

# CAROLINA BEACH

Planning and Zoning Commission

Thursday, November 13, 2025 - 6:00 PM

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



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## MINUTES

### CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Rouse called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

### PRESENT

Chairman Wayne Rouse

Vice Chairman Jeff Hogan

Commissioner Melanie Boswell

Commissioner Ethan Crouch

Commissioner Todd Piper

Commissioner Bill Carew

### ABSENT

Commissioner Lynn Conto

### ALSO PRESENT

Community Development Director Jeremy Hardison

Senior Planner Gloria Abbotts

### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. October 9, 2025 – P&Z Minutes

**ACTION:** Motion to approve the minutes as written

Motion made by Chairman Rouse, seconded by Vice Chairman Hogan

Voting Yea: Chairman Rouse, Vice Chairman Hogan, Commissioner Boswell, Commissioner Crouch, Commissioner Piper, Commissioner Carew

*Motion passed 6-0*

### STAFF REPORT ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Mr. Hardison reported the following:

#### Permitting

- 53 permits (renovation, repair, grading, additions, fences, etc.)
- 4 residential new construction
- 20 certificates of occupancy

#### New businesses

- Noe Hair & Nail Lounge, 1000 North Lake Park Boulevard #121
- Tap Tea Bar, 304 North Lake Park Boulevard

#### Demos

- 907 South 4th Street (single-family home)

#### Past and upcoming

- Board of Adjustment November 3: denied front setback 606 Cape Fear Boulevard
- Planning and Zoning Commission December 11: 205 Raleigh Avenue rezoning MX to CBD
- Tree City USA application submitted
- Stoplight at Lake Park Boulevard and Winner Avenue

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

None

#### **PUBLIC HEARING**

2. Consider a Subdivision Modification of 4 Additional Lots for a Total of 13 Lots Located at 1215 Saint Joseph Street  
Applicant: Big Bird Land Development, LLC

Applicant Big Bird Land Development, LLC, has submitted a request to modify the preliminary plat approval of the Fishers Reserve subdivision at 1215 Saint Joseph Street. The proposed modification adds 4 additional lots to the subdivision, for a total of 13 lots. The Planning and Zoning Commission shall review and take final action. Phase one of the subdivision received approval from the Commission in February of this year. The applicant has completed land clearing, installation of utilities, site work, stormwater, and installation of the base of the road, and landscaping has begun. More details about the project can be found in the agenda packet.

The applicant has received a permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to fill 0.66 acres of 404 wetlands. As a condition of approval, the applicant is offering to donate 1 acre of undisturbed wetlands to the Town or a land trust.

Staff recommends approval of this preliminary plat subject to the following conditions. Final plat may not be submitted for approval until all conditions, revisions, changes, and submissions are made. The conditions, revisions, changes and submissions to be made are as follows:

1. Street trees shall be installed according to preliminary plat submittal. Existing vegetation can be used for this requirement.
2. Permanent monuments of stone or concrete shall be placed at one or more corners of the subdivision to be designated as control corners.
3. A drainage plan that will include all portions of the development shall be submitted. This plan shall be prepared and sealed by a registered surveyor or engineer.
4. Surfacing shall be done in accordance with plans and standard specifications approved by the Planning and Zoning Commission and the State Department of Transportation.
5. The installation of a street sign, light pole, and stop sign is required.
6. Electrical lines shall be buried.

7. Lot coverage for any lot located within the subdivision shall not exceed 40%.
8. Maximum impervious coverage for any lot located within the subdivision shall not exceed 65%.
9. The plan must clearly designate the location of open space, recreation areas, and stormwater ponds, as well as ownership details.
10. Grading, surfacing, curb and gutters, sidewalks, street lighting, street trees, sewage disposal facilities, stormwater drainage facilities, and other utilities shall be installed and certified by a surveyor and/or engineer, or a performance guarantee shall be provided prior to recording the final plat.
11. State stormwater modification permit and soil erosion control modification permit shall be obtained.
12. Donation of 1 acre of undisturbed 404 wetlands to the Town or land trust.

Chairman Rouse informed the applicant that one Commissioner is absent tonight and extended the opportunity to postpone this matter until the full Commission is present. The applicant declined the offer in favor of moving forward tonight. Chairman Rouse reminded everyone that the matter would be settled tonight and is not an item that moves to Council for a final decision.

