



Town of Beaufort, NC

701 Front St. - P.O. Box 390 - Beaufort, N.C. 28516
252-728-2141 - 252-728-3982 fax - www.beaufortnc.org

Board of Commissioners Work Session 4:00 PM Monday, April 24, 2023 Train Depot, 614 Broad Street Beaufort, NC 28516 Minutes

Call To Order

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

Roll Call

Elizabeth Lewis, Town Clerk, called the roll.

PRESENT:

Mayor Harker
Mayor Pro Tem Hagle
Commissioner Oliver
Commissioner Cooper
Commissioner Hollinshed

Commissioner Hagle made a motion to excuse Commissioner Terwilliger from the meeting.

The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Approval

Mayor Harker shared she would like to add an item to the agenda, noted as number eight, "George Street & Fairview Drive Update".

Commissioner Hagle made a motion to approve the amended agenda.

The motion carried unanimously.

Items for Discussion and Consideration

1. Case #23-01 Text Amendment - Affordable Housing District

Todd Clark, Town Manager, explained the process of a work session meeting, noting that after staff presented information on the proposed case, they would be available to answer questions from the Board. He provided background on Case #23-01, which is a Text Amendment that would create an Affordable Housing District. He noted this was one way the housing needs crisis could be addressed in Beaufort, and the Board needed to make a decision on whether or not the text amendment was a prudent step in that effort.

Kyle Garner, Planning Director, explained the text amendment was developed as an effort to combat the lack of attainable and affordable housing in the community for those with limited housing options. He shared the text comes first, then the map to follow. He explained the Town worked with the Beaufort Housing Authority to develop specific criteria that could be applied in the development of new housing to reach the needs of a growing community. As presented, this new district would only apply to properties that are owned by the Housing Authority and Federal Government (HUD). He shared the Planning Board voted 3-2 to recommend the request, with several proposed changes to the amendment; the comparison table below was shared.

	Original Proposal	Planning Board Proposal	LDO References
Building Height	40 Feet Maximum*	35 Feet Maximum	The maximum Height in the TCA Zoning District is 35 Feet
Open Space Requirement	Not Included	12% Minimum Open Space Required	The Minimum in the PUD District 15%
Allowance of Duplexes	Not Included	Allowed as a Permitted Use	Allowed in TCA & TR
Parking Space Requirements	1.5 Spaces per unit	2.0 Spaces per unit	Table of parking Requirements 13-1 Multi-family - allows for 2 parking spaces for each individual dwelling up to 3 bedrooms and 1 additional space per unit for each bedroom over 3
Density Requirements	16 Dwelling Units Per Acre.	12 Dwelling Units Per Acre	TCA allows for 12 units per acre.

- Except for properties in the Local Historic District in which the maximum height is 35 feet.

Commissioner Hollinshed questioned whether the amendment would affect government owned properties only.

Mr. Garner confirmed based on the text before the Board, that was correct, it would potentially apply to all federally owned property.

Commissioner Hagle pointed out the Federal Government (HUD) and Housing Authority were two different entities in which the text amendment would apply. He expressed his concern with including the terms "Federal Government", and suggested the text could be limited to the Housing Authority only.

Mr. Garner shared a few key points from the Planning Board meeting, where the item had been previously discussed. He said the group mentioned the idea of the Board of Commissioners appointing a study group to research housing needs in the community. He suggested the Planning Board felt the item was being rushed into, and there should be more discussion and research before approving the text amendment.

Commissioner Oliver had questions about some of the permitted uses in the proposal; specifically noting, mixed use, public utility facility, religious institution, and utility minor.

Mr. Garner provided examples as to what would be allowed in each permitted use Commissioner Oliver questioned, and the rationale for including them in the current proposal.

Commissioner Cooper question rental rates and who would determine them. He also expressed concerns about future development based off the text amendment. He asked Mr. Garner why a new district should be created.

Mr. Garner explained the current TCA (Townhome, Condominium and Apartment) District at 12 units per acre would not get the client what they needed, based on the request and scope of the project.

Commissioner Hollinshed suggested a daycare center be included in the permitted uses, as those are extremely limited in the area, and the need will continue to increase.

Mr. Garner shared the process of how text amendments are initiated in general. He noted the Board of Commissioners had previously discussed affordable housing and asked that staff research the issue. He explained the Housing Authority approached the Town and they worked together on the proposed text amendment.

Mayor Harker asked if the proposed district was an effort to recraft a TCA District to fit the development.

Mr. Garner said yes.

Mayor Harker asked if there was anything in the TCA that existed currently, that should be included in the proposed district, such as setbacks, lot sizes, covenants, etc.

Mr. Garner confirmed all those specifics were included in the proposed text before them.

Mayor Harker asked if there were any concerns about flooding or anything of that nature.

Mr. Garner noted that every development, regardless of size, would have to go through the site review process, where both the Planning Board and Board of Commissioners would review it.

