and Planning Director Niki Jones

SPECIAL NOTICE

Due to the Declared State of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 Virus, the Town of Wendell has altered the traditional meeting process to accommodate and encourage positive public health practices. The Town is incorporating virtual meeting practices to continue the work of the Board of Commissioners while taking proactive measures to maintain transparency.

The public is encouraged to remain home and call (919) 375-6880 to listen to the meeting. No direct access to Town Hall will be allowed.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Gray called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

1. STRATEGIC PLANNING WORK SESSION

- 1a. Strategic Planning Initiatives Presentation & Discussion
Contact: Town Manager Marc Collins

Town Manager Marc Collins thanked the Board for their time and presented the following report, below in italics:

Vision Statement for the Town of Wendell

"The Town of Wendell is clean, safe, vibrant, and full service with a diverse population. Our citizen friendly reputation is assured by the quality of our facilities and professional staff who work efficiently to provide great customer service. We have a knowledgeable Town Board who works efficiently to incorporate input from Citizen Advisory Boards and staff to be responsible stewards of our tax dollars, through leveraging, by watching return on investments and maintaining our fund balance."

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Mr. Collins said that he emailed the previous Strategic Plan to the Board and that he wanted to listen to the Board's thoughts, saying that staff would also provide the public with the opportunity so provide their thoughts before staff brings a draft back to the Board in December. He said that the Strategic Plan is a 2-year plan that guides staff on the budget and helps set Board policies. Mr. Collins said that the Board's Vision Statement doesn't change tremendously unless there's a major change in an elected body that wants to redefine their vision. He asked the Board to review the vision and let him know whether it still reflects the vision of the Board.

The Board reviewed the current Vision Statement. Commissioner Joyner asked about clarification around "full service" term. Mr. Collins clarified that it means that the Board provides all of the municipal services either through contract or relationships. It means that there is not a service that the Town would not consider providing. The Board had no changes to the vision.

Mr. Collins reviewed the Board's policy goals which cover the five broad areas, below. He said that these goals are intentionally broad, as there is generally overlap between different projects among multiple goals.

Policy goal areas are intentionally broad and are used to identify the most critical issues facing the community. Each policy goal has specific action initiatives that are prioritized annually to assist in the allocation of resources and staff time to ensure efficiency and effectiveness. The policy goal areas identified include the following:

- **GOAL 1: Downtown Vibrancy, Economic Growth, and Community Character**
Promote economic vitality through the development of a vibrant Downtown, economic growth, and unique community character.

Mr. Collins said that goal 1 involves a lot of planning items, economic development and programs and uses provided to the public. He said that tourism and public art could fall under goal 1.

- **GOAL 2: Public Safety and Neighborhood Improvement**
Provide for a safe and secure community that nurtures livable and well-maintained neighborhoods that are family friendly.

Mr. Collins said that goal 2 refers to the police department in how they communicate with the public and professional standards. He said that neighborhood improvement covers the family-friendly community and what that means. He said that a sidewalk and infrastructure policy would also fall into this category regarding safety.

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- **GOAL 3: Infrastructure, Transportation, and the Environment**

Develop and maintain infrastructure and policies to support new growth, improve the quality of life for residents, and provide for a clean and green environment.

Mr. Collins said that goal 3 covers roads, sidewalks, stormwater, and public works concerns. He said it could also involve transit items such as a bus service, bike and ped improvements, and greenways as a transportation method (which can also fall under Parks and Recreation goal 4). Mr. Collins said that events that accentuate different cultures and diversity would also fall under goal 3. He said it could involve open space and farmland preservation, as well.

- **GOAL 4: Parks, Recreation, Special Events, and Culture**

Establish facilities, events, and programs that connect the community, promote healthy lifestyle opportunities, and culturally engage citizens and visitors.

- **GOAL 5: Organization Culture and Communication**

Build a professional and inclusive Town organization that is fiscally responsible, seeks innovative practices, and values the development of staff.

Mr. Collins said that goal 5 is more of an internal organization goal and how the town structure communicates to the community of Wendell. He said that this deals with the fiscal structure and ADA compliance of the town buildings. Mr. Collins said that this would also include communication efforts to different communities in the town regarding public information. He said that technology would fall into goal 5, as well. He asked if any members of the Board had any changes on the goal statements.

The Board reviewed the current goals and had no changes.

