



**TOWN OF WEDDINGTON
REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
MONDAY, JULY 13, 2026 – 7:00 P.M.
WEDDINGTON TOWN HALL
1924 WEDDINGTON ROAD WEDDINGTON, NC 28104
AGENDA**

1. Call to Order

Mayor Bell called the July 13, 2026 Regular Town Council Meeting to order at 7:00p.m.

2. Determination of Quorum

Quorum was determined with Mayor and Council all present: Mayor Jim Bell, Mayor Pro Tem Tom Smith, Councilmembers Darcey Ladner, and Ellen McLaughlin. One council seat was vacant.

Staff present: Finance Officer Leslie Gaylord, Deputy Clerk/Admin Assistant Debbie Coram, Town Attorney Karen Wolter

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Mayor Pro Tem Tom Smith led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Motion: Mayor Pro Tem Smith made a motion to approve 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 Councilmember had a conflict of interest.

6. Mayor/Councilmember Reports

Councilmember McLaughlin reported on an extensive month of activity. She coordinated approximately thirteen interviews total, personally interviewing seven council applicants and seven candidates for staff positions, and reviewed thirty-five to thirty-six applications. She attended a joint meeting with the Mayor, Brian Helms, and Erin Weddington. Additionally, she researched employee onboarding processes, evaluated background screening companies, and contacted the North Carolina League of Municipalities (NCLM) regarding training resources. She also held a substantive meeting with Keith O'Harron and Chris Faulk on the integration of Union County Urban Forestry into the Town's planning department, and conducted a call with LaBella regarding the park project.

Mayor Pro Tem Smith thanked Town staff for their diligence during the staffing transition period. He reported on the most recent WUMA meeting, noting that the meeting start time had been changed from 4:00 PM to 3:00 PM, and that the next meeting is scheduled for August 27th in Weddington. He noted that most member towns reported adoption of their tax rates at that meeting. He also briefly referenced ongoing matters related to CRTPO.

Mayor Bell expressed appreciation for the continued efforts of staff members Kim, Leslie, Debbie, and Jazlyn, acknowledging the additional hours and cross-functional coverage they had provided during the staffing transition. He also recognized the Waxhaw-Weddington Rotary Club for their placement of flags on holidays, specifically noting the participation of Mayor Craig Horn and Mayor Pro Tem Smith and his wife in the most recent flag installation and removal.

The Mayor additionally addressed the subject of public records requests, providing context on their frequency and associated costs to the Town. He noted that North Carolina's public records law, established in 1935 under General Statutes Section 132, was created for purposes of historical preservation, effective government, and public transparency. He cited several recent requests received between April and June 2026 from multiple individuals seeking records pertaining to various residents, town dealings, and development matters. He estimated that the first three requests alone involved approximately 8,000 emails at a cost of roughly \$3,000 in staff time, not including attorney review costs. A prior request from approximately eighteen months ago involved approximately 16,000 emails at an estimated cost of \$6,000. The Mayor emphasized that while he fully supports the right of citizens to request public records, he expressed concern about the financial burden on taxpayers when requests are directed at fellow residents rather than at governmental actions or decisions. He indicated that if the volume of requests necessitates hiring temporary staff to fulfill them, the Town may pursue its legal option to charge for that service.

7. Public Comments

Ann Marie Cruz, 13624 Providence Road, addressed the Council regarding the pending appointment to the District 3 seat. He stated he was not advocating for any particular applicant, as he

was not aware of the full applicant list. He focused instead on the importance of the process and what the decision communicates to the community. He encouraged the Council to select someone who has demonstrated a servant's heart, high moral character, a commitment to public service, and the capacity to thoughtfully consider all sides of an issue. He reflected on divisions within the town and challenged the Council and community alike to engage in productive disagreement rather than adversarial posturing. He suggested that trust is built not by unanimous agreement but by ensuring that people feel heard. He characterized the appointment as a defining moment for Weddington, expressing hope that residents would remember the Council as having chosen to build trust when it was needed most.

