

CAROLINA BEACH

Town Council Workshop

Tuesday, February 28, 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

Assistant Town Manager Ed Parvin

Finance Director Debbie Hall

Town Clerk Kim Ward

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Employee Recognition

Fire Chief Alan Griffin introduced new Ocean Rescue Captain Shawn Kelly and new Administrative Support Specialist Cate Freeman.

Planning Director Jeremy Hardison introduced new Code Enforcement Officer Ashley Martin. He also recognized Andrea Deopp-Norris for 5 years of service in Planning.

Mr. Parvin recognized Mr. Hardison for 20 years of service in Planning.

Public Utilities Director Mark Meyer and Council recognized Kenny Lewis for more than 38 years of service with the Town and congratulated him on his recent retirement.

ACTION: Motion to take a short recess

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

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

Motion passed unanimously

Mayor Barbee called the meeting back to order.

2. Bike/Ped Committee Presentation Regarding Bike Lanes on Carolina Beach Avenue South

Bike/Ped Committee Chairman Ricky Niec said the committee is looking to redesign the Town's Bike Plan and Pedestrian Plan. He asked for a resolution of support to apply for grant money. Council gave consensus to move forward. Mr. Niec said the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (WMPO) will also submit a resolution of support.

Mr. Niec also gave a presentation on a striping proposal for Carolina Beach Avenue South that would include a bike lane and golf cart parking spaces. He reviewed pros and cons and said the committee recommends the walking portion be on the east side to keep pedestrians by beach accesses and allow for better use of existing sidewalks. Mr. Niec said this is a striping project only, so the cost is relatively low because no street work is required. He reviewed photos of various options.

Mayor Barbee said the main thing is that it's very clear where cars can go because right now it's not, so this will help clarify. He said Council will look at all solutions and decide what's best to do there.

Mr. Parvin said the Technical Review Committee (TRC) will want to review the options. Mayor Barbee said after TRC, the process would be to determine staff's recommendation and cost before budget consideration.

Council Member Hoffer said he's not 100% sold on doing this because he has walked Carolina Beach Avenue South for 20 years and never felt threatened by a car and has rarely seen cars going in the wrong direction. He thinks arrows and basic signage may be enough, but he wants to hear from TRC and hear about cost. Council Member Hoffer said he thinks South Lake Park Boulevard is the biggest hazard on the island, and it could be improved for a relatively low amount of money. Mayor Barbee agreed that this will not stop issues on South Lake Park Boulevard.

Council Member Benson said the Bike/Ped Committee may have gotten way ahead on this. Mayor Barbee said a workshop is a good place to look at options and as a Council give direction to staff to come back with more information, including cost.

3. Manager's Update

Mr. Oakley gave an update on various projects and events.

Pavement Condition Index (PCI) Project

Highland Paving started the paving project today. Staff has requested a quote for striping Canal Drive as part of the project.

Parking Lot Striping

The parking lots around Town Hall and the Rec Center will be striped Sunday; the Rec Center will be closed during that time.

Boardwalk Restroom

The Coastal Resources Commission (CRC) has approved a variance to build a restroom on the Boardwalk. The Town will still have to get a floodplain variance from its own Board of Adjustment and an approved budget before the project can start. It will be a long process, with possible completion by summer 2025.

Council Member Hoffer said he hopes staff will consider expanding the paving project to other streets that need work. He said it would be cheaper to do them now than next year.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy asked about the lake dredge project. Mr. Oakley said it is currently out for bid. Council Member Benson said bids close on March 23.

Mayor Barbee said paid parking starts tomorrow, and some signs are missing. Mr. Oakley said he is meeting with the parking company tomorrow.

Mayor Barbee said the Town may eventually have to put no-parking signs where the parking spaces were recently removed on South Lake Park Boulevard. He said it's hard to tell they are no longer there.

With the consensus of Council, Mayor Barbee asked staff to look at adding handicapped and 30-minute parking spaces around the Boardwalk.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy asked what the Town's options are for designating that the removed spots are no longer available for parking. Council Member Hoffer said the Town could run a stripe 5 feet off the curb to establish they are not parking spots, but he isn't sure what the process is for the N.C. Department of Transportation (DOT) to paint in a shoulder. Mayor Barbee asked Mr. Oakley to find out from DOT what simple things the Town can do and bring ideas back to Council. Mr. Oakley said he will talk to the District Engineer.

Council Member Benson asked about approval from DOT to proceed with the traffic light by The Proximity. Mr. Oakley said the Town is working with the four private property owners affected. Mr. Parvin said the Town is waiting for more information from the project's Traffic Engineer.

4. Financial Update Given by the Finance Director

Ms. Hall gave an update on the current state of the Town's finances. She reviewed revenue from property tax collections, sales and use tax, room occupancy tax, Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) tax, building inspections, parking lots, parking meters, and the Utility Fund.

Mayor Barbee praised billing office staff members for the job they did during parking permit sales. He was impressed by the number of transactions they completed each day.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy asked how many parking permits have been sold to Kure Beach residents. Mr. Oakley said he will find out.

Mayor Barbee asked how building permitting is going. Mr. Hardison said the Town had a record past year, issuing more permits than it ever had. He said he doesn't have specific numbers at this time, but the current rate is steady with just a small decline.

Ms. Hall went over budget vs. actual numbers for the General Fund and Utility Fund. She reported that through February 21, the estimated fund balance is 40%.

Mayor Barbee said 40% is in a healthy range and praised staff for prioritizing fiscal responsibility.

5. Discussion on the Placing Sand Toy Boxes on the Beach Strand

Council Member LeCompte presented the idea of providing storage boxes for sand toys near beach accesses. She said the Town is considering putting the boxes on lifeguard stands but will look at multiple options. The purpose would be for people to leave beach toys they no longer want so others can use them. Council Member LeCompte said a reputable local tradesman has volunteered his time to make the boxes, and sponsors will pay for the cost of materials.

Jason Allen spoke from the audience and said his son, Jake Allen, reached out to the Town's Parks & Recreation Department about doing toy boxes for his Eagle Scout project. Council Member LeCompte gave him her card and told him to coordinate with her.

6. Discuss Agenda Items Scheduled for the March Council Meeting

Council Member LeCompte asked if the Planning and Zoning Commission appointments item would be back on the agenda. Mr. Oakley said yes.

Mayor Barbee asked to receive an update on seasonal preparations.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member LeCompte said April 21 is Cape Fear Realtors Give Back Day. This year's service project will entail the group putting plantings at the bumpouts on Cape Fear Boulevard.

Council Member Benson said the Town website reads there will be 35 miles of paving, but the figure should be 3.5. He asked what the process is for paving unpaved roads that are not part of a deed-restricted community. Mayor Barbee said the Town needs a paving request to start the process.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy reminded everyone that paid parking starts March 1 and asked staff to make sure all the necessary signage is in place.

Council Member Hoffer said Beautification Committee members cleared out an area around the "Welcome to Carolina Beach" sign, and they will be putting in plantings. This is an all-volunteer project. He also reminded everyone that March 17 is Arbor Day in North Carolina.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Barbee adjourned the meeting at 10:55 AM.