

CAROLINA BEACH

Riverview Restaurant (Fort Fisher Air Force Base)

Thursday, February 20, 2025 8:30 AM

121 Riverfront Road Kure Beach, NC 28449



MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Barbee called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM.

PRESENT

Mayor Lynn Barbee

Council Member Jay Healy

Council Member Mike Hoffer

Mayor Pro Tem Deb LeCompte

Council Member Joe Benson

ALSO PRESENT

Town Manager Bruce Oakley

Finance Director Debbie Hall

Town Attorney Noel Fox

Fire Chief Alan Griffin

Community Development Director Jeremy Hardison

Finance Director Debbie Hall

Executive Assistant Sheila Nicholson

Assistant Town Manager Ed Parvin

Town Clerk Kim Ward

Police Chief Vic Ward

Public Works Director Brian Stanberry

Public Utilities Director Mark Meyer

Parks and Rec Director Eric Jelinski

Human Resources Director Holly Brooks

This is a budget workshop. No action was taken. This is just a general account of topics that were discussed.

Projects

Mr. Oakley gave an update on the current and future projects.

Centennial Park is moving along, and the paving of the parking lot should begin next week.

The new boardwalk trash receptacles with compactors will be out soon.

Council Member Healy asked if the topic of a municipal service district would be coming back to Council. Mr. Oakley said that it would have to be requested by Council.

The contractor for the boardwalk bathroom project is experiencing some delays beyond his control. He is going to put the project on hold until after Labor Day with plans to complete the project in March of 2026.

The Ocean Boulevard sidewalk is still moving forward. There will be a time when the water will have to be shut off and boil water advisories will have to go out.

The 1810 Canal Drive parking lot will be paved soon and will provide handicap access to the beach. Ms. Fox said that we are still waiting for the appraisal of the nine boardwalk properties that the Town made an offer on.

Council discussed having DOT look at options for the path that golf carts are making at 7th Street and Dow Road in order to cross over Dow. Staff mentioned creating a golf cart path directly across from 7th Street so carts are not traveling down the side of Dow Road.

Mr. Parvin mentioned that the Bike/Ped Plan will be presented on April 1 and will be voted on April 8.

Mr. Oakley said we are not proposing any new projects for the next budget year. He would like to focus on maintaining the projects that are currently in progress.

Mr. Hardison identified a couple of grants that they are looking into for FY25/26.

Mayor Barbee mentioned that sidewalks north of Cape Fear Boulevard are unusable and asked that staff evaluate them.

Ms. Hall gave a financial update. The tax revaluation numbers are out. The Town should receive numbers from the county next week so we can have an idea what revenue neutral will look like. The final numbers will come out in April after the appeal process is complete. She mentioned that she is unsure how sales tax is going to work at 7% if they do away with the penny. Room occupancy tax is down this year compared to last year. Mayor Barbe reminded everyone that it is still up from 2019.

Ms. Hall said that the Town is doing well on interest with investments.

Staff and Council briefly spoke about the possible effects of losing FEMA assistance if the federal government discontinues the department.

Mr. Parvin spoke about revenue bonds and the projects associated with them.

Mr. Meyer explained the AMI purchase and the history behind the current system. The new system is far more advanced than our current system and should eliminate the need for manual meter reading.

Chief Griffin reviewed the fire department capital project projections for the next 10 years.

Mr. Jelinski reviewed the parks and recreation future projects. He said that a lot of the projects on their wish list require land that the Town does not have. They have two A/C units in the back of the Rec Center that are from 1999 and need to be replaced. The two new units are working great.

Council agreed to slow down on new projects in order to catch up and maintain the current ones.

Mr. Parvin reviewed the residential zone expansion. Council felt it was a reasonable request to extend the zone. Mr. Parvin will bring this item back to Council as an ordinance amendment. Council asked to put a priority on making this happen soon.

Council discussed changing the names of parking lots so that they make sense to new residents and visitors.

Council would like to see how the sidewalk effects the traffic on Ocean Boulevard before discussing a speed limit reduction. If crosswalks are added, there may be need for a speed limit reduction.

Mr. Hardison presented a proposed traffic calming device policy. If someone requests a traffic calming device, they will need to go through the Town process. This will come back to Council in March.

Council Member Hoffer asked about painted stop bars as traffic control devices. He also asked about restricting left turns in specific areas that tend to back up.

Mr. Parvin reviewed traffic options for one-way streets. Council asked staff to bring back some ideas for the cross streets and a future vision of the north end. Council was not in favor of paying a high price for a study that may not be implemented. They suggested starting with the WMPO.

Mr. Hardison reviewed some ideas for the downtown area.

Ms. Fox spoke about nonprofits. She reiterated that Town staff and Council should not be participating in nonprofit organizations that benefit the Town. She specifically spoke about the Bike Rodeo. Town Council and staff should not be fund raising for these events and should not be providing paid staff for these events.

Mr. Oakley reviewed communication policies. He asked that Council and staff follow the chain of command. He also suggested starting quarterly Town Halls to communicate with the public.

Mr. Oakley spoke about committees and asked Council if committees were serving the purpose that was established. Council agreed that committees should be ad-hoc and serve a specific purpose. It was suggested that current committees merge with the established non-profits such as Friends of Parks and Greenways, Police Foundation, etc. Council said they would like to notify their committee members that this was the wish of Council and they will discuss it at their April workshop.

Ms. Fox provided the history and an update on Freeman Park. She reviewed some of the options that are allowable for the property and some of the items that are prohibited. She mentioned that the Town should form a Freeman Park ad hoc committee to develop a management plan for Freeman Park Preservation. Mr. Hoffer said that he feels there should be a primitive trail established as soon as possible. There was concern that there needed to be signage. Mayor Barbee wanted to get the committee's recommendation before moving forward. Mr. Hoffer asked about the pinch point. The majority of Council was against opening up the pinch point even if it became passible. Council agreed that the Freeman Park Committee members do not have to be Carolina Beach residents. They would like certain positions to be identified. Mr. Oakley said that staff would work

with the attorney and draft a committee recommendation. Council would like for it to be a 7 person committee. There would be a staff liaison and a Council liaison that would not be voting members.

Staff asked Council for their priorities and legislative initiatives.
Council Member Benson asked staff to follow up on bulkheads.

Mayor Barbee asked staff to follow up with the County on the directional drill, to see if they are willing to provide assistance.

Council Member Hoffer mentioned the road striping/sidewalk project and would like to show Council a plan.

Council Member Benson asked about resident only parking spaces. Mr. Parvin said that you must be a permanent resident, and the house must have been built prior to 1980 with no access to a driveway.

Mr. Parvin suggested possibly giving the residents a parking pass. He said that he would bring an amendment back to Council.

Meeting adjourned at 3:37pm.