Tracy Stone, 1480 Longleaf Court, expressed the view that the Town's priorities were misaligned, and that the Council should return to baseline standards of service before undertaking new initiatives. She cited concerns about the condition of Town landscaping, missing street lighting, the absence of a Town newsletter, and significant staffing vacancies. She questioned the logic of hiring a temporary planner. She argued that a development moratorium would be an appropriate response to the current state of organizational capacity, and stated that she had independently researched the topic by contacting the NCLM and the UNC School of Government. She indicated that a senior assistant legal counsel at the NCLM confirmed that moratoriums are not illegal in North Carolina, and that a UNC School of Government representative provided her with NCGS 160D-107 and an associated publication. She submitted copies of these materials to the Council and asked Town Attorney Karen Wolter to cite a specific statute if moratoriums are indeed prohibited. She also raised concerns about vandalism and maintenance costs at Dogwood Park in Wesley Chapel and other nearby parks, questioning the wisdom of developing a new park given those circumstances. She concluded by asking who bears the cost of public records act compliance—the Town or an insurer.

8. Public Safety Report

Deputy David Plyler of the Union County Sheriff's Office presented the public safety report for the month of June 2026. Key highlights included:

- 550 preventative patrols conducted by Weddington deputies during the reporting period.
- Just under 100 business security checks performed, involving door checks and inspections for signs of breaking and entering.
- 90 traffic stops were conducted.
- Only 2 residential checks were completed. He encouraged residents to complete the free residential check form available on the Town of Weddington or the Sheriff's Office website prior to leaving their homes for extended periods.

Deputy Plyler highlighted a notable arrest that arose from the annual security briefing held with South State Bank. Following that briefing, bank staff contacted law enforcement when an individual attempted to open a fraudulent business account. Investigation revealed the subject possessed

multiple fake identification documents and fraudulent Social Security numbers, and was linked to upward of \$500,000 in fraud across numerous accounts. The individual is currently in custody.

The Mayor commended Deputy Helms for his hands-on assistance following a recent storm, noting that he joined residents with chainsaws to clear a downed tree from Antioch Road.

Councilmember McLaughlin inquired about the timeline for the implementation of a sergeant position to oversee deputies across multiple municipalities, as approved in the budget. Deputy Plyler indicated he did not have a confirmed date and offered to follow up by email with a definitive answer.

9. Consent Agenda

- A. Approve June 8, 2026 Regular Town Council Meeting Minutes**
- B. Authorize Tax Collector to Collect 2026 Real Property Taxes**
- C. Approval of CRTPO Memorandum of Understanding**

Motion: A motion was made to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Vote: The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

10. Old Business

- A. Discussion and Possible consideration of contract for public engagement with LaBella**

Councilmember McLaughlin led the discussion, explaining that she had reviewed the proposed contract from LaBella and found the scope of work insufficiently detailed. She had sought additional information—including survey timelines, postcard distribution frequency, and methods to ensure one response per household—but the supplemental materials provided did not reach the required level of specificity. She expressed support for the concept of conducting community market research before committing to a Phase 2 design engagement, noting that the 2018 community survey did not ask residents about specific park amenities or priorities.

Discussion followed among the Council regarding the overall utility and timing of additional surveys. Mayor Pro Tem Smith noted that two prior community meetings on the park had been held and were not well-attended. He expressed concern that ongoing surveying could serve as a mechanism for indefinitely delaying action, and stated his preference for the Council itself to establish a working group to define the design parameters, with community input invited through existing public channels. He emphasized that the Town has grant funds that may expire, sufficient reserves, and the potential for sponsorship contributions to offset costs—and that a park is a basic municipal function that Weddington has gone without for decades.

Councilmember Ladner raised the question of what action would follow survey results and whether the process risked repeating past inaction. A brief discussion also arose regarding the long-term condition of the existing Town Hall structure and whether future office space needs should factor into the park planning process. Mayor Pro Tem Smith noted that the current conceptual plans leave ample open space for any future facility needs.

After deliberation, Mayor Pro Tem Smith moved to forgo the Phase 1 public engagement survey and instead proceed directly to a Council working group approach for park redesign, retaining LaBella under Phase 2 of the agreement for design services.

Motion: Mayor Pro Tem Smith made a motion to approve the LaBella agreement excluding Phase 1 (the public engagement survey), and to proceed with Phase 2 with a redesign by Council.

Vote: The motion passed 2-1, with Councilmember McLaughlin dissenting.

11. New Business

A. Discussion and possible contract with Barbee Landscaping

Mayor Bell introduced this item, explaining that the purpose of the proposed contract with Barbee Landscaping is to clear and clean up the Town-owned park property on NC 16/85 in preparation for use by the Parks and Events Advisory Board. He noted that the property is currently maintained and insured, but requires removal of overgrown vegetation including privet, poison ivy, vines, and a large stump from a previously removed oak tree. Mayor Pro Tem Smith added that the overgrowth presents a safety concern and that the Town could be considered in violation of its own nuisance ordinance if the property were not addressed.

