

March 23, 2015
Board of Commissioners Meeting Minutes

The Wendell Town Board of Commissioners held their regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, March 23, 2015, at 7:00 p.m. in the Board Meeting Room with Mayor Timothy A. Hinnant presiding. Present at the meeting were Commissioners Virginia Gray; John Boyette; James Parham; Jon Lutz; Sam Laughery; Manager Teresa Piner; Town Clerk Jonnie Driver; Finance Director Butch Kay; Police Chief Bill Carter; Planning Director David Bergmark; Public Works Director Alton Bryant; Parks and Recreation Director Jeff Polaski; Planners Patrick Reidy; and Allison Rice.

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

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Chief Bill Carter and invocation was given by Pastor Claude Wilson-Staten of Covenant Presbyterian Church.

Adjustment and approval of the agenda

With no adjustments being made to the agenda, Commissioner Parham made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion passed unanimously with a 5-0 vote.

Item 1 – Public Comment Period

Sandy Foutch stated she was the Chair for the Appearance Commission and wanted to give the board kudos for trying to help us get the mural up and going. She said we have been trying since 2012 to get it up and this year we have gone really far. We found an artist, and the art students at East Wake High School have volunteered to help. She state that the fund raising efforts had been successful this year and it is their hope that the Board of Commissioners would approve the mural.

Item 2 - Consent Agenda

- a. Approval of the Minutes from Monday, March 9, 2015, Board of Commissioners' meeting
- b. Review and approval of the Wake County Tax report for January 2015

Commissioner Lutz made a motion to approve the consent agenda items. The motion passed unanimously with a 5-0 vote.

Item 3 – Presentation by Tom Benton, Wake County Board of Education.

Mr. Benton stated the main reason he sought a seat on the Board of Education was that he wanted to draw attention and focus to the unique needs of schools in Eastern Wake County. He said he had two daughters that graduated from East Wake High School and both of their husbands went to East Wake High School and they all have degrees and were doing very well. He said he wanted to make sure that the students that live in our community today and who live here in the future have the same opportunities for success as our kids. He said he had a passion to do everything he could to draw attention at the board level to our needs in the east.

Mr. Benton said over the past three years there had been three things that happened. We formed the Knightdale working group. He said it happened in Knightdale before this part of Eastern Wake County. We met with the mayors and looked at some data and they decided that we should focus on Knightdale first. The main data that steered us there was the attendance zones assigned to the four elementary schools in Knightdale, the middle school and the high school. He said of the students that lived in those attendance zones only 40% attended school in Knightdale. We started that group and there were some

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great innovative ideas. He said the board knew when we started that we would look at a model from other parts of the county that were having similar issues. A Wendell/Zebulon group has been organized and they had their first meeting last week. He said Commissioner Parham and Commissioner Gray were there and about 60 other people. Mr. Benton said one of the best things we did was to consolidate the four independent schools at East Wake High back into one. Several people have asked why we did that when at the same time Knightdale was broken into four academies. What is the difference? He said East Wake took on a process that about 6 schools in North Carolina undertook and that was to take a large campus and break it into four independent schools. He said East Wake was the last surviving one of those, because they found out to take an existing school and break it into four independent schools caused some real issues and most of them were management and organizational issues. He said it was decided that East Wake High would be put under one principal and that principal was hired last week, Mr. Stacy Alston who is a Wendell resident. He has a lot of knowledge, experience and commitment to this community to make that school the best it can be. He said once that gets going, you will see a lot of committees set up independent of the Eastern Wake Working Group.

Mayor Hinnant thanked Mr. Benton for coming and speaking to the board and thanks him for allowing Wendell Commissioners to be a part of that group. He said we would support this group as much as possible.

Item 4 – Update on the 2014 Wendell Wonderland Light Show

Manager Piner stated in 2012 Mr. Don Williams of Lake Myra Lights talked with the Town regarding the relocation of the Lake Myra Light Show from Lake Myra Road to inside the Corporate Limits of Wendell. The light show was held at the corner of Hollybrook and Fourth Street for 2102 and 2013 and in 2014 moved to 10 South Cypress Street.

Mrs. Piner said the Town received positive feedback regarding the move from Hollybrook Road to Cypress Street. She said no known complaints were received regarding the volume of music or parking during the month and a half event.

Mrs. Piner said Mr. Williams had expressed his desire to bring the Lake Myra Light Show to Wendell again in 2015. She said the Town did incur cost to upgrade the electrical in the area and expended approximately \$4,275 for the FY 2014-2015.

Mrs. Piner said Mr. Williams was here tonight to give you an update on the 2014 show and express his desire to come back in 2015.

Mr. Williams thanked the Town of Wendell for the support and Commissioner Gary and her husband Bruce for their donation in providing candy for the children. He thanked Mr. Paul White for providing the warehouse space for storage and installing the sound system Downtown so the Christmas music could be enjoyed by all.

Mr. Williams said the new location was absolutely amazing, it enabled us to bring people downtown and it allowed for the depth in the show that was needed. He said the 2015 season was here and you had not seen anything like you would see this season. He said the snow machine, santa sleigh, and train would be added back into the light display. We would need to install a utility pole which Lake Myra

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Lights has available. He said 2014 was the best ever in attendance with 41 states signing the guest book and 18 different countries.

Mr. Williams said the Christmas decorating contest was a great idea and hopes the Town will support the contest again this year. This is the kind of thing that brings communities together.

