



**TOWN OF WEDDINGTON  
REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING  
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2026 – 7:00 P.M.  
WEDDINGTON TOWN HALL  
1924 WEDDINGTON ROAD WEDDINGTON, NC 28104  
AGENDA**

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. Public Safety Report
9. Consent Agenda
  - A. Approve January 12, 2026 Town Council Regular Meeting Minutes
  - B. Authorize Tax Collector to Advertise 2025 Unpaid Real Property Taxes
10. Old Business
  - A. Discussion and Possible Consideration of Ordinance CZ 2026-01 - Application by Keystone Custom Homes for Conditional Zoning Approval for development of a 12-lot subdivision on 3009 Forest Lawn Drive (Parcel number 07150015) and Statement of Land Use Consistency
11. New Business
  - A. Consideration of the Release of Weddington Acres Improvements Bond #CMS0330993 in the amount of \$57,361.00.
12. Code Enforcement Report
13. Update from Finance Officer and Tax Collector
14. Updates from Town Planner and Town Administrator
15. Transportation Report
16. Council Comments
17. Adjournment



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WEDDINGTON TOWN HALL  
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, Councilmembers Darcey Ladner, Ellen McLaughlin, and Clayton Jones.

Staff present: Town Administrator/Clerk Karen Dewey, Town Planner Gregory Gordos, Deputy Clerk/Admin Assistant Debbie Coram, Finance Officer Leslie Gaylord, Permit Tech Jazlyn Mook, Town Attorney Karen Wolter, Deputy David Plyler

Visitors: Liz Holtey, Nicholas Kramer, Cathy Weaver, Richard Helms, Chad Emerine, Steve Fellmeth, Eileen Fellmeth, Bob Griswold, Darrell Parker, Bill Deter, Alan Danko, Rusty Setzer, Bill Caldwell, Heather Presson, Mark Pedersen, Tracy Stone, Christopher Neve, Christopher Johnson

**3. Pledge of Allegiance**

Council led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

**Motion:** Mayor Pro Tem Smith made a motion to adopt the agenda as presented.  
**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 council members had a conflict of interest.

## **6. Mayor/Councilmember Reports**

Mayor Pro Tem Smith reported on the recent WUMA meeting held on January 26th. He announced that the next WUMA meeting is scheduled for February 26th at 4:00 PM at Mineral Springs Town Hall, where topics including security will be discussed. Mayor Pro Tem Smith also provided an update on communications with Amelia Helms at NCDOT regarding upcoming road resurfacing projects. Several streets in Weddington are included in contracts currently being developed by NCDOT. The resurfacing work will use a different treatment than the pavement preservation method used last year, with an additional topcoat for a smoother finish. Smith indicated that once the final information about contracted work is received, it will be shared with the Town Clerk for posting on the website.

## **7. Public Comments**

Nicholas Kramer, 2156 Wedgewood, commented that he moved to Weddington six months ago, drawn by the town's safety and community character. He expressed surprise to learn that the current ordinance effectively prohibits backyard chickens for most residents due to the 150-foot setback requirement from property lines, which necessitates approximately four to five acres. He noted that he lives on a two-acre lot and has spoken with neighbors who support backyard chickens. Mr. Kramer referenced similar ordinances in Matthews and Union County that permit backyard chickens with setbacks between 10 and 50 feet from property lines and allow 10 to 20 chickens per acre. He offered to help draft a backyard chicken ordinance and expressed hope that his son could have chickens by Easter.

Chad Emerine, 953 Eagle Road, raised concerns about the Keystone development plan, questioning whether the yield plan confirms compliance with R-40 requirements. He noted that three lots in the back contain steep slopes and a creek, and he questioned whether they meet the 10,000 square foot minimum buildable space requirement for R-40 lots. Emerine also challenged the open space calculations, pointing out inconsistencies between the numbers presented in January versus February. He questioned how conservation space could decrease from 8.53 acres to 7.53 acres when only one lot was removed, despite the removal of over two acres of floodway, steep slopes, and right-of-way. He argued that the calculations suggest only 6.79 acres of developed land, which would be significantly different from previous submissions. Mr. Emerine also noted that the tree removal map shows different open space numbers and that wetlands and submerged lands are not clearly depicted despite being required in the inventory. He expressed concern that the project appears to be masquerading as compliant and noted that the applicant has had multiple attempts to get the submission correct, including two community meetings and two planning board reviews with missing items. He asked the council to deny the application.