Motion: Mayor Pro Tem Smith made a motion to approve the contract with Barbee Landscaping to clear and clean up the Town park property.

Vote: The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

B. Discussion regarding amending the Town of Weddington Nuisance Ordinance

Code Enforcement Officer Matthew presented an audit of the Town's existing nuisance ordinance, which the Council had previously requested. He indicated that he also performs code enforcement for the towns of Davidson and Cornelius, and that his recommendations were intended to bring the Town's ordinance in line with regional best practices and to address common complaint categories. He emphasized that he was not advocating for or against any specific provision, and that the final determinations were at the Council's discretion.

Discussion touched on several proposed changes:

- Definitions (Page 3–4): The addition of a definition for "litter," which does not currently exist in the ordinance, was noted. Councilmember McLaughlin suggested adding "rodents" to the definition of "small dead animals" and asked whether a weight distinction for large animals should be considered. The Code Enforcement Officer noted that definitions in this section serve later enforceable provisions and can be expanded. Mayor Pro Tem Smith cautioned against overly granular regulations that could create an HOA-like environment, particularly given the diversity of lot sizes in Weddington.
- Overgrown Vegetation Exemptions (Page 6): Councilmember McLaughlin proposed adding clarifying language to the exemption for "areas designated by the Town as natural buffers or preserved open space," suggesting that the exemption be conditioned on the existence of an approved maintenance plan, to ensure that open spaces with maintenance obligations are not inadvertently exempt. The Code Enforcement Officer indicated that the existing language already requires Town designation as a precondition, but agreed that more specific language could be incorporated.
- The Code Enforcement Officer and Town Attorney clarified that nuisance ordinance enforcement applies only to conditions posing a threat to the general public, and that naturalized wooded areas on larger private lots would generally not be subject to enforcement. The distinction between residential and agricultural properties was identified as a priority clarification for the revised ordinance, given the number of larger agricultural parcels within the Town.
- Parking Regulations (Section 50-24): Discussion centered on lawn parking, specifically whether temporary parking associated with events such as parties or graduation gatherings could inadvertently trigger enforcement. The Code Enforcement Officer explained that practical enforcement timelines would typically render short-term temporary violations moot, and that a time-based exemption—or an explicit carve-out for vehicles parked solely within the right-of-way—could be added to address the Council's concern. It was noted that the existing ordinance already provides for a seven-day threshold before a vehicle is considered abandoned on a public right-of-way.
- RV and Camper Regulations (Section 9-19): Mayor Pro Tem Smith expressed concern about the provision allowing extensions to the 30-day temporary occupancy period for RVs and campers, questioning whether repeated extensions could result in indefinite occupancy. The Code Enforcement Officer clarified that extensions are subject to administrative discretion and are not automatic, and that the proposed ordinance language explicitly prohibits use as a

rental unit, permanent dwelling, separate accessory dwelling unit, or substitute for a required principal structure.

- Home Occupation Permits: A proposal to require a permit for home-based businesses was discussed. The Code Enforcement Officer noted this would create a registry of home occupations and ensure residents are informed of applicable regulations before commencing operations, thereby reducing inadvertent violations. Mayor Pro Tem Smith noted potential interaction with state statute and asked that the Town Attorney research any applicable state-level changes before the provision is finalized.

Town Attorney Wolter noted that the last two pages of the proposed amendments relate to the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) rather than the nuisance ordinance, and that those provisions would need to go through the standard UDO amendment process, including Planning Board review, and are not part of the nuisance ordinance action. The Town Attorney indicated she would incorporate the Council's comments and work with the Code Enforcement Officer to bring a revised draft back for Council approval at a future meeting. No vote was taken on this item.

C. Discussion and Possible action authorizing abatement of Code Enforcement violations

The Code Enforcement Officer presented three properties with outstanding code violations that had progressed to the abatement stage, meaning the full enforcement process had been exhausted without remediation by the property owner.

