



**TOWN OF WEDDINGTON
REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, OCTOBER 13, 2025 – 7:00 P.M.
WEDDINGTON TOWN HALL
1924 WEDDINGTON ROAD
WEDDINGTON, NC 28104
AGENDA ** AMENDED AT MEETING**

1. Call to Order
2. Determination of Quorum
3. Pledge of Allegiance
4. Additions, Deletions and/or Adoption of the Agenda
5. Conflict of Interest Statement: *In accordance with state law, it is the duty of every Council member to avoid conflicts of interest. Does any Council member have any known conflict of interest with respect to any matters on the agenda? If so, please identify the conflict and refrain from any participation in the matter involved.*
6. Mayor/Councilmember Reports
7. Public Comments
8. Presentation of Proclamation for World Polio Day
9. Public Safety Report
10. Consent Agenda
 - A. Approve September 8, 2025 Regular Town Council Meeting Minutes
 - ** ~~B. Approve Release of Performance Bond in the amount of \$2,624,900 for the Enclave at Baxley.~~
11. Old Business
12. New Business
 - A. Discussion of Website Upgrade to include AI capability and meet ADA requirements.
 - B. Discussion of Landscaping Weddington Road roundabout
 - ** C. Approve Release of Performance Bond in the amount of \$2,624,900 for the Enclave at Baxley
13. Code Enforcement Report
14. Update from Finance Officer and Tax Collector

15. Updates from Town Planner and Town Administrator

16. Transportation Report

17. Council Comments

18. Closed Session 143.318.11 (5)-*to establish, or to instruct the public body's staff or negotiating agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body in negotiating the price and other material terms of a contract or proposed contract for the acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange, or lease; or the amount of compensation and other material terms of an employment contract or proposed employment contract*

19. Adjournment



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MINUTES
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1. Call to Order

Mayor Bell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

2. Determination of Quorum

Quorum was determined with all councilmembers present: Mayor Jim Bell, Mayor Pro Tem Tom Smith, Council members Jeff Perryman, Brannon Howie, and Darcey Ladner

Staff: Town Administrator/Clerk Karen Dewey, Town Planner Greg Gordos, Finance Officer Leslie Gaylord, Deputy Clerk/Admin Assistant Debbie Coram, Permit Tech/Planning Assistant Jazlyn Moock, Town Attorney Karen Wolter, Deputy Grant Wrenn

Visitors: Anne Marie Cruz, Andy Anderson, Craig Horn, Ellen McLaughlin, Liz Holtey, Fred LeFranc, Bob Griswold, Mark Shepherd, Virginia Shepherd, Winsley Peter, Bill Deter, Anand Kulkarni, Bob Donnelly, Sonali Patel, Andrea Donnelly, Clayton Jones, Cathy Killough Brown, Christopher Neve, Robert Price, Tracy Stone, Reuben Radik, Venketesh Macherla, Santhosh Dasavathan, Dileep Kolli, Rostik Radik, Vijay Paka, Bill Cathey, Eric Anderson

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Council led the Pledge of Allegiance.

4. Additions, Deletions and/or Adoption of the Agenda

Mayor Bell requested to pull item 10.B. Approve Release of Performance Bond in the amount of \$2,624,900 for the Enclave at Baxley from the Consent Agenda and add it as New Business item C for discussion.

Motion: Mayor Pro Tem Smith made a motion to adopt the agenda as amended
Vote: The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

5. Conflict of Interest Statement: *In accordance with state law, it is the duty of every Council member to avoid conflicts of interest. Does any Council member have any known conflict of interest with respect to any matters on the agenda? If so, please identify the conflict and refrain from any participation in the matter involved.*

Mayor Bell read the Conflict of Interest Statement. No Councilmember had a conflict of interest.

6. Mayor/Councilmember Reports

Councilmember Perryman reported on the September Western Union Municipal Alliance meeting held in Stallings. He noted that there was not a quorum present, with only representatives from Stallings, Wesley Chapel, and himself in attendance. Though no formal meeting was held, they had informal discussions. He announced that the next meeting is scheduled for October 23rd at 4:00 PM at Waxhaw Town Hall.

