

**TOWN OF WEDDINGTON
SPECIAL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, MAY 10, 2010 - 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 May 10, 2010, at 6:00 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 and Town Planner Jordan Cook

Absent: None

Visitors: Barry Moose, Nat Hunter, Rick Baucom, Scott Cole and Barbara Harrison.

Item No. 1. Open the Meeting. Mayor Nancy D. Anderson called the May 10, 2010 Special Town Council Meeting to order at 6:05 p.m. There was a quorum.

Item No. 2. Weddington Transportation Issues. Mr. Barry Moose – The issue of the access at Weddington Corners has been up and down. I hate to start off my conversation with the issue of the signal. I should have gone with my own engineering judgment and been done with it. I knew at the very beginning that a signal would not work there. Raleigh has come to that same conclusion that a signal will not work at the northern entrance of Weddington Corners. With that off the table we did go back to the drawing board to see what we could do. We do strongly feel that a median break located at the gymnasium drive is an appropriate location and the ultimate installation of the signal. It gives enough spacing to allow traffic to flow through the area much better. Raleigh has endorsed that as well. We are proposing to go back to the original design of a directional left-over at the northern entrance of Weddington Corners, allow a break and we are going to build that as part of construction. It will not have a signal to start with but will allow a break there with the ultimate idea that once connector roads are connected later back over to the shopping center that it will eventually warrant a signal. We will install a signal at that point. We have two options as far as getting left onto Highway 84. The preferred option of the Division Staff is the continuation of the back entrance into the shopping center. The other alternative is a signal that will only allow left turns out of the shopping center. It will not allow left turns in but will allow left turns out. We don't like that idea because of the mechanical operation. They fail from time to time. It will also create congestion inside the shopping center parking lot. We feel like the back entrance as a driveway nothing can go wrong but a pot hole every now and again. It is low impact from a maintenance standpoint. It is something that we could build and give back to the shopping center as a driveway. We also can build, if the Town is in support of it, a connector road from that driveway utilizing part of the Town driveway here to get up to the upper tier of the shopping center. There is really not a good practical way to get to the upper tier unless we provide that connector. We are talking about building the driveway into the main shopping area but also build a 16' wide driveway that would carry you right between Town Hall and the upper tiers of those businesses. We can modify the island. That is still plausible but not quite as desirable. We will go back and analyze the issue of a signal at 84 and Matthews-Weddington Road. We are in favor of a signal there. That is the best we will be able to do as far as access, then people can come out to the light and go left and right. Our recommendation is to put in a break at the gymnasium driveway, put in a back entrance with connection to the upper tier and then we will go back and look at whatever location is warranted for a signal. If a roundabout would last 20 years it still may be a good investment.

Mayor Anderson – How much of that cost would transfer to the Town?

Mr. Moose - I am not prepared to answer how much it would cost. I would like to have the Town participate to some degree but we created the problem so I think we should fix it. I would try to take ownership of that and be the primary person funding it.

Councilmember Jerry McKee - The left turn into the activity center, is that just going to serve the activity center?

Mr. Moose - Right now it would.

Councilmember McKee – What good does that do the shopping center?

Mr. Moose - Eventually you can build a tie in road back over to the shopping center. As the property develops or as the shopping center and gymnasium want to work together they can put in a tie in road. We talked about putting something in front of the gymnasium now that would be an easy connection. That could be done now. That would be internal and private and off premises.

Citizen - At this point nobody can come into the shopping center coming south from Charlotte.

Mr. Moose – The directional left will still be there.

Citizen - There will be a turn there just not a stop light.

Mr. Moose - There will not be a left out. There will be a left turn in which is the primary move. Then to go left to continue to head south they would have to come out at 84 and go to the right to the traffic light. We are going back to the very original design which would allow that.

Councilmember Werner Thomisser – At the Activity Center, there will be full movement so people can merge to the left and then make a u-turn.

Mr. Moose - It will be a full movement left in and out. We will build a left turn lane at that location so people could do a u-turn there if they wanted to but it will be designed just like it was if there was a median opening so there will be a left turn in but we would not restrict a left turn out. Once that location generates or warrants for a signal, we would come back and put a signal up at that point.

Councilmember Thomisser - People leaving the shopping center they would have to go across two lanes of traffic and get into the turning lane where the full movement is – correct?

