

Town of Walnut Cove

BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MEETING MINUTES

November 13, 2018

Mayor Charles Mitchell

Commissioners Present:

Danny Hairston

Absent: Thomas Mitchell

Charles Byron

Elwood Mabe

Staff present:

Town Manager Kim Greenwood

Town Clerk Amanda Bryant

Town Attorney Ann Rowe

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM at the Walnut Cove Senior Center by Mayor Charles Mitchell. Reverend Wesley Durrell gave the invocation following which Rev. Wesley Durrell led in pledging allegiance to the American flag.

ANNOUNCEMENTS-

- a. The Cove Group 1st Tuesday each month, Oma's Coffee Shop @ 6:30pm beginning (12-4-18)
- b. Walnut Cove Volunteer Fire Dept. Dec. 4, 2018 @ 7:00pm, Walnut Cove Fire Department.
- c. Walnut Cove Board of Commissioners; Regular Meeting. Tuesday, December 11, 2018. Walnut Cove Senior Center.
- d. Town Recycling; 11/16/2018 and 11/30/2018
- e. Tree Lighting December 7, 2018 begins at 4:00 pm
- f. Walnut Cove Christmas Parade. December 8, 2018 begins at 2pm.
- g. The Town office closed November 22, 23, 2018 for Thanksgiving.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – 3

1. Lauren Byron- 1159 N Main Street Walnut Cove, NC

- a. Mrs. Byron has two complaints the first being the Banners Small Town Main Street purchased for over \$6000.00
 - i. They look horrible (dangling from the poles, someone brought one to her they found in a gutter.
 - ii. Has been brought to the attention of the Town before.
 - iii. The banners each are covered by a warranty/guarantee and she is afraid the warranty will not cover them.
- b. Her second complaint is the Town had a wonderful cleanup day.
 - i. Why are the Town citizens having to do this, people have brought it to her attention this needs to be addressed.
 - ii. She had visited the Town of Patrick County and noted how beautiful and clean it was. She stated she asked who took care of the cleanup and was informed the Town took care of it.
 - iii. She doesn't understand why citizens have to volunteer their time to clean up, weed eat, remove old furniture when we have staff that are responsible for it?
- c. Comments from the Commissioner
 - i. Commissioner Hairston asked Town Manager Greenwood why are the banners in such bad shape? Also Mrs. Byron what did you mean by it is the responsibility of the staff?
 - ii. Town Manager Greenwood stated the banners were placed over the road side instead of the sidewalk. Many times the tractor trailers come through and hit them with their trucks. The only equipment we have is a make shift rig that is put on the front end loader of the tractor, which is a safety hazard. We were waiting on Veteran's day to pass so there wouldn't be a conflict with the Christmas lights and Christmas banners. The new Christmas banners will be hanging over the sidewalk instead of the street side.

- iii. Mrs. Byron after visiting the Chamber of Commerce and talking with them they thought it was the responsibility of the town workers to empty the trash containers, mow and weed eat.
- iv. Town Manager Greenwood stated it is not in the job description for our Public Works employees. The trash containers on Main Street public works try to empty them once a week, weather permitting.

2. Don Richardson

- a. Wanted to ask who would be getting the wood up from the tree in Fowler Park now that it has been cut.
 - b. Town Manager Greenwood stated the Public Works employees would be getting the wood up from the tree this week.
3. Town Manager Greenwood wanted to recognize Will Carter Economic Director for Stokes County is in attendance tonight.

ADJUSTMENTS/CORRECTIONS TO THE AGENDA-

Town Manager Greenwood presented the Board with a packet for Add-On to Agenda. The following items were added to the agenda.

Old Business

- Vii. a. Consideration for Re-Zoning of Southern Property

Commissioner Byron made a motion to accept the Add-On to the agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mitchell. Motion carried unanimously.

