

**TOWN OF WEDDINGTON
SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, AUGUST 2, 2010 - 12:00 P.M.
MINUTES**

The Town Council of the Town of Weddington, North Carolina, met in a Special Session at the Weddington Town Hall, 1924 Weddington Road, Weddington, NC 28104 on August 2, 2010, at 12:00 p.m. with Mayor Nancy D. Anderson presiding.

Present: Mayor Nancy D. Anderson, Mayor Pro Tem Daniel Barry, Councilmembers Werner Thomisser, Robert Gilmartin and Jerry McKee, Attorney Anthony Fox, Finance Officer Leslie Gaylord and Town Administrator/Clerk Amy McCollum

Absent: None

Present: Sharon Sanders, Sue Fitch, Walker Davidson, Richard Natale, Stephanie Belcher, and Barbara Harrison

Item No. 1. Open the Meeting. Mayor Nancy D. Anderson called the August 2, 2010 Special Town Council Meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. There was a quorum.

Item No. 2. Discuss and Consider Further Financial Contributions to Weddstock. Mayor Anderson stated, “Weddstock is a four-part concert series which started out being a Town sponsored event and we could not make that happen so we partnered with Kids First of the Carolinas to help. Weddstock has been a huge success so far. The Town sponsored the Kids Corral for \$2,000 for four events. The Town also invested another \$3,000 for the band and operating expenses for the second event. The committee has come back and asked for our continued support and is asking for the Town to help support the last two events in the amount of \$6,000.”

Representatives with Kids First of the Carolinas advised that the events have been very successful so far. They had thought more money would have been raised from alcohol sales and discussed that it was a family oriented event. The family part of the event has been the winner. They advised that the local businesses have done well and it has been a win-win for the citizens of Weddington and the Town businesses; however the charity has not made any money.

Councilmember Robert Gilmartin discussed that the concerts were pulling people together and Ms. Sanders advised that most people attending were Weddington residents and the schools were heavily involved with the events.

Councilmember Werner Thomisser questioned the need for having four events and understood that they were designed to build on each other after the word got out about the event and expressed that he did not feel that the second event was as successful as the first concert.

Ms. Sharon Sanders advised that she felt that next year it may need to be only a all day event instead of four separate events. Ms. Sue Fitch felt that the events were showing cumulative growth and that people were so busy that they were picking one event that they could come to out of the four concerts.

Ms. Sanders advised that they had received \$10,500 in sponsorship money and it cost approximately \$18,000 to do all four events bare bones. She felt that having the charity involved helped to get discounts and sponsorships.

Mayor Anderson mentioned that the Town used to pay the Union County Arts Council \$10,000 to organize the Fall Festival approximately 10 years ago.

Councilmember Thomisser advised that this had been a learning experience for the Town Council and asked the group what they had learned and what they would do differently.

Ms. Sanders - We should have had more kids' activities and fun foods and to possibly use local bands next time and hold the events when the weather is a little cooler.

Councilmember Thomisser – Do you need alcohol?

The group advised that it is nice to have as a convenience but the snow cones were beating it.

Mr. Richard Natale discussed that he had heard that all the money raised from this event is going to the charity but the Town is covering the costs and stated that he did not feel that alcohol was needed to make the event a success. You are not making any money for the charity.

Ms. Sanders – The group is non-profit. The event started out with the Town wanting to do an event and the only reason that the charity got involved was to get the needed alcohol permits. We are bringing awareness to the charity.

The Council discussed that the objective was to bring the people of Weddington together and then to raise money for the charity.

Mayor Anderson – We are not used to the high energy that these people bring to the table. Ms. Sanders is also on the Parks and Recreation Board.

Ms. Sanders – We feel that we have brought a successful event.

Councilmember Jerry McKee commended the group for their hard work but felt that there was a shortcoming on the financial planning side of the event.

Ms. Sanders advised that several of the sponsorships fell through and there were more permits and hoops that they had to jump through than what she was expecting.

Mayor Anderson - It originally started out as a Town event. You usually do not let people in free. That is the Town event part. Charity you have to have people pay to come in.

The group advised that after the first week they began charging \$3.00 for a wristband for the kids section and asking for parking donations.

Councilmember Gilmartin moved to approve the additional funding of \$6,000 for the final two events.

Mayor Pro Tem Barry - I met with Ms. Sanders and Ms. Fitch and we spoke for hours on the phone for the last two weeks. My goal was for you to become self-sufficient and I will have trouble helping you support that amount. In no way does that reflect the work that has been done for these events. You have performed a monumental task.