Heather Presson, 2905 Forest Lawn, addressed comments made by Keystone at the previous meeting regarding the on-site property meeting. She disputed the characterization that neighbors were understanding and appreciative, stating that multiple neighbors were not in favor of the development. She reported that a neighbor had recently informed her about a sign placed on the property encouraging people to call and get on a VIP list, which she believed was an intentional effort to generate support for the project rather than an oversight. Ms. Presson expressed concerns

about the visual impact of the development, noting that houses would be positioned close to the road and that five properties would be visible from her two-acre lot. She raised concerns about school overcrowding, given the new homes being built in the area, and questioned the town's plans for addressing this issue. Ms. Presson noted her disappointment that the historic trees at the front of the property would not be saved, which had been a major concern raised by neighbors at the first meetings. She encouraged Keystone, if approved, to honor Mr. and Mrs. Helms' legacy with some type of namesake, given their long tenure in Weddington.

## **8. Public Safety Report**

This item was addressed later in the meeting. Deputy David Plyler presented the monthly report, noting that deputies conducted over 1,000 preventative patrols in January, involving visible presence in neighborhoods during day and night hours. He reported only two cases of fraud in January, down from six in December, and reminded residents to hang up on suspicious phone calls and contact law enforcement rather than providing information. Deputies conducted 88 traffic stops focusing on major roads including Providence Road, Rea Road, Antioch Church Road, and Beulah Church Road, as well as school zones. The department also conducted 15 residential checks for residents who were out of town for extended periods. Deputy Plyler encouraged residents to utilize the free residential check service by completing a form available on both the Town of Weddington and Union County Sheriff's Office websites.

Mayor Bell added information about a recent incident in which a deputy was injured in the line of duty near Longview in Weddington. During an altercation, the deputy attempted to radio for help but was in a communications dead zone. Unable to reach dispatch by radio, and with his body camera recording the struggle, the deputy threw down his cell phone while fighting and was able to activate the emergency button, which transmitted his coordinates and brought assistance. The deputy broke his hand during the incident and is currently out on leave. Mayor Bell emphasized the importance of addressing communication dead zones to ensure deputy safety.

## **9. Consent Agenda**

- A. Approve January 12, 2026 Town Council Regular Meeting Minutes**
- B. Authorize Tax Collector to Advertise 2025 Unpaid Real Property Taxes**

*Motion:* Councilmember McLaughlin made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented.

*Vote:* The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

## **10. Old Business**

- A. Discussion and Possible Consideration of Ordinance CZ 2026-01 - Application by Keystone Custom Homes for Conditional Zoning Approval for development of a 11-lot subdivision on 3009 Forest Lawn Drive (Parcel number 07150015) and Statement of Land Use Consistency**

Mr. Gordos presented the changes made based on feedback from the January meeting and the documents provided. He explained key terminology, distinguishing between "buildable land" and areas designated as unbuildable, specifically steep slopes within the floodway. He noted that the floodway is the area directly adjacent to the waterway, distinct from the larger floodplain that has potential for flooding. He indicated that specific questions about yield calculations should be directed to the applicant.

The project is a conservation-type subdivision that has been revised from 12 lots to 11 lots. Mr. Gordos noted that the applicant provided detailed calculations and made some key changes including the addition of a neighborhood green. Previously, the plan included trails but no neighborhood green, which code describes should be provided "to the greatest extent possible." The neighborhood green must be at least 10,000 square feet and surrounded by trees at 40-foot intervals, which the new plan provides. The changes also include a net gain in heritage tree save, 72 trees compared to the 65 in the previous plan.

