



## **Town of Beaufort, NC**

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### **Town of Beaufort Board of Commissioners Work Session Meeting 4:00 PM Monday, December 21, 2020 - Zoom due to COVID-19 Minutes**

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#### **Call To Order**

Mayor Newton called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m.

#### **Roll Call**

##### **PRESENT**

Mayor Everette Newton  
Commissioner Sharon Harker  
Commissioner Charles McDonald  
Commissioner Ann Carter  
Commissioner Marianna Hollinshed  
Commissioner John Hagle

#### **Agenda Approval**

*Commissioner Hagle made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. The motion passed unanimously.*

*Voting Yea: Commissioner Carter, Commissioner Harker, Commissioner McDonald, Commissioner Hollinshed, Commissioner Hagle*

#### **Public Comment**

The following comments were submitted via email to Deputy Clerk Rachel Johnson prior to the meeting.

##### **Received: Dec. 21, 2020:**

To: Beaufort Commissioners

From: Jane Hines, 106 Leonda Drive Beaufort, NC

Date: December 21, 2020

I plan to zoom in today as I did for Mr. Balou and Mr. Lewis's initial presentation. I appreciate their interest in developing this area with local input. I live within three blocks of the old school property. My major concerns

are increased density and its affect on vehicular and pedestrian traffic, disruption of marsh area adjacent to property, and potential over-pricing of housing for affordability by workforce residents.

I hope the price point for any townhomes on this property will be in the high \$100k - low \$200k range. Several townhouse communities are currently on the market in the Charlotte area in that price range by these builders: Brookline Homes, Profile Homes, HH Homes, and True Homes to name a few.

The area near Lennoxville Road where I live is experiencing significant construction traffic from Beau Coast development. The affects of the additional increase in local traffic as these homes are occupied is yet to be known. I question the scheduling of further development until the existing infrastructure can be upgraded to handle the volume of construction traffic and regular town traffic that will ensue. Upgrades must include pedestrian/biker considerations as well as vehicular considerations as density rises in this area. My neighbors and I have had multiple "close calls" as we attempt to share the road with no sidewalks available.

Finally, the marsh area is not only critical to storm water management, but also a beautiful natural area in need of protection as development soars around us.

Thank you for thoroughly considering all proposed development and the scheduling of inevitable growth that will determine the desirability of our town in the future.

Jane Hines

**Received: Dec. 21, 2020**

I would like to express my concerns regarding the proposed development at the Old Schoolhouse property.

I really hope the town will analyze this from every possible angle as we are facing a potential crisis in this community if not.

Currently, we have BeauCoast developing at a rapid rate - taking 100+year old trees down without even a moment's thought. I live on Leonda, right off of Lennoxville road, and am already seeing the increase in traffic and I know this is a drop in the bucket compared to the final buildout.

What makes this place so special, are the natural assets that surround us - the ocean, sound, estuaries, big beautiful oak trees, the opportunity to watch dolphins emerge from time to time, wild horses, birds of every species - all of this surrounds us every day. We are so blessed!

The more dense our development is, the more damage it does to our natural resources, the more strain it causes on our infrastructure, the more pollution, the more trash, the more flooding, the more traffic (both car and boat), etc. and before we know it, the very reasons we want to be here, are now destroyed.

Please take all of this into account! I like the idea of converting the current school building to condos, and preserving the history. But, we need to preserve the green space, the marsh, etc. Make it a beautiful community gathering place, outdoors, to be enjoyed by the condo owners, but also the community!

So in summary - some of my concerns:

Harriet Altman

**Received: Dec. 21, 2020**

limit size/ density of development behind Elementary School

When I was looking for ground to establish a Community Garden

20 years ago, I learned:

the soil is contaminated behind the Beaufort Elementary School and the Boys and Girls Club: both were used to park school buses for a long time. and from ~1860s or 1880s to ~1920s, I heard tell, the land behind the Elementary School was a dump.

The land is also flood zone. Across Town Creek is an historic Quaker cemetery.

thanks

susankiwi15@gmail.com

(252) 269-0032 I don't text much

**Received: Dec. 21, 2020**

Sir,

We thoroughly oppose this dense development, to be built on marsh land.

The environmental impact would be huge. And traffic increase worse.

NO!

Thank you,

Daryl Walker

Beaufort resident since 1974

**Received: Dec. 21, 2020**

I am greatly concerned about the proposed rapid development of the old school grounds and suggest a rigorous study of impacts before proceeding.

Beaufort has not fully experienced nor quantified the "**unintended consequences**" of current new developments in progress. These include a broad range of altered traffic patterns, congestion, disruption of previously established neighborhoods and other direct impacts to daily life.

