



**Town of Beaufort, NC**  
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**Town of Beaufort Planning Board Regular Meeting**  
**6:00 PM Monday, December 18, 2023 - Train Depot, 614 Broad Street, Beaufort, NC 28516**  
**Minutes**

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### **Call to Order**

Chair Merrill called the December 18, 2023 Planning Board meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

### **Roll Call**

Prior to roll call, Chair Merrill announced an update to the Planning Board membership. He congratulated John LoPiccolo who had been elected to the Board of Commissioners, and he informed the Board that Aaron Willis had resigned from the Planning Board due to other commitments.

Members Present: Chair Merrill, Vice Chair Meelheim, Member Bowler, Member Stanziale, Member Vreugdenhil

A quorum was declared with five members present.

Staff Present: Kyle Garner, Town Attorney Arey Grady, and Laurel Anderson

### **Agenda Approval**

Chair Merrill informed the Board that Item #3 on the Agenda had been withdrawn.

*Member Vreugdenhil made the motion to approve the agenda as modified to withdraw Item #3 and Member Bowler made the second. Chair Merrill took a vote that was unanimously approved.*

*Voting yea: Chair Merrill, Vice Chair Meelheim, Member Bowler, Member Stanziale, Member Vreugdenhil*

### **Minutes Approval**

1. PB Draft Minutes for 9.18.23 and 10.16.23

*Member Stanziale made the motion to approve the Minutes and Member Bowler made the second. Chair Merrill took a vote that was unanimously approved.*

*Voting yea: Chair Merrill, Vice Chair Meelheim, Member Bowler, Member Stanziale, Member Vreugdenhil*

## Public Comment

Chair Merrill opened public comments and asked if anyone would like to speak. There were no public comments.

## New Business

### 1. Final Plat – Beau Coast Phase III

Mr. Garner gave the Staff Report and explained that the final plat subdivided a 27.64-acre tract into 48 single-family residential lots and the preliminary plat for this area was approved in December 2022 for installation of infrastructure improvements. The applicant has chosen to request to bond the infrastructure improvement and has submitted cost estimates for the complete cost of improvements totaling \$880,605.56. Mr. Garner noted that 4.710 acres would be open space and stated that the town's engineering department had reviewed the estimate as well as the other departments and recommended approval of the final plat.

*Member Stanziale made a motion to approve the final plat.*

Member Bowler noted that the plat would add 48 residential lots and asked how many total lots there would be. Mr. Joe Boyd, the engineer of record for this project, representing Withers and Ravenel, stated that there were 791 total lots. Member Bowler commented that Beau Coast allowed short-term rentals and that Beaufort needed to take a hard look at the percentage of residential properties are eligible for short term rentals as they are potentially a drain on infrastructure, cause increased traffic, and in some areas increase crime.

Chair Merrill asked if there was a second for the motion on the floor and there being none, the motion died.

Vice-Chair Meelheim also discussed short-term rentals.

Member Vreugdenhil stated that the plat met the standards of the subdivision ordinance and the covenants were not the Planning Board's job to review, only to ensure the road standards, the water, the sewer, and the lot size met requirements of the ordinance. He further explained that this phase was a part of a master plan presented in 2008 and it is almost identical to what was approved back then, the town engineer has reviewed the standards and the planning staff has recommended approval.

Chair Merrill asked Mr. Garner why there were 150 pages of covenants in the application and Mr. Garner replied that the ordinance stated that they must be submitted as part of the application. Chair Merrill asked if they were supposed to ignore the covenants and Member Vreugdenhil said his opinion was that they gave additional information regarding how the HOA would operate and Mr. Garner added they were also for stormwater purposes and other infrastructure the town does not maintain and in this particular case those stormwater facilities were still under the HOA.

Vice-Chair Meelheim stated her concerns regarding areas of wetlands and easements through wetlands and Section 404 and asked if perhaps the initial plan could be redrawn to avoid more sensitive areas.

Mr. Boyd responded that wetlands are avoided as much as possible and there was one sewer connection that had been installed, all permits had been obtained, and that disturbance was completed and the area restored back to its natural state. He explained that drainage easements are platted to go to the end of lots. Vice-Chair Meelheim asked how it would be monitored after approval and if the HOA was the builder and Mr. Boyd explained that the area would be maintained by the HOA and there would be periodic inspections performed by the State. He further explained that the HOA was not the builder but were a group of homeowners. Mr. Garner then explained the town permitting process which ensures that there is no encroachment into those areas, and in regard to bulkheads permitting would be obtained from CAMA or the Army Corps of Engineers.