Mayor Pro Tem Smith thanked the Council for taking up the resolution on World Polio Day. He serves as the Rotary District 7680 Polio Plus Fund Chair covering 14 counties in the area. He noted that polio is no longer endemic in the US since 1979 and currently exists in only two countries - Afghanistan and Pakistan - with 35 cases year-to-date, a significant reduction from 350,000 cases of paralytic polio annually when the eradication effort began 40 years ago. He invited anyone interested to join Rotary, which meets Thursday mornings at 7:30 AM at the Weddington Swim and Racquet Club. Mayor Pro Tem Smith also reported on his meeting with county DOT maintenance personnel regarding road conditions. He explained that due to state budget constraints, DOT had only \$600,000 total for maintenance of secondary streets in the entire county last year. Preservation treatments cost \$120,000 per mile while full asphalt resurfacing costs \$240,000 per mile. He noted that DOT is prioritizing the worst condition roads for maintenance. The upcoming state budget, once passed, will determine what roads can be resurfaced in the coming year.

7. Public Comments

Mayor Bell read the public comment rules, emphasizing that comments must be directed to the council, not the audience, and warning that anyone turning to address the audience would receive one warning before being stopped. He stated that anyone talking during the meeting would receive one warning before being escorted from the property.

Anne Marie Cruz 13624 Providence Road: Ms. Cruz addressed the conservation easement on the Hunter Farm. She used ChatGPT to explain the legal documents in simple terms, confirming that the conservation easement is a "forever promise" that runs with the land in perpetuity. The easement prohibits commercial or industrial use, subdividing for neighborhoods or shopping centers, and new roads or parking lots except for farming or education. The land must remain as open farm and nature space forever, regardless of ownership. She explained that the only way to end the easement would be through "impossibility of purpose," requiring agreement from a judge, the Catawba Lands Conservancy, and the NC Attorney General that keeping the land as open farm space is no longer possible. Cruz asked council members and residents to share this accurate information and correct any misunderstandings.

Phillip Anderson 13624 Providence Road: Mr. Anderson continued the discussion about the conservation easement, expressing frustration at hearing the same false claims for 30-40 years. He clarified that the three-year tax lookback applies to tax law when someone stops farming, not to the conservation easement. He emphasized that the conservation easement cannot be undone - it's a legal property agreement on file at the Union County Register of Deeds that binds any future property owner forever. Only agricultural, educational, and conservation uses are allowed, with the possibility of building one additional house on one acre by mutual agreement with the Catawba Land Conservancy.

Fred LeFranc 2109 White Magnolia Lane: Mr. LeFranc thanked Mayor Bell for helping get speed bumps installed at their community entrance and Officer Wren for attending their security meeting. He opposed the

release of Toll Brothers' bond due to pending issues in their community. He outlined five main concerns: cracks in the retention pond berms requiring engineering review; poor condition of the park area with dead grass and safety hazards for children; irrigation valves not connected to electricity causing \$7,500 water bills; dead trees in conservation areas posing safety risks; and roads with standing water issues despite DOT turnover. He also noted their HOA was forced upon them with only \$8,000 in reserves despite collecting \$52,500 in deposits from residents.

Eric Anderson 13624 Providence Road: Mr. Anderson expressed concern about the town's pattern of misreading legal contracts, referencing a previous lawsuit that cost the town nearly a million dollars. He warned that denying development proposals that follow town rules will result in lawsuits and urged the council to change the rules if they don't want development rather than denying compliant proposals.

Winsley Peter 3109 Weeping Willow Dr: Mr. Peter described their luxury neighborhood of \$1.2-1.7 million homes, now nearly two years old. He called the common areas an embarrassment compared to other Weddington neighborhoods, with the park full of potholes making it unusable for children who must play in the streets instead. He requested the council hold the bond until issues are addressed. He commented on the standing water issues in their cul-de-sac, noting there are no storm drains while another cul-de-sac has three. The water creates marshy, muddy conditions after every sprinkler use or rainfall, creating safety hazards for children playing hockey.

Sonali Patel, who paid a premium for a pond-facing lot, described ongoing issues with the pond area despite multiple visits from workers. She expressed concerns about pond safety with her young children, drainage issues, and the poor condition of common areas with ant piles and no grass, making it unsafe for children to play.

Cathy Brown 5012 Longview: Ms. Brown criticized the three-day deadline for submitting veterans' names for recognition, calling it insulting to those who gave years or decades of service. She contrasted it with Indian Trail's veteran memorial that has no deadline for a 100\$ fee and commented Weddington's approach was an embarrassment.

