

VILLAGE OF WESLEY CHAPEL
COUNCIL MEETING MINUTES
March 17, 2009 – 6:00 P. M.

The Council of the Village of Wesley Chapel, North Carolina, met in the Fellowship Hall of the Wesley Chapel United Methodist Church at 120 Potter Road South, Wesley Chapel, North Carolina, with Mayor Tracey Clinton presiding.

Present: Mayor Clinton, Mayor Pro-tem Croffut, Council Members Bradford, Horvath, Pierce

Others Present:

Village Clerk/Finance Officer: Cheryl Bennett (arrived late 7:10 pm)

Planning/Zoning Administrator: Joshua Langen

Concerned citizens: Carol Mullis, Julie Brown

Meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM and a quorum was present.

1. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE / INVOCATION

Mayor Clinton led the Pledge of Allegiance and the invocation was given.

2. JOINT MEETING WITH BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

Union County Commissioners Tracy Kuehler, Parker Mills, Lanny Openshaw and Kim Rogers attended.

Mayor Clinton gave a brief history of the Wesley Chapel area. A map of the Village showed our jagged borders, and how many nearby unincorporated areas can impact us. Our population was estimated by the State in 2007 at 4,783, however there were 4,283 2007 voters which leads us to believe the actual population is higher. Our tax rate is at the low rollback rate of 1.65 cents per \$100 valuation, we have two part time and one full time employees; and the county is collecting our taxes. Mayor Clinton discussed the Master Plan done by UNCC, and the committees that arose as a result. Our Master Plan Survey showed an overwhelming majority want to maintain the rural character and maintaining agricultural activity, as well as support development of open green space, recreation areas and greenways. Sixty percent rated our current level of law enforcement, fire services and EMS as “good” or “satisfactory”. There was less willingness to pay for services from the survey. We have an emerging downtown with 521,000 square feet of retail and 40,000 square feet of office space approved on three corners at Highway 84 and Waxhaw Indian Trail Road. This is our only designated non-residential area. The Mayor concluded our goals are to keep the village “A great place to live and raise a family”; make decisions that support successful development and longevity of our downtown area; respect desires of citizens to maintain a rural, small town feel; keep our tax rate low while

providing wanted services; and perpetuate the original values of our community ancestors.

Council member Sonya Pierce discussed land use. From 2000 to 2007 our population grew 53%, and homes developed under County rules and annexed represented 86% of this growth. Because of our irregular borders, development nearby can greatly impact Wesley Chapel, an example of inconsistent development is Clarion's recommendation of two to five homes per acre just beyond our borders, and a commercial area just a few miles from our large commercial area. We encourage our citizens to participate in planning through our annual Advances, in 2006 we engaged UNCC for a Master Plan Study including a Master Plan Committee of citizens, and a survey sent to residents, which showed residents want the Village to remain low in density and rural in character. Pierce noted our goals include developing and implementing a Master Plan, and updating our Land Use Plan. Union county can help us by establishing a Joint Planning Agreement for our Area of Consideration; consider a Transfer of Development Rights feasibility study; and seek municipality input with major planning initiatives such as the County Comprehensive Plan Update. Suggestions for county process improvements that will assist the Village include regular joint planning board and staff meetings. To enhance the economic development the County could recognize the retail development that currently exists in Wesley Chapel as a regional development, and provide support and services required to maintain it as such; and recognize the objective of the Village to develop as and remain a low-density area, and make contiguous development compatible with our objectives.

Council member Sondra Bradford went over safety services; our Village is split into four different fire districts, Wesley Chapel, Mineral Springs, Stallings (all tax based) and Bakers (fee based). She recommended examining fire district lines to bring the Village into one fire district, and that the county require the same level of fiscal oversight over VFD's as other parts of county government. Regarding law enforcement, we fall in the District 6 law enforcement service area, which also includes unincorporated areas, Weddington, Marvin, Mineral Springs and parts of Waxhaw, Indian Trail, and Stallings. Two of the municipalities have their own police force, and three have contract deputies, and Mineral Springs and Wesley Chapel depend solely on the County. Only two officers are currently assigned to District 6, she recommended examining if this is an adequate number. The higher density of the western part of the County is due in part to County approval of denser subdivisions, which were subsequently annexed into the municipalities. She also recommended the County lead an effort to partner with western municipalities and unincorporated area to fund a pool of officers dedicated to our area. In examining data from 911 call volume reports and Sheriff's incidents reports, questions were raised as to the interpretation and application of these disparate sets of data. Our Safety Committee had data showing in 2005 calls were 824, in 2006 they were 1,003, in 2007 they were 1,124. In 2008 they showed roughly 476 calls, which didn't seem to make sense

with the trend. Bradford called the emergency services office, and their data from the new system showed 1,535 calls in 2008. In looking at the Sheriff's website, she found from July to December 2008 there were 1,170 calls, but only 67 resulting incident reports. With one recurring incident near her neighborhood, at least ten calls resulted in only one report. She suggested that when there is something like a report of a suspicious vehicle, if reports are written up, it may indicate a trend and be helpful information.