Mr. Moose - If you want to continue southbound on 16 you go out the back entrance or you go out one of the right in or right out driveways at this upper tier and turn right, go to the signal and turn left at the signal.

Citizen - Will there be signage in the shopping center or will there be others in the shopping center responsible for the sign?

Mr. Moose - We could potentially consider putting the signs up at the entrances. Something internal to the circulation would be the shopping center's responsibility. We could put a route marker that says to go this way with an arrow.

Citizen - To proceed south on 16 from the shopping center - how many lanes will one have to cross over?

Mr. Moose - You would not have to cross any lanes. You would have two choices. If we build this back entrance, you could go out the back entrance, turn right on Matthews-Weddington Road, come up to 84, turn right again, go to the signal and turn left. Or you could come out one of the right in or right out driveways and you could turn right and go to the left turn lane at the signal and turn left. There will be two lanes there. That is our concern about not breaking this concrete island on Highway 84 because of that particular queue. The ideal way would be to come out the back way. You would not be restricted. You could come out one of the entrances that will access 84 and turn right there and go to the signal and turn left.

Citizen - There will be one right turn lane at this point on to north 16?

Mr. Moose - One right, two lefts and one right straight through - one right lane going north, two left lanes to turn south.

Ms. Barbara Harrison - Have you looked at the traffic patterns Monday through Friday? The church people drop off their children and then they pick their children up. Between 12:15 and 1:00 pm you will see traffic backed all the way down past Weddington-Matthews Road because people are getting out. Have you looked at staging that light? Would you look at it once you put in the barrier because that is a lot of traffic at that time and then at 1:15 there is nothing? For about 45 minutes in the morning and afternoon it is backed up.

Councilmember McKee - The Weddington Church Road is going to be relocated to come out near that pond. When that is completed, there will be a stop light there and that entrance to the church will be entrance only – there will not be an exit. All exits from the church property will be down to the stop light.

Ms. Harrison - I see staging lights all over Charlotte.

Mr. Moose - We are working on the other issue with the church. We are going to realign Weddington Church Road further down. There will be a signal there. What we are going to do is make this an entrance only. The church is on board with that. One of the biggest issues was the encroachment of Verizon. There is a Verizon tower where we want to build the road. We will have to dodge the Verizon tower.

Ms. Harrison - Is that concurrent with what you are doing?

Mr. Moose - At this stage of construction we have probably lost the opportunity to do it with this contract but we are designing it locally at the division level. We are going to fund it using the same funding source that we are building 16. We will let it as a separate contract right on the heels of completion of this one. I am asking Matt and Rick to go ahead and build enough of the 16 project so when we go to build that we won't have to get into 16. We can tie on without impacting 16 again.

Ms. Harrison - So for the interim can you do a staging light then? The traffic goes down quite far on 84.

Mr. Moose – What are they trying to do? Go straight across.

Ms. Harrison – Yes - There are 50 – 60 cars.

Mr. Moose - That would be taken care of with the signal.

Mr. Scott Cole - It sounds more like a queuing problem coming out of the church. Not necessarily a signal problem.

Mr. Moose – I do not think that will be an issue. We will put that signal in as it was designed until we get the road built and then we will change the phasing of that signal to accommodate the new road. I don't think that will be an issue because we will be assigning dedicated green time to the left turn lane. What the roundabout does is the church property on this side of Highway 16 and any future housing development or property that develops on that side you can go to the roundabout and do a u-turn.

Councilmember Thomisser - What is going to happen in the area of the road into the activity center?

Mr. Moose - We are not going to build a road into the activity center. We are going to provide a median break.

Councilmember Thomisser - Right now you can get into the Activity Center going north on 16. What is going to happen in the vicinity of that driveway on 16?

Mr. Moose - That is where we are talking about having a median break. We are going to have a median that will restrict that driveway. We are going to build an intersection type of facility there. If you are in the activity center driveway we will not be restricting the left turn out. That is the only difference from what we are doing out here at the northern entrance of the Weddington Corners Shopping Center.

Councilmember Thomisser - If you leave the driveway of the activity center and want to go south on 16, you go across two lanes of traffic and make a left?

Mr. Moose – Correct.

Councilmember Thomisser - What if you were going north on 16 and you merge into the outside lane – would you be able to make a u-turn and come south?

Mr. Moose - We can look at maybe providing a slip ramp. That movement would not be restricted. To make it safe you would need to provide enough asphalt to allow a car to get out of the through lane. I am not sure if we have considered that in the design. I don't see any reason why we couldn't allow that u-turn.