- 109 Foxton: This property had been subject to violations for unpermitted renovation work, minimum housing code deficiencies related to the unpermitted work, and improper handling of construction debris. A change in ownership during the enforcement process extended the timeline, but the new owners have since cleaned up the construction debris and applied for the required permits. The physical violation is substantially resolved; however, significant fines have accumulated, potentially exceeding \$15,000 due to the per-day accrual rate. The Code Enforcement Officer noted that courts are unlikely to enforce the full accumulated amount and that a reasonable negotiated fine, benchmarked to the estimated cost of municipal abatement (\$4,000–\$6,000), would be a more practical resolution. The Town Attorney recommended that a Council member be authorized to negotiate a settlement and report back at the next meeting.
- 4915 Beulah Church Road: This property has an outstanding violation for junk and debris located in the front and side yards of the home. While much of the accumulated material is in the rear yard—which is permissible under the current ordinance—some materials remain in front of the rear plane of the home in violation of current provisions. The Code Enforcement

Officer recommended proceeding with formal abatement: issuing a notice specifying the date of municipal action, securing contractor services to remove the non-compliant materials, and invoicing the property owner. He noted that sheriff's deputies should be present during abatement for safety. The Town Attorney explained that the Town may place a lien on the property for the cost of abatement, which functions similarly to a tax lien and carries priority over judgment liens. The Council directed that this property proceed to abatement.

- 4500 Homestead: This property has an outstanding violation involving construction debris—including roofing materials and a pallet of bricks—left on the lot following an abandoned development attempt and a period in which the property was used as a staging area for telecommunications installation. The Code Enforcement Officer noted that abatement costs may not be recoverable given the property's inability to perk and its low likelihood of sale. He presented the court order option as an alternative, though the Town Attorney noted that code enforcement liens carry higher priority and longer duration than judgment liens. The Council acknowledged the complexity of this case.

Following discussion on all three properties, the Town Attorney recommended that the Council authorize a single Council member to coordinate contractor procurement and abatement activities across the properties, with an approved spending ceiling.

Motion: Mayor Pro Tem Smith made a motion to authorize Councilmember Ladner to proceed with abatement coordination and contractor procurement for the referenced properties, with expenditure authority of up to \$20,000.

Vote: The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

D. Presentation by NBI Investments, LLC, for a proposed project, the Estates at Weddington, to be located on approximately 23 acres at 3832 Twelve Mile Creek Road (parcel numbers 06099006 zoned RCD, 06099006A zoned RCD, and 06099007 zoned R-40).

A representative of NBI Investments, LLC, accompanied by engineer Mason Creason of Civil and Environmental Consultants, presented a conceptual overview of the Estates at Weddington, a proposed 12-lot luxury residential subdivision on approximately 23 acres at 3832 Twelve Mile Creek Road, located across from Weddington schools. The property is split-zoned RCD and R-40.

The proposal calls for 11 new lots around an existing 12,000-square-foot home, which would be retained as part of the community and offered for sale. All lots are proposed at approximately one acre or greater, with the largest at approximately 1.75 acres. All homes would be a minimum of 8,000 square feet. The presenter indicated the development would feature a gated entry, monument

signage, and would engage established luxury custom home builders rather than national production builders. The anticipated price point for homes was estimated to exceed \$8,000,000.

Water service is currently available at the site. Sewer service is proximate, and the applicant is pursuing an easement, though the representative noted that the completion of a nearby treatment plant may be several years away. The property is believed to perk for septic with the exception of a small area in the rear. The development would use a roll-curb street design with a single point of ingress and egress, which meets the Town's threshold of fewer than 15 lots not requiring a second access point.

Interim Planner Melissa confirmed that based on a preliminary review, the proposal appears to be consistent with the Town's UDO, though a more detailed review would be required as the project advances. The Council received the presentation favorably, noting the project's compatibility with the Town's character and its potential to enhance surrounding property values. The applicant was directed to continue coordination with Town staff, the stormwater engineer, and applicable regulatory agencies. No action was taken on this item.

12. Update from Finance Officer and Tax Collector

Finance Officer Gaylord presented the June 2026 monthly financial statements, which represent the final month of Fiscal Year 2026. She noted that the statements are preliminary pending final accruals and payables. The Town ended the fiscal year with just over \$300,000 in net income, due in part to deferral of a \$125,000 mast arm expenditure. Quarterly special revenue fund updates for SCIF, ARP, and park grants were also included in the Council's packet.

Regarding the FY2025 audit, Ms. Gaylord reported that the submission deadline of June 30th was not met, and an extension appeal was filed with the Local Government Commission (LGC), which acknowledged receipt. Current auditor Ann Craven is preparing the audit and submission is anticipated by the end of the month.