Member Bowler asked if there was any monitoring or prohibitions regarding pesticides in the subdivision, and Mr. Garner responded that he did not know but could ask the owner.

Chair Merrill stated that typically setbacks, buildable areas, and sidewalks would normally be shown on plans and Mr. Boyd explained that they were looking at a final plat and they had already approved the preliminary plats which showed those items.

After further discussion Member Vreugdenhil pointed out that wetlands in development areas are very small, and other agencies approve the wetlands inclusion on the plat. Planning staff review building plans in the permitting process to ensure footprints of houses stay outside the wetlands through plot plans and as-builts. He further stated that these concerns can be addressed in future new subdivisions and preliminary plats, but they must approve this final plat as it does meet the dimensional criteria.

Hearing no further discussion, Chair Merrill asked for a motion.

*Member Stanziale made the motion to submit to the Board of Commissioners and recommend adoption and Member Vreugdenhil made the second. Chair Merrill requested a roll call vote and Secretary Anderson took a vote that was unanimously verbally approved.*

*Voting yea: Chair Merrill, Vice Chair Meelheim, Member Bowler, Member Stanziale, Member Vreugdenhil*

## 2. 23-12 Final Plat -Beau Coast West Amenity Site

Mr. Garner gave the Staff Report and explained that the request was to subdivide a 6.203-acre tract into five single-family residential lots and the Amenity Center, The Amenity Center had already been built, and 5.145 acres of the total 6.203 is open space. The applicant has chosen to request to bond the infrastructure improvement and has submitted cost estimates for the complete cost of improvements totaling \$357,804.89.

Chair Merrill asked about the amenity pond and Mr. Boyd stated that it was a feature but it does have drainage capacity. Member Stanziale asked if the plat met all of the requirements of the ordinance and Mr. Garner stated that it did.

*Vice-Chair Meelheim made the motion to submit to the Board of Commissioners and recommend adoption and Member Stanziale made the second. Chair Merrill took a vote that was unanimously approved.*

*Voting yea: Chair Merrill, Vice Chair Meelheim, Member Bowler, Member Stanziale, Member Vreugdenhil*

## 3. 2024 Planning Board Meeting and Submittal Calendar

Chair Merrill asked if there was any discussion or comments, and Vice-Chair Meelheim and Member Bowler both stated that they would not be at the February meeting. Member Stanziale asked if the calendar met the ordinance requirements and stated that the submittal dates did not seem to allow much time for staff review. Mr. Garner responded that Staff would be requesting a change to those dates in the new Land Development Ordinance. Member Vreugdenhil noted that the submission dates come from the Ordinance to meet the notification requirements to property owners and the newspaper. There was discussion regarding giving the board members more time to review larger packets.

*Member Stanziale made the motion to approve the 2024 Calendar and Member Bowler made the second. Chair Merrill took a vote that was unanimously approved.*

*Voting yea: Chair Merrill, Vice Chair Meelheim, Member Bowler, Member Stanziale, Member Vreugdenhil*

## **Commission / Board Comments**

Member Stanziale recognized the Staff for the attention to detail and giving the Board enough information to make their decisions, and he appreciated the level of work accomplished in the short time frame given.

Vice Chair Meelheim stated her appreciation for the amount of work the staff does and the guidance given by Mr. Garner and Mr. Grady.

Chair Merrill also stated his appreciation of the level of detail and work completed by the staff. He also stated that the Board should be able to ask questions.

Member Bowler reiterated the statements made by other members and her appreciation of professional guidance.

Mr. Grady noted that the current Ordinance was standard and environmental issues were not included, and the updated Ordinance could include and address those issues.

Member Bowler asked about the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) and a possible subcommittee being formed.

### **Staff Comments**

Mr. Garner stated that the Town was waiting for the CAMA Land Use Plan to be certified and then they could move forward with the UDO, possibly in March or April, and Ms. Eitner would be heading that project. He noted that Mayor Harker had recommended two Commissioners and two Planning Board members serving on a subcommittee.

He also reminded the Board that he is always available if any Members have questions regarding items in upcoming packets or other topics.

### **Adjourn**

*Member Vreugdenhil made the motion to adjourn and Vice-Chair Meelheim made the second. Chair Merrill took a vote that was unanimously approved.*

*Voting yea: Chair Merrill, Vice-Chair Meelheim, Member Bowler, Member Stanziale, Member Vreugdenhil*

Chair Merrill then declared the meeting adjourned.

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Ralph Merrill, Chair

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Laurel Anderson, Board Secretary

