

# CAROLINA BEACH

Town Council Workshop

Tuesday, June 27, 2023 - 9:00 AM

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



## MINUTES

### CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Barbee called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

### PRESENT

Mayor Lynn Barbee

Mayor Pro Tem Jay Healy

Council Member Joe Benson

Council Member Mike Hoffer

Council Member Deb LeCompte

### ALSO PRESENT

Town Manager Bruce Oakley

Town Clerk Kim Ward

### DISCUSSION ITEMS

#### 1. Manager's Update

Mr. Oakley gave an update on various projects:

- Emergency Operations/Incident Command open house: This will take place today 4:00-6:00 PM.
- Cape Fear Boulevard/Canal Drive one-way: There is an existing engineering study that needs to be updated, and there is money in the budget for this.
- Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) lot parking: The Town is ready to order gravel and start working on the lot between Hamlet and Fayetteville avenues.
- Post-budget retreat date: This was originally planned for July but will be moved to August when better numbers are available.
- Proposed mooring field expansion: The Town has applied for a grant for this. A slide showing the existing and future mooring field was presented.
- Ocean Boulevard sidewalk: The Town heard back from the N.C. Department of Transportation (DOT) and found out the proposed crosswalk at Searay Lane was slowing down the project because there must be a separate encroachment agreement and review. The Town has requested that this be pulled out so the project can move forward. Council Member Hoffer asked why Pinfish Lane was not considered for the crosswalk instead of Searay Lane. Planning Director Jeremy Hardison said the sidewalk terminates halfway through the block of Pinfish Lane and doesn't carry all the way to Ocean Boulevard, so that may be the reason. He said Searay Lane terminates at Ocean Boulevard and already has a sidewalk connection. Mr. Oakley

said DOT will not approve an encroachment agreement unless there is a sidewalk-to-sidewalk connection.

- Lake dredge and stabilization: Work is ongoing, and the project is moving forward. The Town will install a sign at Lake Park with a QR code people can scan for more information about the project. The Town has reached out to the Pleasure Island Sea Turtle Project to ask for help monitoring geese, turtles, and other wildlife to ensure they are not being trapped or otherwise affected due to the work.
- Marina: The project is on schedule. Crews will soon put back the walkway along Canal Drive. Council Member Hoffer asked if June 2024 is still a reasonable estimate for completion. Mr. Oakley said the Town is shooting for this winter/spring. Mayor Barbee asked what the front area will contain once this phase of the project is complete. Mr. Oakley said it will be reseeded until the Town can come up with a plan for that phase of the project. Council Member LeCompte said there has been talk about making this Centennial Park.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy said the Carolina Beach Mural Project wants to paint the alley next to Beach Bumz and asked what kind of approval the group needs. Mr. Oakley said this is in the Town right-of-way, so Council would need to authorize it. Mayor Pro Tem Healy said the group is reaching out to owners of the buildings to get permission to paint them and install lighting. He said there is talk about calling this area Centennial Alley. Mayor Barbee suggested asking representatives from the group to come before Council to make a formal request and answer questions about the process.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy asked how many no-wake zone signs are in the mooring field area. Mr. Hardison showed a map of where the signs are. Mayor Barbee said there are a lot of signs, so this is not the issue. He said the problem is that people do not follow the signs.

Council Member Hoffer asked about the schedule for the Lake Park playground work. Mr. Oakley said the Town has selected a design, an installer, and a manufacturer, and the plan is for a fall start with work to be completed before the next tourist season. He said a new restroom facility similar to the one at Mike Chappell Park will be ordered.

Council Member Hoffer said he still feels strongly that geese waste around the lake is a problem. Mayor Pro Tem Healy said some vendors at the Carolina Beach Market often bring shovels to scoop the waste from the sidewalk. Council Member Hoffer said he met with the owner of a dog who is trained to deter geese at Airlie Gardens, and he suggested the Town look into this humane solution. He said the cost to buy a trained dog is about \$6,000, and the animal would need to be someone's pet. Mayor Barbee said the dog aggravates the geese until they move on, making the patrolled area inhospitable to them. Mr. Oakley said Parks & Recreation Director Eric Jelinski is planning to look into this. Mayor Barbee said he would be supportive of this measure because it does not physically harm the geese, and there are other ponds where they can go.

