



CITY OF PORT WENTWORTH
CITY COUNCIL
SEPTEMBER 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
ArtLise Alston-Cone	Council Member	Present
Mark Stephens	Council Member	Present
Rufus Bright	Council Member	Present
Shawn Randerwala	Council Member	Present

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councilman Mark Stephens made a motion to approve the agenda with the following changes:

- add item C. Georgia Ports Agreement

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

5. RECOGNITION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

City Manager Steve Davis stated that we have engaged with a the new DMO, and he recognized Moncello Stewart, who is the President of the Black Chamber of Commerce.

City Manager Steve Davis also recognized Mellanie Ellis all of the work that she has done, and for her service here with the city as she celebrated 10 years.

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS - REGISTERED SPEAKERS

A. Avril Roy-Smith

Discussed the following topic(s):

- Thanked the city for a sidewalk that was put in at Lakeshore
- Planning and Zoning Board

B. Issac Wright

Discussed the following topic(s):

- Thanked the Police Chief for Police presence and the roll call service

C. Georgia Benton

Discussed the following topic(s)

- Utilities

7. ELECTIONS & APPOINTMENTS

8. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

A. Regular Council Meeting Minutes - August 15, 2024

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

9. COMMUNICATIONS & PETITIONS

City Manager Steve Davis gave a presentation on the new budget in which new equipment and new personnel have been included. He states that starting October first, Public Works will begin ditch dredging of all of downtown Port Wentworth ditches in phases. City Manager Steve Davis shared that the following events will be taking place: the National Night Out event, the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new state of the art training facility, which will be open to the public starting October 4th, the rescheduled Front Porch Friday Event is on October 11th, the Leisure Service Fall Festival which will be held on October 18th, the Heart Festival Trunk or Treat will be held on October 31st, Port Wentworth Broncos will be doing a pre-season game in honor of Cancer Awareness on October 28th, and a harvest market will be held on November 2nd.

10. COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

11. CONSENT AGENDA

Councilman Thomas Barbee made a motion to approve the consent agenda with the clarification that 11 C. is a Memorandum of Agreement with Port Authority. It was second by Councilman Mark Stephens. Approved unanimously.

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

- A. Consideration to adopt the current draft Future Land Use Map as a Policy Document
- B. Consideration of a proposal by Pond to provide professional services for the update of the City of Port Wentworth Comprehensive Plan.

12. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

13. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Consideration for approval of a Final Site Plan submitted by Mass Dev Group Port Wentworth for "Port Wentworth Self Storage. PINs # 7-0906-04-057, 7-0906-04-058, 7-0906-04-059 located in the 4th Council District, on Mulberry Avenue.
City Planner Katie Dunnigan explained that this is a proposed three story, 109,550 square foot self-storage facility with outdoor boat and RV storage. The general site plan was approved in May of 2020 and the final site plan was submitted in May of 2023 even though it received engineer review comment satisfaction in July, and this item was also submitted prior to the new zoning ordinance. City Manager Steve Davis stated that a conversation was had with them and the Council in regard to a tree buffer that is between the facility and Amenities Package of Rice Hope where there was concerned about the number of trees of Bio Swale. An agreement was made to do a 25-foot undisturbed natural buffer on the entire site line.

Councilman Shawn Randerwala made a motion to approve with the condition of the 25-foot buffer along the entire site line, and it was second by Councilman Mark Stephens.

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

- B. General Site Plan for "The Whitney at Port Wentworth". Application submitted by George Ward as Agent for Southern Wood Company, LLC. PIN# 7-0037-02-004 located on GA Highway 21 in the 3rd Council District, zoned R-5.
- City Planner Dunnigan stated that an application has been presented for approval of a general site plan for an R-5 zone property for multi-family residential use. This property consists of proposed six buildings with a total of 336 units, seven garage buildings, a clubhouse, and other amenities. Staff and Planning commission had recommended approval with conditions which were approved. Those conditions were a subdivision plaque and the final site plan application that the twenty foot buffer against the I-95 on-ramp be left in a natural, vegetative state with a privacy fence set to the interior of the vegetation, tabletop speed bumps must be installed 100 ft on either side with appropriate signage, and the secondary egress be approved by staff.
- Councilman Mark Stephens asked if the second egress will be able to support the City's emergency vehicles. City Manager Steve Davis stated that it will only be an emergency access. He also stated that it is required to have that access point for fire code.
- Mayor Pro-Tem Gabrielle Nelson thanked The Whitney for bringing housing because the city is still in a "housing crisis" and thanked them for addressing the speed bumps.
- Councilman Mark Stephens made a motion to approve with the conditions that were stated, and it was second by Mayor Pro-Tem Nelson. Approved Unanimously.

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

- C. Zoning Map Amendment Application submitted by Charles and Gwen Covert, requesting to rezone 5 acres from R-1 to C-1, to allow for future commercial development. PIN # 7-1017-02-003, located in the 3rd Council District, at 1238 Georgia Highway 30.
- Ms. Dunnigan explained that the applicant requested to rezone a 5-acre parcel where they currently reside located on highway 30. It is surrounded by C-1 zoning. At the time of annexation, that area in the city offered to rezone all parcels to commercial which was turned down by the owner at the time. The applicants are looking to rezone to commercial to assist in the sale of their property allowing for all C-1 uses in that area, this is also compatible in keeping aligned with the future land use map.
- Councilman Mark Stephens asked if that was the last of the parcels? City Manager Steve Davis stated that they are surrounded by commercial property. He also stated that it meets the future land use map that was recently passed for commercial zoning.
- City Manager Davis also explained that this is a first reading, and a public hearing will be held at

the next meeting.

