

# Town of Walnut Cove

## **BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**

### **MEETING MINUTES**

**August 13, 2019**

**Mayor Charles Mitchell**

**Commissioners Present:**

Danny Hairston  
Thomas Mitchell  
Elwood Mabe  
Charles Byron

**Staff present:**

Town Manager Kim Greenwood  
Town Clerk Amanda Bryant

The meeting was called to order at 7:08 PM at the Walnut Cove Senior Center by Mayor Mitchell. Wesley Durrell gave the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS-**

- i. The Cove Group. September 3, 2019 at 6:30 PM. Oma's Coffee Shop
- ii. Walnut Cove Volunteer Fire Dept; Regular Meeting. 7:00 PM. Thursday, September 5, 2019, Walnut Cove Vol. Fire Dept.
- iii. Walnut Cove Board of Commissioners; Regular Meeting. Tuesday, September 10, 2019. Walnut Cove Senior Center.
- iv. Town Recycling; Aug. 23, 2019 and September 6, 2019.
- v. Trick or Treat Night. October 31, 2019 6-8PM.
- vi. Just Plain Country Festival. November 9, 2019. 9am to 5pm.

- vii. Stokes County Board of Elections. Voter Educational Seminar ID. Thursday August 29, 2019. 2:00 PM. Walnut Cove Public Library
- viii. Fall Clean Up September 9-20, 2019
- ix. Community Health Fair September 21, 2019. South Stokes High School. 9-12pm.

### **PUBLIC COMMENTS – 5**

Mitzi Britt-Walnut Cove, NC wanted to thank the Board for their generous donation to the Stokes County Special Olympics as well as declaring the third week in April as Special Olympics week. Ms. Britt gave each Board member a thank you card. She also wanted to give an update regarding the Special Olympics at the state games. They were able to take 3 bowlers to the State games and brought home a gold, silver and 6<sup>th</sup> place finish. Along with participating in the State games the YWCA is in the process of starting a youth program.

Justin Duncan, 1110 Friendship Forrest Dr., Germanton, NC. Mr. Duncan is the pastor at Green Pasture Baptist church in Walnut Cove and is here today to express his opposition regarding the proposed bar/tavern that will be at the end of Fowler Road. Mr. Duncan wanted to thank the Board for allowing him to speak. He asked the Board if this is something they would like in their backdoor, as well as the increased need for police and EMT's due to the likelihood of drunk drivers. Mr. Duncan stated his biggest concern is what about the moral cost. By allowing the bar/tavern to open we are opening the children in the community to temptation and they have enough temptation already. Mr. Duncan feels the Town has a bright future and wants to see the Town grow but not this way.

Sam McBride, 1220 Alamo Drive, Walnut Cove, NC addressed the Board about his concerns of the proposed bar/tavern. Mr. McBride has five children and does not want them to witness the things that can go on at a bar. He feels the Town does not need this bar and the neighborhood

does not need it as well. He thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak.

Jeff Brown, 985 Fowler Road, Walnut Cove, NC thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak but he is also here to express his opposition to the proposed bar/tavern. Mr. Brown is a deacon at Green Pastures Baptist church as well as a father to 3 children. He wanted the Board to consider the risk of what the bar can bring to town. He stated the location of the bar is a 5-way intersection, along with the fact we are low on law enforcement and EMTs in the county they do an excellent job but they can't be everywhere. Mr. Duncan's concern is the potential of drunk drivers especially since there are no local cab companies to provide alternate transportation. He also feels this is not needed in our neighborhood.

Robert Tompkins, 4884 Highway 89, Walnut Cove, NC, he was here to address the proposed bar/tavern, he is the owner. Mr. Tompkins understands the concerns of the citizens but his purpose for purchasing the property was to bring people and revenue to the Town. He does not want this to be a party place but more of an environment for people to come and relax after work and on weekends. He will have security on the floor as well as security cameras outside of the establishment. As for the potential of drunk drivers Mr. Tompkins stated he had plans of providing rides for people who can not drive. He has 5 children of his own so he understands the concerns but he wants people to give the bar/tavern a chance.

