

CAROLINA BEACH

Town Council Workshop

Tuesday, September 23, 2025 - 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 Deb LeCompte

Council Member Jay Healy

Council Member Mike Hoffer

ABSENT

Council Member Joe Benson

ALSO PRESENT

Town Manager Bruce Oakley

Deputy Town Manager Ed Parvin

Finance Director Debbie Hall

Town Clerk Kim Ward

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Employee Recognition

Public Utilities Director Mark Meyer recognized Devin Brooks and Deidre Fennell of Water Billing, each for five years of service. He praised Ms. Brooks for her outstanding interactions with residents and staff and Ms. Fennell for her strong work ethic and ability to keep things in check.

Fire Chief Alan Griffin recognized Deputy Chief Buddy Thompson for 10 years of service, highlighting his effective management of fire inspections, logistics, and operations.

Public Works Director Brian Stanberry recognized Tim Lawrie of Public Works for 25 years of service, noting his reliability and management skills.

2. Presentation by the Bike/Ped Committee

Rodney Kidd, Chair of the Bike/Ped Committee, gave updates. He said committee members recently attended the BikeWalk NC Transportation Summit in Hickory and announced that Carolina Beach will host the event next year, which will be an opportunity to showcase the area and get Town officers and other staff to sit in on meetings.

Mr. Kidd also discussed access between Island Marina Drive and Peninsula Drive. The committee is proposing to reopen a blocked connection between the two roads to offer a route for pedestrians, bikes, and emergency vehicles. He said this would involve about \$500 in materials, and volunteers should be able to complete the work.

Mr. Parvin clarified that this access point was originally approved in 1996 with the requirement that it remain open for fire and emergency vehicles, but it has since been fenced off due to complaints about vehicular traffic. He said this proposal should go to the Technical Review Committee (TRC) for design ideas and other input.

Mayor Barbee said if he lived at the corner, he would not like the fact that his house could not be accessed by emergency vehicles.

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte said public safety should be at the forefront of any discussions about this issue.

Council Member Hoffer suggested running a path to the left of the pumphouse and staying away from the two houses.

Mayor Barbee praised Mr. Kidd for his work on the committee.

3. Presentation by Crystal Lee Regarding Puppy Mills

Resident Crystal Lee gave a presentation regarding puppy mills and asked Council to consider drafting an ordinance prohibiting them. She provided proposed language and cited alarming statistics, including that North Carolina has the second-highest euthanasia rate in the nation and that County taxpayers funded the euthanasia of 343 healthy animals in 2024. Ms. Lee asked that the Town adopt a zoning ordinance that prohibits the sale of dogs, cats, and rabbits from commercial breeders, limiting sales to those sourced from the County shelter or local non-profit animal rescue organizations. She described the conditions in large-scale breeding facilities as cruel and unsanitary and said the issue is a public health and safety concern.

Mayor Barbee said while he opposes puppy mills, he does not understand the legality of whether the Town has the enabling legislation to consider such an ordinance. He said the next step would be to take the issue to Town Attorney Noel Fox.

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte said she fully supports Ms. Lee's proposal and would be in favor of it if the Town can codify it.

Mr. Oakley said Ms. Fox will look into this, and he will give an update.

In a separate matter, Mr. Parvin presented follow-up information from the recent Council retreat regarding beach services operations and regulations. Staff met with beach service providers to discuss concerns and possible updates to ordinances, and Mr. Parvin provided a summary of that meeting and

a list of questions to guide upcoming discussions. He said the plan is for an October workshop to refine proposals, followed by a public hearing in November where any changes could be adopted. Mr. Parvin asked for Council input by the end of the week to help frame the discussion and get closer to a drafted ordinance.

Mayor Barbee commended staff for collaborating early with business owners and said this will offer a better chance of finding something that will work for everyone. He also suggested that staff take advantage of the offseason to review other contracts and permits – including sidewalk café permits, marina leases, and parking rules – to ensure that any needed changes are completed before the next Council takes office.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte requested an update on Canal Drive paving estimates. Mr. Stanberry reported that resurfacing the street would cost about \$650,000 to \$700,000 for basic asphalt overlay, and with milling the project would increase to \$1.5 million. He said staff advises that before paving, the roadway should be engineered first to raise the base and adjust infrastructure around it to accommodate runoff. Mr. Stanberry said the proper engineering and reconstruction needed to address long-term structural issues could reach \$ 2 million-\$3 million. Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte said Canal Drive goes to Freeman Park, one of the greatest assets on the island, so she would like the Town to take a closer look at this.

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte also asked that the Town consider one-way traffic patterns on the north end crossover streets to improve parking and pedestrian access. She also requested that parking be redone and crosswalks repainted near the elementary school. Mr. Stanberry said repainting would need to be done during the summer when school is out, and any work on the crossover streets would take place during the offseason. Mr. Oakley said one-way conversions would require TRC review.

Council Member Healy commented on the progress of the Boardwalk bathroom construction project.

Council Member Hoffer mentioned the Seventh Street sidewalk project, emphasizing the need to connect existing sections between Island Palms Drive and Olde Mariners Village. He noted that developers had been required to install sidewalks decades ago with the understanding that the Town would later fill in the gaps, but it still hasn't been completed. Council Member Hoffer said there is money in the budget for this, and it's just 700 linear feet of sidewalk. Mr. Stanberry said contractors were currently providing quotes and prioritizing repairing existing sidewalks and Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliance before extending new segments. Council Member Hoffer urged that at least partial connectivity be completed soon to show progress on pedestrian infrastructure.

Council Member Hoffer said he would like tree contractors to work on opening up lines of sight on Spartanburg Avenue at the Greenway because this is a little too much work for a volunteer crew. Mr. Stanberry said the contractor cut some back but not to the extent they wanted, and more work would be done by close of business today.

Mayor Barbee expressed concerns about thermal sensor crosswalk lights, preferring push-button systems for safety, especially due to some cyclists not stopping at crossings. He said he has had many close calls in that area, even when being cautious.

Council Member Hoffer said he has been blogging about upcoming traffic changes in the Town and is happy to further explain theories and strategies for downtown. Mayor Barbee said the comments have been largely positive.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Barbee adjourned the meeting at 9:48 AM.