

DRAFT MINUTES
TOWN OF APEX
REGULAR TOWN COUNCIL MEETING
TUESDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2023
6:00 PM

The Apex Town Council met for a Regular Town Council Meeting on Tuesday, December 12, 2023 at 6:00 PM in the Council Chambers at Apex Town Hall, located at 73 Hunter Street in Apex, North Carolina.

This meeting was open to the public. Members of the public were able to attend this meeting in-person or watch online via the livestream on the Town's YouTube Channel. The recording of this meeting can be viewed here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PvGF9xx6jyQ>

[ATTENDANCE]

Elected Body

Mayor Jacques K. Gilbert (presiding)
Mayor Pro Tempore Ed Gray
Councilmember Audra Killingsworth
Councilmember Brett Gantt
Councilmember Arno Zegerman
Councilmember Terry Mahaffey

Town Staff

Interim Town Manager Shawn Purvis
Assistant Town Manager Demetria John
Assistant Town Manager Marty Stone
Town Attorney Laurie Hohe
Town Clerk Allen Coleman
All other staff members will be identified appropriately below

[COMMENCEMENT]

Mayor Gilbert called the meeting to order, and invited all to join him in a moment of silence, highlighting the transition into the Holiday Season.

Mayor Gilbert then invited everyone to join him in a recitation of the Pledge of Allegiance.

[CONSENT AGENDA]

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A **motion** was made by **Mayor Pro Tempore Gray**, seconded by **Councilmember Killingsworth**, to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS (5-0)

CN1 Capital Project Ordinance Amendment No. 2024-9 - Apex Cemetery Columbarium Project - Phase 2 (REF: ORD-2023-118)

Council voted to approve Capital Project Ordinance Amendment 2024-9 allocating funding for Phase 2 - Landscape Architecture and Civil Engineering for the Apex Cemetery Columbarium project.

CN2 Council Meeting Minutes - November 14, 2023

Council voted to approve Meeting Minutes from the following meeting:
November 14, 2023 - Town Council Regular Meeting Minutes

CN3 Position Authorizations - New FTEs - Water Resources and Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources

Council voted to approve the following new position authorizations:

One (1) Full-Time, Benefited Water Resources Specialist Position [Water Resources Dept.]

Two (2) Full-Time, Benefited Park Attendant Positions [Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Res. Dept.]

Two (2) Part-Time, Benefited Park Attendant Positions [Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Res. Dept.]

CN4 Tax Report - October 2023 (REF: OTHER-2023-126)

Council voted to approve the Wake County Tax Administration Tax Report for the Town of Apex dated November 6, 2023.

[PRESENTATIONS]

PR1 Western Wake Crisis Ministry Presentation

Seaira Green, Executive Director of Western Wake Crisis Ministries (WWCM) gave the following presentation:

[WWCM - SLIDE 1]



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[WWCM - SLIDE 2]



Vision: A brighter future for all by cultivating a healthy, hunger-free and housing-stable community.

Mission: Partnering with those in crisis, helping them gain stability through basic supports for food, financial/housing assistance, education, and opportunity.

Values: Compassion, Community, Equity, Optimism, Relationship, Vision, and Impact

[WWCM - SLIDE 3]



Services

<h4>FOOD SECURITY</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Curbside Pickup & Open-Air Market – weekdays (M-Th)• Saturday Distribution (monthly)• Latinx/Hispanic Outreach• Home Delivery (monthly)• Emergency Food Support	<h4>HOUSING SECURITY</h4> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rental Assistance• Utility Assistance Program• Short-term Case Management• Resource Assistance
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[WWCM - SLIDE 4]



WWCM & Covid Response

- Curbside food distribution & home delivery
- Limited volunteers & staff in building
- Monthly meat & produce distribution to all Wake County
- Resource Assistance provided virtually or by appointment outside
- Collaboration with Emergency Meal Program, Local Agencies & Churches