## **ADJUSTMENTS/CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA-**

Need to combine Halloween/Cove Group on the agenda. Item d will become item C and the Halloween/Cove Group will become item d, under new business.

**A motion was made by Commissioner Byron to accept the agenda with the mentioned adjustment and seconded by Commissioner Hairston. The motion carried unanimously.**

### **Consent Agenda**

**A motion was made by Commissioner Byron to approve the minutes from July 9, 2019 Regular Board Meeting with the following correction stated below and seconded by Commissioner Mabe. The motion carried unanimously.**

1. Correction: On page 7 of the July 9, 2019 minutes it was not stated the amount of increase for the Senior Center. The amount was for \$500.00/year. The motion was made by Commissioner Byron and seconded by Commissioner Hairston. The motion carried unanimously.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **A. Lilies Project (attachment B)**

- a. Caroline Armijo came to update the Board following her presentation in June. Previously in June she was working with Christine Boles from the Walnut Cove Library to install a labyrinth on the side to help prevent erosion but due to the fact they would have to have wires buried, build up the bank and install sidewalks it would not work. She has been working with Christ Church on Summit Street and the labyrinth will be installed there instead.

- b. As for the library instead of the labyrinth they will install a butterfly garden as she has been working with the Stokes County Agricultural office. The budget for this project is \$1000.00 which includes the mulch for the butterfly garden. She has discussed this with Christine Boles and both agree and it will be a good way to engage the children. She has spoken with Mitchell's nursery and they will help select plants that for the location. They have an estimated build day of October 12<sup>th</sup>.
- c. As part of her grant from A&T included installing 30 hexagon post throughout local parks in the area. They are still working with A&T to iron out the details.
- d. Lastly, there will be a gymnastics show September 21, 2019 at Southeastern Middle School. The gymnastics show is a variety show and not limited to gymnastics; they are currently looking for acts. They had a reunion in December. The show is family friendly and they are inviting people to the show as well as become an act in the show.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **A. Richard Campbell, Campbell's Automotive**

- a. Mr. Campbell wanted to address the Board regarding the numerous cars on his property. He wanted the Board to understand it was not his intention for them to pile up but it is difficult to get them moved. He has had customers to pass away, won't pay their bill or others lose interest.
- b. Commissioner Byron stated he was very impressed with those he has moved and understands it is difficult but he commends Mr. Campbell for a job well done. Commissioner Byron asked if he had considered

leasing a lot to move the cars too? Mr. Campbell stated he has recently found a place and the cars are being relocated there. It is time consuming to relocate the cars but understands the need for it. Commissioner Byron told Mr. Campbell he was not the only one with similar issues, he didn't want Mr. Campbell to think the Town was picking on him only.

- c. Commissioner Byron stated we need to be fair to Mr. Campbell and make sure the other garage in Town comes into compliance. He commended Mr. Campbell for the progress he has made.

**B. Permitted Use Consideration (attachment c)**

- a. Town Manager Greenwood provided each Board member a copy of the permitted use table for the Rezoning. The permitted use table needs to have the following added for each of the following zones.
  - i. B-1, NB-1 & NB-2: We need to add florist to B-1, NB-1, Auto Detailing B-1 & NB-2 and Bar/Tavern B-1, NB-1 & NB-2.
- b. Commissioner Byron stated he felt it would be best to look at each item line by line. The Town Attorney Rowe stated would be the most consistent with future reports.
- c. Commissioner Byron stated for item a: B-1 and NB-1 to include florist, he was in favor of any business not listed specially. He suggested the Town adopt the municipal language and establish guidelines as a Town to make this simple. Town Manager Greenwood clarified by stating to allow specific language already allowed to similar zones as stated in attachment A the

“Zoning Ordinance Amendment: Unlisted and Similar Use.”

**Commissioner Byron made a motion to approve the request to adopt attachment A Zoning Ordinances Amendment: Unlisted and Similar Use, with Commissioner Mitchell seconding the motion. Upon the vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

- d. Town Manager Greenwood directed the attention of the Board to include Florist as a permitted use in B-1 & NB-1. Town Attorney Rowe stated right now by not including this it is inconsistent with the staff report. Commissioner Hairston asked where the florist is located to which Mr. Greenwood explained it is the new business on Main Street beside Wildfire Tattoo, called Dandelions All Things Weddings & Events. The planning and zoning passed on August 5, 2019. Commissioner Hairston asked who the owner was to which Town Clerk Amanda Bryant stated Jennifer Kendrick.

