

**TOWN OF WEDDINGTON
SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, MARCH 11, 2013 - 6:00 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 March 11, 2013, with Mayor Walker F. Davidson presiding.

Present: Mayor Walker F. Davidson, Mayor Pro Tem Daniel Barry, Councilmembers Werner Thomisser, Pamela Hadley and Barbara Harrison, Town Planner Jordan Cook and Town Administrator Amy S. McCollum

Visitors: Bill Price, Joyce Helms, Robert Kerfonta, Ray Roberts, Mary Shiple, Judy Johnston, Lee A. Rolfes, Jr. Cheryl Klink, Richard Natale, Monica Snider, Bill Snider, Lynn Cavin, Laura Cavin, Bill Deter, Tina Lodge, Jay Lodge, Pat Harrison, Jim Vivian, Don Titherington, Craig Hazeltine, Jennifer Romaine, Lisa O'Connell, Dennis Taylor, Harry Welch, Carol Hogan, Walton Hogan, Bob Rapp, Rob Dow, Nancy Anderson, Annette Baker, Doug Stewart, Michele Stewart, Elton Hardy and Ralph Nappi.

Item No. 1. Open the Meeting. Mayor Walker F. Davidson called the March 11, 2013 Special Town Council Meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. There was a quorum.

Item No. 2. Public Input/Comment Period on the Weddington Land Use Plan Update. Mayor Davidson asked the Council how they would like to handle the Public Comment Period of the meeting. Councilwoman Pamela Hadley advised that she would like to allow three minutes per person with no back and forth dialogue between the Council at this time and also requested that the meeting end at 6:50 p.m. to allow the Council time to prepare for the 7:00 p.m. meeting. Mayor Pro Tem Daniel Barry also mentioned that each speaker should not be allowed to donate time at this meeting.

Ms. Judy Johnston – I want to commend Council and the Planning Board for going through the process of updating the Land Use Plan. We have over 10,000 residents made up of a variety of demographics. We have Whites, African Americans, Hispanics, Orientals, Europeans, Christians, Atheists, Jews, Muslims, Buddhists and the list goes on and on. We have disabled residents, infants and senior citizens who live here. We all got the flyer that talked about those who are in opposition to the business development that potentially might be added to the map. One of the phrases used was affordable housing which I think is very interesting. My house in Providence Woods South would be considered affordable housing for somebody who lives in Highgate or one of the other more affluent neighborhoods. Affordable housing is a term that can be broad in description. One thing that disturbs me is the feeling that if we allow some business then the whole Town is going to become a totally commercial area like Indian Trail. For me it shows me that you are actually considering the protection of those areas that will be designated for business and some architectural plans and restrictions for those areas. I don't see a problem with having affordable housing. We have senior citizens that are aging in this community and as a town it should provide some housing for those senior citizens. To say that they lived here for 30 years and sorry you have aged out of the demographics in this town is a very selfish way for a town to organize itself. You need to provide for those individuals along with our children that are growing up in this community. My kids can't live here. There is no housing that they can afford. Affordable housing doesn't mean tract housing. Mixed use can be very thoughtfully planned out in designated areas and fit the environment. I might say that those individuals that are in protest to business development in this community may also be running businesses out of their homes.

Mr. Bill Snider – I live in Providence Place. In the neighborhood where I live there are houses that are \$500,000 to upwards of \$800,000. If you decide that you want to put up affordable housing in the 40 or 50 acres that are behind my house that are in the \$150,000-\$200,000 range, that will have a negative effect on my property values. For me my house is my biggest investment. I have already taken a pretty good hit in 2007 with the economy. The area right behind my house and across the street from the main road by my neighborhood is for sale and it is up for development. I see it having a negative impact if you do not keep with the one house per acre or do something to try and keep property values in your minds when you are considering people who can't afford to buy in for whatever reason. I was young once and did not make a lot of money. I understand that. But what I see is 10 -15 years down the road what becomes of those neighborhoods? If they are not kept up or maintained, the values will go down. It can be like an infection in a community. It has to be really well thought out.

Mr. Sam Lowe – My concern is who owns, pays for and maintains green space in the Town? If that is not managed it will be worse than anything else you can do to the town. I don't want to have to call the law every time I see a bunch of kids riding four wheelers through my yard. I grew up in Weddington. I have been back here 12 years. I can't believe someone doesn't want one or two decent restaurants in Weddington.