Yet the "benefit" of increased town property tax revenues takes years to develop and longer still to recover the supporting infrastructure costs placed on current taxpayers, directly and indirectly.

A short inspection of Freedom Park and the surrounding lands stripped of all landscape and an altered viewshed as a current example of negative impacts and visible loss of Beaufort's beauty and environmental health.

Sincerely,

Rich Huffman

116 Mashburn Drive, Beaufort NC 28516

(252) 732-0396

**Received: Dec. 21, 2020**

I am writing to register comments regarding the development of the old Beaufort Elementary School property. I do not wish to speak tonight but I would like my comments noted in the minutes - or- recorded in the usual manner for meetings of this kind.

I am concerned about yet another large development that may have negative environmental impacts and quality of life impacts in Beaufort.

Regarding the environment: I live near the Beau Coast property. This property has displaced and changed the habitat for many of our local wildlife. The many trees that have been removed, not only took away bird habitats, but created the possibility of greater flooding. The traffic on Lennoxville Road has increased. How will our town be impacted further with the addition of this new planned development?

Our town is in need of affordable housing. I wonder how much of this development will be dedicated to this? I have heard younger people say they cannot afford to rent or buy in Beaufort.

I respectfully ask that these issues be addressed before decisions are made to build on this property.

Thank you,

Virginia Ferri

102 Leonda Dr.

Beaufort, NC

**Project Updates**

Greg Meshaw gave a project update.

Electric vehicle charging station; have had conversations with ChargePoint and Duke Energy. Staff determined Duke Energy is a better fit for the Town's needs and will provide assistance with planning.

Commissioner Carter said that she felt this is a great idea. She asked if the charging station would be equipped with Tesla chargers, too. Mr. Meshaw said that he is not sure but will find out.

Commissioner Harker said that she believes this is a great idea as well. She said it would be nice to have a charging location in Beaufort. She said that he did not mention the fees associated with this service. Mr. Meshaw explained that the fees would be at the Board's discretion. Commissioner Carter said that there is a charger at Bucky Oliver's property, but she isn't sure what the fees are.

Commissioner Hollinshed asked how long it takes to charge a car from empty. Mr. Meshaw explained that it depends on the type of charger. He said that most vehicles today are in a 200-300-mile charge range.

Commissioner Hagle voiced concerns about the proposed location of the charging stations. He said that he would like to explore alternate locations in Town that are not as heavily trafficked in the summer months. He added that it seems like a lot of work for Town staff and said that he feels the private sector will likely provide these charging stations in the near future.

Mayor Newton asked the Board if it is interested in pursuing this grant opportunity. The Board confirmed.

Mayor Newton asked Mr. Meshaw if he had any updates on the high rate infiltration permit. Mr. Meshaw said that the Town was waiting for the clearing to be completed prior to placing the piezometers for the ground water table monitoring. He said that last he checked that clearing had not occurred. He added that he received an email from one of the consultants involved, who said that they have been communicating with the contractor and it appears they are moving forward. He said that the consultants would let him know when they are able to install the piezometers. He further added that the clearing process has taken longer than was originally anticipated. Mayor Newton asked the Board for any questions.

Commissioner Carter asked Mr. Meshaw if the piezometers were required in order to obtain the high rate infiltration permit. Mr. Meshaw confirmed.

### **Items for Discussion and Consideration**

1. Draft Minutes for the Nov. 23 and Dec. 14, 16 and 21 2020 Work Session

Draft Minutes for the Nov. 23 and Dec. 14, 16, 21 Work Session and Regular Meetings were placed on the consent agenda for the Jan. 11, 2021 Regular Meeting.

2. Sewer Allocation Policy

Greg Meshaw reminded the Board of recent discussions – Oct. 26, Nov 9 and Nov. 23. Mr. Meshaw made the requested revisions following the Nov. 23 meeting. Mr. Meshaw explained that the packet materials have two types of highlights. The yellow highlights were the initial revisions, and the red highlights were the newest revisions based on feedback at the last meeting.

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Mr. Meshaw concluded his presentation and asked for any questions or comments.