Mr. Collins said that in the two-year plan, the new Town Hall would be built. Commissioner Tarnaski asked if there was anything Town staff would need to hold them over until they moved into the new building. Mr. Collins said that staff have had to purchase a sound mixing technology for the virtual board meetings, but that most of the technology adjustments with the server have involved the IT company's assistance in switching up desktops with laptops for webcam and server access to employees. He said that the goal is to surplus 16 computers out of the town's system that are the oldest and get into a 4-5 year replacement schedule on a consistent basis in the future. Mr. Collins said that the speed of the processor is more important than the data based on information needs and the ability to connect and communicate from different levels of WiFi strength. He said that the capability of the machine has become the focus, with the option for data space being purchased if needed.

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GOAL 1: Downtown Vibrancy, Economic Growth, and Community Character

Promote economic vitality through the development of a vibrant Downtown, economic growth, and unique community character.

Management in Progress

1. *Downtown UDO Amendments (following Comp. Plan completion)*
2. *Pursue Brownfield Grants through the Regional Brownfield Coalition at TJCOG or as a Town to encourage Downtown redevelopment.*
3. *Develop economic development program marketing material.*
4. *Establish an action plan for the infill redevelopment of three (3) properties in or near Downtown.*

Strategic Initiatives

1. *Evaluate future land use opportunities for the Wendell Elementary School Property*
2. *Establish a broadband policy and action plan.*
3. *Develop action plans (ETJ, land assembly, proactive zoning, utility partnerships, etc.) for areas suitable for non-residential development.*
4. *Establish plan for future use of Old Town Hall Property.*
5. *Implement a Downtown Streetscape project to further improvements and updates necessary to encourage private investment and placemaking.*
6. *Establish a Wendell Mural Trail to encourage awareness of public art and visitation.*

Mr. Collins said that staff will still be implementing the 2019 plan through June. He reviewed goal 1 and the different uses that were included in the Comprehensive Plan process and updating the UDO is what the Management in Progress is about. He said that Strategic Initiatives would be something that staff would begin to advance, moving forward. He said that #2 could get into cost equity issues and that it wasn't as much of a priority when the Board ranked these initiatives. He said that access to the data stream affects economic opportunity within the community.

Mr. Collins said that action plans in Strategic Initiative #3 gets into land use that will involve recommendations from the Comp Plan. He said that the interchange near Wake Tech is an area that needs to be considered, as it is a bulk, undeveloped land near an interchange and has broadband access. He said that economic development opportunity exists in that area and steps need to be looked at. The T30 gas line that has been developed in this area runs from Franklin County to Clayton, which would provide high use and is within Wendell's urban service area. He said that it's not currently in the town's ETJ, so the Town doesn't have the opportunity to guide land use in that area as of yet.

Mr. Collins said that the Downtown Streetscape project involves the East Campen Road project, with a future project in the works for next year to keep the investment in downtown. He asked the Board if any of these initiatives needed to be taken off of goal 1.

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Commissioner Lutz indicated the Wendell school property is not as much of a priority, since a different site was selected for a new Town Hall. After discussion, the Board consensus was the school property was no longer a Board priority until it becomes a priority for Wake County.

Commissioner Joyner said that Town should maintain communication with Wake County so the Board can be aware if they change their CIP Plan.

The Board Members wrote down suggested additions on post-it notes.

GOAL 2: Public Safety and Neighborhood Improvement

Provide for a safe and secure community that nurtures livable and well-maintained neighborhoods that are family friendly.

Management in Progress

1. *Complete policy reviews and complete (if eligible) CALEA accreditation.*
2. *Implement Neighborhood Improvement Program capital projects in FY22 and FY23 to improve housing, infrastructure, and program access for neighborhoods surrounding Downtown (areas 2 and 3).*
3. *Complete and communicate updates from the comprehensive review of the use of force policies used by the police department.*
4. *Continue department-wide training on implicit bias and community engaged policing.*
5. *Implement a community-wide "Neighborhood Clean-up Day".*

Strategic Initiatives

1. *Establish and communicate a community engagement plan for the Police Department.*
2. *Pedestrian and Bicycle safety*
3. *Implement crosswalk improvements on Wendell Blvd. (others?)*

Mr. Collins said, referring to Management in Progress, that item 1 has begun with the police department hiring an accreditation manager. He said that they have applied to the CALEA program and have been deemed eligible to proceed with the training, which should be completed in 2-3 years.

