

MINUTES OF THE WHITSETT TOWN COUNCIL
October 11, 2016
Whitsett Town Hall Building

REGULAR COUNCIL MEETING

The regular meeting of the Whitsett Town Council was held on Tuesday, October 11, 2016 at the Whitsett Town Hall. The following members of the Town Council were present: Mayor Richard Fennell, Mayor Pro Tem Andy Brown, Council Members Jerry Rice, Cindy Wheeler, and Lee Greeson.

Also present were Town Administrator Gary Deal, Planning Board Chairman Bob Maccia, *The Alamance News* reporter Tomas Murawski, and four area residents.

Mayor Fennell called the meeting to order, and asked Council Member Jerry Rice to offer the invocation.

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 September 13, 2016 regular monthly meeting; and hearing none, asked for a motion to adopt the minutes as written. A motion to adopt the minutes as written was made by Council Member Jerry Rice; motion seconded by Council Member Cindy Wheeler. The motion to adopt the September regular meeting minutes carried by unanimous vote.

2. Update on Jordan Lake Activities – Annual Report, Informational Websites

Mayor Fennell asked Town Administrator Gary Deal to the floor, who reported that the Jordan Stage I Annual Report is due to the Division of Environmental Quality (formerly DENR) October 31.

The Town had updated its required information and forwarded those pages to the Guilford County Planning Department whose staff would complete the technical aspects of the report with final submission to DEQ on behalf of Whitsett. In addition, the Town's website had been updated with the latest informational links on environmental guidelines and Jordan Lake requirements that still apply to this jurisdiction.

3. Any Other Old Business

Mayor Fennell asked if there were any other old business to be discussed; there was none.

BOARD AND COMMITTEE REPORTS

1. Planning Board

Planning Board Chairman Bob Maccia reported that Town Administrator Deal had participated in a long session with members of the Guilford County Planning Department to understand current county requirements and processes with respect to subdivisions, and then to align those procedures with the Town's outdated Article VI.

The need for this major undertaking came to light when, in late summer, a case to subdivide a parcel in Dow Acres came to the Town, only to discover that the Town's ordinance had not received a major revamping since its original adoption in the early 1990's because so few cases for subdividing had been requested.

Maccia explained that Deal had compared the county's document governing subdivisions and incorporated its current requirements (e.g., map standards, etc.) into a prime modified version of the Town's Article VI for the members of the Planning Board to review, revise, and recommend to Council.

2. Enforcement Committee

Enforcement Officer Gary Deal stated that no committee activity had taken place this month.

3. Enforcement Officer

Enforcement Officer Deal reported that since the last Council meeting, five Development Clearance Permit Certificates had been issued to: (1) Bob Maccia at 216 Brightwood Church Road to situate an accessory structure in the backyard, (2) Michael Duquette at 7020 Kivette House Road to convert LP to natural gas and connect appliances, (3) Emery Duquette at 7026 Kivette House to convert LP to natural gas and connect appliances, and (4 & 5) Paul Lewis to convert LP to natural gas at 7032 and 7032-A Kivette House Road.

4. Town Administrator

Town Administrator Deal stated that the earlier update on Jordan Lake activities was the only report.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Any Items from Council Members

Mayor Fennell asked for any items from Council members; and continued with asking Town Administrator Deal to come forward with an announcement. Deal stated that he had arrived at a point in his life where he would be stepping down as Town Administrator. Shortly after moving to Whitsett, Deal had served the Town since 1994 in various capacities, starting with the Planning Board, which ultimately led to an invitation to become the first Town Administrator—a position he has held since early 2000.

Deal was asked to remain standing while the Mayor, on behalf of all members of the Council, presented a plaque to Gary with the inscription:

“With deep appreciation, we applaud you and your invaluable contributions to Whitsett over more than two decades—most notable, as our inaugural Town Administrator since April 2000. We are forever indebted.”

~ Town of Whitsett, September 2016.

The plaque expressed only a token of sentiments felt by all Town Council members and by anyone having worked alongside Gary. Town Administrator Deal, in turn, expressed his vested love of the Town and his honor to serve.

Moving on in New Business, Mayor Fennell stated that he had approached former Council Member Ken Jacobs about his interest in replacing Gary Deal, which was to the affirmative. Mayor Fennell explained that in 2000, the position of Town Administrator had been created via resolution and instituted as an appointed office whose incumbent would serve at the pleasure of the Town Council.

