

# Town of Walnut Cove

## BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

### MEETING MINUTES

October 13, 2015

**Mayor Lynn Lewis presiding,**

**Commissioners Present:**

Elwood Mabe,  
Kim Lewis, Sharon Conaway  
Town Manager Bobby Miller  
Town Clerk Leslie A. Falstreau  
Town Attorney Ann Rowe

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 a.m. at the Walnut Cove Senior Center. Reverend Ralph Botte, First Christian Church of Walnut Cove, gave the invocation following which Mayor Lewis led in pledging allegiance to the American flag.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS** – Mayor Lewis introduced the new Town Manager Bobby Miller and went over the announcements in the agenda packet.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

David Hairston, 125 Adams Ridge Road, Walnut Cove, NC addressed the Board on the issue of fracking. He started by thanking the Board for their consideration in calling for a moratorium on fracking, but urged them to look into our zoning with fracking in mind. He also mentioned that he supported the “In God We Trust” motto, but felt that the Town should live up to that motto by respecting the land.

Tracey Edwards, 2271 Martin Luther King, Walnut Cove, NC thanked the Board for considering a moratorium, and asked that the Board go along with the County for three (3) years. She mentioned that on the state level there is a move to take rights away, and she encouraged the Board not to allow that. She said she did not want her children to have to leave this county because of a tainted environment due to fracking, and again encouraged the Board to join the alliance to prevent the state from taking over the powers that local government has concerning this issue.

E. A. “Buddy” Timm, 708 Summit St., Walnut Cove, NC wanted to address the Board concerning “Duty to Society”. Mr. Timm read a piece to the Board which addressed gun control stating that the Second Amendment doesn’t give that right to the federal government. He read quotes from historical figures and encouraged governmental support of our Second Amendment rights. He said that the people cannot stay silent about federal gun control. He said the people must choose liberty!

Susan Gonzales, 1001 N Main St., Walnut Cove thanked the Board for considering the moratorium. She talked about loving this community and being vested in this community and encouraged the Board to vote yes to a moratorium to protect water and quality of life.

Rev Gregory L. Hairston 1070 Brookridge Dr., Walnut Cove, Pastor of Rising Star Baptist Church addressed the Board regarding fracking. He told the Board that there is an opportunity now to rectify what was done in the Walnut Tree community by the recent drilling. He questioned whether the Town wanted the results that fracking in this community could bring and mentioned the fault line and nearby dam. He said that this area is fighting two devastating issues – coal ash and fracking. He thanked the Board for their consideration and asked that they attach to the county's efforts and send a message to Raleigh that they don't dictate to this Town how to run this community.

### **ADJUSTMENTS TO THE AGENDA**

It was requested that the Public Hearing on the Zoning Request RZ#08-31-15, R-20 to NB-2 be removed due to a technical issue and be rescheduled at a future time. It was also requested that a new item of Request to Close Road be added under New Business and the Executive Session be eliminated.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Conaway and seconded by Commissioner Lewis to approve the amended agenda. The motion passed unanimously.**

**CONSENT AGENDA** - The consent agenda contained the minutes of the Regular Meeting of September 8, 2015.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Lewis and seconded by Commissioner Conaway to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of September 8, 2015 as presented. The motion passed unanimously.**

### **OLD BUSINESS**

**US MOTTO ACTION COMMITTEE** - There was no one present to speak to the Board this evening about this issue. Brief discussion followed about how this wording would be incorporated into the lettering on the Town Hall. It was explained that this organization budgets an amount of up to \$2500 for each sign, and what Walnut Cove needs comes within this range. However, since the Town is changing what was originally requested it was thought that this item should wait until a representative from the US Motto Action Committee can address the Board.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

**CLOSURE OF FOURTH STREET** - Kathy Dix addressed the Board presenting an Exhibition Show Permit Application for their approval. She told the Board that this was her ninth (9) year holding this festival and the Library will have some spaces this year. She will have bands and food. She will take care of trash pickup and port-a-jons. The road closing would be on Fourth Street from Main St. down to Farm Bureau. It was also mentioned that she had provided the Town with the appropriate certificate of insurability for the event.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Conaway and seconded by Commissioner Mabe to approve the event application for Just Plain Country for street closure from Main Street to Windmill. The motion passed unanimously.**

There was clarification that the street be closed from Main Street down to Farm Bureau.

