

TOWN OF LITTLETON

PUBLIC HEARING

SPECIAL USE PERMIT FOR SAWMILL OPERATION

October 8, 2019

6:00 p.m.

The Littleton Town Board of Commissioners met to continue the Public Hearing which was recessed September 24, 2019, to receive comments pertaining to the application for a Special Use Permit for a sawmill operation to be located at the corner of E. North Main and Hackett Street, parcel number 0700149 by Mr. Ashley Wilson. The Public Hearing reconvened at 6:00 p.m., in the Littleton Town Hall. Present were Commissioners Don Spragins, Gerleen Pitchford, Ophelia Gould-Faison, Bonita Knight, Steve Barcelo, and Town Attorney, Kris Gardner and Town Clerk Ellen Eller. Mayor Pro-temp Don Spragins called the meeting to order. Mayor Pro-temp Spragins turned the meeting over to town attorney, Kris Gardner.

Mr. Gardner reviewed the purpose of the public hearing was to receive comments in regard to a Special Use Permit for a portable sawmill operation which had been recessed. Mr. Gardner stated a lot of testimony had been heard previously. He said the hearing was open again and would be open until 6:30 when another Public Hearing would be heard. He made it clear the Public Hearing did not have to be closed, it could be recessed until the next town meeting. However, if the public hearing was closed the commissioners could only deliberate amongst themselves. They would not be allowed to ask any further questions of any one in the audience. Mr. Gardner suggested if comments were to be heard, just new comments and questions could be entertained with perhaps a time limit on those speaking. Mr. Gardner asked the Board if they desired to ask questions or receive any more comments from the public. Commissioner Gould-Faison and Commissioner Pitchford both agreed if there was anyone present who had not been at the September 24th meeting they should be allowed to speak. Mayor Pro-temp Spragins opened the floor, limited speakers to two minutes, and asked them to not repeat any previously presented comments.

Mr. Edward Johnston II, 149 Hackett St., Littleton, spoke and was concerned about security and whether fencing would be in place before he opened for business. Mr. Wilson stated he would be cutting wood first to make money. Mr. Johnston was concerned about stacking logs and having a small child on the stack of logs. Mr. Wilson stated his son was supervised and not on the logs. Mr. Johnston showed pictures of debris from a sawmill. Mr. Johnston was concerned about the handling of debris. He was concerned that once the sawmill was closed for the evening young children going by would get inquisitive and be on the property which would not be fenced and could be hurt. Mr. Johnston gave the pictures as exhibits to Mr. Gardner. Mr. Gregg Wilson stated the pictures were taken without permission. The road was a private road.

Mr. Gardner swore in Julia Johnston, 175 W. Norwood Lane, Littleton, NC. Ms. Johnston was concerned about the safety of children in the area. She was also concerned about increased traffic in the area and large trucks on the roads.

Mr. Willis Brinkley, 107 Kirkland, Littleton, NC, spoke and was concerned about the amount of noise the sawmill would make. He was concerned because several older citizens live in the area and would be affected by the noise. Mr. Brinkley also felt the added traffic to the streets would be a problem. He stated the sawmill would not add value to the property in the area.

Mr. Ashley Wilson spoke next. He was concerned because someone had left a decapitated rooster on his property in front of his tractor. He stated he was trying to run a business and didn't want problems. He said his business was going to grow or it wouldn't be a business.

Mr. Willis Brinkley spoke again and felt Mr. Wilson was not concerned about the residents in the area and was not showing respect for them. Mr. Brinkley said there were better locations for Mr. Wilson to run his business.

Mr. Wilson then presented a site map showing he would be leaving 20 foot of trees around the property as a buffer. There would be one entrance to the property from Hackett Street. Mr. Wilson gave the site map to Mr. Gardner.

Ms. Julia Johnston spoke about the amount of sawdust that would be generated and the chance for a potential fire. She was concerned that having only one entrance would not allow the fire department to enter the property or people on the property to exit. The fire could spread quickly to surrounding property.

Mr. Gardner affirmed Mr. Robert Faulcon, 1194 Summit Rd., Littleton. Mr. Faulcon spoke about his concerns for South Street Baptist. He was concerned as the business expanded more traffic and noise would be generated.

Mayor Pro-temp Spragins asked for Board questions. Commissioner Barcelo was wondering if there was any way to actually know the decibel level the sawmill would generate. It was decided there was no way to know that at this time. Commissioner Gould-Faison was concerned about the noise level for six days from 8 to 6 every day. She was concerned about citizens breathing in pollutants caused from the sawmill, and other health issues that would occur. Commissioner Gould-Faison asked Mr. Wilson if had taken into account the pollutants that would be generated. Mr. Wilson stated there were no pollutants. He said people sitting on their porches when someone cuts grass would be similar, but his sawmill would be a football field away from anyone.

Ms. Julia Johnston was concerned about the dust that would be generated from the sawmill. She stated she had grown up around Macon Moore's sawmill and there was always a layer of sawdust at her home, which was seven acres away. She wanted it known comparing it to grass being cut was not true.

Mr. Willis Brinkley spoke again about the adverse impact the sawmill would generate to the area according to the ordinances. He felt Mr. Wilson should grow his business somewhere else.

Commissioner Pitchford made a motion; seconded by Commissioner Knight to close the Public Hearing. Motion voted and carried unanimously.

Ellen M. Eller, Town Clerk