Commissioner Carter asked if the Deerfield subdivision (where annexation has not been discussed) would be one of the infill areas the Town would be willing to expand sewer to. Mr. Meshaw said that he believes the capacity to service Deerfield subdivision is there and that by definition, the vacant lots in Deerfield would be considered infill development as the subdivision is already there. Mr. Meshaw said that from what he understands, there are 3-5 lots that are required to switch to the Town's system. He said that these lots will get the allocation and added that the station and infrastructure was designed such that it could support 15 houses. He said that he anticipates additional lots will likely not be able to support a septic system and will need to join Town sewer. Commissioner Carter said that there are several vacant lots on fill that will never be able to support a septic system. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Day asked Mr. Meshaw if houses other than the houses that were included or the lots that were included in the original agreement town approve any other requests in that area, because they're outside of the town limits would go to the board to decide. Mr. Meshaw confirmed. Mr. Day said that in a case like this, it would go before the Board. Mr. Meshaw added that it would be a level two priority and would follow the same approval process that is required for the development. He said that this sort of thing does not go before the Board typically. Mr. Day said that he believed the Board would be more comfortable with any request for sewer outside of the Town limits if it went before the Board. Mr. Meshaw said that would be an easy fix and said that he would make the revisions to paragraph E.

Commissioner Harker asked for clarification regarding the reservation fees. She asked what would happen if a developer paid reservation fees based on a project of a certain size, but as the project progressed, the size changed, and they use less water than anticipated. She asked if

there would be a refund or prorated fees. Mr. Meshaw said that there would not be a refund.

Commissioner McDonald had no questions.

Commissioner Hollinshed thanked Mr. Meshaw for developing the policy and reiterated the importance of tracking capacity.

Commissioner Hagle asked if a town-funded project was a town-owned facility. Mr. Meshaw confirmed. Commissioner Hagle asked for clarification on page 4 regarding Tier 2 projects and two classes within it, noting the portion that read, "except that it does not include development and redevelopment to be located within an area or corridor...." Mr. Meshaw explained that it was added based on concerns by Commissioner Carter. He explained that if one is adjacent to a sewer forced main, the Town is not necessarily going to provide sewer allocation, adding that Priority 2 areas are areas that are already served with necessary infrastructure in place.

Mayor Newton asked if the Board would like to add the item under Discussion and Consideration at the Jan. 11 Regular Meeting. The Board confirmed.

3. Case No. 20-11 – Request to Rezone 1205 Lennoxville Road

Kate Allen, Town Planner, reminded the Board of the Public Hearing at the December 14<sup>th</sup> meeting. She said that this is a request to rezone 1205 Lennoxville Road from B-1 General Business to TCA Townhomes, Condominiums and Apartments District. She said that staff did not receive any additional comments in the 24-hour public comment period following the public hearing.

Mayor Newton asked the Board for any questions or comments.

Commissioner Harker asked if staff had any idea of the price-point of the future homes. Ms. Allen said that information had not been provided.

Commissioner Hollinshed said that she would like for the applicants to try to take care of the lovely trees on the lot. She said that it is not a condition of the approval, but that she would like to see them preserved if possible.

Commissioner Hagle agreed and said that he would like to make a motion.

*Commissioner Hagle made a motion to approve the requested amendment to the zoning map and CAMA Land Use Plan Future Land Use Map as presented. The motion passed unanimously.*

*Voting Yea: Commissioner Carter, Commissioner Harker, Commissioner McDonald, Commissioner Hollinshed, Commissioner Hagle*

4. Financing for Public Utilities Dump Truck

Christi Wood, Finance Director, said that the FY 21 budget appropriated loan proceeds for the purposes of purchasing a dump truck for Public Utilities. She said that she received rates from banks that the Town usually works with and reached out to the bank with the lowest rates in order to obtain a proposal. She said that the terms are 1.79% for five years, with the amount of the quote at \$79,533.10. She said that staff needs Board approval to move forward with the loan.

Mayor Newton asked the Board for any questions or comments. Commissioner Hagle asked if the Town has considered paying cash for the vehicle in order to avoid the finance charges. John Day, Town Manager explained that generally vehicles are paid for with cash, but given upcoming projects, financing the vehicle is an attempt to conserve cash in the utility fund.

Mayor Newton asked the Board if this item should go on the agenda under Discussion and Consideration. The Board agreed unanimously.

5. November Financial Report/Notes

Christi Wood, Finance Director, said that tax collections are included in the notes for October and November. She added that the sales tax collection worksheet is also included in the packets. She pointed out that sales tax revenue in December was \$173,832, up 30-31% from last year.

Mayor Newton asked the Board for any questions or comments. Commissioner Carter asked if the audit has been completed. Mrs. Wood said that the audit is ongoing, but on track and will be wrapping up soon. She said that confirmations still need to be sent out to the attorneys, but that there will be no issues meeting the January deadline. She explained that the state extended the deadline due to the COVID-19 pandemic and virtual audits.

Commissioner McDonald asked Mrs. Wood to explain why the Town has been running late on the audit. Mrs. Wood explained that the last couple of years were largely because of the two hurricanes. She said that this year the state extended it because of the virtual audit requirements, noting challenges with protected information and the time-consuming process of scanning documents that are usually reviewed in person. Discussion ensued.