**DESTINATION BY DESIGN** - Eric Woolridge was present this evening to bring an update on the Stokes County 2035 Plan, the Walnut Cove Main Street Revitalization piece in particular, briefly explaining its origin for the benefit of the audience. He said that it was discovered as a result of the Walnut Cove citizen input that there was the notion that the focus in Walnut Cove is the Main Street area and what it could look like if there was some public investment made so that some private investment was encouraged. Recently some funding was received from NC Department of Commerce which brought even an additional level of planning to the Downtown area from Mr. Woolridge's company. He talked briefly about the Main Street Program, in which Walnut Cove participates, touching on the Main Street Organization's main goals of organization, design, promotion and economic restructuring. He presented the branding idea of "Our Roots Run Deep" saying that he thinks there is a message and story about Walnut Cove in this slogan. He then started into his update, apologizing to the Board for not being able to bring them a large PowerPoint presentation and handed out information that he briefly reviewed with them. The information addressed recent revisions to the plan, site analysis and framework, design guidelines, façade recommendations, streetscape recommendation and site plans. Discussion followed as topics of interest were brought up.

Mr. Woolridge told the Board that this information was a "tool box" for how things can be used by the Town and by the Small Town Main Street Committee (STMS) and suggested that they use this to educate businesses in Town.

The façade renderings and streetscape ideas spawned the most conversation, with Mr. Woolridge saying that the particular Exhibit A, which called for a roundabout, elimination of the middle turn lane and angle street parking was met with resistance from the DOT. An Alternative Two which kept the center lane in most places and kept parallel parking was being presented also.

Mr. Woolridge gave information to the Board regarding public-private partnerships.

There followed discussion about the Fowler Park site study area which includes an amphitheater, adventure playground with the stream present in the plans. Mr. Woolridge cautioned the Board about the possible difficulties with permitting in filling in the stream to level that area as has been suggested by the Fowler Park Committee in the past.

In ending, Mr. Woolridge reminded the Board that this plan is a long range plan and is anchored by the street scape piece. He was asking the Board this evening if his company could take this information to the public for their input on the evening of December 3, 2015. The Board was agreeable and the time was set for 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Walnut Cove Librarian Christine Boles was in the audience and asked that she be kept informed of what she needed to do to have the room ready for the evening. Mr. Woolridge will send letters of invitation out to the business community regarding this event, the Town will advertise in the newspaper as well as on the Town's website and water bills if timing allows. Mr. Woolridge will e-mail the Town of any other needs or concerns. He repeated that he would continue to work on the Alternate Two streetscape.

Lastly, Mr. Woolridge talked about and gave information on grant funding for greenways saying that the Town has a real unique opportunity to create linear parks and trails around the creek. He gave that information to Town Manager Miller.

**PROPOSED CHANGE OF PERSONNEL POLICY** - Manager Miller explained that the proposed changes to the Personnel Policy were technical in nature and about benefits. He referred to the Attachment C in the agenda packet. He said the proposed change brings the Town Policy in line with the retirement system and uses the same wording.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Lewis and seconded by Commissioner Conaway to change the policy to match the retirement verbiage. The motion passed unanimously.**

**PROPOSED ORDINANCE CHANGE** - Manager Miller explained that this change gives a clear way to deal with a leak and also give a customer a way to appeal if there is no agreement between the Manager and customer. It eliminates section three in the Walnut Cove-Public Works Ordinance, 50.22 Adjustment (3).