Consent Agenda

- a. Two corrections to be made to the minutes
 1. Minutes state Commissioner Byron was present at the last meeting when he was not.
 2. The spelling of Commissioner Byron was wrong in the minutes.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hairston to accept and approve the minutes from the October 9, 2018 meeting with the corrections stated above. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mitchell. The motion carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS-

a. Consideration for re-Zoning of Southern Property

- a. The consideration to Re-Zone from Industrial to Business. Commissioner Byron asked for Bradley to explain the motivation of the property owner.
- b. Bradley Davis with PTRC explained the property is currently zoned as Industrial 1 which is a unique zone it must be larger than 1 acre and cannot subdivide it. It has to meet certain requirements with one company and one activity. By re-zoning the property to NB-2 it will become Multifunction Business.
- c. Commissioner Byron asked what are the zones of the bordering properties. Mr. Davis explained there are 4 zones between Food Lion and Ingles. The borders of the Southern Property are R6, I1 and NB-2 across the street. Mr. Davis also stated for the next 2 years the road will be under construction and by approving the re-zoning it will open up more opportunities.
- d. Commissioner Byron wanted to make sure there was no spot zoning and stated Commissioner Mabe had the same concern as well. Mr. Davis stated there will be no spot zoning.
- e. Mr. Joe Southern asked to speak regarding the re-zoning. Mr. Southern appreciated the Board for their consideration and if any of the Commissioners had any questions to please call him. As many of the Commissioners know he bought the old Concrete plant and by re-zoning the property to NB-2 it would make it possible to have multiple small business park.
 - i. Mr. Southern stated he would like to table the re-zoning until he could get things more in line. Also his financial institution is in favor of it being tabled as well. They want to make sure everything is conforming to the zone they choose.

Commissioner Byron made a motion to table the Re-Zoning of the Southern property until Mr. Southern requests it. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Hairston. Motion carried unanimously.

X. New Business

a. Presentation of Citizen Award

- a. Commissioner Byron presented Mrs. Kim Ferrell a plaque for her volunteer work with Small Town Main Street
- b. Mrs. Ferrell volunteered for 10 years with STMS doing festivals, projects and parades. She does everything no one wants to do.
- c. Mrs. Ferrell stated it was an honor to be recognized.

b. Consideration of Lease of Property to The Cove Group

- a. Town Attorney Rowe explained the lease agreement for the property beside of Main St. Diner. She stated she presented each Board member with a copy of the lease agreement; the draft lays out the terms.
- b. Attorney Rowe stated the Statutory Property has to provide a 30 day public notice at the proposed location of when the Town plans to enter the lease.
- c. Attorney Rowe covered some of the highlights of the agreement:
 - i. The Cove Group by laws needs to be completed, which should be ready for the December meeting.
 - ii. The best opportunity to approve the lease will be in February, The Cove Groups 501(c) should be completed by that time.
 1. Commissioner Byron regarding the 501(c) status they knew it would take approximately 6 months to get it approved but must have the by-laws in order for the status to be confirmed.
 - iii. For the December meeting she recommends the Board direct Town Manager Greenwood to post the 30 day notice.
 - iv. The proposed timeline is as follows
 1. December: Direct the Town Manager to post the 30 day notice
 2. February: Consideration of Lease
 - v. Terms of the Lease

1. This lease is modeling that of the Boy Scout hut with the exception of the time of the lease.
2. The lease will be a 5 year renewable lease with the cost of \$1/year.
3. The Cove Group agrees to pay the expense of premise to maintain it.
 - a. Alterations to the property have to be approved by the Board
 - b. Any improvements at termination become the property of the Town including thing such as heat/gas/lighting etc.
 - c. The Town will furnish water and sewer
 - d. The Cove Group will be responsible for obtaining permits, insurance etc.
4. Thoughts of the Board
 - a. Commissioner Byron stated he feels this is a positive between the Town and the Cove Group. The Cove Group wants to earn the right to renew the lease in 5 years. They have already secured a lot of grants and have partnered with Caroline Rutledge. The volunteers are ready and want the Board to be ready to move forward in February.
 - b. Lauren Byron stated she was under the impression the Town would take care of the mowing.
 - i. Attorney Rowe stated the lease agreement is modeled after the Boy Scout agreement.
 - ii. Commissioner Byron stated the lease needs to be consistent with that of the Boy Scout and Fowler Park. Both organizations have it stated in their agreements but the Town is kind enough to mow for them, but they are not legally bound to do so.

- iii. Attorney Rowe stated she would like to encourage the Board to maintain consistency.
- c. Commissioner Byron also stated he had discussed with Attorney Rowe if it was appropriate for him to discuss matters regarding the Cove Group due to the fact he is the president of the group.
 - i. Attorney Rowe stated it was not a conflict of interest because Commissioner Byron does not have direct financial interest in the Group. The UNC School of Government also confirmed this is true.
 - ii. Commissioner Hairston asked if this could be put in writing in which Attorney Rowe stated she could.