Mr. Williams said Lake Myra Christmas would never charge a fee for people to watch, we operate on donations only and 2014 was a record low year for donations. We depend on the donations to bring new elements, replacements of lights and new technology to the display. He said on December 5th at the Lighting of the Square it was a lot of people in attendance, but our donations one night were \$11.87, another night we estimated that we had about 500 people in attendance and our donations were \$1.00. He said he had to ask myself was the show that bad. In 2015 we plan to install more donation boxes where people can see them. He stated that he would be investing a lot of money to bring the display new elements and technology. We will be introducing a huge element within the display that had never been done. He said any suggestions on how to improve donations would be appreciated. He said Central Baptist Church provided men and women in serving hot chocolate and popcorn at no cost to further their ministry and to provide a donation box, without them we could hardly purchase the replacement lights.

Mr. Williams said it took 910 hours to install Lake Myra Christmas from October 6, to our fire-up date of November 22, 2014. We need help installing the lights. He said if you would like to help with Lake Myra Christmas please send me an email at dwilliams64@nc.rr.com.

Mr. Williams presented the board members with a DVD of the 2014 Wendell Wonder Light Show.

Mayor Hinnant said he thought part of the reason contributions were low was that people do not know if it is the Town of Wendell Light Show under the name of Lake Myra. He said he did not want it to be a financial burden to anyone. Mayor Hinnant said he would like to know what it cost for the light show to operate and if it was something that we could do such as allocating some funds for the light show. He said he saw an Economic Development value in the light show. If you could get with Teresa and talk about what the show cost were, then we could decide if we needed to get involved or not.

Item 5 – Review and discussion of a proposed mural to be located at 100 W. Third Street

Planner Patrick Reidy stated the Appearance Commission reviewed one mural application at the February 2, 2015 meeting and recommended to the Board of Commissioners by a vote of 5 to 0, approval of the mural application for the side of 100 W. Third Street (Farley's Accounting and Tax Service).

Patrick stated that at the August 4, 2014 meeting, Peggy Lee Mead, a professional muralist from Wendell, offered to design the mural free of charge for the Appearance Commission. He said she also offered to outline the mural on the wall of the building if the Appearance Commission could get volunteers to paint the mural. He said six art students and their teacher from East Wake High School had agreed to paint the mural over the evenings and weekends late spring/early summer of this year.

Patrick said the proposed mural had been reviewed by staff and deemed to meet the regulations.

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The Board was in agreement to place the mural on the Consent Agenda for approval at the April 6, 2015 Board of Commissioners Meeting.

Item 6 – Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Gray stated she attended a meeting in Wendell regarding cell towers which had been a big hot topic of conversation and the good news was the Wendell Historical Society and the State Historic Preservation Office had come to agreement as to what would be required of the cell tower on Fourth Street. She said that she and Commissioner Parham attended the Eastern Wake School Workgroup at East Wake High School. She said they had a PowerPoint and she had a copy for the board. She stated that she was flabbergasted at the information it contained and it demonstrated to her something that she thought we all know and some light needed to be shined on our schools. She said the good news was everyone there was ready to get started and working on the issues and she thought great things were going to happen at East Wake High and our schools here Wendell. She said she wanted to welcome Stacy Alston, the new principle at East Wake High School. She said she had heard so many positive comments about him and his wife and she was looking forward to the positive growth that she anticipated was going to happen. She said that she had met with Mr. Williams a couple of months ago and he expressed his concerns about the financing of the light show and the need for some volunteers. She said she told him she would do everything she could to try to get him some help. She said we discussed the donation boxes and why people do not understand the donations.

Commissioner Boyette said he was speaking with a couple in the process of moving to Wendell and he always liked to ask people what attracted you to Wendell and the reason given was not expected. They said they were moving to Wendell for the schools. They said by the time their kids get old enough to get into school there would be caps, because Wake County was having issues with the growth on the western side of the County and they had to put caps on the schools. Commissioner Boyette said he had said it before and I would say it again “How about that Wolfpack”.

Commissioner Parham said the couple that Commissioner Boyette spoke to was called Futurist, they know what is coming so they were preparing. He said one thing he knew that made a difference in school was parental involvement. He said in Eastern Wake a group has been formed called the 55+ initiative. There were a lot of people who do not have transportation and our church volunteered to use the church van, but the liability was too much so we were going in another direction and trying to get volunteers. He said the Senior Center in our Town have some needs and when the manager told me about those needs he talked with a gentleman at the Eastern Regional Center who had a small group of young people who volunteer to do things and they were going to paint the rooms at the East Wake Senior Citizens Center.

Commissioner Lutz said Saturday was a great day in Wendell and thanks to Teresa, Jeff and the Chief of Police. He said it was great to see people walking around and eating at the food trucks. He said he would encourage our citizens to stay turned in on the events that would be coming up. He said he would also like to encourage any citizen that was interested in serving on a citizen board to please complete your application and get it in.

Commissioner Laughery said he was excited about the things going on in this town, signs that we had installed, excited about this board with everybody moving in the same direction. He said I know that in

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the last 4-5 years there had been some negativity, but he thought we had overcome that and were starting to do things that people see as positive.

Item 7 – Mayor’s Comments

Mayor Hinnant said the BMX event last Saturday was great, it also requires staff working more than their 40 hours per week. He said the citizens look at the Town, not at the Commissioners but Town staff because that was who they see doing the work. He wanted to say how much he appreciated the quality of employees that we had and the quality of service they provide the citizens.

Item 8 – Adjourn.

Mayor Hinnant adjourned the meeting at 7:46 P.M.

Timothy A. Hinnant, Mayo

Attest:

Jonnie S. Driver, Town Clerk