



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

Town of Beaufort UDO Steering Committee Meeting 10:00 AM Monday, August 18, 2025 - Virtual via Zoom

Call to Order

Minutes Approval

- [1.](#) UDO Steering Committee Draft Minutes 8.4.25

Items for Discussion and Consideration

- [1.](#) Coastal Resilience Overlay Single-Family Residential Exemption Language
- [2.](#) Preliminary Drafting Discussion: Trees, Landscaping, & Bufferyards

Adjourn



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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 _____

D. Exception for Nonconforming Single-Family Houses.

1. When ~~an existing~~ nonconforming detached single-family house ~~that is damaged or destroyed~~ substantial damage⁵ by fire, flood, wind, or other natural disaster or event beyond the owner’s reasonable control, substantial improvements⁶ to the house ~~may be~~ are allowed to repaired and ~~restored~~ it to its pre-event dimensions⁷ on the pre-event footprint⁸ if it:

- (a) ~~m~~ Meets all applicable building codes;
- (b) Is constructed to meet or exceed the Regulatory Flood Protection Elevation (RFPE),⁹ unless a variance has been granted pursuant to Section 6.3.4, Variance Procedures,¹⁰ of the Town’s Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance; and
- (c) If applicable, receives a Certificate of Appropriateness in accordance with Section 7.5.3.¹¹

⁵ UDO Article 12 will carry forward the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance’s definition of *substantial damage*, which is “damage of any origin sustained by a structure during any one-year period whereby the cost of restoring the structure to its before damaged condition would equal or exceed 50 percent of the market value of the structure before the damage occurred. See definition of substantial improvement. Substantial damage also means flood-related damage sustained by a structure on two separate occasions during a ten-year period for which the cost of repairs at the time of each such flood event, on the average, equals or exceeds 25 percent of the market value of the structure before the damage occurred.”

⁶ UDO Article 12 will carry forward the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance’s definition of *substantial improvement*, which is “any combination of repairs, reconstruction, rehabilitation, addition or other improvement of a structure, taking place during any one-year period whereby the cost of which equals or exceeds 50 percent of the market value of the structure before the start of construction of the improvement. This term includes structures which have incurred substantial damage, regardless of the actual repair work performed. The term does not, however, include either: (1) Any correction of existing violations of state or community health, sanitary or safety code specifications which have been identified by the community code enforcement official and which are the minimum necessary to assure safe living conditions; or (2) Any alteration of a historic structure, provided that the alteration will not preclude the structure’s continued designation as a historic structure.”

⁷ The term *dimensions* includes both horizontal dimensions and vertical dimensions (i.e., height).

⁸ This is a current provision in the Town’s LDO (see Section 11, Paragraph D.6).

⁹ The Town’s Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance (Sec. 151.05) defines *regulatory flood protection elevation* as “the elevation to which all structures and other development located within the Special Flood Hazard Areas must be elevated or floodproofed, if non-residential. Within areas where Base Flood Elevations (BFEs) have been determined, this elevation shall be the BFE plus one foot of freeboard. In areas where no BFE has been established, all structures and other development must be elevated or floodproofed, if non-residential, to two feet above the highest adjacent grade.”

¹⁰ This is a cross-reference to the new UDO section that will establish the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance’s Variance procedure; the teal highlight is a reminder to verify the cross-reference once the UDO is drafted. The current cross-reference is Section 151.28.

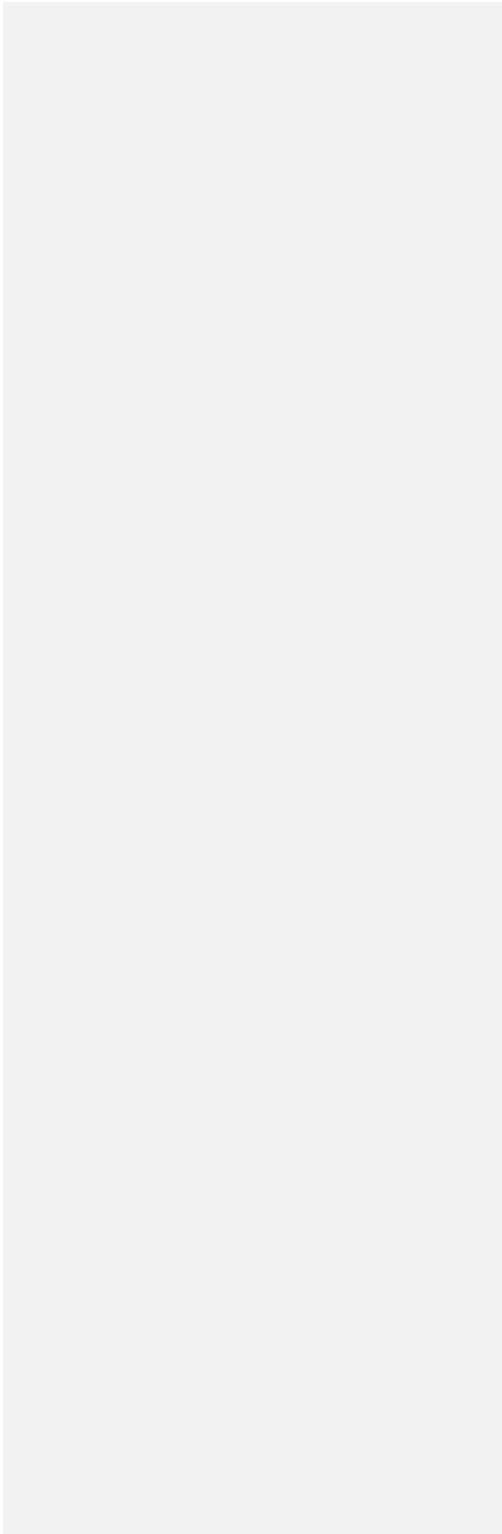
¹¹ This is a cross-reference to the new UDO section that will establish the Certificate of Appropriateness procedure; the teal highlight is a reminder to verify the cross-reference once the UDO is drafted. The procedure is described Section 23 of the current LDO.