A motion was made by Commissioner Byron to authorize Attorney Rowe to proceed forward with the Lease Agreement. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mitchell. Motion carried unanimously.

c. WWTP Grant

- a. Town Manager Greenwood explained on November 8th he met with Dr. Burchell from NC State University and Fred Summers with the Rural Water Association.
- b. NC State has been trying to develop ways to make our WWTP more efficient. Previous testing revealed the wetlands are not operating efficiently.
- c. Our WWTP is similar to only 4 other systems in North Carolina. Currently we have no fines at this time.
- d. Dr. Burchell is proposing the Town contract an excavator to remove some of the cattail plants from the lagoons; the excavator would not disturb the outer edges.
 - i. Dr. Burchell has estimated approximately 250 dump truck loads.

- ii. Dr. Burchell is writing a grant for \$15,000.00 to cover the cost of the removal of the dentrites and two new aerators in the Duckweed ponds. He has asked for 25% of the grant be matched by the Town to serve as “skin in the game” money.
- iii. The 25% would be \$3750.00.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hairston to approve the proposal by Dr. Burchell. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Byron. The motion carried unanimously.

d. Town Employee Christmas Bonus

- a. Town Manager Greenwood asked the Board to consider the Christmas Bonus for the Town Employees.
- b. The Employees have previously received a bonus. He also reminded the Board it was discussed during the budget retreat.
- c. Mayor Mitchell asked how much would the bonuses be?
 - i. Town Manager Greenwood stated there was not an amount determined during the budget retreat
 - ii. Commissioner Mitchell stated he thought it was \$350.00.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hairston to approve the Town Employee Christmas bonus of \$350.00. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mitchell. Motion carried unanimously.

A motion was made by Commissioner Byron to enter into Executive Closed Session. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Mitchell. Motion carried unanimously.

Entered Executive Session at 8:13pm

Reopened Regular Meeting at 8:22pm, Mayor Mitchell stated No Action Taken.

e. Town Manager's Report

- a. The Town was blessed to receive minimal damage from Hurricane Michael. Our public works folks did remove several trees from our streets. We did have some damage to the WWTP. It washed out part of the road and damaged some of the electrical equipment. In conjunction with the county, we have applied for FEMA funds to offset the damage. If approved, FEMA will compensate us at a rate of \$.75 for every \$1.00 spent. It covers our man-hours and use of the town's equipment. I commend our public works folks for many of them either didn't have power at home or had damage but all worked extra hours in service of the town.
- b. Our Halloween night went well in town for the trick-or-treaters. I thank the Board for not only funding the town's part but participating. We enjoyed a large crowd in town and thank all the merchants and participants.
- c. The state audit is near completion. He has unofficially advised that everything looks great and will have the final report done in a few weeks. I sincerely thank our Town Clerk, Amanda Bryant and Brandi Bowman the Office Manager for the hard work they have completed this past year. Ms. Leslie had not planned on leaving in November, however when she left we had not had time to train or make plans for the transition. This has been a huge undertaking, not only to learn the duties but make improvements.
- d. The LPA compensation report is attached. The compensation is consistent with previous years for the fall month is the lowest.
- e. I have attached a page indicating the payment of overtime money. This was due to the hurricane damage in October.
- f. The Christmas tree lights have all been tested and we are preparing to put up the lights and change the banners.
- g. Hopefully our contractor will remove the tree in Fowler Park this week as we prepare for the winter events.
- h. Please remember Sandra Rogers for she has had some health issues.
- i. The pump at the DMV is out.

f. General Concerns of the Board

- a. Commissioner Byron stated Code Enforcement has been previously brought to the attention of the Board but there has been no follow through. He also stated we need to follow the proper procedures for everyone and not to be selective.
 - i. Mayor Mitchell stated something needs to be done regarding code enforcement.
 - ii. Commissioner Hairston commented it is November and we have one more month in the year, we need to plan beginning January 1st to start cracking down on violators.
 - iii. Town Manager Greenwood stated it would be added to the agenda and we would get any correspondences from Bradley.
 - iv. Town Attorney Rowe stated she had talked to other towns and cities to understand how they enforced their coding ordinances and would have that information in December along with newly drafted letters and violation letters.
 - v. Lauren Byron asked if maybe a notice could be placed on the water bill stating stronger code enforcement would begin January 1st.
- b. Wesley Durrell stated there are 2 bad pot holes on Cameron Street.

A motion was made by Commissioner Hairston to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Byron. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting adjourned 8:41pm.

Charles Mitchell
Mayor

Amanda Bryant
Town Clerk

Date

Date