

CAROLINA BEACH

Town Council Regular Meeting

Tuesday, January 14, 2025 - 6:00 PM

Council Chambers, 1121 N. Lake Park Boulevard, Carolina Beach, NC



MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Barbee called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM, followed by the invocation by Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte and Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT

Mayor Lynn Barbee
Mayor Pro Tem Deb LeCompte
Council Member Jay Healy
Council Member Joe Benson
Council Member Mike Hoffer

ALSO PRESENT

Town Manager Bruce Oakley
Assistant Town Manager Ed Parvin
Finance Director Debbie Hall
Town Clerk Kim Ward
Town Attorney Noel Fox

ADOPT THE AGENDA

ACTION: Motion to adopt the agenda as presented

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Benson, Council Member Hoffer

Motion passed unanimously

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Resolution of Support for the WMPO Application for a USDOT Grant
2. Adopt a Resolution of Intent to Close 15' X 188.24' of the Alleyway at the Intersection of Glenn Avenue Between Lots 17-23, Block 3
3. Set a Public Hearing for February 11, 2025 – Text Amendment to UDO Article 3, Nonconforming Situations; Applicant: North Pier Holdings LLC
4. Appropriate Funds for Ocean Sidewalk Project
5. Budget Amendments/Transfers
6. American Rescue Plan Budget Amendment
7. Approval of Council Meeting Minutes

ACTION: Motion to adopt the consent agenda

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Benson, Council Member Hoffer

Motion passed unanimously

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

8. Centennial Service Award Presented to Pat Efird

Council presented Pat Efird with the Pleasure Island Chamber of Commerce's Centennial Service Award. Ms. Efird has served the Town in numerous capacities, including 34 years as a Council Member. Moving forward, the award will be known as the Pat Efird Centennial Service Award.

9. 30-Minute Recess to Honor Pat Efird in the Town Hall Multipurpose Room

Mayor Barbee recessed the meeting for 30 minutes.

10. Events Update by Tim Murphy

Mayor Barbee called the meeting back to order.

Tim Murphy, Community Services Manager, said the Town received an application to enhance an existing event. He said it has gone through the Events Committee, and he introduced Jim DeGilio of the Pleasure Island Chamber of Commerce to give details.

Mr. DeGilio said the Chamber is proposing to expand the Beach Music Festival to be a two-day event. Saturday will continue to feature beach music, and Sunday will offer a different musical genre each year, with reggae being proposed for this year's event. He said each day will have the same start and end times and number of bands.

Mayor Barbee asked if there are any staff concerns about the request. Mr. Murphy said no.

Mayor Barbee asked how ticketing will work. Mr. DeGilio said attendees may buy tickets for one day only or get a two-day ticket at a discounted rate. He said the primary goal is to create commerce and get people to come for the whole weekend.

Council Member Hoffer asked if they had considered mixing the types of bands to offer more than one musical genre each day. Mr. DeGilio said they thought it was important to keep Saturday as it has been so they don't water down the beach music component, which is culturally important.

ACTION: Motion to approve the two-day Beach Music Festival as presented

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Benson, Council Member Hoffer

Motion passed unanimously

Mr. Murphy introduced Maureen Ferguson of the Centennial Committee, who presented an overview of Centennial events taking place from March 6 to September 7. Ms. Ferguson said there are a few events not yet approved by the committee that will be presented to Council next month. She also showed a rendering of the whale that will be featured in the N.C. Azalea Festival parade in Wilmington on April 5.

ACTION: Motion to approve the Centennial events as presented

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Benson, Council Member Hoffer

Motion passed unanimously

11. Manager's Update

Mr. Oakley reviewed the budget FY 2025-26 schedule:

- Budget open house – January 22 (rescheduled)
- Council strategic planning sessions – February 20-21
- Public hearing for non-profit requests – March 11
- Public hearing for community input – April 8
- Budget workshop – April 22
- Budget workshop (if necessary) – May 6
- Budget open house – May 6
- Budget message presented to Council – May 27
- Budget adoption – June 10

Mr. Oakley gave an update on various projects:

- The South Lake Park Boulevard sidewalk project will start in the spring and will be paved in the fall. This includes the Spartanburg Avenue crosswalk.
- The Ocean Boulevard sidewalk project is going well. The N.C. Department of Transportation (DOT) is going to request a speed limit reduction to 25 mph.
- The Saint Joseph Street multi-use path project should have a bid opening date in late March or early April.
- The current Boardwalk bathroom will be demolished in two weeks.
- The Lake Park pump house is going back out for bid for two more weeks because the Town only received one bid last time.