Commissioner Cooper suggested the Board take a step back and review the current TCA to determine whether changes should be made to it, rather than creating a new district that is similar. He expressed concerns regarding future development under any changes that are made.

Commissioner Hagle suggested scheduling a Public Hearing on the topic, to allow citizens to provide their input.

Commissioner Oliver asked Mr. Garner if he believed it was advisable to consider special use applications for assisted living or group homes.

Mr. Garner said he would always encourage those to be special uses.

Mayor Harker deemed a consensus to schedule a Public Hearing for Case #23-01 Text Amendment - Affordable Housing District, on May 8, 2023, at 6:00 p.m. at the Train Depot.

2. Request for Street Closure & Abandonment of West End of Ann Street

Mr. Garner explained a request for abandonment of a portion of the western end of Ann Street was submitted to the Town Manager in November of 2022 by Jay Horton with Filter Design Group, on behalf of The Beaufort Inn. The area to be abandoned is approximately 12,041 square feet per attached survey; currently, the area is used as parking for the Beaufort Inn, through a lease agreement with the Town of Beaufort. Mr. Garner explained Town staff had met with Filter Design to discuss and review the proposal, and requested they provide the following items:

A survey of the property with metes & bounds description.

An appraisal of the property requested to be abandoned.

A site plan depicting the existing infrastructure and showing proposed utility and access easements for both the Town and adjacent property owners.

Mr. Garner said to date, all the requests from staff have been satisfied. He explained the next step in the process, as required by North Carolina General Statutes, would be for the Board to consider adopting a Resolution of Intent on the abandonment. A public hearing would also need to be scheduled and conducted regarding the request.

Commissioner Hollinshed confirmed the dockage was not considered as part of the negotiation, as the Town does not own that area.

Commissioner Hagle had questions regarding the survey area and easement agreement.

Arey Grady, Town Attorney, confirmed the easement agreement was non-exclusive.

Commissioner Oliver asked if it was the applicants desire to acquire the surveyed property.

Mr. Garner confirmed that it was.

Mr. Grady explained the current proposal was for the Town to abandon the portion of Ann Street outlined in the survey; if the property is abandoned, it will be split in half and it will revert back to the adjacent property owners. He went on to explain the Town was not being solicited to buy the property, and that the applicant was not offering to provide any kind of payment to the Town for that specific area. He noted if the Town wished to sell that portion of the property, it would trigger the upset bid process if an offer was made.

Commissioner Oliver shared he did not believe there was anything in it for Beaufort.

Mr. Clark added there were utilities on a portion of the property, and the Town would not abandon those.

Commissioner Cooper added those who were requesting the abandonment would benefit, not the Town.

Mayor Harker asked if the property was abandoned, would it void the easement with the Town.

Mr. Grady confirmed it would and explained the abandonment procedure, should the Town want to go that route.

Commissioner Oliver made a motion to deny the request for street closure and abandonment of the West End of Ann Street, and to not move forward with a Resolution of Intent regarding the matter.

The motion carried unanimously.

3. Wayfinding Update

Rachel Johnson, Parks & Events Coordinator/PIO, gave an update on the Wayfinding Project. She noted what had been accomplished to date and gave a presentation on the next phase of the project. All information referenced is included in the meeting packet. She explained staff had identified 18 locations for direction wayfinding signage. She asked the Board to review and approve suggested locations to be called out as destinations on the signage. She also noted after this phase is complete, the remaining phase of the project involves parking signage; these signs will be evaluated during the parking season to ensure they meet the needs of residents and visitors and will be installed after July 1, 2023.

Commissioner Hagle asked how much was budgeted for the project.

Ms. Johnson shared the original budget was \$60,000 but she believed the Town would come in well under budget.

Commissioner Hagle suggested minimizing signs when possible.

Commissioner Oliver questioned the sign materials and life expectancy.

Ms. Johnson confirmed the signs were aluminum with enamel coated paint.

Commissioner Oliver expressed concerns about signage lasting in the extreme environment.

Ms. Johnson suggested the signs were expected to last 15-20 years.

Mayor Harker noted the need for additional signage outside of the Town limits, directing people towards Beaufort. She also suggested adding information about the Farmers Market to some of the signs, with specific dates and times.

Commissioner Hagle made a motion for Ms. Johnson to proceed with the next phase of the Wayfinding Project.

The motion carried unanimously.

4. Arts in Beaufort Mural Project

Ms. Johnson explained that in June 2022, Arts in Beaufort received permission from the Board of Commissioners to proceed with a mural project on the shower house at the end of the boardwalk. Ms. Johnson went on to explain, since that time, Arts in Beaufort has revised their original request to include several changes and seeks the Board of Commissioner's approval to move forward with the project. The revisions include, to paint the mural directly on the shower house; remove the existing fence from the boardwalk that is adjacent to the shower house; remove the current shutters and replace them with solid pieces of wood. Ms. Johnson noted if the changes were approved, Public Works staff would complete the work associated with the last two items.