Reuben Radik, 2103 Green Cyprus Lane: Mr. Radik asked the council to help by holding the bond release to bring Toll Brothers to the negotiating table. He noted Toll Brothers received conservation easements allowing 0.3-acre lots instead of one-acre lots but now they are trying to walk away from responsibilities, forcing the HOA to handle everything.

Venkat Macherla, 2002 Green Cypress Lane: Mr. Macherla reiterated safety and infrastructure concerns including retention pond cracks needing professional inspection, the eyesore park with water logging, hazardous dead trees, and lack of maintenance instructions. He noted their HOA is out of funds despite paying over \$25,000 in annual water bill

8. Presentation of Proclamation for World Polio Day

Mayor Bell read Proclamation P-2025-05 proclaiming October 24, 2025, as World Polio Day. The proclamation recognized Rotary's global network of 1.2 million members and their role in launching PolioPlus in 1985 and establishing the Global Polio Eradication Initiative in 1988. It noted that polio cases have dropped 99.9% since 1988, with Rotary contributions adding to more than \$2.9 billion and protecting

over 3 billion children in 122 countries. The proclamation encouraged all citizens to recognize these efforts and join the fight for a polio-free world.

Mayor Pro Tem Smith explained that the global polio eradication initiative vaccinates approximately 450 million children annually at a cost of \$1 billion per year. He described polio as a waterborne disease transmitted through unsanitary water, particularly problematic in Third World countries with poor water and sewer systems. Two of three polio types have been eradicated worldwide, with only Type 1 remaining in Afghanistan and Pakistan. The effort involves 50,000 paid workers and hundreds of thousands of volunteers.

Craig Horn, President of the Rotary Club of Weddington-Waxhaw, thanked the council for the proclamation. He recalled the iron lung and its terrible impact on children who could not breathe on their own. He emphasized that Rotary is very close to eradicating polio worldwide and stressed the critical importance of not stopping now. Mayor Bell presented the proclamation to Mr. Horn.

9. Public Safety Report

Deputy Wrenn presented the September public safety statistics: 63 9-1-1 hang-ups, 29 wrecks including serious personal injury, 24 alarms, 10 animal services calls, 4 armed subject reports, 5 assaults, 2 home burglaries, 1 vehicle burglary, 52 business checks, 17 careless/reckless driving calls, 7 disturbances including domestics, 562 preventive patrols, 13 residential checks for vacationing residents, and 57 traffic stops, totaling 1,400 calls for service.

Deputy Wrenn reminded residents about October safety concerns with churches holding fall events and trunk-or-treats. He urged extra caution as darkness comes earlier, and children will be out. Many HOAs have encouraged the neighbors to set up at the end of driveways rather than having children walk up to houses, avoiding setting off doorbell cameras and creating a safer environment. He noted officers will patrol with cruise lights on.

Deputy Wrenn thanked residents for their calls, both positive and negative, emphasizing the importance of reporting suspicious activity. He shared an example of someone wearing a mask at a retail store who was arrested with hundreds of dollars in stolen merchandise, receiving an additional charge under North Carolina statute for wearing a mask during commission of a crime.

10. Consent Agenda

A. Approve September 8, 2025 Regular Town Council Meeting Minutes

**** B. ~~Approve Release of Performance Bond in the amount of \$2,624,900 for the Enclave at Baxley.~~**

Motion: Councilmember Perryman made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as amended.

Vote: The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

11. Old Business

No Old Business was discussed.

12. New Business

A. Discussion of Website Upgrade to include AI capability and meet ADA requirements.

Ms. Dewey explained that the town website must be ADA compliant by April 2027 according to federal requirements. She has begun obtaining quotes for upgrading the website, noting the current bare-bones site will require more significant investment.

Mayor Pro Tem Smith explained his interest in incorporating AI capabilities to make the website more user-friendly, allowing citizens to find information instantly rather than searching through multiple pages or calling staff. He believes AI features could be incorporated alongside ADA compliance upgrades, though they are separate components.

Mayor Bell shared his conversation with a computer science professor about concerns regarding AI and government computers. The professor advised considering return on investment, avoiding expensive solutions, looking for bots that could drive up costs, and limiting AI access to prevent distribution of residential records. Mayor Bell emphasized the need to ensure the town is protected and doesn't open itself up to security risks.