Mr. Gordos reviewed code requirements for both conventional residential subdivisions (the yield plan) and conservation subdivisions (the proposed development). For the conservation development being proposed, 50 percent or greater must be retained as conservation land, with zero percent credit allowed for wetlands, submerged lands, steep slopes, floodways, or other compromised areas. According to the submitted calculations, the applicant meets UDO requirements.

The revised site plan shows 11 lots with the neighborhood green positioned at the front of the property. The plan includes a walking trail around the perimeter, approximately half-acre lots around a cul-de-sac, and a stub-out to vacant land to the south. The frontage area is supplemented by a thoroughfare buffer, necessary because utility lines prevent a tree canopy extending to the road as seen elsewhere in Weddington and on Forest Lawn. Supplemental trees are planted more densely at the back of the hundred-foot buffer and around the neighborhood green, spaced approximately 40 feet apart.

Mr. Gordos noted that the development agreement, part of the conditional zoning process, includes stricter aesthetic standards requiring more masonry building materials. One condition is that houses must be built according to the renderings presented in January.

Keith Fenn of Keystone Custom Homes thanked the council and stated that all metrics for calculations and defining factors between buildable, developable, common open space, and percentages are being met as referenced in the UDO. He addressed public comments, reiterating that they received no negative feedback during neighborhood meetings. Regarding the sign that was placed on the property, Mr. Fenn stated there was no malicious intention, it was triggered by their marketing department unbeknownst to the development team, and it was removed as soon as it was discovered. Mr. Fenn stated that the two main points of contention from the last meeting were the yield plan calculations and the green space, both of which they believe they have now addressed. The green space was added as recommended by the council, intentionally placed on flatter, usable land with no existing trees, then supplemented with plantings rather than clearing more trees in other areas.

Mayor Pro Tem Tom Smith asked why the green space was placed upfront in a treeless area when it could have been located between lots 3 and 4, preserving heritage trees and keeping houses positioned as they were previously. He noted that code does not require the green space to be wide open with no trees.

Mr. Fenn explained that with the hundred-foot buffer, they wanted to respect the relationship between the open green and the buffer, creating complete screening. Additionally, they wanted to keep houses as far from the street as possible. Mayor Pro Tem Smith countered that with the green between lots 3 and 4, they wouldn't lose the front trees, and it would provide more central neighborhood access rather than requiring residents to cross the street to reach the green.

Mayor Pro Tem Smith raised concerns about tree removal on lots 4 and 5 in steep slope areas, questioning whether steep slopes would be graded. Mr. Fenn and engineer Casey Whiteman explained that the storm drain must run through that area, but they are not grading within steep slopes that are in the conservation area. The steep slopes are excluded from open space calculations but are not being graded. Mayor Pro Tem Smith remained concerned about the appearance of grading on steep slopes given the town's intent to minimize disturbance in those areas.

Councilmember McLaughlin asked about the statement from Keystone's last presentation that neighbors were understanding and appreciative, noting that public comments contradicted this characterization. Mr. Fenn maintained his position about the neighborhood meetings.

Mayor Bell commented on what appeared to be clear-cutting of heritage trees throughout the development area. He noted that while trees in conservation areas are saved because they must be, the development area appears to involve removing all heritage trees. Mayor Bell suggested that shifting lots 1, 2, and 3 down and placing the green space between lots 3 and 4 could save trees that currently sit directly on building pads. He expressed concern about approving the project without knowing the final configuration, as the current plan appears to ignore tree preservation despite the purpose of the town's tree ordinance. Mayor Bell indicated he would prefer to see the revised plan before voting rather than approving something conditionally.