## 2. Discussion on Handicap Parking

Mr. Oakley said the Coast Guard put together a list that showed the Town added 10 handicap parking spaces this past year. He said the Town upgraded lots to meet building code requirements for handicap spaces, and there is the potential to add five more spaces, although the public has been vocal that

more are necessary. Mr. Oakley said there has been discussion about relocating some handicap parking spaces on Cape Fear Boulevard.

Mayor Barbee said the Town must be careful in determining the right number of handicap parking spaces. He said the list Mr. Oakley presented shows progress.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy asked how many total handicap parking spots the Town had before the additions. Mr. Oakley said he doesn't know the total, but there is one handicap space per every 25 parking spaces.

Mayor Barbee said the Town is now meeting handicap parking requirements established by the Federal government. Mr. Oakley said for any large lots, the Town is meeting or exceeding the requirements.

Council Member LeCompte asked if the Town could designate areas close to Boardwalk beach accesses as handicap parking only when there are events such as Life Rolls On. Mr. Oakley said he thinks the Town can work out something for these situations.

Council Member LeCompte said many people believe the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) requires handicap parking to be free, but that's not true. She said the Town chose to make its handicap parking spaces free.

Mayor Barbee said some people also believe that a handicap placard entitles them to free parking in any spaces, not just those designated as handicap parking, which is also not true.

#### **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Council Member LeCompte said she spent the day at the State Park yesterday replanting salt marsh where phragmites had been eradicated. She said phragmites are a problem all over the island. Council Member LeCompte said during this event, she met the State's debris removal team and was amazed to learn how much debris they keep out of our waterways.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy said the appearance of some stagnant construction sites does not reflect well on the Town. Council Member Hoffer said this is a Code Enforcement issue, and he encouraged people who see violations to report them using SeeClickFix. Mr. Oakley said SeeClickFix helps Code Enforcement a lot. Council Member LeCompte and Council Member Hoffer said they have had good experiences using the platform.

Council Member Benson said he would like to propose consideration of a text amendment that would allow Highway Business District (HBD) businesses to pursue using any property, not just those with the same owner, to satisfy the requirement for non-contiguous parking within 500 feet.

Council Member Benson said at the next workshop he would like a refresher on what the State Supreme Court has decided about short-term rentals and what the Town can do with its existing code. Mayor Barbee said a legal update would be a good idea because things are rapidly changing. Council Member LeCompte said she hears a lot of complaints about short-term rentals.

Council Member Hoffer said the public should use SeeClickFix or email Code Enforcement directly to report issues for which rules are already in place, such as parking, noise, and trash. He said staff members are taking care of aesthetic issues on the Boardwalk that go beyond just emptying trash.

Council Member Hoffer said someone asked him what can be done about tents belonging to homeless people on Snow's Cut Trail. He suggested taking down the tents and putting them in the trash, which he has done in the past. Mr. Oakley said while there is not an ordinance that would prevent someone from doing this, he suggested letting the Police Department handle the situation. Council Member Hoffer said he understands not everyone is comfortable discarding the tents themselves. Mr. Oakley said some of that property is not in the Town's jurisdiction.

Mayor Barbee asked about the status of Boardwalk repairs. Public Works Director Brian Stanberry said the Town is waiting on lumber, which should be available in about two weeks, and then repairs will take about a week.

Mayor Barbee said he is no longer a fan of motion-activated lights at street crossings because they are not working as intended. He suggested removing the motion detectors so people would have to push a button to activate the lights. Mr. Stanberry said these are a maintenance nightmare and often need adjustments. Council Member LeCompte said bicyclists sometimes forget they are operating a vehicle that should be following traffic laws.

Council Member LeCompte said the solar speed limit sign at the Fire Department is still not working.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Barbee adjourned the meeting at 10:10 AM.