Discussion among council members confirmed this would be exploratory only with no money being spent at this time. Councilmember Brannon Howie noted that while ADA compliance by 2027 is required, much more research is needed before considering AI implementation. The council gave consensus to proceed with research on both ADA compliance and AI possibilities.

B. Discussion of Landscaping Weddington Road roundabout

Mayor Pro Tem Smith proposed exploring beautification of the roundabout by town hall. He explained that municipalities can beautify roundabouts within state guidelines using drought-hardy plants, shrubs, and smaller trees without adding power or water.

Council members discussed visibility concerns and previous attempts at roundabout landscaping. Councilmember Perryman recalled an incident less than two years ago where drivers went through plantings at Hemby and Providence, requiring replanting at town expense. He suggested ensuring the town wouldn't be responsible for repairs if someone damages plantings again.

Mayor Bell clarified this is exploratory only with no vote to spend taxpayer money. He also noted that landscaping on the town hall property has been delayed to avoid planting in summer heat but will be completed soon, along with replacement of damaged light poles.

C. Approve Release of Performance Bond in the amount of \$2,624,900 for the Enclave at Baxley.

Mr. Gordos explained this performance bond release request for over \$2.5 million encompasses the entire Enclave at Baxley subdivision. The project has gone through multiple names, developers, and staff members over nearly a decade. The bond covers infrastructure including roads, sidewalks, curbs, and the detention pond. Mr. Gordos noted this conservation development preserved 50% of open space in perpetuity with the other 50% developed with lots as small as 12,000 square feet. Under old zoning requiring conservation developments to include a neighborhood green, this central feature has become a key concern for residents.

He reported that roads have been turned over to NCDOT with final asphalt layer completed, sidewalks and curbs are in good shape, and the town's primary concern - the stormwater pond - was inspected less than two weeks ago by staff and LaBelle Associates. During inspection, contractors were actively regrading and reseeding around the pond to address soil stability issues.

Bob Wilson from LaBelle Associates confirmed they could reinvestigate cracks in the pond embankment mentioned by residents, which weren't evident during their inspection. He explained that roads have been accepted by NCDOT and cannot be overruled, the park/common area isn't covered by the bond, and dead trees in undisturbed conservation areas are natural occurrences not requiring developer action.

Mr. Gordos addressed the tree planting issue, explaining that approved plans from 2020 (before the current UDO requiring trees in front and back yards) only showed front yard trees.

Robert Price from Toll Brothers stated they want to be good neighbors and have been in conversation with homeowners for about a year since turnover. He noted they could have petitioned for bond release a year ago but waited to address concerns. He explained that multiple entities validate proper construction including professional engineers, surveyors, and the town's third-party engineering firm. Mr. Price offered to investigate the HOA funding concerns and continue working with residents on their issues.

Council discussion focused on the recent repairs to the retention pond only two weeks prior being insufficient time to ensure proper establishment, the ability to request NCDOT reinspection of roads, and investigating whether the sinking fund was properly funded under applicable regulations. Council requested staff to determine that the sinking fund was sufficiently funded, to reinspect the ponds and request NCDOT to reinspect the roads.

Motion: Mayor Pro Tem Smith made a motion to table consideration of the release of the Performance Bond in the amount of \$2,624,900 for the Enclave at Baxley until the November 10, 2025 Regular Town Council meeting.

Vote: The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

13. Code Enforcement Report

Mr. Gordos reported significant progress with nearly 50% of cases closed in the past month. The department levied fines of several thousand dollars and is actively collecting this revenue, which will fund the code enforcement department for several months. He announced that their current code enforcement officer will be phasing in a new inspector soon but expects the same positive level of service to continue.

14. Update from Finance Officer and Tax Collector

Ms. Gaylord reported completion of the first quarter with financial statements included in the packet. She noted quarterly updates on grant funds will be provided next month as they weren't ready for this meeting. The audit process is beginning and will continue for 30-45 days. Ms. Gaylord warned that Ms. Woods, the tax collector, has been receiving numerous property appraisal challenges with adjustments significantly higher than usual, which will reduce the initially billed tax amount somewhat. She confirmed this shouldn't materially impact the budget as the initial valuation exceeded budget projections.