**Commissioner Byron made a motion to include florist for zones: B-1, NB-1 & NB-2. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hairston, the motion carried unanimously.**

- e. The permitted use table needs to be updated for zone B-1 and NB-2 to include auto detailing. This is for the new car wash and auto detailing that will open soon beside of Farm Bureau. Commissioner Mabe stated this is the business we provided a grant for.

**Commissioner Hairston made a motion to include auto detailing for zones: B-1 and NB-2. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Byron. Motion carried unanimously.**

- f. Commissioner Hairston asked if the Planning/Zoning Board had approved the proposed bar/tavern, which Town Manager Greenwood stated yes on August 5, 2019. Commissioner Hairston asked Wesley Durrell if they voted on this. Mr. Durrell stated they had voted and approved it.

**Commissioner Hairston made a motion to table the decision to rezone the property on Fowler for the proposed Bar/Tavern until the September meeting. Commissioner Byron seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.**

### **C. Façade Grant Revision (attachment E)**

- a. Town Manager Greenwood explained the Façade grant was previously in place with the Town but was a long and less user-friendly process. He had spoken to the Cove Group in regard to them overseeing the Façade grant program. The Cove Group was able to reconstruct and developed a much easier program. Mr. Greenwood directed the Board to Commissioner Byron to discuss and explain the changes and the new process.
- b. Commissioner Byron stated the key issues discouraged businesses from beginning any type of changes until the grant was approved which could take up to 3 months. They recommend changing the approval process now allowing the applicant the ability to start the process and gives the Town Manager the ability to

approve an application instead of waiting for the timely process as before. The Board has the option to override the Town Managers approval as well as the ability to deny the grant to the applicant. The applicant can start the process but are not guaranteed the grant until the final approval of the Board. Additionally, the original façade grant application would not allow hanging signs, the new application has removed this item. The façade grant was increased to \$2500.00.

- c. Town Manager Greenwood stated money for the façade grant would be used from the Economic Development line of the budget. Commissioner Mabe asked the reasoning behind the applicant is only required to have one bid instead of two as before. Commissioner Byron stated in many cases the work would be completed by family members verses market cost and in some cases, applicants are charged for a bid. If the bid was cheaper and good, they felt there wasn't a need to obtain additional bids at market value. For the top end applicants who are needing the entire grant amount it can be recommended for additional bids but that will be at the discretion of the Town Manager. Commissioner Mabe stated he would like 2 bids for every application.

**Commissioner Byron made a motion to approve the Façade Grant Revision with the guidelines requiring 2 bids for each application and maintain the language of the revision. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hairston. Motion carried unanimously.**

#### **D. The Cove Group/Halloween Street Closure**

- a. Misty Bennett was present to represent the Cove Group and the upcoming Halloween event being called Walnut-ween in Hallo-cove. She wanted to thank the Board for the opportunity to speak. Ms. Bennett also had a display for the Board members to view of past Halloween events she has hosted at her homes. Ms. Bennett explained The Cove Group would like to do some things different this year for Halloween. Because the Town has such a large turnout, they wanted to make this year's Halloween even better. They plan to have food trucks and many activities such as trunk or treat, inflatables and hayrides along with turning Cove Square into an area for teenagers. Ms. Bennett explained many of the merchants in Town are spending around \$500 on candy each year so they are currently taking candy donations at Oma's Coffee Shop, The Just Plain Country Store and Charlies Trading Post.
- b. Ms. Bennett stated one of the biggest concerns is the safety of the children. They would like to have Main street closed from 5pm-8pm from Fowler Park down to Wildfire Tattoo shop, where the haunted house is. Commissioner Byron stated there is always a large crowd at Wildfire Tattoo because of the haunted house and feels it is a good idea to close the road from the ABC store to Wildfire Tattoo. Town Manager Greenwood said they could detour car traffic to Old Town Road but was unsure if it would be easy for large trucks. Commissioner Byron stated they do not want

