



CITY OF PORT WENTWORTH
CITY COUNCIL
DECEMBER 19, 2024

Council Meeting Room

Regular Session

7:00 PM

7224 GA HIGHWAY 21
PORT WENTWORTH, GA 31407

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Gary Norton called the meeting to order.

2. PRAYER AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Council Member Rufus Bright Led the Prayer and Pledge of Allegiance.

3. ROLL CALL - CLERK OF COUNCIL

Attendee Name	Title	Status
Gary Norton	Mayor	Present
Gabrielle Nelson	Mayor Pro Tem	Present
Thomas Barbee	Council Member	Present
Mark Stephens	Council Member	Present
Rufus Bright	Council Member	Present
Shawn Randerwala	Council Member	Present
ArtLise Alston-Cone	Council Member	Absent

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Thomas Barbee, Council Member
SECONDER:	Rufus Bright, Council Member
AYES:	Gabrielle Nelson, Thomas Barbee, Mark Stephens, Rufus Bright, Shawn Randerwala

5. RECOGNITION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

Mayor Pro-Tem Gabrielle Nelson read a proclamation to recognize corporate sponsors for their contributions to the holiday giveaway. She emphasized the importance of businesses being good community partners to create an environment where children can thrive. The Proclamation expressed gratitude for the generosity, kindness, and dedication of the sponsors whose efforts have brightened the

holiday season and fostered a spirit of togetherness.

The sponsors recognized were NFI, Port City Logistics, Cargo Group, Red and White Supermarket, First City Investors, Food Lion Supermarket, and Project Hope.

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS - REGISTERED SPEAKERS

7. ELECTIONS & APPOINTMENTS

8. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

A. Regular Council Meeting Minutes - November 21, 2024

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Mark Stephens, Council Member
SECONDER:	Gabrielle Nelson, Mayor Pro Tem
AYES:	Gabrielle Nelson, Thomas Barbee, Mark Stephens, Rufus Bright, Shawn Randerwala

9. COMMUNICATIONS & PETITIONS

City Manager Steve Davis provided updates on upcoming events and announcements. He states that "Shop with a Cop" event is still scheduled and Councilwoman Cone will hold her Citizens Input Group meeting on December 27th at City Hall from 6:30 PM to 8:00 PM.

City Manager Steve Davis states that City Hall will be closed on Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day. Additionally, the Board of Commissioners Inauguration will take place on January 2nd at 6:00 PM. He also stated that the Planning and Zoning meeting is scheduled for January 13th at 3:30 PM. He highlighted that the city received the GRPA Hawks grant this year to support the basketball season by helping cover costs for uniforms and officials. He expressed gratitude for the progress being made with grants.

Mayor Gary Norton announced that the coaches will play the fire department in a basketball game on Monday, January 6th at 6:30 PM, and encouraged attendance.

10. COMMITTEE REPORTS

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Rufus Bright, Council Member
SECONDER:	Mark Stephens, Council Member
AYES:	Gabrielle Nelson, Thomas Barbee, Mark Stephens, Rufus Bright, Shawn Randerwala

11. CONSENT AGENDA

- A. Well Permit Applications for residents at Hwy 30 and Meinhard Rd.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Mark Stephens, Council Member
SECONDER:	Gabrielle Nelson, Mayor Pro Tem
AYES:	Gabrielle Nelson, Thomas Barbee, Mark Stephens, Rufus Bright, Shawn Randerwala

- B. City Council 2025 Meeting Dates

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Mark Stephens, Council Member
SECONDER:	Gabrielle Nelson, Mayor Pro Tem
AYES:	Gabrielle Nelson, Thomas Barbee, Mark Stephens, Rufus Bright, Shawn Randerwala

- C. First Responder PTSD Insurance Program-Effective 01/01/2025

Council Member Mark Stephens recused himself for this vote, and returned once the vote was completed.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Thomas Barbee, Council Member
SECONDER:	Gabrielle Nelson, Mayor Pro Tem
AYES:	Gabrielle Nelson, Thomas Barbee, Rufus Bright, Shawn Randerwala

12. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. Amend the City of Port Wentworth Zoning Ordinance-2nd Reading

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Thomas Barbee, Council Member
SECONDER:	Gabrielle Nelson, Mayor Pro Tem
AYES:	Gabrielle Nelson, Thomas Barbee, Mark Stephens, Rufus Bright, Shawn Randerwala