Regarding the Neighborhood Improvement Program, Mr. Collins said that area 1 has been included in this year's budget, with the next two years improving two more areas.

Regarding use of force policies, Mr. Collins said that completion of the review and having the community involved in the review are important. He said that implementing that policy is also important to the community. He said that implicit bias training has begun and needs to be expanded to all staff across departments. Engagement in the community is what contributes to the Town's motto as a "small town with big charm."

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Neighborhood Clean-up Day was in the works, but then COVID happened, preventing this event. He said that a lot of neighborhoods need a pressure washer or a coat of paint in the community, which might be an opportunity for scout troops and volunteerism in the town. He said the Town would come back to this project as soon as it can.

Mr. Collins reviewed the strategic initiatives, saying that the community engagement plan needs to be established as a philosophy that is lived within the Police Department. He said that CALEA is more the special event policy and the review of that. The actual form and process would be the community engagement plan.

Regarding pedestrian and bicycle safety, Mr. Collins said that he has heard from all Board members that there are locations within Town that are of interest for improvements. He asked for some policy guidance with specifics like the crosswalk improvements on Wendell Boulevard and other safe ways to connect neighborhoods across public streets. He asked the Board to write any additions or subtractions to these items under Goal 2.

The Board had no changes to the current list and wrote their suggested additions on post-it notes.

GOAL 3: Infrastructure, Transportation, and the Environment

Develop and maintain infrastructure and policies to support new growth, improve the quality of life for residents, and provide for a clean and green environment.

Management in Progress

1. *Support the completion of the NCDOT Old Battle Bridge replacement project.*
2. *Implement the recommendations of the street resurfacing program in FY22 and FY23.*
3. *Improve the stormwater program in advance of the FY22 program audit by the State.*
4. *Complete construction of the Wendell Boulevard Pedestrian and Intersection LAPP Projects.*
5. *Establish a projects list for transportation, bike, and pedestrian improvements eligible for CAMPO and other outside agencies for projects identified in adopted plans.*

Strategic Initiatives

1. *Establish an infrastructure plan for the connection and extension of water and sewer for inclusion in the capital improvement plan to promote development, annexation, and close service gaps.*
2. *Prioritize and prepare intersection improvements for NCDOT and CAMPO funding processes.*
3. *Identify new bus stops and work with regional transit partners to develop implementation strategies.*

Mr. Collins reviewed goal three's Management in Progress projects, saying that he has hope that the Old Battle Bridge replacement project will be completed in the next two years. With the street resurfacing program, he said that Withers Ravenel completed a street assessment to be

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presented at the next Board Meeting about the street condition ratings. He said the current rating is 74, with a good rate being between 75 and 80. Mr. Collins said that a lot of new growth with developments have created new streets in town, whereas the maintenance of streets needs to be addressed as there isn't a street maintenance crew. Mr. Collins said that there are also some roads that are not repaved, with some paved roads on their way to becoming gravel roads. He said that this presentation from Withers will provide the Town with a 5-year plan to get and keep the road rating up. He said that the Board would need to allocate funds for this to occur and bids would have to be put out that specify which streets need to be improved. Staff would conduct yearly evaluations to keep up with road quality statuses.

Regarding the stormwater program, Mr. Collins said that the Town has an audit in 2022 with the State. The Town is wrapping up interviews to fill a stormwater manager position to help with this. Mr. Collins thanked the Board for approving the final mapping, which will be completed in December and reviewed drainage areas of concern along Wendell Boulevard and Wall Street. Mr. Collins encouraged the Board to inform staff if they hear about any additional areas of concern from constituents.

Mr. Collins reviewed the Strategic Initiatives for Goal 3, saying that infrastructure plan for the connection and extension of water and sewer to promote inclusion in the capital improvement plan to promote development, annexation, and close service gaps is an identified reason as to connecting Wendell Falls to the rest of town. He said that water and sewer allocations facilitate social equity within the community.

Regarding Strategic Initiative 2, Mr. Collins said a signal study could be useful for Third Street and Wendell Falls Parkway. He said that the Board can probably think of additional intersections on a major road that might be ready for that kind of involved study. Mr. Collins asked if there were any initiatives that the Board would like to remove or add.

The Board had no changes to the current list and wrote their suggested additions on post-it notes.

Commissioner Joyner asked if staff can request well fail data from Wake County to identify areas that have issues with wells.

