



CITY OF PORT WENTWORTH
CITY COUNCIL
JULY 29, 2025

Council Meeting Room

Regular Session

6:00 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

Mayor Gary Norton 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	Absent

4. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Councilman Thomas Barbee approved the agenda with the following addition of:

14C: Four Party Development Agreement

14D: Resolution Approving Financing of Certain Capital Projects

This was second by Mayor Pro Gabrielle Nelson. Approved Unanimous.

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

5. RECOGNITION OF SPECIAL GUESTS

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS - REGISTERED SPEAKERS

A. Janell Westley

Discussed the following topic:

- Property

7. ELECTIONS & APPOINTMENTS

8. ADOPTION OF MINUTES

A. Regular Council Meeting Minutes - June 12, 2025

B. Regular Council Meeting Minutes - June 26, 2025 1

C. Regular Council Meeting Minutes - June 26, 2025 2

D. Regular Council Meeting Minutes - July 14, 2025

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

9. COMMUNICATIONS & PETITIONS

Mayor Pro-Tem Gabrielle Nelson recognized the great work done last week during the Back to School event, serving over two hundred and fifty kids with book bags and school supplies. She thanked Coca-Cola as the primary drink sponsor and acknowledged the vendors who provided supplies and resources.

10. COMMITTEE REPORTS

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

11. CONSENT AGENDA

12. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Consideration of the Second Reading for a Zoning Map Amendment Application submitted by Robert L. McCorkle as Agent for Development Associates Partners, LLC, requesting to rezone 24.81 acres from R-1 and C-1, to R-5 and C-1, to allow for residential development with a separate commercial component. PIN #s 70978 07004 & 70978 07005, located in the 2nd Council District, off Meinhard Road.

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

13. NEW BUSINESS

- A. Consideration of a Special Use Permit Application submitted by Garret LeBlanc as Agent for T&T Exley Properties, LLC, et al, requesting to allow a fueling station on a C-2-zoned property. PIN# 70906 01036 located in the 1st Council District, on Highway 21, zoned C-2.

PUBLIC HEARING

City Attorney Scott Robichaux explained that items 13A and 13B are the same essential property and can have staff give an over view on both at the same time. City Planner, Katie Dunnigan, stated that item A is a special use permit request for a gas station in a C2 zoning district. Item B is a concept sketch for a plan for a service station and grocery store, which also requires a vote on a requested modification to the street yard greenway. She states that the property, located at the entrance of Rice Creek next to the existing car wash, is zoned C2 and designated on the future land use map as a commercial mixed-use corridor. She states that the proposed fueling station would be the second on southbound Highway 21 within city limits. She states that the concept plan includes full vegetative buffering, a potential access connection to the car wash pending GDOT approval, and a street yard greenway in front of the station.

Mayor Pro-Tem Gabrielle Nelson thanked the applicant for the conversations that they had. She referenced past concerns about the car wash entrance leading directly into the neighborhood and expressed support for the proposed traffic reroute. She stated that this would improve safety for people in the community.

Mayor Pro-Tem Nelson stated that the decisions on potential tenants are decided by the property owner. She states that the council only reviews concept plans and does not determine specific uses, which are decided by the owner. Mayor Pro-Tem Nelson states that there was no attendance at the last public meeting.

Councilwoman Cone asked how many fuel stations would exist within the sixteen square-mile area if the proposed gas stations was approved noting that there would be two on the southbound side of Highway 21?

City Planner Katie Dunnigan stated that she could provide the number of fuel stations. She stated that there had not been any community outreach to either the engineer representing the applicant or the Development Services Office.

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

- B. Garret LeBlanc, as Agent for T&T Exley Properties, LLC, et al., requests the approval of a Concept Site Plan "Rice Mill Road and SR21 Development" with a modification to the required Street Yard Greenway, PIN# 70906 01036 located on Highway 21 in the 1st Council District. Zoned C-2.
 - **PUBLIC HEARING**

- C. Alcoholic Beverage License Application submitted by Matthew David Clements for a Malt Beverage/ Wine Package Retail Sales License for Nouria Energy Retail, Inc., DBA Nouria 7002 GA Highway 21 (7002 Highway 21) located in a C-3 (Interchange Commercial) Zoning District
 - **PUBLIC HEARING**

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

14. RESOLUTIONS/ORDINANCES/PROCLAMATIONS

- A. Moratorium on Rezoning Residential Property

City Attorney Scott Robichaux explained that the item is a moratorium on accepting new residential rezoning applications. He states that Commercial rezonings are not affected and that the moratorium allows time to review infrastructure needs, particularly along the Highway 30 corridor.

City Attorney Scott Robichaux stated that the moratorium does not affect applications already in process. He states that it only stops the acceptance of new residential rezoning applications.

RESULT:	APPROVED [UNANIMOUS]
MOVER:	Mark Stephens, Council Member
SECONDER:	ArtLise Alston-Cone, Council Member

AYES: Gabrielle Nelson, Thomas Barbee, ArtLise Alston-Cone, Mark Stephens, Rufus Bright

B. Resolutions Approving Exercise of Eminent Domain

City Attorney, Scott Robichaux, stated that the city is finalizing acquisition of properties around the park. He states that while the city has authority to acquire property, the preference is to negotiate rather than take land from unwilling sellers. He states that the state requires extensive notice, publication, certified mail, and continued negotiations. He states that the targeted properties are in the "checkboard" area between the main parkland and Highway 30, intended for roads, government buildings, nature trails, and other improvement. He states that each parcel requires a separate resolution with specific timelines and notices, using the same language as last year's resolution.

Councilman Mark Stephens made a motion to approve to exercise domain for all the parcels listed in the newspaper, policy paper provided in the packet, and on the public notice. Seconded by Councilman Rufus Bright.

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

C. Four Party Development Agreement

City Attorney Scott Robichaux stated that the agreements between the two park developers, the city, and the development authority have been finalized, with only minor corporate naming details remaining. He states that the agreement outlines payment schedules, duties, and responsibilities for all parties, forming a four-party partnership.

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

D. Authorization for a Resolution for the Finance of Capital Projects

City Attorney, Scott Robichaux, stated that the resolution authorizes the city to begin exploring bond options to help finance park projects in partnership with the Development Authority. He states that this pre-authorization step, required by Georgia law, allows the city to proceed to the bond market after court validation. He states that the resolution sets maximum amounts and interest rates slightly above current levels to provide flexibility and avoid repeating the process if rates change.

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

15. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Councilman Mark Stephens made a motion to adjourn to executive session, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Gabrielle Nelson.

Councilwoman ArtLise Alston-Cone made a motion to reconvene, seconded by Mayor Pro-Tem Gabrielle Nelson.

16. ADJOURNMENT

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

Mayor Gary Norton

The foregoing minutes are true and correct and approved by me on this _____ day of _____, 2025.

ATTEST:

Zahnay Smoak, Clerk of Council