B. Amendment to the Nuisance Ordinance-2nd Reading

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Rufus Bright, Council Member
SECONDER:	Gabrielle Nelson, Mayor Pro Tem
AYES:	Gabrielle Nelson, Thomas Barbee, Mark Stephens, Rufus Bright, Shawn Randerwala

C. Budget Amendment For The Years Ending 6/30/2024 and 6/30/2025-2nd Reading
 • Public Hearing

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Mark Stephens, Council Member
SECONDER:	Rufus Bright, Council Member
AYES:	Gabrielle Nelson, Thomas Barbee, Mark Stephens, Rufus Bright, Shawn Randerwala

13. NEW BUSINESS

A. Maupin Engineering as Agent for PW Hotel, LLC, requests the approval of a General Site Plan for "Spring Hill TP - 18969 Magellan Blvd Hotel". PIN# 7-0037-02-016, located at 18969 Magellan Boulevard in the 3rd Council District, zoned C-2. City Planner Katie Dunnigan presented a general site plan request submitted by Maupin Engineering as an agent for PW Hotel, LLC, for the development of a Spring Hill Suites Hotel. The proposed site, located at 18969 Magellan Boulevard in the 3rd Council District and zoned C-2, span three and a half acres. She states that the plan includes a four-story hotel with approximately 146 rooms and associated amenities. The site will have a single access point on Magellan Boulevard and is situated near several existing hotel projects.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Gabrielle Nelson, Mayor Pro Tem

SECONDER: Mark Stephens, Council Member
AYES: Gabrielle Nelson, Thomas Barbee, Mark Stephens, Rufus Bright, Shawn Randerwala

- B. Maupin Engineering as Agent for SavLot7, LLC, requests the approval of a General Site Plan for "Magellan Blvd Lot #7". PIN# 7-0037-02-013, located on Magellan Boulevard in the 3rd Council District, zoned C-2.

City Planner Katie Dunnigan presented a site plan request for Maupin Engineering as Agent for Lot 7 on Magellan Boulevard located in the 3rd Council District. The proposed development is for a single-story, multi-tenant commercial property just under 14,000 square feet, consisting of nine units. Two of the units are proposed for restaurant use, including one sit-down restaurant. She states that the site will have two access points, one on Magellan Boulevard and another on Cabot Street, aligned with Dunkin' Donuts access point. The proposal complies with the Port Wentworth Ordinance.

Staff recommended approval with one condition: the developer/ owner must enter into a hold harmless agreement with the City for future utility repairs due to the utility easement located close to the building.

Council Member Barbee asked if the building will be constructed over utility lines.

City Manager Steve Davis stated that the building will not be constructed over the utility lines but there will be parking.

RESULT: **APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]**
MOVER: Thomas Barbee, Council Member
SECONDER: Gabrielle Nelson, Mayor Pro Tem
AYES: Gabrielle Nelson, Thomas Barbee, Mark Stephens, Rufus Bright, Shawn Randerwala

- C. Continental Properties as Agent for the Estate of Thomas L. Exley Sr. and Thomas L. Exley Jr., requests the approval of a General Site Plan. PIN# 7-0906-01-029, located off Highway 21 in the 1st Council District, zoned R-5.

City Planner Katie Dunnigan presented a general site plan request. The proposed development, located off of Highway 21 at Rice Mill Road in the 1st Council District and zoned R-5, is for a multifamily residential community. She states that the development will consist of approximately 240 apartment units with associated amenities. Primary access will be via Rice Mill Road, with an exit-only emergency access onto highway 21. The applicant also plans to dedicate a 30-foot-wide use trail on the north side of the site for the city's future trail project and conserve wetlands on the southern portion.

She states that staff and planning commission recommended approval with the condition that, prior to submitting a final site plan, the applicant must submit a subdivision plat which is required because the commercial property adjacent to the site was not previously platted when rezoned to commercial.

Mayor Pro-Tem Gabrielle Nelson expressed how excited and grateful she was for this to process to happen and appreciates that all of the City's request were considered,

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Gabrielle Nelson, Mayor Pro Tem
SECONDER:	Mark Stephens, Council Member
AYES:	Gabrielle Nelson, Thomas Barbee, Mark Stephens, Rufus Bright, Shawn Randerwala

- D. Maupin Engineering as Agent for RxNow, LLC, requests the approval of a General Site Plan for "Cherokee Growth" with a petition of modification from Sections 10.50B and 8.20C. PIN# 7-0906-04-044, located at 7896 Highway 21 in the 4th Council District, zoned PUD (Rice Hope - Commercial).

