

MINUTES OF THE WHITSETT TOWN COUNCIL
March 10, 2020
Whitsett Town Hall Building

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

The regular meeting of the Whitsett Town Council was held on Tuesday, March 10, 2020 at the Whitsett Town Hall. The following members of the Town Council were present: Mayor Richard Fennell, Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Rice, Council Members Cindy Wheeler, Lee Greeson, and Jamie King.

Also present were Town Administrator Ken Jacobs, Town resident Gloria Mitchell, *The Alamance News* reporter Tomas Murawski, and eight additional citizens. Absent was Planning Board Chairman Bob Maccia.

Following the public hearing, Mayor Fennell called the regular Council meeting to order at approximately 7:06 p.m., and noted that a quorum was present.

SPEAKERS FROM THE FLOOR

Mayor Fennell asked for any speakers from the floor, and no one asked to be acknowledged.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Adoption of the Minutes

Mayor Fennell asked for any changes to the minutes from the February 11, 2020 regular monthly meeting; and hearing none, asked for a motion to adopt the minutes. A motion to adopt the minutes as written was made by Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Rice; motion seconded by Council Member Jamie King. The motion to adopt the July minutes passed by unanimous vote.

2. Action on Proposed Rezoning on Penn-Lo Drive from RD-40 to HB

Mayor Fennell asked for any Council discussion on the proposed rezoning; and with none, asked for a motion for action. Council Member Lee Greeson made a motion to approve the rezoning of 900 Penn-Lo Drive from RS-40 to HB; motion seconded by Council Member Cindy Wheeler. By unanimous vote, the rezoning was adopted.

3. Update on Proposed Text Amendment to Commercial Architectural Standards for Neighborhood Business (NB) District

Mayor Fennell turned to Town Administrator Ken Jacobs who redistributed to Council Members the proposed text amendment, concerning building materials for exterior walls and surfaces for structures within the Town's neighborhood business (NB) district, that would replace paragraph 3 under Section 12.5.4 in Article XII. [The document is part of the official file for this meeting.]

The paragraph prohibited metal siding on any visible-from-the-road surfaces, and discouraged it for roofing. In addition, the use of certain materials, e.g., plastics, vinyl and faux siding materials, would require review on a case-by-case basis by the Planning Board who would recommend to the Town Council action to be taken or final approval.

In addition, Jacobs stated that, as requested by Council at last month's meeting, the document was forwarded to Town attorney Joe Kalo who initially saw no reason to not move forward with the amendment; but requested time reserved for further review and discussion prior to the public hearing being set.

4. Any Other Old Business

Mayor Fennell asked if there were any other old business; and there was none.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Planning Board

In the absence of Planning Board Chairman Bob Maccia, Town Administrator Ken Jacobs reported that, in addition to the Board meeting being the official meeting for the newly-adopted rezoning above, another topic for continued discussion was the ordinance for the preservation of mature tree lines, which remains in its infancy, and is still producing more questions than answers.

2. Enforcement Officer

Enforcement Officer Jacobs reported that the Rex Tuggle property at 814 NC highway 61 has been condemned by Guilford County and the citation posted. The property shall either be rehabilitated or torn down.

Council Member Cindy Wheeler asked about the possibility of the Starr property with the abandoned tourist home project being condemned since it has been dormant for over 15 years. Jacobs suggested that we see how the process goes with the Tuggle property, and then perhaps look into the Whitsett Park Road structure.

3. Town Administrator

Town Administrator Jacobs reported the following informational items:

- Town Hall Activities and Processes: (1) To add to the previous Planning Board report, Jacobs offered background and updates to the ongoing initiative of working up an ordinance for mature tree-line preservation, explaining what prompted the need for the document was the proposed development of a 25-acre parcel at the Town's farthest east edge for an active senior community.

The original developer, Paul Milam, stated during public meetings his commitment to not removing any mature trees or usable shrubbery that borders other Town parcels and Gibsonville's Lindley Park subdivision. Nothing, though, was ever put on paper except the reference in meeting minutes. When Milam became embroiled in conflicts with another real estate acquisition in Burlington, his attention was taken away from the smaller Whitsett project, which then became owned and financed by Keystone Group, Inc. who hopefully would uphold the original pledge.

Even so, this ordinance would allow the Town to enforce protection of mature tree lines not only for the Keystone development, but would encourage residents to work out neighbor to neighbor any modifications or removals planned for shared or close by buffered lines.

Jacobs also contacted Guilford County Planning Department for any advice on formulating this ordinance, and was directed to the state Division of Forestry instructional pamphlet that dealt with the subject. This resource would likely serve as the basis for creating the new Town ordinance for tree-line protection.

- Meetings: (1) As Town representative for Census 2020, participated in two meetings—one in mid-February with the government subcommittee of which Jacobs is chairman, and an early March meeting for Guilford County Complete Count endeavor. A Town-wide mass mailing followed the latter, urging all residents to participate in Census 2020 immediately. (2) Met with Gibsonville parks and recreational staffers on their use and management of the Whitsett ball field, and presented a written agreement for their reaction. The representatives concurred with the terms, which included paying for ball field lights use and weekly mowing of the field done by Whitsett. In addition, this mutual arrangement will result in consistent use of the field by Gibsonville youth teams with staffer supervision on site at each practice or game.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Any Items from Council Members

Mayor Fennell asked for any items from Council members; and there were none.

2. Announcements

Mayor Fennell asked for any announcements; and there were none.

3. Speakers from the Floor

Mayor Fennell asked for any speakers from the floor; and parishioner Phyllis Campbell from the Whitsett Park Road church stood to introduce herself and to invite the community and its leaders to attend an event on April 14 to mark the renaming of the church to Love and Grace Fellowship and to celebrate the relaunching of its outreach.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Council, Mayor Fennell invited a motion to adjourn. Mayor Pro Tem Jerry Rice made the motion to adjourn; motion seconded by Council Member Lee Greeson. The motion passed by unanimous vote; and the March 10, 2020 Town Council meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:27 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Whitsett Town Council is scheduled for 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, April 14, 2020 at the Whitsett Town Hall. [Due to the COVID-19 emergency, the April and May Town Council meetings were cancelled, making the next Council meeting to be June 9, 2020, which would be required to be held in order to adopt an interim operating budget.]

/s/

Jo Hesson, Town Clerk

/s/

Richard Fennell, Mayor

APPROVED: June 9, 2020