



CITY OF PORT WENTWORTH

CITY COUNCIL

May 10, 2022

Council Meeting Room

Regular Workshop

6:30 PM

7224 GA HIGHWAY 21
PORT WENTWORTH, GA 31407

1. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Mayor Pro Tem Thomas Barbee called the meeting to order.

2. WORKSHOP AGENDA ITEMS

A. Lot Sizes in Monteith – Meinhard Farm Area

Council Member Jo Smith stated that there is an issue in the Monteith- Meinhard farm area with upcoming developments. Through research she has found that there is history in that area and would like to find a way to preserve it, so before deciding what to do with the land in that area Mrs. Smith wants to connect with the chambers, the savannah historic touring company and the neighbors who live there to create goals for what the area should be so that it is not over developed. She spoke with some of the neighbors, and they asked if the Council could do something like a MPO and change the zoning to where no house can be built under a 5 acre lot.

Council Member Barbee asked if what she was asking for was to limit the property owner to selling only 5 acres at a time, taking away the liberties from the citizens. If so, he is not for having the city get involved with taking any citizens liberties.

Council Member Smith replied that they do that every day by putting contingencies and restrictions on zoning, and the council is there to have the best interest of the entire city.

Council Member Rufus Bright asked the City Attorney legally if we could do that, and does that make us liable for the property owners to sue us? The City Attorney Scott Robichaux said that if talking about changing the density to 1 house for every 5 acres then council can set density if there isn't current designation within the zoning code. As long as the procedures are followed correctly then it becomes a legal zoning.

Council Member Barbee asked the City Attorney if any other cities have done this and he said that there are cities that have density requirements, but he is unsure if they have the 1 house per every 5 acres limit. However, density is regularly voted on.

Council Member Barbee stated that a survey should be sent to those homeowners, so that the Council can get input on how they would feel about it. Council Member Smith agreed.

Council Member Gabrielle Nelson asked if they would be doing it city wide or just in that area and Council Member Smith said just in that area.

City Manager stated that his concern would be the boundaries involved, and the fact that the homeowners lots are different sizes.

The council found it best to study the issue and get inputs from the homeowners.

B. Temporary Office Space

City Manager Steve Davis explained that there is a space issue and as we are trying to expand there isn't space to place everyone. He has found two places that he believes will help accommodate the needs of the city. The first property is a small space between two restaurants, and it is 1200 sq ft. The second property is another Renasant Bank that was abandoned, and it is 2500 sq ft. There are limited options for us on a temporary basis while we look into a new administration building that will house everyone. The second one is the one he preferred. He also showed the council images of where they are and what they looked like. He also asked if the council could amend the agenda for the regular council meeting to vote to allow him to negotiate and approve the contract.

Council Member Rufus Bright asked how long would the contract be? Mr. Davis said maybe around 2 years. Council Member Nelson asked if we would continue to lease the area for resources for the children such as a technology center or library? Mr. Davis said that we could, and the space is versatile so we could do a few different things.

Council Member Barbee wanted to know more about the technology center and how it would be run. Council Member Nelson stated that there would need to be supervision and Council Member Stephens said that you'll need hardware and software, as well as someone who can teach at the center. Council Member Nelson stated that the idea is to create a resource for the children that can help them with school or something that will encourage them to learn.

3. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mayor Pro Tem Thomas Barbee adjourned the workshop.