GOAL 4: Parks, Recreation, Special Events, and Culture

Establish facilities, events, and programs that connect the community, promote healthy lifestyle opportunities, and culturally engage citizens and visitors.

Management in Progress

1. *Design and construct a neighborhood park on the Hollybrook Road park site.*
2. *Work with the Meet on Main group to coordinate a year-round special event schedule.*
3. *Complete construction of the Main Street Greenway and evaluate the next extension of the project.*
4. *Evaluate the fee-in-lieu process for parks and open space in the UDO.*

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Strategic Initiatives

1. *Identify and plan for acquisition of a second community park or a significant expansion of the current park along Buffalo Creek.*
2. *Identify and provide for the acquisition of the next neighborhood park identified in the Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan.*
3. *Identify and plan for the implementation of a greenway segment to connect the Wendell Falls community to Downtown.*
4. *Coordinate the development of a new Wendell Branch Library or regional library with Wake County to include space for historic preservation and community group meetings.*

Mr. Collins reviewed goal 4's Management in Progress, saying that the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund will be ready by this spring for the Hollybrook Road park site. He said that the Main Street Greenway is in this year's budget and will probably be completed next fiscal year. Mr. Collins said that staff will make sure fee in lieu process will match the Town's Parks and Rec Master Plan.

In discussing Strategic Initiatives, Mr. Collins said that the Parks and Rec Master Plan looks to see the building of three community parks. He said it might be a separate location or an expansion of Wendell Park on Buffalo Creek. He said that the Town needs to look at the next neighborhood park site in the next two years. In the next two years, the county will be updating its library comp plan. Towns like Wendell has an opportunity to be involved in this library bond. Mr. Collins asked if the Board had anything it wanted to add or subtract from goal 4.

The Board had no changes to the current list, and no new suggestions.

GOAL 5: Organization Culture and Communication

Build a professional and inclusive Town organization that is fiscally responsible, seeks innovative practices, and values the development of staff.

Management in Progress

1. *Complete and begin implementation of the ADA Transition Plan.*
2. *Update and implement the employee evaluation and development program.*
3. *Evaluate health plan options for competitive cost spouse and family plan coverage.*
4. *Complete construction of the new Town Hall.*
5. *Maintain a technology replacement program to meet current needs for flexible work environments for the continuation of public services.*

Strategic Initiatives

1. *Evaluate current department policies and practices to enhance efforts to improve customer service.*
2. *Establish a plan with timeline for the facility needs for the Police Department to consider growth in place versus a new location.*

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3. *Establish a plan with a timeline for the property acquisition and construction of a public works yard.*

Mr. Collins reviewed goal five's Management in Progress items, saying that accessibility issues will be addressed with the implementation of the ADA Transition Plan. He said that employee evaluation is being reviewed that separates merit pay from the annual evaluation. Regarding health plans, Mr. Collins said that family plans need to be reviewed for staff.

Regarding initiatives, Mr. Collins said that staff hasn't had to deal with a number of customer service complaints at the Town. He said that it was carried over from a previous plan and he is happy to look at continued training initiatives. Mr. Collins said the next two big needs after a New Town Hall were Police and Public Works department growth in positions, as there is a dire need there. He said that there are also facility needs at Public Works, which might require a build out in the future, with the storage unit being used for public records and the office space transitioning to code enforcement. He said the Police Department building might need a new building or location, in the future.

The Board had no changes to the current list and wrote their suggested additions on post-it notes. Commissioner Joyner suggested increasing department communications to the public, specifically more from the Police Department. The Board discussed whether it would be better suited for Goal 2. Commissioner Tarnaski suggested adding the newsletter to website for people to access past issues and increasing social media marketing to drive people to the newsletter.

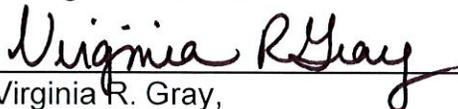
Mr. Collins said that the next steps involve Assistant to the Manager Stephanie Smith coordinating one-on-one meetings with Town Manager Marc Collins, either through meetings or a driving tour.

2. ADJOURN

ACTION

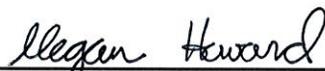
Mayor Gray adjourned the meeting at 8:17 p.m.

Duly adopted this 12 day of October 2020 while in regular session.



Virginia R. Gray,
Mayor

ATTEST:



Megan Howard,
Town Clerk