15. Updates from Town Planner and Town Administrator

Mr. Gordos reported two projects pending for coming months. First is a conditional zoning revision to the ARIA subdivision (a 9-lot subdivision approved earlier) to use well water instead of public water, as allowed for rural subdivisions under 12 lots. Second is a Toll Brothers conventional subdivision on Weddington-Matthews Road that has undergone seven revisions and community meetings to address design issues. He noted developers are rushing to request bond releases, mentioning Weddington Glen (a Beechwood project) may request their remaining bond money in November. Mr. Gordos introduced Jazlyn Moock, the new part-time permit technician who started two weeks ago. She introduced herself as a Davidson College graduate with a political science degree and passion for zoning, excited to help with permit processing and customer service. Mayor Bell clarified that Jasmine is a part-time planning assistant and permit technician, not a full-time planner as some have claimed. Mr. Gordos confirmed the town still has only one planner.

Mr. Gordos announced that minor subdivisions are now posted online for transparency since strengthened major subdivision regulations have led to more minor subdivision applications. He also announced Bob Wilson from LaBelle will attend all future public meetings to provide engineering expertise when development proposals are considered, including preliminary review of projects before they reach the planning board.

Ms. Dewey reported that the family of the Eagle Scout who installed the Veterans' monument behind town hall has offered to update it. The deadline for name submissions was set to complete updates by Veterans Day 2025, though name collection will continue as an ongoing project. She also continues working on website upgrade proposals.

16. Transportation Report

Mayor Bell reported multiple conversations with DOT about the Rea Road extension and widening of Highway 16. DOT is confident the project will start in June/July 2029, with right-of-way acquisition already underway. He has requested a community-wide update from DOT but they are still tweaking plans including the Michigan left at Stratford and improvements at Rea Road. Mayor Bell continues working to minimize impact on homes, particularly in Stratford on Providence.

Mayor Pro Tem Smith added that Weddington Hills successfully negotiated for a cul-de-sac instead of a connection at Rea Road, with final agreement recently reached between the HOA, landowner, and state.

17. Council Comments

Councilmember Ladner congratulated staff on closing 50% of code enforcement cases, something she never thought possible when seeing the list two years ago. She thanked them for being strong and collecting fines.

Councilmember Howie thanked town staff, council, and everyone making the wheels turn at town hall. She thanked Rotary for the flags at 9/11 and making Weddington look sharp on important days. Councilmember Howie shared her terrifying experience during the elementary school hard lockdown a few weeks ago when she was in the building with her children. As officers walked down the hallway with weapons, it reminded her of a terrorist attack she had experienced, but this time with her children present. She thanked Deputy Wrenn and UCSO for their quick response, disposition, and seamless operations that got kids back on track.

Councilmember Perryman echoed the accolades and welcomed Jazlyn to the great team. He encouraged everyone to vote in the upcoming election regardless of political affiliation, noting it's a right paid for dearly.

Mayor Pro Tem Smith thanked everyone who stayed through the meeting and staff for their hard work. He welcomed Jazlyn and looked forward to continued financial updates, especially as the year progresses beyond first quarter when revenue starts coming in.

Mayor Bell noted he had optimistically expected a 30–45-minute meeting. He warned about election-time misinformation online, citing false claims about buying land and building a multi-million-dollar town hall or using taxpayer money for the LaBella study when grant funds were actually used. He encouraged anyone with questions to ask council or staff for clarification rather than believing inaccurate information.

18. Closed Session NCGS 143.318.11 (5)-to establish, or to instruct the public body's staff or negotiating agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body in negotiating the price and other material terms of a contract or proposed contract for the acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange, or lease; or the amount of compensation and other material terms of an employment contract or proposed employment contract

Motion: Councilmember Ladner made a motion to move into Closed Session according to NCGS 143.318.11 (5)-to establish, or to instruct the public body's staff or negotiating agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body in negotiating the price and other material terms of a contract or proposed contract for the acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange, or lease; or the amount of compensation and other material terms of an employment contract or proposed employment contract at 8:53 p.m.

Vote: The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

Mayor Bell called the meeting back to order at 9:52 p.m.

19. Adjournment

Motion: Mayor Pro Tem Smith made a motion to adjourn the October 13, 2025 Regular Town Council Meeting at 9:52 p.m.

Vote: The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

Approved: November 10, 2025

Karen Dewey
Karen Dewey, Town Administrator/Clerk

Jim Bell
Jim Bell, Mayor