2. If a house is nonconforming with respect to height or would exceed the district height limit after a substantial improvement because an increase in elevation is required to comply with the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance or the Building Code, it may be reconstructed to the greater of:

(a) Its height at the time of the substantial damage; or

~~20.~~(b) The base zoning district height limit plus one foot for each one foot the house is elevated above the RFPE, up to a maximum of three feet.

DRAFT





Preliminary Drafting Questions: Trees, Landscaping, & Bufferyards

UDO Steering Committee | August 4, 2025

- (1) Does Beaufort have a preference in community aesthetics between naturalistic (or even undisturbed) or formal (or more maintained) landscaping?
- (2) Is Beaufort’s regulatory preference to require or provide incentives for preferred outcomes? Or maybe a hybrid where there is a menu/point system that requires several (but not all) preferred conditions. Examples of topics that could be addressed by requirements, incentives or a hybrid system could be:
 - LID for development sites
 - LID for parking areas
 - Preservation of undisturbed areas on site
 - Preservation of existing specimen trees on site
 - Use of native species
 - Avoiding pesticides or herbicides
 - Other?
- (3) What are some incentives that the consultants should consider for preferred landscaping outcomes?
 - Decreased parking requirements
 - Increased height
 - Increased density
 - Other?
- (4) What goals do you want to accomplish by the landscaping standards for commercial developments?
 - Screening of site from the street
 - Screening of parking area from the street
 - Providing shade for parking areas
 - Aesthetic quality of development
 - Stormwater management
 - Wildlife habitat
 - Water conservation
 - Improving water quality from runoff
 - Protection of buildings from damage by trees in storms
 - Reducing maintenance costs
 - Other?

- (5) What types of landscaping locations would you like to see for shopping centers and other commercial developments?
 - Street Trees
 - Street (Perimeter) Buffers for Parking Area
 - Interior of Parking Lots (Parking Islands)
 - Drive Aisles
 - Building Foundations
 - Other?

- (6) Are there specific commercial corridors where there is heightened interest in regulating landscaping?

- (7) Do you want parking areas to be shaded by the trees? Is this goal being realized? If not, what are the reasons they think a full canopy doesn't develop?
 - Incorrect tree selection
 - Inadequate planting area
 - Inadequate watering
 - Other inadequate maintenance
 - Other?

- (8) Is there a preference to explore limiting or prohibiting pesticides or herbicides in the site development and maintenance of landscaping?

- (9) Are there issues with:
 - Dead plants and trees in developments?
 - Damage to existing trees during construction, resulting in their death?

Should any of these issues be addressed?

- (10) Is the Town more interested in preservation of :
 - Specific larger trees?
 - Tree canopy?
 - Both?

- (11) Do you think that recent residential subdivisions provide adequate trees? Are trees in the developed areas mostly provided by the preservation of existing trees or by new plantings?

- (12) The current approach preserves specific trees. Is there an interest in saving larger areas of tree canopy, as well? This is another approach for tree preservation, particularly to address concerns with mass grading of residential development sites.

- (13) How do you perceive the size threshold for protected trees? It is currently eight inches, regardless of species. Is this too big, too small, or just right?

- (14) Stakeholders expressed interest in pursuing an Arbor Day Foundation “Tree City USA” designation for the Town. Is the Town familiar with the standards for this designation or need more information on what is required? Does the Town want to revise its ordinances to meet the standards for the Tree City designation in this UDO revision?

- (15) How do you perceive the extent of regulation for tree removal on:
 - Existing residential lots?
 - Existing commercial lots?
 - New subdivisions?
 - New commercial developments?

- (16) Do you hear complaints about permitting requirements for tree removal?

- (17) Should the tree removal standards be increased, decreased, or kept at the current level?