Mr. Day explained that the town is not running late on the audit. He said that the deadlines were extended in recognition of the additional time required to do a virtual audit. He said that there are boxes of files that have to be scanned and emailed.

Commissioner Hagle thanked Mrs. Wood for all of her hard work.

6. Manager and Board Evaluation Proposal

Mayor Newton asked Commissioner Harker to introduce Donna Warner of the UNC School of Government. Commissioner Harker said that she and Mr. Day attended a workshop called "Evaluating Manager and Board Performance." She said that the workshop was led by Pat Carolson and added that she has been in contact with Donna Warner who is an adjunct with the School of Government. She explained that she has been working with Donna to create a process and tool to effectively evaluate the manager as well as the Board. She said that she has been able to touch base with all of the commissioners to get their concerns in order to draft a final document which she will present tonight.

Ms. Donna Warner, UNC School of Government, explained that she will discuss the process, analysis conducted, and recommendations that resulted. The four findings/focus areas from the commissioner interviews were:

She added that it is apparent that the Board is very committed and very proud of Beaufort and that it wants the best for the community.

Ms. Warner then discussed actions taken following the commissioner interviews. She said that they consulted with Peg Carolson at the School of Government, examined assessments used by other municipalities, and reviewed standards set by the ICMA (International City/County Managers Association).

Ms. Warner then discussed the recommendations that resulted from the review.

Revise/Expand what is assessed

*Ms. Warren experienced technical difficulties and was disconnected from the call. John Day, Town Manager, said that if the Mayor and Board would like, they could move on to the next item until Ms. Warren was able to rejoin.*

*Ms. Warren rejoined the call following the discussion of Item 7. Preservation North Carolina Request.*

Ms. Warren explained that it is important to incorporate both the operational and strategic sides of the manager's performance. She also added that it takes two to govern and that in the process of evaluating the manager, separation is so important. She said that in North Carolina, we have a manager-council form of government. That means that you are tied together as a Board and manager. And it means that that understanding and being clear about what you expected one another, both as a board, but also the manager becomes really vital. Otherwise, you're going to have conflict.

Ms. Warner then discussed additional recommendations:

Ms. Warren then provided a summary of the presentation. She said that we looked at samples and models, we made recommendations about changing not only what the Board assesses, but also the process, and then the form would change. She added that part of that would be looking at the commissioners' role as governors and how their work and John's work is tied together. And then lastly, having a chance to have a discussion about what the Board expects because that becomes the foundation. She then asked for any questions from the Board.

Commissioner Carter said that one thing that seemed to be omitted from the presentation is that the commissioners are evaluated by the most severe critics possible: the public. She said that the commissioners have to deal with that, and if the manager does not perform to satisfy the public, the commissioners get caught up there. She added that she has some real issues with the idea of evaluating fellow commissioners. Ms. Warren explained that the intent is more to set expectations rather than evaluating fellow commissioners.

Commissioner McDonald said that he feels the commissioners should not do the evaluations on themselves or be evaluated as a group. He said that he thinks that instead of being evaluated, commissioners need to be properly trained. He said that the commissioners are not getting the training necessary to assist the manager.

Commissioner Hollinshed said that she thinks it is hard to evaluate fellow commissioners. She said that the manager could meet the goal and leave wreckage and chaos along the way. She said that he/she has achieved the goal, but that it may have negative impacts on the community. Commissioner Hollinshed also voiced concerns about the number of meetings that would be necessary in order to meet these recommendations. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Hagle said that it's a difficult process – especially when 5-6 people are evaluating one person. He said that he believes the recommendations address the challenges and added that he believes the evaluation of fellow commissioners likely will not be as hard or challenging as it may seem at first glance.

Mayor Newton said that the best organizations are self-critical. He said there is an opportunity, and noted that currently the Board conducts formal evaluations in the winter and informal evaluations in the summer. He added that one of the most consequential responsibilities of the Town Manager is creation of the budget. He said that if those were swapped with the formal review in July, and an informal meeting in February, it would provide the time necessary to address some of Commissioner McDonald's concerns regarding training, etc.

Commissioner Carter voiced concerns about the focus on commissioner evaluations rather than the town manager evaluation and process.

Commissioner Harker said that part of the process here would be conducting an evaluation that could be facilitated by a facilitator. She added that it could be part of the training process. Commissioner Harker pointed out that by having a facilitator, the Board would essentially receive training on conducting the evaluations. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Harker asked Mayor Newton how he would like to proceed. Mayor Newton said that he would like to set up a time in January or February to discuss further, and

potentially include a training aspect at that time. Mayor Newton and the Board thanked Ms. Warren for the information and presentation.