Mr. Bill Deter – I live in Waybridge. I have lived here about six years and am retired. This is about the second or third meeting I have heard the term "elite" and I have heard it in a negative standpoint. I would like to address that briefly. There is nothing wrong with having an elite community. Michael Jordan is an elite athlete. Mother Theresa of Calcutta was an elite person. Seal Team 6 are elite people. There is nothing wrong if Weddington becomes an elite community. I hope it does become a community where people strive to want to live in. A couple weeks ago we had a person come in to help educate the group on different types of housing and communities. He gave examples of relatively high density communities. I saw some heads in the room very negative and I saw a few that were nodding that they liked it. The important thing to remember is he talked about specific targets. He talked about working with communities that have defined the brand of what their community is going to be. The examples he gave and the targets they were addressing were young people that liked community centers or town centers and older people that liked community centers where they can walk to the grocery store. The important message I want to get across is you are going to have to look at what is the brand of Weddington going to be. I like a rural community and one acre lots and that is where I am coming from. This means some hard decisions. You can't be everything to everyone. If you do, you won't end up with a clear vision for Weddington that separates it from any other surrounding communities. Don't try to be all inclusive. Have a clear vision and stick to it.

Mr. Don Titherington – I live in Providence Woods South. We are aware that no changes to the Land Use Plan have been finalized. We are also aware there have been some comments in several of these meetings which seem to be counter to what our Town Council's platform was when they ran. That has created some concerns. After speaking with several neighbors, it became apparent that many were not aware that the Town Council can actually change the Land Use Plan. Our Homeowners Association Board thought it was important to notify our community of this Land Use Plan work that is going on and let them get engaged with the process which is very important. Several of the neighbors that I spoke to said, "I sent a survey in and I saw the results. Aren't they reading it?" We had another neighbor state, "This has come up before and was voted against by our elected officials. Like other social issues I guess that they will just keep coming at us until they get what they want." I don't think that is really what the Town of Weddington wants. We started a petition that was sent to approximately 90 people via email. We have over 60 signatures. As a matter of record the majority of the respondents were empty nesters. They live in Weddington and they love our community and have a high response rate. I would like to read for you very simply what we asked and what people responded to.

We the undersigned petition for the Weddington Town Council to adhere to the results of the survey in developing the Land Use Plan. Specifically to retain our current R-40 and R-CD zoning and to limit commercial development in the existing area around the Weddington Corners Shopping Center that has already been approved in the Land Use Plan. *He read some of the names for the record.* We do love Weddington. It is a unique place but more importantly our intent in doing this is to let the Town Council know that there are many voices in Weddington that love Weddington and want to keep it the jewel it is.

Mr. Harry Welch – I grew up in Charlotte. I live in Providence Woods South. Ten years ago we moved from Southpark to Union County. We had everything there - the mall, YMCA, neighborhoods that were crammed on ¼ acre lots. We chose to move to Weddington because of the quality of life. This is a special community. It has a lot to offer. We could have chosen Waxhaw, Indian Trail, or Matthews but the fact that Weddington had restrictions on homes being on one acre was very appealing to us. We were in a tight neighborhood in Charlotte. That is one of the reasons that we chose Union County and we chose Weddington because of the way the land is used and the fact when our kids were younger (10 years ago) they could ride their bikes and not have to worry about a lot of traffic or situations that caused a lot of problems as with a high volume neighborhood. If a decision was made to move forward and allow us to build higher density neighborhoods what will separate us from Waxhaw or other communities in this area? The shopping malls will come. It doesn't create a special atmosphere like we have in Weddington. I believe firmly this community is an attractive community. This is what people are seeking especially people moving in from out of state and out of this area. My suggestion and encouragement is to leave what we have special and not try to make us like Indian Trail, Waxhaw, etc.