- D. Special Use Permit Application submitted by Ferrellgas as Agent for Justin and Jennifer Redmond, requesting to allow warehousing on an industrial-zoned property. PIN # 7-00009-02-001, located in the 4th Council District, at 3 Birkenhead Road, zoned I-1. City Planner Dunnigan explained that the applicant proposed a distribution facility comprised of two 30,000-gallon tanks. This property and the adjacent property are under the same ownership in which the applicant has the owner's authorization. The project was approved by the office of the commissioner of Insurance and Safety Fire. Staff reached out to Northern Southern Corporation because of the proximity to the railway, and they had no comment. Staff and Planning board are recommending approval with the condition that access through the parcel be brought to 2018 fire code standards.

City Manager Steve Davis States that this is the same standard that was done for The Whitney.

Mayor Gary Norton asked if they have agreed to have the emergency access road paved? City Planner Katie Dunnigan states that staff discussed this concern with the applicants and have not come to a final agreement.

Justin Redmond, who is the CEO of the property, stated that they are in agreement with everything; however, asked to pave the turnout coming into the property but use gravel by the metal building in the diagram to save on costs. He states that only twenty-five trucks a week will be expected on the property which is a low volume operation.

Mayor Pro-Tem Nelson asked if they would have any safety features setup in regard to the proximity of the homes near the property. Justin Redmond stated that the company has been in business for eighty-five years and is regulated on national level. He states that it will be built to modern standards which will be fenced off from the public and there will be policies in place to make sure that they are operating to modern safety standards.

Mayor Pro-Tem Nelson asked if there will be opportunities for citizens to go to the facility and have access to fill their own propane tanks? Justin Redmond states that the facility is not a retail facility and unfortunately, they will not have that access.

Councilman Thomas Barbee asked if Justin Redmond reached out to the railroad since hazardous material is being built close to their property? Justin Redmond states that everything will be contained on their property. He states that the location of the property will not be seen from the road.

Mayor Pro-Tem Nelson asks if the citizens will be offered job opportunities first? Justin Redmond states that it is a Gas Transfer Special Use Permit application, but at DSI there are currently job openings. They are hiring twenty people as of right now.

City Manager Davis explained that they do not want to add any cost to them, however, fire trucks are not getting any cheaper and we really need to have that road paved.

Councilman Mark Stephens made a motion to approve with the condition that the emergency road is paved, it was second by Councilman Rufus Bright.

RESULT:	APPROVED
MOVER:	Mark Stephens, Council Member
SECONDER:	Rufus Bright, Council Member
AYES:	Gabrielle Nelson, Thomas Barbee, Mark Stephens, Rufus Bright, Shawn Randerwala, ArtLise Alston-Cone

- E. Special Use Permit Application submitted by Phillip R. McCorkle as Agent for Angela J. Anderson, Andrea J. Anderson, and Sparkman Properties, LLC, requesting to allow warehousing on an industrial-zoned property. PIN# 7-0975-01-001 located in the 1st Council District, on Saussy Road, zoned I-1.
City Planner Dunnigan explained that the 200-acre parcel was already rezoned to industrial under the concept to use for warehouses and is part of the City's larger industrial park. It came back as the final land use decision of the industrial park because special uses are required for warehouses under the new zoning ordinance.

Mayor Pro-Tem Gabrielle Nelson ask for clarity to make sure that this is the same industrial park project that has been being discussed? Katie Dunnigan confirms that it is and that it is not new industrial usage.

Councilman Mark Stephans asks if there are any more were coming in? City Manager Steve Davis states it is a large industrial park in which three major parts were done at different times. The main part was done five years ago and so the new parts are add-ons that were landlocked back against the train tracks behind the park.

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

14. RESOLUTIONS/ORDINANCES/PROCLAMATIONS

- A. Amendments to the Zoning Ordinance- 2nd Reading

City Manager Steve Davis explained that this was just a cleanup for the zoning ordinances from last year to addressed some of the things that weren't.

City Attorney Scott Robichaux also explained that some of those items addressed include uses by right, redefines garages and what's allowed, as well as what is actually required for a community meeting because it was not clear on what the developer needed to share with the community.

RESULT:	APPROVED
MOVER:	Gabrielle Nelson, Mayor Pro Tem
SECONDER:	Shawn Randerwala, Council Member
AYES:	Gabrielle Nelson, Thomas Barbee, Mark Stephans, Rufus Bright, Shawn Randerwala, ArtLise Alston-Cone

B. Amendments to the Parking Ordinance- 2nd Reading

City Manager Steve Davis states the parking ordinance was switched to odd-even.

City Attorney Scott Robichaux stated the parking ordinance deals with commercial vehicle residential parking which stops commercial vehicles of 10,000 pounds from being in R-1 unless it is greater than three acres, and cannot be seen from the road, so it is not permitted in R-2, R-3, R-4, or R-5. It also states that you cannot park or have shipping containers.

Councilman Mark Stephens asks what can the city do to prevent citizens from getting tickets when their cars are blocking the sidewalk or parking on the street if they do not have enough room in their driveway to park? City Attorney Scott R. states the new ordinance that was put in place redefines the odd-even ordinance. He also explained that there needs to be access to the sidewalks because people do use it as a public amenity, and it is just a part of the growing process.

Mayor Pro-Tem Gabrielle Nelson states a citizen called asking about the six-wheel rule for vehicles. City Manager Steve Davis stated that they have removed the wheel restrictions all together, and it is limited to weight and commercial application.

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

15. EXECUTIVE SESSION

A. Litigation

B. Personnel

C. Real Estate

There was no Executive Session.

16. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Councilman Stephens made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Councilman Bright. Approved Unanimous.

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