



Town of Beaufort, NC
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Board of Commissioners
Work Session
4:00 PM Monday, October 27, 2025
Train Depot, 614 Broad Street

Call To Order

Mayor Harker called the meeting to order at 4:00 PM.

Roll Call

Elizabeth Lewis, Town Clerk, called the roll:

PRESENT:

Mayor Harker

Mayor Pro Tem Cooper

Commissioner Gillikin

Commissioner LoPiccolo

Commissioner Oliver

Commissioner Spiegler

ABSENT:

None

Agenda Approval

Commissioner Cooper made a motion to amend the agenda to move Beaufort Wine & Food Spring Event to item number one.

The motion to approve the amended agenda carried unanimously with a (5-0) vote.

Items for Discussion and Consideration

1. Beaufort Wine & Food Spring Event

Rachel Johnson, Public Information Officer, presented an event request from Beaufort Wine & Food to return to the downtown area for their April 16, 2026, event. The organization anticipates selling approximately 700 tickets and would utilize three private

spaces: The Vault, BHA space, and the Watercraft Center. Their request includes use of public roadways to allow participants to cross between locations with open containers.

Ms. Johnson explained that of the 700 tickets, 200 would be VIP tickets for an event at the Watercraft Center, requiring participants to cross Front Street. She presented two route options, with Route A being the preferred, most direct route. She noted that event hours would be 1:00-4:00 PM for The Vault and BHA sites, with a VIP band concluding at 6:00 PM, creating migration pulses around 4:00 PM.

Brittany Pittman, Executive Director of Beaufort Wine & Food, addressed the Board, emphasizing the event's history since 2005 and its community benefits. She explained the organization gave back proceeds to the community funding projects, government and non-government entities. She detailed parking and shuttle arrangements, including vendor parking at Ann Street United Methodist Church and shuttle service from the Beaufort Hotel for less mobile guests.

Commissioner Cooper raised concerns about the \$100-110 ticket price excluding many community members. Ms. Pittman responded that while the event is private and nonprofit, its mission is to generate proceeds for community projects. She cited recent donations including \$6,000 to the Beaufort Fire Department, an upcoming donation for a van for The Bridge Down East, and \$250,000 to the culinary arts program at the Community College over five years.

Commissioner Spiegler thanked Ms. Pittman for submitting the application early and working with Town staff, noting the importance of flexibility given ongoing construction projects.

Ms. Johnson confirmed that Turner Street construction should be complete by the event date, though paving status remains uncertain, making Route A preferable.

Commissioner Gillikin made a motion to approve the Beaufort Wine & Food Spring Event as presented, with Option A as the route. The motion passed unanimously with a (5-0) vote.

2. UDO Coastal Resilience Overlay District Draft

Michelle Eitner, Town Planner, introduced the draft Coastal Resilience Overlay District, explaining that the Town began the code assessment process in June 2024 and advanced to Phase Two—the creation of the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO)—in January. She noted that it is a three-year process divided into five modules and funded through the Resilient Coastal Communities Program. Ms. Eitner emphasized that Beaufort is the first community in North Carolina to undertake ordinance development using this grant funding. She stated that staff were seeking feedback and potential approval of this component.

Kelly Cousino of White Smith Cousino presented the draft document and summarized the extensive public engagement process, which included six steering committee meetings, two community conversation events, a joint work session, and a Planning Board meeting. She explained that the steering committee ultimately determined that an overlay district was the most effective approach for implementing the resiliency policies contained in the Town's Comprehensive Plan and CAMA Land Use Plan.

Ms. Cousino reviewed several revisions made since the August 25th presentation. These included recognizing Beaufort's downtown waterfront as an "urban waterfront" designation, clarifying that sea-level rise measurements would be based on NOAA data, and maintaining the proposed subdistrict names, CR-NIZ for the Non-Intensification Zone and CRM for the Moderate Hazard subdistrict. She noted that the overlay district boundaries would be fixed as of the adoption date, with any future FEMA map changes requiring a formal text amendment.

Ms. Cousino also summarized the Planning Board's discussion from its September 15th meeting, noting several topics raised for consideration: removing residential use limitations in the CR-NIZ, defining "heavy equipment" for invasive species removal, reducing minimum tree-planting sizes, and clarifying standards for utility line penetrations. The Planning Board also questioned whether the overlay district would apply to state or federal lands. Ms. Cousino confirmed that such lands would be exempt unless approval was granted by the Council of State.

Commissioner Oliver expressed strong objections to considering the draft in its current form, sharing that it violates North Carolina law prohibiting down-zoning. He explained that he could not morally support or promote a document that conflicts with state law and voiced concern about requesting a \$100,000 contribution from an entity while advancing a proposal he believes to be unlawful. He further noted that more than 900 tax-paying parcels located within the 100-year floodplain would be affected and expressed concern that property owners had not been adequately informed about the potential impacts.

Commissioner Gillikin suggested including descriptive language outlining the Town's strategy to proceed with or without the down-zoning legislation in place, noting that many legislators are currently monitoring potential amendments. She emphasized the importance of creating a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document to address public misunderstandings and misinformation, explaining that significant confusion had circulated about the overlay district and that it was easy for residents to misinterpret the information.