Ms. Abbotts presented the details, including current progress and a site plan, and she reviewed additional required improvements and permits.

Commissioner Crouch asked about the condition to donate 1 acre of undisturbed wetlands. Ms. Abbotts said this was proposed by the applicant, and they would have to show proof that it was donated to a land trust or the Town.

Commissioner Piper asked about the status of the State stormwater permit modification. Ms. Abbotts said the applicant can answer this.

**ACTION:** Motion to open the public hearing

Motion made by Chairman Rouse, seconded by Vice Chairman Hogan

Voting Yea: Chairman Rouse, Vice Chairman Hogan, Commissioner Boswell, Commissioner Crouch, Commissioner Piper, Commissioner Carew

*Motion passed 6-0*

Drew Hatcher, an engineer representing the applicant, said wetlands preservation would be in perpetuity. He said the applicant is only requesting 4 additional lots instead of double that amount shown in the previous plan, adding that they pared that back to make the 1 acre of undisturbed wetlands stay that way and maintain a buffer between the subdivision and the conservation area. Mr. Hatcher said the 4 lots will have some infiltration areas assigned to them, and the modification to the permit is not necessarily to change the manner of the permit but to extend it to those 4 lots.

**ACTION:** Motion to open the public hearing

Motion made by Chairman Rouse, seconded by Vice Chairman Hogan

Voting Yea: Chairman Rouse, Vice Chairman Hogan, Commissioner Boswell, Commissioner Crouch, Commissioner Piper, Commissioner Carew

*Motion passed 6-0*

Rich Walsh of 141 Lighthouse Drive described significant flooding issues in his cul-de-sac, especially during heavy rain, hurricanes, and tropical storms. He explained that water flows across Town-owned property, around his home, and into the wetlands, and he feared that filling additional wetlands would overwhelm the area's drainage capacity. Mr. Walsh shared maps and photographs showing how water currently moves through the neighborhood and argued that additional development would worsen flooding for nearby homes.

Dale Edmundson of 102 Lighthouse Drive read from a letter submitted by Kelli Braunbach, an HOA board member in his neighborhood, opposing the project. The letter described wetlands as critical for flood control, water quality, and habitat and argued that filling them would increase runoff, erosion, and pollution while displacing wildlife and threatening historic features such as the Sugar Loaf line earthworks. He also stated that Carolina Beach Village already experiences drainage problems that would be aggravated by this project.

Debbie Sullivan of 115 Lighthouse Drive said her backyard began flooding only after Publix was constructed and expressed concern that further wetland loss would worsen the situation.

Debbie Sikorski of 1200 Saint Joseph Street, President of the Forest by the Sea HOA, described significant impacts to neighborhood landscaping and infrastructure from recent utility work associated with projects in the area. She cited bare ground, dead vegetation, damaged sprinkler systems, and inadequate communication regarding water and electricity shutoffs. Ms. Sikorski also noted repeated delays to their paving project because their neighborhood was used as a detour for nearby construction. She requested a direct point of contact and clarification on when detour use would end and asked whether the new homes would be required to use contained runoff systems similar to those required of neighbors in other recent developments.

Commissioner Piper requested that Ms. Sullivan come back to the podium and asked her several questions about the situation around her home. She said she has not approached the Town about cleaning any of the nearby ditches. Commissioner Piper said he was trying to understand where all the water in that area runs.

Chairman Rouse asked if the applicant wanted to offer rebuttal to any of the comments.

Mr. Hatcher said some of the utility work in the area was actually for the Town and not directly associated with their property. He said if there is a detour planned, they are happy to work with anybody on advocating specific routing, adding that they are trying to be as proactive as possible and willing to work with all parties.

**ACTION:** Motion to close the public hearing

Motion made by Chairman Rouse, seconded by Vice Chairman Hogan

Voting Yea: Chairman Rouse, Vice Chairman Hogan, Commissioner Boswell, Commissioner Crouch, Commissioner Piper, Commissioner Carew

*Motion passed 6-0*

Commissioner Carew emphasized that flooding is a significant concern as a Town but argued that it should not prevent property owners from developing land when they comply with all standards. He noted that the applicant's stormwater systems appear to improve conditions rather than worsen them.