Councilmember Robert Gilmartin - Why would anyone turning north on Providence Road do a u-turn there?

Mr. Moose – For somebody that accidentally gets out of the shopping center and decides that they need to get south and they are headed north that would be their first opportunity to do a u-turn back around. I see some value there.

Mayor Anderson – There is a turnaround at Highgate also.

Mr. Moose - If it is just a couple hundred yards, we probably want to encourage people to go there for that would be a better design to build a u-turn.

Councilmember Thomisser – Let's talk about the intersection at Highway 84 and Weddington-Matthews Road. You said that you would consider a traffic light at 84 and Weddington-Matthews Road?

Mr. Moose - Yes, we would go back and do an analysis.

Councilmember Thomisser - Would there be something in the pavement on Weddington-Matthews Road so that if two or three cars back up the light will change so you can make a left?

Mr. Moose - Just about all of our signals now are actuated. They all have a loop which is a detector that will pick up the queue of traffic and that will be part of the design of the signal and certainly once the computer picks up those detections it will signal the cycle to give a left turn phase at that location.

Councilmember Thomisser - The light at Weddington Matthews Road and Highway 84 would most of the time be green.

Mr. Moose – In theory, correct.

Councilmember Thomisser - How far down the road would that be?

Mr. Moose - We need to go back and do the analysis. We need more data. It would be a matter of us trying to put that in motion. If it doesn't meet warrants we would have to wait until it does meet warrants before we could consider a signal. I want to look at the roundabout one more time. I don't want to build something that will fail in five years. That is not a good use of public dollars. If it is something we can get 20 years life out of before it fails then that is a wiser investment. It may be worth considering a roundabout if we can get some extended 20 year life out of it.

Councilmember Thomisser - You need 150' diameter for a roundabout.

Mr. Moose - That is typically the inscribed diameter for the roundabout.

Councilmember Thomisser - It looks like it is tight there.

Mr. Moose - It is designed to allow WD50 which is a short 18 wheeler. It is not your long 67 foot trailer. School buses, fire trucks, etc. should not have an issue at all. The inside of the roundabout has a standup curve that is 10' wide.

Councilmember Thomisser - How big is the roundabout on Potter Road?

Mr. Moose – I believe 150'. Every time we build a roundabout we learn something new. The one at Potter is one of the first ones and there are things about it that I would not do again. We are making the outside radius wider.

Councilmember Thomisser - Who pays for the roundabout?

Mr. Moose - Since I consider this issue part of DOT's creating the problem, I will certainly pursue funding the majority of it. We provide the basic services. If you want an upgrade then I would look to the Town to upgrade the difference.

Councilmember Thomisser – When we talk about the access road, would it be necessary to cut the trees down behind the Animal Hospital?

Mr. Moose - We need to look at that more. The design that came out of Raleigh showed it going right through the middle of the Town property. I did not like that design. We were trying to do right at the edge of the Town property. Maybe we could negotiate some property from the adjacent property owner. From a constructability standpoint that is better because we don't have near the difference in grading

elevations plus that gives you a natural turn. We would try to avoid the trees. I would like to have an official action from the Town endorsing these ideas so we can get started making the changes. The only way I could get this back entrance done is to do a small contract or do it with my own forces so we can beat the schedule and not delay the contractor any more than we have to. I need this quickly. We are in the construction season. This project is to finish this year. Scurry needs to finish 84. We are holding them off. We need to do something so we can go ahead and get started. Our board member manages the shopping center. The typical funds that I would use for that would be what we refer to as small construction funds. That being a distinct conflict of interest, the only funds we have to build that are with my maintenance funds. I don't expect that to be more than \$80,000. It is worth getting it done.

Councilmember McKee - Are you assuming that the Town will donate the right-of-way?

Mr. Moose – Yes.

Councilmember McKee – Regarding Highway 84, the left in, left out from the church property offices that are across the street from this shopping center area, how would employees and people who come to do business there be able to get in and out?

Mr. Moose - They would have to come up to Matthews-Weddington Road and do a u-turn. If they do a roundabout then it would be a natural movement for them. If they put a signal in they would have to get in the left turn lane and do a u-turn as people turning left get the right-of-way.

Councilmember McKee - They would turn right out and go the roundabout that has not been approved or don't even know if we will build it or not?