Mayor Fennell commented that Ken Jacobs, while serving as a Council Member, had proved extremely proactive in all activities and objectives of the Town at the time; and he believed that Jacobs would make an excellent Town Administrator. That being said, Mayor Fennell opened Council Members to any discussion.

With apparent nods from all, and a motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Andy Brown to appoint Ken Jacobs to the position of Town Administrator; motion seconded by Council Member Jerry Rice. The motion carried by unanimous vote of Council.

Town Administrator Ken Jacobs extended his gratefulness for the opportunity; and pledged his dedication to upholding the Town's best interests and welfare.

2. Announcements

Mayor Fennell asked for any announcements; and no one had any.

3. Speakers from the Floor

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

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Council, Mayor Fennell invited a motion to adjourn. Council Member Cindy Wheeler made the motion to adjourn; motion seconded by Council Member Jerry Rice. Motion passed by unanimous vote; and the October 11, 2016 Town Council meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:17 p.m.

The next regular meeting of the Whitsett Town Council is scheduled for 7:00 p.m., Tuesday, November 8, 2016 at the Whitsett Town Hall.

/s/

/s/

Jo Hesson, Town Clerk

Richard Fennell, Mayor

APPROVED: November 8, 2016

the Board is continuing its work on an ordinance to regulate solar panel farms.

Chairman Maccia invited Town Administrator Gary Deal to preside over the meeting for this subject. Deal explained that what prompted the immediacy to modify Article VI was a request to subdivide one of two contiguous 4-acre lots in Dow Acres; and he had to scurry to re-familiarize himself with Town procedures and make numerous contacts with Guilford County for updates to its requirements since the county is under contract to serve as the Town's agent on such cases.

Deal further stated that, during his tenure, the Town had received very few subdivision cases; and had he known ahead of time about the Dow Acres parcel, he would have been better prepared to address the request. The surprise Town Hall visit and demands of a hired Alamance County land surveyor, who knew nothing of Guilford County requirements or processes to follow complicated matters, which led to turmoil and rudeness towards the county planners by the surveyor. Through the acid, the surveyor withdrew the request to subdivide, and configured a recombination plat to resize the two parcels for recording, thereby averting Town and county reviews.

This experience drove home the need for Town Administrator Deal to carve out extended time to meet with members of the Guilford County Planning Department in order to clarify procedures and to ensure that the current Town ordinance, which had not been updated since its original adoption in the early 1990's mirrored the county's ordinance and appendices (e.g., map standards).

As a result of the meeting with the county and in a concentrated effort to go page by page through the Town and county ordinances, Deal had drafted a customized Article VI aligning Town and county requirements, duties, and processes. The draft was provided to Board members to begin discussions and study the document to arrive at a proposed revised Article VI for recommendation to Council. When asked about a target date for completion, Deal stated the sooner, the better because the next ordinance for the Board to tackle would be Article IV on Zoning.

Deal excused himself to attend the Ruritan meeting; and discussions ensued among Board members. Soon recognizing that having been given the document this evening with all its "add-in" references and highlighted suggestions, absorption of Article VI would be a tall order for one night. Members opted to take the ordinance home for reading and comprehension; and discussions on it would consume next month's Planning Board meeting.

Town Administrator Deal reported that he had spent extended time with members of the Guilford County Planning Department to update Town ordinances and

clarify procedures primarily relative to Article VI on Subdivisions, which had not been updated since its original adoption many years ago. Push came to shove when the Town received a request to subdivide a 4-acre lot in Dow Acres, causing numerous consultations with the county to make sure current review requirements would be met.

The meeting with the county became a concentrated effort to ensure that certain sections (e.g., map standards) of the Town's ordinance mirrored those of the county, now and in future modifications. Deal had asked Town Attorney Bill Trevorrow if the Town ordinance could simply reference pertinent sections of the county ordinance to avoid every time the county would make a modification to its ordinance, the Town in turn would have to adopt its changes.

Meanwhile, Deal had drafted a revised Article VI updating Town processes and incorporating county requirements. The draft will be passed along to Planning Board Chairman Bob Maccia for the Board to finalize for recommendation to Council.

In addition, Deal had also tapped the county to make sure that the latest version of the Town's "watershed" ordinance was, in fact, the latest since the county had actually developed the environmental guidelines customized to the Town. The Town's Article XI in hand was accurate; and will be posted online as is all other development ordinances.