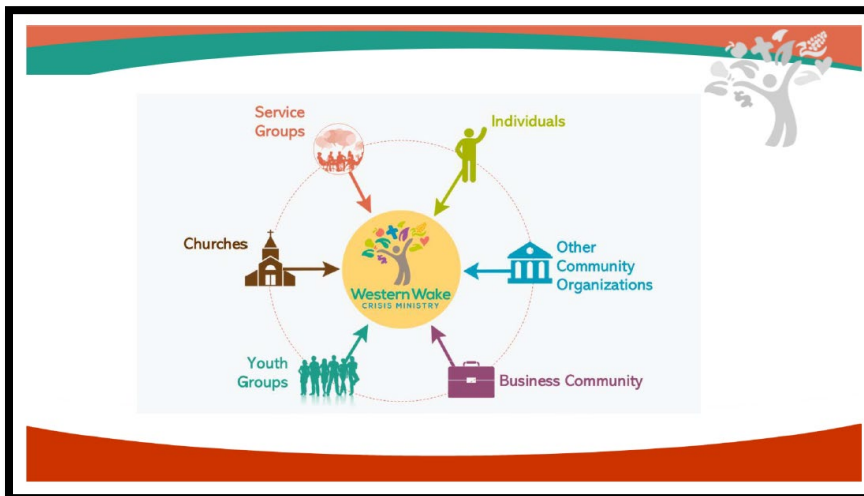
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[WWCM - SLIDE 5]

Operational Snapshot

- Serve Approximately 400 families per month with food assistance
- Serve Approximately 55+ families per month with financial support (rent & utilities), Receives approximately 330 calls for screening
- Partnered with Town of Apex to assist customers with past due utility bills
- WWCM only has 5 employees, 2 of which are part-time
 - Approximately 100 regular volunteers
 - Interdependent relationships with volunteers
 - Numerous donors and partners that support the overall operations of WWCM including the Interfaith Food Network, Food bank of NC, Food Lion, United way, Apex Chamber of Commerce and Wake County.

[WWCM - SLIDE 6]



[WWCM - SLIDE 7]

What's Happening at WWCM

- Several food collection drives for Thanksgiving Meal-Goal is to serve 300 families
- Holidays and Beyond campaign to combat food security past the holidays
- Collaboration with Apex Police Department to support a family that actively fleeing domestic violence
- Hiring additional support staff to meet the needs of the community.
- Working directly with landlords, hotels, property managers to facilitate housing
- Hosting Coffee & Chat sessions, community tours and Lunch and Learns

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[WWCM - SLIDE 8]



What can Groups Do?

- Food and/or Fund Drives
- Distribute information about WWCM via newsletter, social media
- Volunteer
- Invite WWCM to speak or present at events

The slide features a decorative header with a green and orange wave and a stylized tree icon on the right. The footer has an orange wave.

[WWCM - SLIDE 9]



Where to Find Us

1600 Olive Chapel Road, Suite 408 (549 Flex), Apex, NC 27502

919-362-0657

WWCM.ORG

@westernwakecrisisministry
@westernwakecrisisministry
@wwcm2017

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Mayor Gilbert said Western Wake Crisis Ministries has been around for 40 years, and is a great organization for the community. He asked if she could speak about her background.

Ms. Green said she has worked in non-profits for 16 years, having worked in Orange and Durham Counties, and the Greater Wake County Area, running many kinds of programs. She said she was a therapist after college, but felt she could make more of a difference in the lives on families through life and family coaching, and working with families as a unit. She said it's a pleasure to serve the community, and the outpouring of support and donations has been overwhelming.

Councilmember Zegerman asked about the overall financial health of the organization in terms of balancing donations with the current demand and need in the community.

Ms. Green said she just started in September, and has not seen a crunch like that in this "season of giving". She said the support has been generous through finances and tangible items, but she would like to continue going on "Holidays and beyond" to help donations come in during less prevalent times.

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Councilmember Zegerman said a volunteer he had spoken said the pantry seemed emptier than it had in previous years, so he was wanting to gauge what the status currently is.

Mayor Pro Tempore Gray thanked Ms. Green for the work she is doing. She said this is an embodiment of what it means to be a member of the community. He said it's important to remember that the need does not end on January 1st.

[REGULAR MEETING AGENDA]

A **motion** was made by **Councilmember Gantt**, seconded by **Councilmember Zegerman**, to approved the Regular Meeting Agenda as presented.

VOTE: UNANIMOUS (5-0)

[PUBLIC FORUM] (Note: To view public forum and public hearing sign in sheets, please see OTHER-2023-125)

First to speak was **Dawn Cozzalino** of 3632 Bosco Road:

"I have two themes tonight for the Town Council. Be an advocate for Apex taxpayers, this is a checkbook, they've trusted you with fiscal responsibility, to make planning choices that are the least costly, and provide the best benefit to the people, community, and the least impact to the environment. There're two pictures here but they're actually the same. One's just a map and one's a satellite view, and we're talking about the Western Big Branch Force Main tonight. You can see that above the US-1 line, it's all New Hill and Bosco and Friendship and those communities of farms, and people's lands and buildings, you can see that in the map on the satellite. You can see US-1, then you see below it, there is an existing utility easement. There's really nothing here, it kind of looks like a trail. It's already an easement for electric, it's already cleared, there's no trees in the way, just a little grass, and the cost would be minimal for choosing that, upfront cost and the maintenance cost ongoing, than looking at doing a project with eminent domain in the New Hill/Friendship community. The next theme, be an environmental exponent. This is where you can really invest in a win/win situation. And what I mean by that is for the Apex Town and the Apex citizens that are taxpayers, that this is going to help lower costs, it's going to also help in protecting our environment, our tree canopy, lowering our urban heat island, all the things that are so detrimental and so confusing in this time with climate change. So, I ask you to consider the big picture, and I've showed this before, please consider this. There's an existing easement. It's already there, you can see it by the lower pictures, you can see at the ground view very easy to access. Already there. Thank you."

Mayor Gilbert thanked Ms. Cozzalino for her comments.

Next to speak was **Judy Ives** of 3413 Pleasant Plains Road:

"My father, Willard Pleasant, bought the farm that is now Pleasant Park in 1967. I was a teenager then, and although our family lived in Raleigh, I loved my parent's rural roots and my father and grandfather's love of the land. And I loved the Apex farm we affectionally called "the 100-acre

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wood”, after the Winnie the Pooh stories. Because so much of it was woodland. In the early 80’s my sister and her husband renovated the old farmhouse and I followed them by building my little house in the woods in 1983, thus putting down my own rural roots. But, with all of the development and 540, my sister and brother-in-law decided they just couldn’t stay anymore, so that left me to fend off developers and make Pleasant Park happen. I was up against 3 sisters who all just wanted their money. So, I will say that I was a little misinformed about what this park was going to be in the beginning, and I’m not going to go into that now because I don’t have time, but I do want to say that it is a beautiful park, and as wonderful as it is, it has hit me really hard. When I built my house Pleasant Plains was a dirt road, so I built my house at the front of the property, now cars stream by my house day and night, and cars leaving the park at night shine their headlights on their house as they leave the park. And sometimes cars back up in the park to the curb where their lights shine in my house, all the way out to old US-1 and the railroad, and the stoplight. So, I might have 6 or 7 cars standing in line at a standstill, to leave the park, all shining at the front of my house. I talked to Angela Reincke yesterday about the problem with the headlights, and she said she going to work on it, and I really do appreciate that. I would also like to say that the noise from the park is much more than I expected, and I cringe when I think about the baseball diamonds right across the street from me. I hope I can work with Angela and the town to resolve the issues that arise from further development of the park. Today, the 100-acre wood is down to the 4 and a half acres I call home. Please be respectful of what I have done and don’t let this park spoil my beautiful home.

Mayor Gilbert thanked Ms. Ives for her comments.

Next to speak was **Dean Krupa** of 2001 Simco Court:

“I’d like to continue the theme of speaking about trees. Recently, in my neighborhood, I drive up Olive Chapel Road and there was a large tree removal happening right before me, and I guess it was a 55 and over community being put in there. Those trees were right against the sidewalk, and it was just sickening to be driving through there, and see the sawdust and the construction vehicles, and just like that mature trees coming down. My heart sunk. I went on social media, and there was a lot of comments about it, and it’s too bad those folks can’t come here and voice their sorrow over that incident. It’s happening all over my neighborhood, there’s big developments going on right now. A few months ago, we had the tree canopy study, which was very informing, there was some great conversation around that. I really liked the questions by the Council on that study. It was disappointing that Apex was number 1 in tree loss over the 10-year study period, we lost 23% of our canopy, and almost 2,200 acres. So, the study had some good recommendations as far as strengthening the ordinances, preventing the mass tree-cutting that I know was talked about here. But also planting, re-planting perhaps on sidewalks, schools, HOAs, freeways, parks. And how do we better account for developers doing this removal and making sure that they’re staying with the RCA ordinance. So, I’m working with a group to become more active and vocal with the Town Council, we’re trying to get the citizens mobilized from social media into this forum. We just got engaged with the Tree CAP, and we look forward to getting more engaged with this Council and the staff. But I encourage us not to just have these three-minute dialogues, and have a back and forth conversation at Town Hall. Some type of community outreach. I watched the acceptance speeches of the candidates, Mayor Gilbert yours I especially liked when you said we need to work together. On

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this issue specifically, we need to work together. And I like forward to working with all of you, thank you.”

Mayor Gilbert thanked Mr. Krupa for his comments.