Councilmember Ladner noted that the planning board and staff approved the plan according to the UDO, and that conservation zoning is designed to allow the same density as R-40 (one house per acre) but on smaller lots to conserve trees and green space. She asked whether removed heritage trees fall under the tree save plan that imposes fees. Mr. Gordos clarified that trees within the buildable area can be removed as necessary for construction. The ordinance primarily applies to traditional one-acre lots, particularly protecting backyard trees. If a heritage tree outside the buildable area is killed or removed after approval, such as from aggressive grading that damages root systems, a \$50,000 fine per tree would apply.

Councilmember Jones stated his appreciation with the addition of green space and the removal of one lot. However, he expressed disappointment that all large front trees are now gone. He questioned whether slight adjustments in home sites could save some large trees. Mr. Fenn responded that the extensive buffer plantings would screen the view.

Mayor Pro Tem Smith emphasized that the issue regarding architectural standards is not just about having stone versus siding or color variations, but avoiding seeing matching grey stone houses next to each other as mirrors. Mr. Fenn stated this would not happen at this price point.

Mayor Bell reiterated that the goal is for the development to be a positive addition that increases surrounding property values and makes neighbors excited about the project, requiring a product that stands the test of time rather than being regretted later.

Council discussed sending the application back to the Planning Board for further examination regarding the tree save and architectural standards. Mr. Fenn expressed frustration that priorities seem to keep changing, making it difficult to know what will satisfy the council. Each time they address one concern, another issue emerges as the subject of focus, creating uncertainty about requirements.

Ms. Wolter outlined options for proceeding: the council could create a general condition requiring the applicant to present plans to the administrator demonstrating tree preservation with 11 lots before receiving any grading permits, with a specific number of heritage trees to be saved. Alternatively, the council could table the matter and require a revised plan to be brought back.

Councilmember McLaughlin suggested that bringing it back to the planning board would provide more review. Councilmember Ladner questioned why it would be sent back to the planning board when it passed their review according to the UDO, preferring to approve with conditions if the single outstanding issue could be addressed.

Mayor Pro Tem Smith suggested submitting a new plan showing what could be saved by moving the green space, without necessarily returning to the planning board. He emphasized that the green space does not need to be clear-cut and could include some trees. He wanted to see how the configuration could be worked to make it more acceptable, given his discomfort with approving the current plan that would remove numerous trees.

Mr. Banks asked whether it would be possible to meet with council members individually to show proposed revisions before the next meeting, avoiding surprises about new concerns. Council members agreed they could meet in groups of two to avoid quorum issues.

Ms. Wolter raised an additional issue regarding the development agreement. In paragraph 5(b) of the general conditions, which states that no two homes either adjacent to or directly across the street from each other will share the same front elevation, she requested adding "or primary building materials." The goal is to avoid a uniform-looking or all-white neighborhood, ensuring homes have different facades and different appearances.

The applicant expressed concern about requiring different primary building materials in addition to different elevations for adjacent or opposite homes, stating this could create practical difficulties. After reviewing elevation examples showing three homes with stone as the primary material but distinctively different appearances, discussion ensued about how to achieve visual variety without overly restricting building materials.

Mayor Bell emphasized the importance of avoiding a siding-dominated neighborhood and ensuring the development enhances surrounding property values. Various council members weighed in on priorities: Mayor Pro Tem Smith emphasized that different colors and material types provide substantial variation; Councilmember Jones cared about tree preservation over garage orientation; Councilmember Ladner prioritized trees over garage configuration.

Ms. Wolter suggested revising the language to require a "mix of materials" rather than prohibiting repetition of primary materials, ensuring combinations like stone with siding, brick with siding, or shakes with siding. The applicant agreed to craft appropriate language addressing architectural variety using correct architectural terms and reflecting the council's vision.

Councilmember McLaughlin requested visual renderings showing the view from the road, particularly regarding landscaping from the street. Mr. Gordos explained that Keystone had previously provided views from the road that appeared sparse compared to other properties in the vicinity, leading to requests for improvements such as berms and additional supplemental plantings. A landscape plan is not required by the UDO but is almost always added as a condition of approval. Council discussed tabling the project to allow the applicant to revise the plan by moving the green space between lots 3 and 4, exploring options to save large heritage trees potentially by using front-load garages where necessary, and crafting appropriate development agreement language regarding building material and elevation variety. The applicant will arrange meetings with council members in groups of two to review proposed revisions before the next council meeting.