Commissioner Crouch stated that although flooding and wetland impacts are serious issues, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, not the Commission, is the authority governing wetland disturbance. He said because the applicant had obtained the required Federal permit, he thinks this carries substantial weight. Commissioner Crouch supported the conservation of 1 acre of wetlands and said such protection in perpetuity was important to prevent incremental future expansion of development on the site.

Commissioner Piper explained that the applicant could have legally developed the property incrementally without coming before the Commission and could have filled wetlands through individual permits but instead submitted a full planned development with enhanced conditions such as permeable pavement, stormwater measures, and larger-caliper trees. He noted that other neighborhoods in the area had likely been built under similar or less restrictive rules and emphasized that the applicant had satisfied all Town, State, and Federal requirements.

Commissioner Boswell noted that although she cares deeply about wetlands, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, not the Commission, has authority over those decisions, and the Corps has already approved the project. She emphasized that the applicant has exceeded expectations in meeting required conditions, including planting high-quality trees, and she confirmed this by visiting the site herself. She asked Mr. Hardison whether the stipulation involving the 1-acre parcel had been discussed with Town Attorney Noel Fox. He explained that it had not yet been discussed but said that transferring such property to a land trust or the Town is common practice. Commissioner Boswell clarified that the parcel would be a donation rather than a purchase. She also asked about the status of the State stormwater permit modification. Mr. Hardison said this had not yet been finalized and was likely awaiting the Commission's decision.

Vice Chairman Hogan asked Ms. Abbotts to display the required stipulations and pointed out that if that if the applicant fails to complete the additional required improvements and permits, the 4 planned homes cannot be built. He said he has walked the property a couple of times and thinks it will be a nice neighborhood that will add value to the Town and help property values on the street.

Commissioner Boswell asked Mr. Hardison to reach out to the residents who spoke tonight about cleaning out nearby ditches. Mr. Hardison said he can discuss this with the Stormwater Department and contact residents. Commissioner Boswell encouraged residents to email Mr. Hardison and the Operations Department about these issues.

Chairman Rouse expressed support for the project and noted that having the 1-acre parcel placed under a land trust or Town ownership would be a rare but beneficial outcome. He stated that the applicant could have chosen to subdivide the land in much smaller increments to avoid stricter stormwater requirements but instead opted for a more transparent process.

Vice Chairman Hogan added that zoning allows 7,000-square-foot lots, but the applicant chose lot sizes closer to 9,000 to 10,000 square feet. He noted that the developer could have requested approval for more houses but did not, resulting in less impervious surface than what would have been permitted.

Chairman Rouse requested that any motion of approval include both the 1-acre condition and the staff-recommended approval.

**ACTION:** Motion to approve the subdivision for Fishers Reserve as presented with the approved conditions and the requirement that the 1 acre go into a land trust or is turned over to the Town  
Motion made by Vice Chairman Hogan, seconded by Commissioner Boswell

Voting Yea: Chairman Rouse, Vice Chairman Hogan, Commissioner Boswell, Commissioner Crouch, Commissioner Piper, Commissioner Carew

*Motion passed 6-0*

### **NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

Vice Chairman Hogan thanked Chairman Rouse for his time on the Commission and praised his knowledge, preparation, and leadership.

Chairman Rouse expressed gratitude for the opportunity to serve over the past nearly 9 years and reflected on the extensive work the Commission completed together, including the Land Use Plan and Unified Development Ordinance. He also thanked staff for their support and the many conversations required outside formal meetings.

Mr. Hardison said with Chairman Rouse moving to Council, the Commission will need a new member, Chair, and possibly Vice Chair at the next meeting.

Chairman Rouse described ongoing work with staff regarding non-conforming lots. He explained that the Town has more than 400 such lots, far more than neighboring Kure Beach. Chairman Rouse said because handling these cases through the Board of Adjustment could create precedent and overwhelm the Board, staff has been preparing to bring non-conforming lot issues to the Commission and eventually to Council. He emphasized that it will be a major undertaking and significantly affect many property owners as well as public safety considerations.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Chairman Rouse adjourned the meeting at 6:51 PM.