



Town of Beaufort, NC

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Town of Beaufort UDO Steering Committee Meeting 10:00 AM Monday, August 04, 2025 - Virtual via Zoom Minutes

Call to Order

Planner Eitner called the meeting to order at 10:00am. Those in attendance were Paula Gillikin, Commissioner (UDO Steering Committee Member), John LoPiccolo, Commissioner (UDO Steering Committee Member), Ryan Neve, Planning Board Chairman (UDO Steering Committee Member), Vic Fasolino, Planning Board Member (UDO Steering Committee Member), Tyson Smith, White Smith Cousino (UDO Consultant), Kelly Cousino, White Smith Cousino (UDO Consultant), Sean Scoopmore, White Smith Cousino (UDO Consultant), Caitlin Cameron, White Smith Cousino (UDO Consultant), Kyle Garner, Planning Director (Town Staff), and Michelle Eitner, Planner (Town Staff). Several members of the public attended to observe the meeting.

Minutes Approval

1. UDO Steering Committee Draft Minutes 7.22.25

The UDO Steering Committee meeting minutes from July 22, 2025, were approved by consensus without any changes.

Items for Discussion and Consideration

1. Revised Coastal Resilience Overlay District Preliminary Discussion Draft

Cousino from the consulting team began the discussion on the revised Coastal Resilience Overlay District draft that incorporated feedback from the previous meeting. She highlighted that changes included different impervious surface coverage limits for residential and nonresidential properties in both the Non-Intensification Zone (NIZ) and the Moderate Hazard Subdistrict. The current draft made increased construction standards entirely optional, whereas in the previous draft they were required in the NIZ and optional in the moderate district.

The committee discussed exemptions for the R-8A zoning district which primarily includes lots along Front Street. Neve suggested these lots should be exempt from certain provisions of the shoreline buffer, but not all requirements. He proposed that while R-8A properties shouldn't have to maintain the full 20-foot buffer or meet specific planting requirements, they should still be required to use native plants and avoid invasive species.

Eitner noted that with the 15-foot rear setback in R-8A, requiring a 20-foot buffer would reduce the buildable envelope by 5 feet, which could significantly impact these small lots. After discussion, the committee agreed

that R-8A properties should be exempt from the buffer width and planting density requirements, but should still follow native planting requirements if they choose to establish vegetation in that area.

The committee reviewed the definition of critical facilities that would be prohibited in the NIZ. There was extensive discussion about whether gas stations and fuel tanks should be included in this definition.

Neve expressed concern about allowing gas stations in the NIZ, noting that during storms they could be damaged and unavailable for months, creating a community resilience issue. Gillikin added that from an environmental justice standpoint, high-density affordable housing like apartment complexes should be kept out of the NIZ.

Eitner explained that fuel tanks in the floodplain already meet specific requirements for installation, addressing some of the committee's concerns.

After discussion, the committee decided not to classify gas stations as critical facilities, noting they would still be subject to special use permits, and therefore evaluated case-by-case. The committee also acknowledged that marine fuel facilities inherently need to be near water and, as such, in the NIZ.

The committee briefly reviewed a comment received on the public-facing draft that suggested more environmental storm readiness measures. The consensus was that many of these concerns would be addressed in the upcoming section on trees, landscaping, and buffers, as well as through the shoreline buffer requirements already in the draft.

The committee discussed a subsection of the draft regarding repairs to damaged homes. The provision states that when an existing detached single-family house is damaged or destroyed, it may be repaired and restored to its pre-event dimensions on the pre-event footprint if it meets all applicable building codes.

LoPiccolo raised concerns about how this would interact with freeboard requirements and height limitations in the historic district. If a home needs to be elevated to meet flood requirements, would the limitation to “pre-event dimensions” allow it to exceed height limits?

After extensive discussion, the committee agreed that:

1. Property owners should be allowed to rebuild to pre-event dimensions with necessary elevation for freeboard requirements;
2. Building code and freeboard requirements must be met;
3. Historic district requirements must still be followed; and
4. There should be a reasonable cap on how much additional height could be added, with the committee suggesting a maximum of 5 feet above current height restrictions.

The committee requested that Cousino and the consulting team revise this language to clarify these points.

The committee discussed whether to address infrastructure installation and extension in the NIZ as part of the overlay district or in later UDO modules. Town staff reported that utilities are already designed to meet floodplain regulations, with components like lift stations and generators elevated above base flood elevation.

After discussion, the committee decided to focus on limiting density in the NIZ rather than specifically restricting infrastructure. They agreed to limit residential development in the NIZ to:

1. A maximum of 5 units per acre; and
2. Only detached single-family homes (no multifamily, townhouses, or apartment complexes)

This approach would help keep vulnerable populations out of the most flood-prone areas while still allowing appropriate development.

Cousino provided an update on the schedule, noting that the virtual and in-person panel discussions would be consolidated into a hybrid session on August 26th at the Train Depot, which would also be streamed on Facebook Live.

The Planning Board meeting on September 15th would need to be in-person since COVID-19 virtual meeting allowances had expired, making it difficult to include both in-person attendees and remote consultants.

Cousino introduced the next drafting topic on trees, landscaping, and bufferyards, presenting a series of questions that would help guide their work. The committee decided to review these questions via the Konveio platform and provide feedback rather than discussing them in detail during this meeting. Neve requested that Pine Knoll Shores' landscaping regulations be reviewed as a potential model.

The meeting concluded with agreement that virtual meetings worked well for the committee, though there had been some confusion with Zoom links at the beginning of this meeting. Attendees indicated that a subsequent virtual meeting would be scheduled after the committee had time to review the questions about the trees and landscaping regulations.

Adjourn

The meeting adjourned by consensus at about 12:10pm.

_____ Committee Staff – Approved _____