#### 7. Preservation North Carolina Request

Mayor Newton asked John Day, Town Manager, to speak on the item. Mr. Day said that earlier this year, the town entered into an agreement with Preservation North Carolina whereby the demolition order for 400 Pollock Street would be rescinded if certain conditions were met, including reimbursing the town for asbestos abatement costs. Mr. Day said that the Town received a letter from Preservation North Carolina requesting an extension of the deadline for reimbursing the town for asbestos abatement from Dec. 31 to June 30, 2021 or when the property is sold, whichever comes first. He added that the reason for the request is that as a nonprofit, finances are tight.

Mayor Newton asked the Board for any questions.

Commissioner Carter asked why they waited until now to request an extension, adding that their financial situation likely has not changed drastically in the last few months. Mr. Day said he did not know.

Commissioner Harker asked why there are two deadlines and asked why not just wait until it sells. Discussion ensued.

Commissioner Carter pointed out that this is town money that is tied up. She said that by granting the extension, this keeps that money unavailable. Commissioner Harker asked if the Town is charging any interest on the funds. Commissioner Carter said that it is not.

Mayor Newton asked Mr. Day if Commissioner McDonald needed to recuse himself from this particular item. Mr. Day said that he would like to defer to the attorney. Mr. Arey Grady, Town Attorney, said that the dynamics have changed, and he does not feel that Commissioner McDonald's family is involved anymore. Therefore, he said he felt it was okay for Commissioner McDonald to participate on this particular topic. Commissioner McDonald said that he would like to recuse himself based on the fact that he recused himself on the onset of the discussion. He said that he would like to recuse himself from this discussion. He added that he would like for the Board to table the request to the next meeting.

Mayor Newton explained that there is a deadline at the end of the year. He said that it can go on the January agenda if the Board would like, but said he wanted to make sure that there is flexibility for the end of year deadline to push into January.

Mayor Newton asked if the Board would be okay with placing the item on the January agenda under Items for Discussion and Consideration. The Board agreed.

#### 8. NC League of Municipalities Legislative Goals - 2021-2022 Legislative Biennium

Mayor Newton asked John Day, Town Manager, to speak on the matter. Mr. Day said that the North Carolina League of Municipalities Legislative Policy Committee compiled and refined goals submitted by members, and from those the NCLM Board of Directors has reviewed and approved 17 proposed advocacy goals for consideration. Each member municipality may now review and vote on the proposed goals so that cities and towns have a focused state and federal advocacy agenda for the 2021-2022 legislative biennium, which begins in January at the NC General Assembly. He explained that the league asked each municipality to select a delegate and select 10 of the 17 possible legislative goals which would be for their delegate to vote on in the future. He said that the votes will be submitted electronically and that the deadline is January 14. He said that the Board could consider the goals at the January 11 meeting.

Commissioner Harker asked if there was a way to create a poll format. Commissioner Hagle asked if the Board could vote on the matter tonight. Mr. Day said that if the commissioners would like to send their votes to him, he could compile them and share them with the Board and pointed out that it is entirely up to the Board. Commissioner

Hagle said that would be the best way to proceed. Mayor Newton asked Commissioner Hagle if he would be willing to be the Town's delegate. Commissioner Hagle confirmed.

### **Mayor/Commission Comments**

Commissioner Carter urged everyone to stay safe and enjoy Christmas as much as possible.

Commissioner Harker said to continue practicing the 3W's and have a safe and happy holiday.

Commissioner McDonald wished happy holidays to all.

Commissioner Hollinshed wished everyone a safe healthy holiday. She said that she would like to have an update on the latest PUD, commonly called the Food Lion/Souza property. She further added that she would like to see the children enjoying the splash pad and long-awaited park facilities. She would like to receive news that the Town has received federal funding from the USDA. She would like to see Carolina win the Orange Bowl. She added that she would like to see Beaufort remain the caring Town that attracted many here to begin with.

Commissioner Hagle wished everyone a Merry Christmas. He encouraged everyone to focus on their driving, be it a car, truck, bicycle, golf cart, skateboard, etc. as they are all hazardous if you are not paying attention to what you are doing. He said people get distracted very easily when driving.

### **Adjourn**

*Commissioner Hagle made a motion to adjourn. The motion passed unanimously.*

*Voting Yea: Voting Yea: Commissioner Carter, Commissioner Harker, Commissioner McDonald, Commissioner Hollinshed, Commissioner Hagle*

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Mayor

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Deputy Clerk