**Motion:** Councilmember Jones made a motion to table Discussion and Possible Consideration of Ordinance CZ 2026-01 - Application by Keystone Custom Homes for Conditional Zoning Approval for development of a 11-lot subdivision on 3009 Forest Lawn Drive until the next Town Council Meeting.

**Vote:** The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

## **11. New Business**

### **A. Consideration of the Release of Weddington Acres Improvements Bond #CMS0330993 in the amount of \$57,361.00.**

Mr. Gordos presented the agenda item: Weddington Acres is located off Tilly Morris Road on the northern border of town. It is a gated, private road subdivision with two gates and two access points. Lots are sold individually for custom homes rather than being a master builder community.

The bond amount is \$57,361 and covers a simple asphalt road with no curb, gutter, significant storm infrastructure, or sidewalks. As a private road, it would be owned and maintained by the HOA.

Mr. Gordos stated that four months ago, he would have recommended against releasing the bond due to substantial construction activity on-site, with many pads still being graded and tree removal ongoing that could damage the road surface. He visited the site that afternoon and observed that

approximately half the homes are actively under construction and framed with substantial progress, and all lots are sold. The concern about releasing bonds prematurely is to avoid situations where lots remain unsold or where future construction equipment will damage infrastructure. Despite ongoing active construction, the infrastructure currently looks good. LaBella's recommendation included in the packet advised releasing the bond. Bob Wilson, the town's consulting engineer, was present to answer questions.

Mayor Bell noted he also visited the site that morning and observed six homes under construction with about half the lots still wooded with no activity. He questioned whether there is a threshold percentage of homes that should be completed before releasing bonds to protect against road damage costs falling to homeowners.

Mr. Wilson explained that several inspections were conducted for closeout, including extended dry detention basins that required clearing overgrowth for inspection. Deficiencies were found and corrected through approximately three site visits, with all requested corrections completed. He stated he felt comfortable recommending release despite some ongoing home building, as it is a gated community with substantial homes and minimal clear-cutting due to homes conforming to the land rather than creating flat building pads.

Mr. Wilson clarified that while NCDOT requires a high percentage of homes (approximately 75 percent) to be built before accepting a public street for maintenance, this bond is not for the road itself but for stormwater control measures. A previous bond for turn lanes held by NCDOT has already been released. The bond in question is specifically for stormwater infrastructure.

**Motion:** Councilmember Ladner made a motion to release the Weddington Acres Improvement Bond, CMS0330993, in the amount of \$57,361.00  
**Vote:** The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

## 12. Code Enforcement Report

Town Staff continues working on complaints received and mitigating issues. There are several inspections scheduled for the coming week.

Councilmember Jones asked whether staff had ever received complaints regarding chickens. Staff confirmed that there had been complaints requiring animal control involvement in the past. Council continued discussion on chicken regulations. Mr. Gordos clarified that hens are allowed but the issue is setback requirements for the coop structure and waste storage. The Council agreed to consider text amendments for the chickens in the future.

## 13. Update from Finance Officer and Tax Collector

Ms. Gaylord stated the monthly financials are included in the packet, along with quarterly updates on SCIF and ARPA grant money. She noted that while ARPA funds are gone, they are not yet closed out federally, so reporting has to continue. Budget discussions will begin at the retreat, and she invited council members to share any items they want included in budget considerations.

#### **14. Updates from Town Planner and Town Administrator**

Mr. Gordos provided a high-level update, noting that the latest Toll Brothers project, Morris Farm, was scheduled to go before the Planning Board at the end of January but was delayed by ice and snow storms. It is now scheduled for the planning board agenda at the end of February. Due to the tabling of the Keystone project, Morris Farm will not be heard by the council in March but will come before them in two to three months depending on planning board actions.