The Parks and Recreation Board was directed to review seven proposed designs and make a recommendation to the Board of Commissioners. Ms. Johnson shared the top three choices and noted "Beaufort Blue" as the number one recommendation.

Additionally, Ms. Johnson shared upon reviewing the finalists for the Arts in Beaufort proposed mural project, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board unanimously recommend the Board of Commissioners consider the submission titled "Under the Sea" for a mural at Randolph Johnson Park near the splashpad. The location would be on wooden panels along the fence separating the splashpad from the parking lot. The mural would not only add an artistic whimsical element to enhance the park, but would also serve as a protective barrier between the splash pad and the parking lot. Currently, staff has observed the majority of children arriving at the park go through the fence slats instead of using the designated pathways.

Commissioner Oliver asked if there was a gap between the boardwalk and shower house, to ensure taking the fence down would not be a safety issue.

Ms. Johnson confirmed it would not be a safety issue.

Commissioner Cooper expressed concerns with having Blackbeard represented in the recommended design.

Ms. Johnson asked if there were any suggestions she could take back to the artist.

After discussion from the Board, the consensus was for the artist to create several different designs within the Beaufort Blue piece, and to bring it back to the Board of Commissioners for approval at a future meeting. Their directive was to remove Blackbeard and the mahi fish from the current design, and to identify other images incorporated in the piece, such as Rachel Carson. The replacement images should include historical pieces that define the best of Beaufort.

Commissioner Hagle suggested there not be any designs painted on the fence at Randolph Johnson Park, as there would be too much maintenance in the upcoming years.

Mayor Harker suggested the mural proposal be readdressed at the May 8th Regular Meeting, if the artist has enough time to come up with new ideas, per the direction of the Board.

5. Dock House Lease

Mr. Clark explained staff was requesting the Board consider approving a modification of the current Dock House lease, as listed in the meeting packet, with the attached document titled "Deed of Reciprocal Transfer of Adjacent Parcels." He noted the subject property is located at 500 Front Street and is further described as Carteret County Parcel # 730505196802000. He shared some background on the property and discussed the rendering, which is referenced as "Exhibit B". Mr. Clark explained the owner, Haywood Weeks had expressed interested in the proposed exchange of property, where the Town would gain ownership of the dockmaster offices and give up ownership of the deck/porch areas.

Mr. Grady confirmed the property exchange included two offices which comprise the dockmaster's office, and the easement to get to those spaces, via the west side of the building. He explained specific details outlined on page two of the proposed modified lease, as noted in the meeting packet. He noted the utilities for the space were separately metered, and there would be shared maintenance cost in the future.

Commissioner Hagle made a motion to approve the modified Dock House Lease as presented.

The motion carried unanimously.

6. Residential Solid Waste Fee Increase

Christi Wood, Finance Director, explained the Town's residential service agreement with Waste Industries (GFL) notes the monthly fee shall be adjusted on an annual basis to reflect rates based on the Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers (CPI-U): South Region as published by US Department of Labor. She noted the rates will be increased by 7% for residential services effective May 1, 2023, and a 7% rate increase for Waterfront Business District (WBD) which will be addressed in the FY 24 Fee Schedule.

Commissioner Hollinshed made a motion to approve the change in the residential solid waste fee from \$20.88 to \$22.34, broken down to be \$1.46 per month or \$17.52 annually.

The motion carried with a 3-1 vote, with Commissioner Cooper voting in opposition.

7. March Financial Report

Ms. Wood presented the March Financial Report. She noted Carteret County is currently submitting estimates for property tax collections; the estimate for February collections was \$103,559. This payment was received in March. Staff has received a few preliminary reports from the county for billing and collections and estimated values. She shared that the MVT collected in February was received in April, in the amount of \$17,529. She also noted sales and use tax distribution for April as \$195,672, for January sales. She explained that is a 30% increase from the distribution in April 2022. Ms. Wood also noted the below account balances as of April 13, 2023.

General Fund- Unrestricted Fund Balance: \$6,552,078

Utility Fund Unrestricted Net Position: \$3,238,593

Commissioner Oliver shared his review of the quarterly reports show the Town in a very good financial place. He also suggested budget season was a good opportunity to look at debt payment on utility loans, setting money aside for capital reserves and reduction of sewer rates.

8. George Street & Fairview Drive Update

Mr. Clark provided a recap regarding a previous item on the Board's agenda. He explained the item focused on consideration of connecting Beau Coast West to George Street and Fairview Drive. Th Board agreed there was a need to connect the roads and directed the Town Manager to have a conversation with the developers to potentially share the cost associated with the connection. Mr. Clark was pleased to report, after

having a conversation with Karl Blackley, on behalf of Beau Cost, he agreed to incur 50% of the construction cost to interconnect those streets. The Town would incur the other 50% of the total cost of the project.

Adjourn

Commissioner Hagle made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

The motion carried unanimously.

Sharon E. Harker, Mayor

Elizabeth Lewis, Town Clerk