Council member Brad Horvath discussed roads and transportation. Current factors include our large retail square footage, which is about the size of Stonecrest; they have fourteen lanes of traffic, and we have four. Residential growth, being the 7th fastest growing County in the Country in 2007, and the schools including Wesley Chapel and New Town Elementary, and the new Cuthbertson schools (even though they are on unincorporated land) all contribute to traffic. Demographics show 71% have lived in the Village less than 9 years, and over 62% travel more than 20 miles per day, about 60% commute to Charlotte. Looking at traffic projections, Highway 84 will be one of the most traveled roads, New Town Road will also have much more traffic, as will Potter Road. Accident data from 2005-2008 shows the highest frequency at New Town Road and Waxhaw Indian Trail Road (although there have been improvements recently), and Waxhaw Indian Trail Road and Highway 84. Village goals and actions include Master Plan recommendations to form a Downtown Improvements Committee and a Parks and Recreation Committee. We worked with MUMPO to raise the importance of improving Highway 84, which is now in the 2035 plan. The Village also formed a Local Area Regional Transportation Plan (LARTP) in conjunction with Weddington, Waxhaw and Marvin. Short term process improvements to enhance economic development include land use (reinforce existing zoning and recognize efforts to follow resident desires), roads (LARTP planning process and MUMPO prioritization for Union County) and economic development (our commercial area is a significant contribution). In the long term the County can support our land use with joint planning efforts, and our roads (either use MUMPO's prioritization matrix or establish new ones for use at the County level, as well as improvements to move traffic from communities to major arterials/thoroughfares).

Mayor Pro Tem Rick Croffut concluded with a summary. Several committees - Downtown, Parks and Recreation, Safety and Welcome - have been formed since our Master Plan Study and invested much time and work. A boundary review is slated for this month for the Post Office to determine the need and interest of having one zip code and post office for Wesley Chapel. We have partnered with an MBA marketing class at Wingate to get ideas on how to market Wesley Chapel. We have reduced our taxes to \$.0165 to remain revenue neutral. Several things make Wesley Chapel special. Our heritage is very important to our citizens; we have an advantage in that we are building our community without a lot of "negative" development to work around. We have a government committed to making decisions based on the desires of our citizens. We have focused in one

central area with much open space surrounding it. We are committed to keep a low tax rate, and commit our limited resources to services that are important to our citizens. Croffut noted none of our efforts will succeed without working together with the County and neighboring municipalities. We invite County partnership in transportation, safety services and park and recreation opportunities. Croffut asked the County to recognize the desires of communities to retain their identities/atmosphere to protect our vision for Wesley Chapel.

A question was asked about interaction with the County land use steering committee; we were not originally invited to those meetings, but at the end they seemed to listen to our input. Horvath will probably be the representative to the County transportation committee; Mayor Clinton will be the representative to the County governance committee. A question was asked about our commercial area; we don't plan to add more commercial area, but we may add an area around it a little denser. Mayor Clinton noted our Master Plan recommended some industrial area, but we didn't think it that would make sense if it would be competing with areas such as the industrial area in Monroe.

Both the County Commissioners and the Village Council expressed appreciation to each other for their joint meeting. The County Commissioners left at this point.

3. ADDITIONS, DELETIONS, AND / OR ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Bradford made a motion to approve the agenda; Croffut seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

4. REVIEW OF PARKS AND REC SURVEY

Bradford reported the survey had been sent to Lindsey Dunevant at the state level and the Catawba Lands Conservancy for feedback. It has been condensed to three pages. John Lepke has survey software, and he will have to see if he needs to make any minor changes to make it compatible. Croffut made a motion to approve the survey, with any minor additional changes due to feedback; Pierce seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

5. FINALIZE NEWSLETTER

Mayor Clinton will have her article ready Thursday. We are waiting on mailing data from the County tax department. One addition, The Coffee Table, will be made to the stores at the Shops at Wesley Chapel. A note will be added to the newsletter cover that the Parks and Rec survey is inside. Langen will write a blurb on signs to include in the newsletter. The articles on the Cuthbertson road bridge and firearms ordinance were missing; Pierce will check on those. Pierce made a motion to approve up to \$2,000 for the newsletter printing and mailing. Croffut seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

6. DISCUSS CHANGE/CANCELLATION OF APRIL COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULED FOR APRIL 13, 2009

After discussion, Bradford made a motion to move the April 13, 2009 council meeting to April 21, 2009, and cancel the work session. Horvath seconded the motion.

The motion passed unanimously.

7. OTHER BUSINESS

There is a fish fry at Union United Methodist Church this Friday from 5 to 7:30 pm. The MUMPO meeting is tomorrow at 4:30 pm, and Secretary Conti will attend.

8. COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mayor Clinton thanked the Council members for their presentations tonight.

9. ADJOURNMENT

Horvath made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Pierce seconded the motion.

The motion was approved unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Cheryl Bennett, Clerk

Mayor Tracey Clinton