Ms. Gaylord reported that a Request for Proposals for audit services was issued, yielding four responses with fees ranging from \$8,500 to \$21,000. Given that Fiscal Year 2027 has already begun and the FY2025 audit is already in progress, Ann Craven recommended continuing her services for the FY2026 audit as well rather than transitioning to a new firm at this time. Ms. Gaylord indicated that Ann Craven that due to Ms. Craven's age, this would be her final year of service, and that other

firms would be invited to resubmit for the FY2027 engagement. She recommended Council authorization to enter into a contract with Ann Craven for the FY2026 audit at a cost of \$11,880.

Motion: Mayor Pro Tem Smith made a motion to authorize staff to enter into an audit contract with Ann Craven for the FY2026 audit in the amount of \$11,880.

Vote: The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

13. Updates from Town Planner and Town Administrator

No formal report was presented, as both the Town Planner and Town Administrator positions are currently vacant. Mayor Bell acknowledged the continued efforts of staff members Kim Woods, Leslie Gaylord, Debbie Coram, and Jazlyn Moock during the transition period. The Mayor also noted that Ms. Moock would be departing for a full-time position, wished her well, and commended her contributions during the transition.

14. Update from Park and Events Committee

Gayle Butler, representing the Parks and Events Advisory Board, reported that the Board held its July 6th meeting and is continuing preparations for an upcoming two-day event titled "Weddington's Revolutionary Legacy – Camp New Providence," to be held July 31st and August 1st from 10:00a.m. to 3:00p.m.. The event will feature a portrayal of General Nathanael Greene in period character, a display of Revolutionary War artifacts including muskets, cannonballs, and period currency, a copy of the Declaration of Independence, and a book signing by author Mr. Anderson, whose work addresses Cornwallis's campaign in the Charlotte region. The event has been cross-promoted by the Museum of the Waxhaws. Ms. Butler indicated coordination with the Union County Sheriff's Department regarding the use of blank musket fire during the event. She expressed the hope that this event would become an annual tradition celebrating Weddington's Revolutionary War heritage.

Ms. Butler also reported that the Board has begun planning for the Town's Christmas tree lighting and is scheduled to hold a working meeting on July 28th to address the volume of planning items. She noted that the Museum of the Waxhaws has moved the Battle of Charlotte reenactment to their Waxhaw facility, and that a growing partnership between the two institutions is anticipated.

15. Transportation Report

Mayor Bell noted that coverage of the CRTPO matter and the I-77 South toll franchise situation has been ongoing in the news. He indicated that the matter remains contentious and that additional updates would be provided at a future meeting once there is more definitive information to report.

16. Discussion and Possible Action regarding District 3 Vacancy

Mayor Bell acknowledged all applicants who submitted applications and participated in the interview process, expressing appreciation for their time and willingness to serve. He noted that the appointed individual would serve the remainder of the vacated term through the next municipal election in November 2027, at which time the seat would be subject to competitive election.

Motion: Councilmember Ladner made a motion to appoint Tripp Soukup to fill the District 3 vacancy on the Weddington Town Council.

Vote: The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

Councilmember. Soukup was sworn in by the Mayor.

17. Council Comments

Councilmember McLaughlin thanked staff for their sustained efforts during the transition period and expressed appreciation to all applicants who participated in the District 3 selection process. She noted that her evaluation criteria included candidates' familiarity with current Town issues, longevity in the community, attitude toward commercial development, and awareness of long-term challenges facing Weddington.

Councilmember Ladner echoed appreciation for the efforts of Leslie, Debbie, and Kim, encouraging residents to express their gratitude when they encounter these staff members in the community.

Mayor Pro Tem Smith thanked all staff and all individuals who participated in the appointment process. He expressed appreciation for civic participation generally.

Councilmember Soukup stated that he has resided in Weddington since 2014, that his daughter will be attending Weddington Elementary School in August, and that he looks forward to greater engagement in Town affairs.

Mayor Bell stated that we may not always agree but we will always be cordial.

18. *Enter in to closed session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a) (3) and (6) to consult with Town Attorney.*

Motion: Mayor Pro Tem Smith made a motion to enter into closed session pursuant to NDGS 143-318.11(a)(3) and (6) to consult with Town Attorney at 9:23 p.m.

Vote: The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

The Council entered into closed session to consult with the Town Attorney on personnel matters.

19. Adjournment at 9:22pm

Mayor Bell called the meeting back to order at x:xx p.m.

Motion: Mayor Pro Tem Smith made a motion to adjourn the July 13, 2026 Regular Town Council meeting at xx:xx p.m.

Vote: The motion passed with a unanimous vote.

Approved: _____

Jim Bell, Mayor

Debbie Coram, Deputy Town Clerk

The meeting adjourned following the conclusion of the closed session.