City Planner Katie Dunnigan presented a general site plan request for the development of a medical office and primary care facility on Highway 21 and Market Boulevard. The proposed 14,000-square-foot facility will offer extended hours, weekend appointments, primary pediatric care, in-house labs, x-rays, and imaging services, benefiting the residents of Port Wentworth. She states that this application includes a public hearing due to two requested modifications. The first modification is for an additional 10 parking spaces beyond the ordinance maximum to accommodate patient turnover, which staff supports. The second modification pertains to the Greenway requirements on Highway 21 and Market Boulevard. She states that the applicant is requesting a reduction of the Greenway on Highway 21 due to the angled intersection, which reduces available space. They propose equivalent landscaping in the area. Along Market Boulevard, the applicant requests eliminating the Greenway where parking spaces are located but will maintain the required 15-foot landscape depth along the islands. The proposal meets all other ordinance requirements, and the Planning Commission, along with staff, recommends approval of the plan with support for the requested modifications.

City Manager Steve Davis provided an update on efforts to secure a secondary access point for the Houston House. He states that discussions are ongoing with the school system to acquire the lot adjacent to the Houston House. If an agreement is reached, this lot will provide access from the Market Boulevard, allowing entry to the Houston House parking lot without relying on Highway 21. He states that the proposed access would utilize the existing easement without requiring any widening or additional modifications.

Council Member Mark Stephens asked if the area near the Houston House would be the one with the crosswalk.

City Manager Steve Davis stated that it is not a divided lot right now. It is the space between the Houston House and the empty area and have been in communication with them for several months to finalize the details. He states that that facility fulfills a long-standing need in the community and that significant outreach efforts have been made to bring this type of facility to Port Wentworth, and this this projected is expected to be first of many.

Mayor Pro-Tem Gabrielle Nelson expressed gratitude for the hard work on the proposed medical facility, recognizing City Manager Steve Davis and the Economic Development Director, James Touchton for their efforts in coordinating with the school board to address access concerns. She stated that although they would have preferred the facility to be located in the first district, its placement in the fourth district is still highly beneficial as it serves the entire community.

Council Member Rufus Bright expressed his excitement for this project.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Gabrielle Nelson, Mayor Pro Tem

SECONDER:	Mark Stephens, Council Member
AYES:	Gabrielle Nelson, Thomas Barbee, Mark Stephens, Rufus Bright, Shawn Randerwala

14. RESOLUTIONS/ORDINANCES/PROCLAMATIONS

15. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. Litigation

B. Personnel

C. Real Estate

Mayor Pro-Tem Nelson made a motion to go into to executive session, and it was second by Councilman Stephens. Approved Unanimous.

Councilman Bright made a motion to reconvene regular session, and it was second by Councilman Stephens. Approved Unanimous

Councilman Stephens made a motion to appoint Jeana Wright to Port Wentworth Development Authority, and it was second by Mayor Pro-Tem Nelson. Approved Unanimous

City Attorney Scott Robichaux made a motion to approve the proposed settlement of up to \$1.9 million as outlined by Plaintiff's Counsel and to direct counsel to negotiate the terms and return with finalized settlement documents for Council approval. Approved 4 to 5. Votes are as follows

- Gabrielle Nelson: Against
- Thomas Barbee: For
- Mark Stephens: For
- Rufus Bright: For
- Shawn Randerwala: For

RESULT:	APPROVED
MOVER:	Rufus Bright, Council Member
SECONDER:	Shawn Randerwala, Council Member
AYES:	Thomas Barbee, Mark Stephens, Rufus Bright, Shawn Randerwala
NAYES:	Gabrielle Nelson

16. ADJOURNMENT

RESULT:

APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]

MOVER:

Mark Stephens, Council Member

SECONDER:

Rufus Bright, Council Member

AYES:

Gabrielle Nelson, Thomas Barbee, Mark Stephens,
Rufus Bright, Shawn Randerwala

Mayor Gary Norton

The foregoing minutes are true and correct and approved by me on this _____
day of _____, 2024.

ATTEST:

Zahnay Smoak, Clerk of Council