Councilmember McKee - The financial planning was a shortfall. I do not want you to be discouraged. I will back you 100% if you come back next year during budget time and request the funding that you would

need. I objected to the alcohol at the beginning and obviously I was correct. I do not want to discourage you from stepping up and I would like to see it continue and grow.

Councilmember Thomisser - I believe you have achieved your objective and people want to have a gathering event. The problem is the fiduciary responsibility that we have.

Mayor Anderson - Would you be willing to put \$25,000 in the budget for the next year?

Councilmember Thomisser - That would depend on what the numbers show for one event versus four. This has been very good for Weddington. I would be willing to fund Parks and Recreation to a certain degree.

Ms. Sanders expressed that the Town had asked her to do the event and that they are all working for free.

Councilmember Gilmartin - This is something that came up last minute and has a net value to the community. This is something that we have been striving to accomplish for the past ten years and to potentially say no because it is outside of the budget cycle is short-sighted. I believe that it is dynamic and it could be a budgetary thing moving forward. It is 6,000 more dollars. We have \$2 million in our savings account. We have been very frugal with our money. I believe that we should move forward.

Mayor Pro Tem Barry asked to amend the motion and that he would support the request if the group will come back and debrief the Council on how the money was spent and assuming the event maintains the same success level and the group is willing to put forth the effort for next year, then prepare in time next year to be included in the budget process.

Ms. Barbara Harrison – I want to commend you and tell you that you did a great job based on a lot of things. You are not going to hit everybody if you are going to do family oriented. I am over 60 and if I did not have my grandchildren, there would be no reason for me to go. I am not saying it is a bad thing. I am on a charity and we have yearly events. I and everybody that works on it does not take any money and we plan a year in advance for every event we do. I have a Fall Festival that I started last November. If you have really been talking about this for 10 years, why then last year did you not say that we need to get the Parks and Recreation on that? You have the chance now to do that. My only objection is that I got three emails about what was going on. All three led me to believe that this is a charity event, not that the Town was sponsoring it and a charity was going to get the proceeds. Since I am the President of my association I sent that to all my homeowners because I knew a lot of them would support the charity. You are all business people. You have to plan it in advance and then the issue of whether it is \$3,000, \$6,000 or \$25,000 becomes moot because you know black and white what it is going to take. I agree that you should have a lessons learned and that should be presented to the public. I think that it is a good idea that we have something in the community because certainly when I was going door to door that was what people asked for.

Mr. Walker Davidson – First of all, thank you for everything that you are doing. I support the program. To make this work you are going to need land, labor and capital. You have free land. You have free labor. What you need is capital. I would like to see this long term pay for itself. I love the buckets for voluntarily contributing to the parking. Those are the kinds of opportunities I think people should be presented with. That burden is on me. I will help you guys if you want me to help you. I think anytime a small group gets together and tries to do something they eventually get frustrated and it goes away. I would like to expand your base. I want to steer it paying for itself. I do not think anyone has asked this question but if you do not get this money today what happens. This was a timing thing. It was rushed. You guys lit a fuse and I think anybody that voted for this before should probably vote for it now as an honor thing. To back out now and put them out there is not good. If you voted no for it before, you

probably should vote no because it probably should not have changed anything. You cannot light a fuse and walk away because they are not going to come back if you want this to survive. The problem that I have with this type of process is the taxing of citizens. It is not voluntary. You have already gone down the road with the sponsors. I will donate \$100 today. I would like to ask anyone that votes yes to donate \$100 to show your personal commitment versus the taxpayer's commitment. The public hearing for the budget is the right process. However, at the last budget hearing two people spoke and both wanted a lower tax rate and we were ignored. There are four of you asking for \$6,000. There are two of us asking to save our \$10.00. Until people show up to prevent this from happening - keep going. The burden is on me for that. I love the event. I went Friday and it was great. I would just love for it to pay for itself. If you are subsidized by free labor, free land you are 2/3 there if you can get the capital done.

Councilmember Gilmartin accepted Mayor Pro Tem Barry's amendment. All were in favor of the motion, with votes recorded as follows:

AYES: Councilmembers Thomisser, Gilmartin, McKee and Mayor Pro Tem Barry
NAYS: None

Item No. 3. Adjournment. Mayor Pro Tem Barry moved to adjourn the August 2, 2010 Special Town Council Meeting. All were in favor, with votes recorded as follows:

AYES: Councilmembers Thomisser, Gilmartin, McKee and Mayor Pro Tem Barry
NAYS: None

The meeting adjourned at 1:04 p.m.

Nancy D. Anderson, Mayor

Attest:

Amy S. McCollum, Town Clerk