Commissioner Spiegler expressed support for the intent of the overlay district, explaining that the Non-Intensification Zone is designed to limit uses in the most flood-prone and vulnerable areas. She suggested that the Town wants to continue encouraging new development but in safer, more suitable locations, where properties will not be at such high risk.

Commissioner LoPiccolo raised concerns about protecting business owners, noting that properties with more than 50 percent lot coverage would become non-conforming under the proposed regulations. She suggested adding provisions similar to those applied to single-family homes to ensure that businesses could rebuild following storm damage without undue hardship.

Town Attorney, Arey Grady, clarified that it would be legally permissible for the Town to approve and submit a draft version for grant purposes, provided that the grant agency understands the document may be significantly revised prior to adoption. He confirmed that the draft could not be formally adopted in its current form if it conflicts with state law.

Mackenzie Todd, Coastal Resiliency Coordinator with the North Carolina Division of Coastal Management, explained that the grant contract expects the submitted draft to closely resemble the final adopted version. She advised that the Town could request a six- to twelve-month extension to allow additional time for discussion, public input, and revision.

Following the discussion, Commissioner Oliver made a motion to direct staff to request a twelve-month extension of the \$100,000 Resilient Coastal Communities Program grant.

The motion passed unanimously with a (5-0) vote.

3. TAFT Family Ventures Sewer Allocation and Workforce Housing Agreement (Draft)

Kyle Garner, Planning Director, presented the revised sewer allocation and workforce housing agreement for TAFT Family Ventures. He noted that the board had requested several changes to the original document, including changing the title to "Sewer Allocation and Workforce Housing Agreement," clarifying that rentals would be no shorter than three months (not short-term rentals), and requiring the developer to provide rental criteria and next available unit policies as exhibits.

Mr. Garner explained that the agreement now includes provisions for the Town to receive performance data at least twice yearly, with the option to request more frequent reports if

needed. He detailed Exhibit C, which outlines applicant rental criteria based on income levels, and Exhibit D, which addresses the medium income set-aside and lease-up procedures for the next available unit. He emphasized that the ten workforce housing units would be distributed throughout the project rather than segregated in specific buildings, per the Board's previous request.

Mr. Garner noted that TAFT representatives were not present at the meeting.

Mayor Harker inquired about oversight of the self-regulated system, with Mr. Garner explaining that the required data reports would allow the board to monitor compliance with who occupies the units and turnover frequency.

Commissioner LoPiccolo made a motion to approve the workforce housing agreement as set forth in the document.

The motion passed unanimously with a (5-0) vote.

The Board decided to take action on the tabled sewer allocation request separately.

Sam Bell, Town Engineer, confirmed the request for reservation was for 16,380 gallons per day. He explained that according to the Town's sewer allocation policy, TAFT would need to pay 20% of calculated sewer impact fees upfront to reserve the allocation for 24 months.

Commissioner Oliver clarified that this would be a reservation, not final approval, and that all installation costs including pump stations would be at the developer's expense.

Mr. Bell confirmed it was a reservation and the developer would be responsible for that cost.

Mayor Harker asked about which lift station would be used, with Mr. Bell indicating it would be either lift station seven or nine, both of which currently have capacity. He noted that lift station seven is currently out for bid for replacement.

Commissioner Oliver made a motion to approve the sewer allocation reservation for 16,380 gallons per day in accordance with the request that was tabled at a previous meeting. The motion passed unanimously with a (5-0) vote.

4. Beaufort Town Docks Logo Selection

Commissioner Gillikin presented logo options for the Beaufort Town Docks, explaining that the Beaufort Waterfront Operations and Finance Committee (BWOFF) had reviewed renderings and provided feedback through an online survey. She noted that the selected logo would need to be finalized soon for use on dock staff apparel and signage, though minor tweaks could still be made. Discussion among the Board of Commissioners focused on practical considerations for logo reproduction.

Commissioner LoPiccolo initially favored the darker version on the far right, noting its stronger visual impact.

Commissioner Oliver agreed that darker colors would provide better contrast.

Mayor Harker observed that tighter spacing between elements, similar to existing Town logos, would improve visibility when printed.

Commissioner Spiegler provided context that the logos would primarily appear on dock staff shirts but could have different background colors for websites or other applications. She emphasized the need for a standard, uniform version for staff apparel while allowing flexibility for other uses.

After discussion, the Board reached consensus on using a bit of each version with specific modifications: darker blue coloring similar to the far-right example, a properly proportioned menhaden fish, tighter spacing between elements, and retention of the flower/propeller element.

Commissioner Gillikin volunteered to create draft versions, though she noted that high-resolution files in various formats (EPS, PDF, PNG, JPEG) would eventually need to be produced by staff or professional designers.

Staff Comments

Ms. Lewis shared Halloween events and activities taking place in the upcoming week. She also shared that the Town plans to submit the HMGP Advance Assistance grant application the following day, thanking Sam Bell and other staff members for preparing the information.

Adjourn

Commissioner Cooper made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 5:30 PM.

The motion carried unanimously with a (5-0) vote.

Sharon E. Harker, Mayor

Elizabeth Lewis, Town Clerk