Mr. Craig Hazeltine - I am very much in favor of keeping the current zoning as it is and limiting commercial development to where it currently is. The citizens of this community have two ways to speak. One is provided by a survey provided by the Council. We have done four since 2002. The other way is to vote. I believe everyone up here (Barbara I am not sure about you) ran on a platform of maintaining the current one house per acre and limiting commercial growth to where it is. The citizens of this community have spoken loud and clear. I assumed we are going forward with a plan that is basically just redoing what we have and moving forward and to this day, other than the Mayor, I don't know your position on anything. I don't know what you are considering and where you are considering what. All I am asking is what is your position? What do you want to do where? Then we can debate that. Right now people are being told they are misinformed. They are not misinformed; they are uninformed. They really do not have anything to go on. It is frustrating. There are a couple of things I request. Put a position together for what you are considering and debate those facts. Once the plan is done give us a 30-day period to review it.

Ms. Cheryl Klink – I have lived here for 15 years and am the Vice President of the Weddington High School PTSO. My husband and I selected Weddington for many of the reasons that everyone is saying - for its rural character, low density housing, low taxes and great schools. Many people have also moved here for those same reasons. The surveys you have sent out have shown this. In this country we teach our children that our form of government is a representative democracy. Reasonable expectations are that Town Councils follow the wishes of the majority. Why are we even considering these changes? Our current Land Use Plan has development in the northeast quadrant. We are not against commercial development. We just don't want it scattered throughout our town. Why can't it be kept there? We have commercial development all around us in Wesley Chapel, Indian Trail, Stallings and Charlotte – all near by. We do not live in the type of community that has sidewalks where people could walk to a restaurant. That is not what Weddington is. I have great concern about the safety of our students if commercial development is allowed on the corner of Twelve Mile Creek and Weddington Road. Currently there are 1,365 students in our high school. We have 34 buses coming and going each day. There are 477 cars that drive to and from school. A lot of those cars have more than one student in them. We have 500 cars that go through the car pool line every morning and evening. The school has 125 staff members. Traffic is terrible. There is one crossing guard trying to let through traffic go by. If we allow this development there

it is going to create a traffic nightmare. It will be very unsafe for our students. The 8th grade enrollment for next year is 1,440 students and by 2015 we could have 1,500 students in the high school. Development on that corner is not a good idea for the safety of our students. Given the fact that the Land Use Plan is being re-written, I also agree that we be given an appropriate amount of time to review this. I think a 30-day viewing period would be a good option for us to look at this plan.

Mr. Richard Natale – I live in Steeplechase. I moved here in 1988. I am 82 years old; I am not ready for the Old Folk's Home yet and when I am I don't think I need someone to build it here in town. There is plenty going out Weddington-Matthews Road. I have a strong feeling that several of the Councilmembers don't have an open mind when it comes to listening to the folks. At the last couple of meetings I have been to obviously they have not listened to what we have to say. They went along with their own agenda. There are enough people here speaking now and I think they should get the message. If the Planning Board has a meeting without the Council trying to influence them that is the way it should be. All the surveys that I have seen have been 100% against commercial development. Why don't you pull the surveys out and look at them?

Ms. Annette Baker – I live at 1289 Greylyn Drive. I have been here for 25 years. I moved here because we had R-40 zoning and low taxes. Weddington was formed because people were tired of paying taxes and because of the growth and craziness that was going on in Mecklenburg County. Weddington was formed as a residential town. I am tired of coming here and fighting this Town Council all the time. I have spent numerous hours of my life fighting this Town Council wanting to change what Weddington was formed for. It was formed to be a residential town. We don't want commercial and multi-family housing. If you want that, it is in every town around us. If you want to vote for this stuff, you need to quit your job here, sell your house and move to any of these little towns that are just right around us. I do not understand why you want to come in and change...

Councilmember Thomisser called Point of Order and felt the speaker was beginning to become out of order.

Mayor Davidson - I think the speaker is in order. Would you like to vote on as a Council?

The Council allowed Ms. Baker to continue.

Ms. Baker - I am tired of things getting rammed down our throat. We had R-CD rammed down our throat when we didn't want it. We didn't want the commercial growth that was voted on the last time that I was here across the street and yet that is coming here. We don't want it here.

Item No. 3. Adjournment. Councilwoman Harrison moved to adjourn the March 11, 2013 Special Town Council Meeting. The vote on the motion is as follows:

AYES:	Councilmembers Harrison, Hadley and Mayor Pro Tem Barry
NAYS:	Councilmember Thomisser

The meeting adjourned at 6:33 p.m.

Walker F. Davidson, Mayor

Attest:

Amy S. McCollum, Town Clerk