them on Summit Street because the crowd has gotten so large. People's safety is our responsibility. Commissioner Byron also mentioned we need to find out when the last bus route ran, it will not be safe to start beforehand. Town Manager Greenwood stated we can keep people on Main Street and provide more resources such as lighting provided by the Fire Department, have the Gazebo as an information center for EMT's, lost and found. Ms. Bennett stated they do have tents available. Commissioner Hairston asked about rerouting thru Old Town Road and have as many police and Fire Department members present as possible, of which Town Manager Greenwood stated yes that would work. Commissioner Mabe asked about Brook Cove Road, we have a lot of trucks that come up Brook Cove Road to get to 311 and 65. Commissioner Bryon asked about rerouting them from Piney Mountain Road to East from a safety stand point, coming from Brook Cove that would be a big loop for them to make. Commissioner Hairston asked how we would have to close it. Commissioner Mabe stated we could not block 3<sup>rd</sup> street. Town Manager Greenwood stated to block the road from ABC Store to Old Town Road. Commissioner Mitchell stated they can go down to 65 from Germanton but the problem is getting them to 311. Town Manager Greenwood suggested the possibility of putting our flashing sign out to help reroute traffic.

**Commissioner Hairston made a motion to table closing the street for Halloween until the September meeting. Commissioner Mabe seconded the motion. Motion carried unanimously.**

### **Town Manager Report**

- 1.** Our public works did repair a leak that affected about a fourth of Town a couple of weeks ago. As an update, I have advised Mr. John Akers, with Withersravenel Company to apply for the water mapping and water study for the Town. The application is due in September and we are to provide the requested data as a part of the application process. The grant is 100% funded with no matching requirements from the town. I have attached an image from the leak which shows the same line with four separate repairs made over the years.
- 2.** Dr. Mike Burchell with NC State did advise the work performed in the Spring is proving to be beneficial. Our Ammonium levels have decreased by half. He has applied for a grant to complete the lagoon. The preliminary numbers “are great” in his words, and if the numbers keep improving. Walnut Cove will be the “gold standard” in how to keep a wetland system functional.
- 3.** The LPA profit sheet is attached. They had a very good month of July.
- 4.** The Dept. of Labor has completed the first audit and we are in the process of creating a health and safety program.
- 5.** The Town and LPA office will be closed September 2, 2019 in observance of Labor Day.
- 6.** Most of the streets have been trimmed in preparation of the new school year.
- 7.** We have spoken with two other paving companies to attempt to get a reasonable price for patching and paving.

## **GENERAL CONCERNS OF THE BOARD**

Commissioner Hairston asked if Bradley Davis was present tonight and wanted an update on citations and fines. Mr. Davis stated each citation that has been written was based on the current ordinances of the Town but he was unsure how to fine those still in violation. Commissioner Byron stated over a year ago Town Attorney Rowe reviewed the guidelines and had a protocol in place for every 15 days, this is surprising to me you are unsure how-to fine people. Town Attorney Rowe stated the process is 2 letters with a time lapse and the process was defined to that point but after the process it was not clear the exact steps. Commissioner Byron stated he felt it was a fair expectation after a year to have this resolved, when can we expect this to be addressed? Town Attorney Rowe stated whether or not it is under the law for the Town to go on a citizens property is a determination she is not sure is clear. Commissioner Byron stated with a code violation is there anything from preventing the codes from being enforced, he also included he expects to have a protocol at the next meeting.

Commissioner Hairston asked if the next meeting would give her enough time to meet with Kim of which she stated yes.

Commissioner Byron stated Wesley Durrell included in his prayer at the beginning of the meeting for the Town to have willing workers and he thinks God has answered that prayer. The Cove Group has utilized its resources and Cove Square is slowly evolving into a park. Hedgecock Building supply donated wood and material as well as Chase Ragsdale donated a \$1000.00 to build the new stage. Joe Bennett helped as well.

**Commissioner Byron made a motion to adjourn. Commissioner Hairston seconded the motion. Upon a vote, the motion carried unanimously.**

**The meeting adjourned at 8:44 PM.**

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Charles Mitchell  
Mayor

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Amanda Bryant  
Town Clerk