Next to speak was **Elizabeth Stitt** of 3113 Friendship Road:

“So, I have been coming to these meetings now for 20 months. Talking about all kinds of concerns for my community, but always circling back to why the Big Branch Force Main should not be on our side of US-1. But I’ve been holding back on one of the reasons, because I always end up in tears, but we are going to go there tonight, so you may have to bear with me for a few moments while I gather myself at certain points. If you’re lucky enough to get to my age, where I have outlived my father and many of the people in my family, you start realizing that money isn’t everything. I’ve held onto my property for 32 years, and I could have timbered my trees twice, in the time that I’ve been there, but I haven’t, because some things are more important than the money. Some things can not be replaced. Once it’s gone, it’s gone. The portion of my property that you want to take has been frozen in time. I don’t talk about it much, because this is where I am going to get very upset. This small little 5-acre tract has been landlocked for 6-7 decades. You don’t know what my struggles were to eventually get it. You don’t know how beautiful and gorgeous it is, because you haven’t walked down there. Not only has it been landlocked for 6-7 decades, there has never been a timber deed on it, so I suspect it’s never been logged. On it, there are massive trees, that are 8, 9, and 10 feet in circumference. When you calculate the age of these trees, they’re all over 160 and 170 years old. You don’t see these kinds of trees in Wake County. When you construct the force main, there is no protection for these trees. You will be clear-cutting a 30-foot strip, and then there will be another 10 feet cut for a temporary construction easement. And based on how far these roots go, I’m going to realistically lose another 15 on either side, so probably a total of 70 feet of trees. I am losing hundreds of mature trees in that 70 feet, but that number of these massive trees I’m losing, is something that keeps me awake at night. These trees will not grow in my lifetime, in my kid’s lifetime, or my grandchildren’s lifetime. And it feels so incredibly unjust, where I can stand and look across the highway, and see trees that are only 20 or 30 years, that have volunteered itself. The town preserved historical homes, you preserve the town’s history, the town’s been around for 150 years. But there is nothing to preserve these trees. I don’t know how we can call this the Peak of Good Living and destroy something that will never come back, never. And I will have to say the town has offered to maybe re-route the force main on my property, but there’s nowhere to re-route it on my property, that’s what these 5 acres are. So, I would like to host any of you, and bring your children, bring your neighbor’s children, watch them run down there, they will see things that they’ve never seen. And I’ve been encouraged to tell you guys this before, but I don’t want to stand up here and cry, I shouldn’t have to. All the reasons why it should be on the other side should be on the other side. But if you guys need to see me cry, fine I’ll cry. But come see the trees, they’re magical, I’m never going to cut them. I mean this is something that needs to be preserved for all of Apex. Once you cut it down, you put the force main through, there may be some left, but you’re going to have these ugly concrete massive things running through the property. You’ll destroy it, and we won’t get it back. So, thank you for your patience, I apologize for the emotion, but this keeps me up at night, and I will keep coming back. Thank you.”

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Mayor Gilbert thanked Ms. Stitt for her comments, and for all community members who spoke tonight.

With no further signups, Mayor Gilbert closed Public Forum and continued the meeting along.

[UPDATES BY TOWN MANAGER]

Interim Town Manager Purvis said last week was the Employee Awards Ceremony and the Public Safety Awards, and thanked everybody for their support and recognition of town staff. He gave a special shoutout to Kerrin Cox, who was the 2023 recipient of the Apex Employee of the Year Award. He said earlier today, the Apex Police Department children's book was featured on Good Morning America, which highlight Apex's Community Connections. He added that there will be a way to highlight the many cultural events the town does, as a news-style program from Lisa Raschke and Celeste Sherer. He said the budget survey was online on the town's webpage, and is for residents to help prioritize the budget at a high level.

[ADJOURNMENT]

Councilmember Gantt said Mayor Gilbert did a great job speaking about the expansion on the S-Line from Raleigh to Richmond, which is a project that helps Apex extend its goal of commuter rail.

Mayor Gilbert said it was good to be there with Governor Cooper and Secretary Buttigieg, and it help moves the region forward. He said growing up here, he never thought passenger rail was something that would be considered in Apex, but that it was something that was needed. He also thanked Councilmember Gantt for his work on this over the years.

Councilmember Gantt said that passion is something that has been shared among Council and staff.

Mayor Gilbert thanked Yunjun Jung for providing IT Service, and Corporal Steward for Police Service.

Mayor Gilbert adjourned the meeting at **6:36 p.m.**

Jacques K. Gilbert
Mayor

Allen Coleman, CMC, NCCCC
Town Clerk to the Apex Town Council

Submitted for approval by Town Clerk Allen Coleman and approved on _____.