Mr. Moose - Or they could go to the signal and get in the left turn lane and do a u-turn.

Councilmember McKee - What about left in?

Mr. Moose – There would not be a left in.

Councilmember McKee – How would they get in to go to work?

Mr. Moose – It is not going to be good either way. We do not guarantee access anywhere. We have gone through a public hearing process. These issues were not raised during that public hearing process. We have gone through the right-of-way acquisition phase. These issues were not raised.

Councilmember McKee - Yes they were. I was in charge of the right-of-way with the church. We talked with Larry Helms about it.

Mr. Moose - It was paid in damages then at that phase. The only reason we are here tonight is it is the right thing to do. We have done our due diligence with this. I don't like what that due diligence was so that is why we are here tonight. It is not going to be desirable no matter what. There is too much traffic here and there are not enough connector roads and not enough interconnectivity in the area. There is not enough network. We are forcing the cars to use one or two different roads. So when you do that and you compact all the traffic on those one or two roads you will have to face these issues. That is what we are looking at now. It is not desirable.

Councilmember McKee – An idea is to shorten that median to the end of where the church property is which would access the left in to the Town and left into the business here and give them that access. That is only from that property to where it is going to end is 100 yards.

Mr. Moose - The queue of traffic on Highway 84 is going to back up beyond that. That is what we are trying to solve with the median. We are looking at a design year which is 25 years away.

Mayor Anderson - I have met several times with Barry Moose. I do think you guys have looked at every which way you can and I do appreciate it.

Mr. Moose - This is not perfect given the circumstances we have and the fact we don't have a lot of connectivity. The public option is 84 and 16. When you have the amount of traffic that we are forecasting in design year it is a tremendous amount of traffic and we have to consider that. We have an overarching responsibility to take care of the public safety. As part of our analysis we have a standard of safety that is higher than most other people to consider when it comes to public safety. When we look at these things – I see the desire to provide better access but I have to do it in the context of doing it safely so that the public in general can maneuver these roads and feel safe doing so.

Councilmember McKee - When you restrict the movement, people will find unsafe ways to make better movements than go down ½ mile and make a u-turn. People are going to use their imaginations.

Mr. Moose – I do not think they have any choice the way it will be built. It is going to be restrictive.

Councilmember McKee - The way it is going to be now you can come down 84 if you want to go into the church property or anything on that side of the road, turn right and go to Hemby Road, make a u-turn and come back or you can go left and go turn around at Old Mill.

Mr. Moose - There is no other solution. You can come up to the light at 16 and do a u-turn there. Our critical data suggest that a u-turn movement is always safer than a left turn movement. The other choice would be to make a left, go up to where the new Weddington Church Road will be and do a u-turn there.

Mayor Pro Tem Barry - What specifically do you want the Town Council action to reference?

Mr. Moose - The primary thing would be this back entrance. Part of the bonding process guarantees a year warranty period. We capitalize on that. That is a good business practice for the public. We basically hold that year out. Any blatant defects that show up as a result of construction we will contact the contractors to come back and fix at no cost to the State. That is an advantage of the bonding process. Typically a blatant defect will show up within a 9 month period of time.

Mayor Anderson – When you use the term eventually warrant a signal. We have not gotten very good experience with getting signals put up here.

Mr. Moose – That is new ground. I have not covered that ground. Let's assume it is warranted. I am going to turn right around and champion that the project pay for it and go ahead and get it up. It probably would not be installed by this contractor but we will have it in motion so that it would get installed using these project funds.

Mr. Scott Cole advised that the light at Hemby/Beulah Church and Weddington-Matthews Road was moving forward. They are finalizing design and moving on to the right-of-way acquisition and utility relocation.

Mr. Moose advised that they are doing a roundabout study for the intersection of Tilley Morris Road and Weddington-Matthews Road. He stated, “We have not finished that yet. We would rebuild that island regardless of the study. There is no identified funding source for the roundabout if it is warranted.”

Citizen - What is your time period for the cut through back here?

Mr. Moose - As soon as I get the endorsement from the Town, I am going to start moving on that. I will build it with my own forces.

Item No 3. Adjournment. Councilmember Gilmartin moved to adjourn the May 10, 2010 Special Town Council Meeting. All were in favor, with votes recorded as follows:

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

The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Nancy D. Anderson, Mayor

Attest:

Amy S. McCollum, Town Clerk