Community Development Director Jeremy Hardison reported the following recent developments:

- There were 47 permits issued for renovation/repair/additions, etc., 5 new construction, and 12 certificates of occupancy. There was a home demolition at 1406 Swordfish Lane.
- Upcoming: The Planning and Zoning Commission unanimously recommended approval of a text amendment to amend the nonconforming section regarding lot coverage; this will come before Council in February. The Conditional Use Permit (CUP) modification for 401 Marina Street to increase boat storage spaces will come before Council in March. The traffic-calming policy is being finalized, and the Town has submitted for Tree City USA 2025.

- New business permits include Boombalatti's at Proximity, Island Dog Grooming at 915 North Lake Park Boulevard, and Carolina Beach Grill & Bar at 102 Cape Fear Boulevard.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Nadia Murphy of 704 Sumter Avenue asked staff to investigate flooding in that area. She said her home never flooded until the Greenway went in nearby.

Paul Levy of 1606 Mackerel Lane said he does not understand the parking plan for low-speed vehicles (LSVs). He said he feels it gives an advantage to LSV owners and short-term renters that may get an LSV with their rental. Mr. Levy also spoke about fire safety and the need for water storage.

Lynn Conto of 707 Magnolia Avenue asked Council to prioritize Town needs. She said parking is not a critical situation and does not impact safety or security. Ms. Conto said she feels Council and staff should focus on stormwater mitigation, water quality, and appropriate first-responder staffing.

Vinny Doria of 1216 Canal Drive asked Council to revisit the beach vending policy. He said businesses are applying for vending permits and not using them. Mr. Doria said he feels if they are not being used, they should be forfeited and made available for other businesses.

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

12. Consider Approving an Ordinance to Amend the Rates and Fees Schedule to Update Parking, Re-entry, LSV, and Golf Cart Fees and Regulations
Applicant: Town of Carolina Beach

Council gave staff direction at the December meeting to work with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (ACOE) on developing a parking plan that would meet federal regulations. Staff met with ACOE on December 20 and reviewed the options Council was considering.

ACOE was willing to open up some additional parking for island passes in exchange for adding additional designated parking spaces in the Town that met or exceeded their requirements. Their requirements will continue to fluctuate annually based on how the Town grows, but this year it was based on:

1. 767 equally available spaces for all. In other words, these spaces should not allow for island passes. The Town can charge for them, but everyone (regardless of where they live) should be charged the same.
2. LSVs/golf carts are proposed to have an issued parking pass that is available regardless of where they live. These spaces could also count towards the 767 as long as the island pass was not also allowed in the parking space(s).
3. A minimum of 10 parking spaces per a quarter-mile ring should be equally available (no allowance for island passes).

With these parameters in mind, staff was able to obtain ACOE's tentative approval to add two lots and some on-street parking to the list of areas that allow for island passes (Alabama West and North Pier Lot). To be able to create this allowance, the Town would need to increase on-street parking.

Mr. Oakley said staff is recommending Option 1, which is similar to the current parking plan but makes the island pass cheaper. He said it is simple to understand, allows some ocean access, and will have a minimal effect on the budget.

Mr. Parvin gave an overview of the 2024 parking season and parking transactions per ZIP code in 2024. He said undesignated parking spaces may be used by all Town residents with a re-entry pass, which is free from January 1 to March 31 and \$20 after that and available for every vehicle registered in the Town. Mr. Parvin said when it floods, parking enforcement will be suspended for areas where this is occurring.