Regarding bond releases, Mr. Gordos noted that one bond was just released with approximately five more bond release requests in the pipeline. He and LaBella have been working diligently on inspections, which typically require three to four rounds to achieve compliance, as demonstrated by Weddington Acres. Many requests were received in October and November with applicants hoping for year-end completion, but staff has not felt comfortable bringing them forward until properly vetted. While it may feel like bond issues appear monthly, this is because multiple requests came simultaneously but were not all ready for approval.

Mr. Gordos reported several other potential subdivisions in the pipeline at various stages. He noted that around this time last year, there were approximately ten projects in the pipeline. Code revisions have slowed or eliminated many applications, contrary to any perception that the town is allowing all subdivisions. Staff is eliminating many requests due to higher standards and requirements.

Mr. Gordos stated he would be talking to the council at the retreat about the development process to provide information about what the UDO allows, doesn't allow, or might allow. He intends to discuss text amendments or proposed code audits so everyone is comfortable reading agenda packets and understanding UDO requirements.

#### **15. Transportation Report**

Mayor Bell reported that the new I-485 toll lanes are scheduled to open February 28.

#### **16. Council Comments**

Mayor Pro Tem Smith thanked staff for their work preparing for the meeting and the upcoming retreat. He thanked attendees for staying until 9:00 PM and participating, wishing everyone a great evening.

Councilmember Ladner thanked everyone for coming and thanked the Weddington team for their work. She expressed appreciation to Ms. Gaylord for spending many hours helping her understand the budget in detail, providing extensive time and expertise. She also thanked staff for organizing the upcoming retreat and training sessions, acknowledging the substantial work involved.

Councilmember McLaughlin announced that the Weddington Garden Club meets on the second Tuesday of each month at Siler Church at 9:15 AM, with the next meeting focusing on herbs. She mentioned the Constructive Plant Rescue group, which has volunteers who go to building sites before clearing to save native plants. She plans to meet with them to explore coordination

opportunities. Councilmember McLaughlin announced that Weddington Watch will hold a meeting on March 3rd at 7:00 PM at Weddington Methodist Church Fellowship Hall. Weddington Watch is a crime prevention group that allows neighborhoods to coordinate and share information about incidents to increase community awareness. She invited neighborhood safety committee representatives or interested parties to contact her for coordination.

Councilmember Jones noted that Deputy Plyler, new to Weddington patrol, grew up in Weddington and is "one of our own," welcoming him home.

17. Adjournment

**Motion:** Mayor Pro Tem Smith made a motion to adjourn the February 9, 2026 Regular Town Council Meeting at 9:01 p.m.  
**Vote:** The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

Approved:

9 March 2026

Karen Dewey  
Karen Dewey, Town Administrator/Clerk

Jim Bell  
Jim Bell, Mayor

**TO:** Mayor and Town Council  
**FROM:** Kim H. Woods, Tax Collector  
**DATE:** February 9, 2026  
**SUBJECT:** 2025 Authorization to Advertise

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In accordance with North Carolina General Statute 105.369(a), the following represents the total of unpaid 2025 taxes that are liens on real property to date:

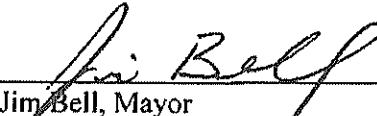
**\$ 95,324.46**

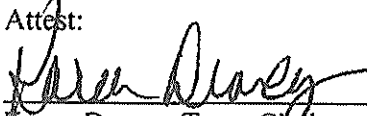
In accordance with General Statutes 105.369(a), I am hereby requesting authorization to advertise unpaid 2025 taxes that are liens on real property.

State of North Carolina  
Town of Weddington  
To the Tax Collector of the Town of Weddington

The Town of Weddington Tax Collector is ordered to advertise all unpaid 2025 taxes that are liens on real property, pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 105-369(a), -369(c).

Witness my hand and official seal this 9th day of February 2026.

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Jim Bell, Mayor

Attest:  
  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Karen Dewey, Town Clerk