

Town of Oriental
Town Board of Commissioners Special Meeting
November 1, 2013

A Special Meeting was called concerning the outcome of a telephone conference between Walmart and the committee consisting of Mayor Sage, Town Manager Cutler, Commissioners Venturi and Johnson.

Mayor Sage called the meeting to order at 12:07 PM.

PRESENT: Mayor Sage, Commissioners Besette, Johnson, Venturi and Summers, Town Manager Cutler, Captain Dwaine Moore, Deputy Town Clerk Beyer and Public.

ABSENT: Commissioner Styron

Mayor Sage opened the meeting by explaining the purpose of this Special Meeting, which was to discuss the results of a telephone conference call with Walmart representatives.

The results of this conference call were as follows: Walmart felt it necessary to decline annexation but this decision would not preclude future annexation. Upon a request by Mayor Sage to schedule a future meeting to discuss other options, Brooke Mueller, Director, Public Affairs and Government Relations for Walmart, stated that a face to face meeting was not possible during the time frame specified. However, it was decided that a conference call be scheduled for October 31, 2013 at 11:00 AM. The conference call would involve Walmart representatives Brooke Mueller, Jennifer Clarke, Assistant General Counsel, Michael Phillips, Senior Director of Real Estate, Jay Sawyer, Senior Project Design Manager, Mayor Bill Sage, Town Manager Wyatt Cutler, and Commissioners Johnson and Venturi.

The results of the October 31, 2013 conference call were as follows:

Walmart felt it necessary to decline annexation, but this decision would not preclude future annexation.

In exchange for Town water, the Committee requested that Walmart agree to donate annually an amount equivalent to the Town property taxes. This donation would be in addition to any charitable contributions made to area organizations; work with the Town Tree Board to provide appropriate landscaping, abandon the Gilgo easement and use LED lighting in the parking lot. These terms will be put in writing, and the Town will provide water service to Walmart.

Mayor Sage then opened the floor to public comment:

Barbara Stockton read a letter, a copy of which is included in these minutes;
Carol Small inquired as to whether there would be additional burdens placed on the fire department due to Walmart's presence;

Marlene Miller inquired if the long term ramifications have been considered by providing Walmart Town water service;

Lili Stern asked that the Town consider the tax benefits that would be lost if local businesses closed due to Walmart building near Town limits;

Terry Halpern asked why there was a need for these Special Meetings as Walmart still has not closed on the property outside of Town and feels the Town is encouraging them to come; asked that they table the decision until the new Board comes in;

Joe Valinoti asked everyone why they did not attend County Commissioner meetings and voice their opinions there as Town has no say in businesses coming outside of Town limits; encouraged those not satisfied with Town to run for office and be thankful for those that currently serve;

Doug Carmichael spoke of being in favor of Walmart and appreciated the choices available to the citizens; praised the committee on doing an excellent job negotiating with Walmart;

David Marchand stated that the final outcome was similar to the Resolution set forth in the earlier meetings;

Karen Wilson spoke of being for Walmart coming to the area; described other Walmarts doing positive things in their communities, and said the Walmart would help the poor who couldn't go anywhere else;

Grace Evans stated that there was a finite amount of sewer capacity, and Board may not know how Bay River works; suggested current Board wait until new Board is elected so issues can be closer examined;

Kenneth Midyette described his being a lifelong resident of Oriental, seeing many changes to the Town, and how everyone should love thy neighbor. The Town would have never turned away anyone just because they were not from here; the Town was always very hospitable to visitors and 'come heres.' He encouraged all that were opposed to Walmart to not shop there, and shop at wherever they chose.

Melinda Penkava stated that a precedent was being set by giving Walmart water.

Mr. O'Malley stated that when West Marine came to Town they undercut everyone's prices

Missy Tenhet asked if the new apartment building being proposed outside the Town limits would be getting Town water and sewer and that the Town should deal with the sewer capacity issue;

Marilyn Stern asked that the issue be tabled until the Board comes in and make Walmart annex into Town.

There being no further comment, Mayor Sage closed the Public Comment segment.

Town Manager Cutler discussed the Grantsboro Walmart, and water pressure issues associated with the location. Per a conversation with Skip Lee, Building Inspector for the County, the 70,000 square footage of the proposed Grantsboro location was too large for the County Water Department to provide adequate pressure. Walmart, at their expense, would have to build a 250,000 tank to alleviate these pressure issues. This pressure issue was probably anticipated by Walmart's engineers.

Sales tax benefits were then discussed, and how the funds were distributed amongst the cities and towns and the Counties. In relation to Pamlico County, the Sales Tax monies go into one central fund at the State level. This fund is then divided into 10 payments, which encompasses the 9 cities or towns, and the County itself.

The discussion then moved onto answering the Public Comment questions concerning the sewer capacity and Walmart's impact upon it. Town Manager Cutler stated that Bay River is permitted for a 200,000 gallon a day lagoon, with River Dunes and Oriental generating approximately 80,000 gallons per day. These numbers illustrate plenty of capacity left if the apartments are constructed as well as Walmart. Walmart's usage estimates are about 700 gallons of water per day.

Commissioner Summers then read a Motion that was passed in the October 29, 2013 Water Advisory Committee meeting: "Given the long term annexation impact, the Extra Territorial Jurisdiction strategy by the Town of Oriental, and considering the water revenue that will be generated; the Water Advisory Committee recommends to the Town Board of Commissioners that water service be provided to Walmart."

Mayor Sage then presented the Resolution to provide water service to Walmart, a copy of same is attached to these minutes.

MOTION: Commissioner Johnson made a Motion to approve the Resolution as presented, and provide water service to Walmart. Commissioner Venturi seconded. Discussion followed:

Commissioner Venturi spoke of the importance of the GMO, and also stated that the Town has water capacity beyond what is needed. One of the Board's purposes is to support the Town's business of selling water.

Mayor Sage then asked for a vote on the Motion; Motion passed 4-0.

There being no further business to discuss, a Motion to adjourn was made. Commissioner Venturi made a Motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Summers seconded. Motion passed 4-0.

Bill Sage, Mayor

Wyatt Cutler, Town Manager