Mr. Parvin said the following steps remain in implementing a 2025 parking plan:

1. Designate remaining on-street parking to ensure there are 767 spaces distributed evenly
2. Clarify signage
3. Create educational materials
4. Develop press releases and social media posts
5. Update website

Option 1

1. \$30 residential limited pass (reduced from \$40)
2. \$100 LSV/golf cart pass available to everyone for all public parking spaces (excludes contracted lots)
3. Vehicles parked in undesignated residential parking areas shall have a current re-entry decal

Mr. Parvin went over the parking lots and on-street spaces where residential passes will and will not be accepted, as well as free parking spaces. He said the Town will be using the Centennial whale presented earlier as a delineator for signage showing where residential passes are allowed.

Option 2

1. \$40 residential limited pass
2. \$200 unlimited pass available to everyone for all public parking spaces (doubles after March 1 and excludes contracted lots)
3. Vehicles parked in undesignated residential parking areas shall have a current re-entry decal

Council Member Hoffer said he likes Option 2 because it's simpler and will lead to less confusion and tickets being issued. He said he supports LSVs but doesn't think it's fair to those who can't afford them that LSVs get to park wherever they want and other vehicles can't. Council Member Hoffer said he thinks people should have options no matter what they drive, and he feels like Option 2 got brushed off the table and not pursued.

Council Member Benson said after the December meeting it seemed the direction was to explore two options, and he thinks either option will be a projection. He said Option 2 is his preference.

Council Member Healy said the parking discussion should be based on how to protect residents from tax increases, and the current system of not allowing passes to be sold to non-residents is a proven

financial model. He said there is no idea what Option 2 would look like financially, and if there is a revenue shortfall residents will have to pay the difference. He said he is in favor of Option 1.

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte said her first responsibility is to Town taxpayers. She said she would like to give residents a \$200 parking pass that can be used everywhere, but then it must be given to everyone. Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte said she thinks Option 1 gives residents over 700 spaces near the beach without giving too much revenue away. She said at first she questioned the \$100 LSV pass, but LSVs already get preferential treatment with special parking spaces so she is not against it.

Mayor Barbee said his two most important objectives are balancing costs between residents and visitors and the fiscal health of the Town and reserves. He said selling parking passes to daytrippers, who often don't spend money at local businesses, is shifting the burden of paying for services to residents. Mayor Barbee said he cannot support an option that is going to dramatically change the revenue stream Council voted for in this year's budget, so he supports Option 1.

ACTION: Motion to adopt Ordinance No. 25-1247 amending the rates and fees schedule to update parking, re-entry, LSV, and golf cart fees and regulations per Option 1

Motion made by Council Member Healy

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy

Voting Nay: Council Member Benson, Council Member Hoffer

Motion passed 3-2

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member Hoffer asked that staff put a Bike/Ped Committee item on the January 28 workshop agenda. He wants to consider a speed limit on the Greenway and would like Police Sgt. Derrick McNeil to discuss the Safe Streets lighting program. Council Member Hoffer also asked staff to make sure sod and irrigation are in the grassy area around the marina. He suggested having a landscape designer make recommendations. Finally, Council Member Hoffer asked to have the Town's landscaper spend some time around the lake near the playground because oleanders have taken over.

Council Member Benson asked about having crosswalks on Canal Drive and Carolina Beach Avenue North. He also requested that staff establish residential parking zones on North End streets such as Virginia, Florida, and Delaware.

Council Member Healy said he would like the Town to budget for a new stage at the Boardwalk. Council Member Hoffer suggested he research some options and possible costs and make a presentation to Council.

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte said volunteers will be painting the Boardwalk stage in the hopes of getting one more year out of it. She asked staff to put an item on the January workshop agenda to discuss details for the Rainbow Bridge at Lake Park. Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte also asked staff to follow up on Mr. Doria's comment regarding beach permits.

Mayor Barbee said he has been requesting funds from the County and other sources for some of the Town's projects. He said every Council should plan to talk about parking every year because there will always be changes with leased lots, rules, etc., that need to be addressed.

CLOSED SESSION

13. Closed Session – Attorney/Client

ACTION: Motion to go into closed session to discuss an attorney/client matter in accordance with NCGS 143.318.11(a)(3); the matter being discussed is 23 CVS 3744 Carolina Beach Land Holdings LLC vs. Town of Carolina Beach

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Benson, Council Member Hoffer

Motion passed unanimously

Mayor Barbee called the meeting back to order and said Council took no action during closed session.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Barbee adjourned the meeting at 9:00 PM.