**A motion was made by Commissioner Conaway and seconded by Commissioner Mabe to approve the proposed amendment to the section 50.22 of the Public Works Ordinance. The motion unanimously passed.**

**Consideration of Ordinance Creating Temporary Moratorium on Oil and Gas Development** - Commissioner Conaway expressed that there is a legitimate concern whether the state has the ability and capacity to protect municipalities from fracking which is such an invasive industry and brings so much cost and detrimental impact to communities. Current ordinances do not allow for oil and gas development so we are at odds with state requirements on this issue but, said Commissioner Conaway, there is no reason we cannot move forward in this effort. There are no penalties and it would stand until challenged and that process would be lengthy. The ordinance that was distributed to the Board this evening was an updated version that had technical changes from the one that was in the agenda packets. It focuses on impacts to water resources and health and safety for the community. Commissioner Conaway stated that she felt it best says why the Board is taking this action. Mayor Lewis added that it is good to pass this ordinance but the state can do what they want, and it will stand until it is contested. Attorney Rowe clarified what the legislation says and explained what would happen if it was challenged. It was commented that the state wants to make the fracking rules uniform in all municipalities in the state, and Commissioner Conaway said that if the state did really want it to be uniform, they should have contacted and involved municipalities in the decision making. Commissioner Conaway said that she would like to move forward, but we do need to have a Public Hearing. She said to the state "we hear you, but we respectfully disagree and have a responsibility to our citizens". Attorney Rowe reviewed the advertising requirements for a Public Hearing. There was discussion about obtaining help, perhaps from the PTRC, in refining the moratorium ordinance.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Conaway and seconded by Commissioner Mabe to schedule a Public Hearing for consideration of establishing a temporary moratorium on oil and gas development within Walnut Cove at the next regularly scheduled meeting of November 11, 2015. The motion passed unanimously.**

## TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

Manager Miller went over his report with the Board which included information on the following:

- LPA update on finances, pill drop, and novelty items
- Land Gift – deed and title work are in the hands of an attorney, and it was suggested that the lot be cleaned off
- ABC audit – finished and shows increase in sales with increase in proceeds to the Town
- Dump truck purchase for W&S – great deal negotiated by Commissioner Mabe; truck is already in service
- Well updates – Fowler Park well is being tested and the Town is waiting to hear from DENR about testing requirements - Oldtown Road well has been down for ten (10) days and will be in service by next week
- Water Tank Test – the Plant Street water tank has been tested and given a clean report
- Engineering Study Update – The October 1, 2015 deadline for the engineering study for our pump station project was met and a copy is available for inspection in the Manager's office

Manager Stevens told the Board that Commissioner Smiley did submit a letter of resignation to the Board and a procedure for replacing her will be decided at the November meeting.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Lewis and seconded by Commissioner Conaway to accept the written resignation of Commissioner Natalie Ann Smiley. The motion passed unanimously.**

It was mentioned "for the record" that Commissioner Smiley moved out of the county. It was further stated that the Town was unable to put the vacated seat on the ballot for the November election.

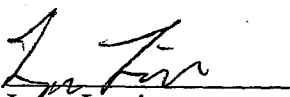
Manager Miller told the Board that a water leak had caused the Walnut Cove Driver's License Office to be temporarily closed. The leak was outside the building near the foundation and water and mud had gotten into the office. The office should be able to re-open next Tuesday, October 20, 2015.

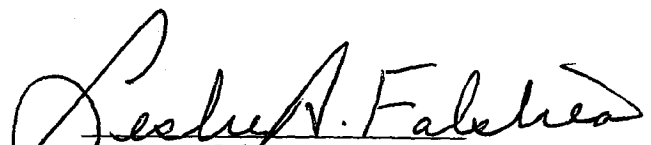
Commissioner Mabe mentioned that Bill Prince had asked for the Town to purchase eighty (80) new flag poles at a cost of \$2.25 each.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Mabe and seconded by Commissioner Conaway to purchase eighty (80) flag poles at \$2.25 each for the Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) to place American flags up and down the streets. The motion passed unanimously.**

**A motion was made by Commissioner Mabe and seconded by Commissioner Conaway to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously.**

The meeting adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

  
Lynn Lewis  
Mayor

  
Leslie A. Falstreau  
Town Clerk