CAROLINA BEACH

Town Council Regular Meeting

Tuesday, October 13, 2026 - 6:00 PM

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

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Barbee called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM, followed by the invocation by Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte and Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENT	ALSO PRESENT
Mayor Lynn Barbee	Bruce Oakley Town Manager
Mayor Pro Tem Deb LeCompte	Ed Parvin Deputy Town Manager
Council Member Jay Healy	Debbie Hall Finance Director
Council Member Wayne Rouse	Kim Ward Town Clerk
Council Member Vince Losito	Noel Fox Town Attorney

ADOPT THE AGENDA

ACTION: Motion to adopt the agenda
Motion made by Mayor Barbee
Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Rouse, Council Member Losito
Motion passed unanimously

CONSENT AGENDA

- Budget Amendments/Transfers
- Set a Public Hearing for November 10 to Consider a Conditional Zoning Modification for an Outdoor Space Expansion for the Event Venue/Bar at 205 Charlotte Avenue in the Central Business District (CBD) Applicant: Common Ground Holdings
- Set a Public Hearing for November 10 to Consider a Text Amendment to Allow Additional Accessory Structures Applicant: Town of Carolina Beach
- Approval of Council Meeting Minutes from September 8 and 22, 2027.

ACTION: Motion to adopt the consent agenda
Motion made by Mayor Barbee
Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Rouse, Council Member Losito
Motion passed unanimously

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

Events Update

British Car Show

Community Services Manager Tim Murphy introduced John Merhar, who gave an overview of a free public event seeking to bring roughly 100 to 135 cars to Lake Park.

Mr. Murphy said the proposal had gone through the Events Committee, which gave approval for it to move forward.

Council Member Rouse asked whether 130 cars would fit in the proposed event space. Mr. Murphy said logistics would be worked out later but assured the Council the event would stay within its permitted areas.

ACTION: Motion to approve the British car show in 2027
Motion made by Mayor Barbee
Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Rouse, Council Member Losito
Motion passed unanimously

Island of Lights New Year's Eve Celebration

Mr. Murphy said the Town was looking to do something different for New Year's Eve. The Parks & Recreation Department is planning to hold a family-friendly event at the Boardwalk Gazebo area from 6:00 to 8:00 PM on Thursday, December 31. The road would then be reopened and the crowd moved to the beach for a drone show presented by Island of Lights at the oceanfront stage at 8:00 PM. Mr. Murphy said this was intended to ease the burden on Police and Fire.

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte explained that she had spoken at length with Fire Chief Alan Griffin and Police Chief Vic Ward. Fireworks in the winter, especially on a holiday, were not advisable because first responders would already be busy with illegal fireworks. She said she proposed a drone show, and Parks & Recreation Director Eric Jelinski was in favor of the idea, with local businesses contributing the amount needed to have a “double show.”

Council Member Healy asked whether there has been discussion about having the New Year’s Eve event in Carolina Beach every year rather than alternating every other year with Kure Beach. Mr. Oakley said the idea was to hold a family-friendly event in Carolina Beach every year. Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte said the main Island of Lights celebration alternates with Kure Beach and they like alternately hosting it because it is one winter day of business for their merchants.

ACTION: Motion to approve the Island of Lights drone show this New Year’s Eve
Motion made by Mayor Barbee
Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Rouse,

Council Member Losito
Motion passed unanimously

USA Beach Wrestling National Championships

Mr. Murphy said the beach strand has hosted a great event for about 15 years and introduced Ed Duncan to speak on the Beach Wrestling program and its impacts. He gave an overview, including history, calling Carolina Beach "the birthplace of modern American beach wrestling" and describing the championships as "the premier beach wrestling event in the United States." Mr. Duncan thanked the Town, local businesses, and volunteers for making it possible, and he also gave a report on the sport's future.

Mr. Duncan said next year's dates are Mother's Day weekend, May 7-8. He said organizers hope to bring in more international competitors and are planning a USA Beach Wrestling Hall of Fame, with induction ceremonies coordinated with the Carolina Beach event.

Mayor Barbee thanked Mr. Duncan and said the event is worth attending, even for those who are skeptical about the sport.

Council Member Healy asked about ages. Mr. Duncan said all ages compete, starting at 6 and going up to 75 recently, which requires a medical note.

6. Veterans Memorial Reef Presentation

Mayor Barbee introduced Thomas Marcinowski, who explained that Veterans Memorial Reef is a nonprofit organization that honors veterans in an eco-friendly alternative to burial. He detailed the process, which culminates with the Vonda Kay departing from the Carolina Beach Marina and traveling to the final resting place of an aquatic urn to create an artificial reef.

Mr. Marcinowski then presented two requests. The first was for a memorial garden on the grass area in front of the marina. It would recognize the Veterans Memorial Reef and the Town's support of veterans, highlight ocean rehabilitation, and promote tourism. He said the cost would be small; a donor would give a $2,400 bronze plaque, and the North Carolina Coastal Land Trust had offered to donate local pollinator plants.

The second request was for parking passes for the launch day, which is the Monday before Memorial Day weekend. Mr. Marcinowski said some families had been ticketed in the past for not paying for parking. He invited Council to attend the launch and meet the families. Mr. Marcinowski added that the proprietary cement used would last for centuries and serve as a substrate even if coral dies.

Mayor Barbee asked Mr. Marcinowski to describe the cost to families and the shortage of veteran burial plots. He said North Carolina has seven Federal cemeteries, four of them full, including two in Wilmington, and State cemeteries provide a plot and headstone only. The organization asks for a $5,000 contribution, less than the cost of a casket, which covers both the veteran and a spouse.

Council Member Healy said he loved the idea and wanted to see what the marina site might look like. Mr. Marcinowski displayed a mock-up. Council Member Healy asked who would maintain it. Mr. Marcinowski said the all-volunteer organization would, and he lives on the island and would help. He said Coastal Land Trust might also volunteer because maintaining local flora is part of its mission.

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte said she knows of volunteers who would love to help.

Mayor Barbee told Mr. Oakley that both requests required staff research. He noted restrictions on what could be placed at the marina and asked that staff investigate if Council agreed. Mr. Oakley said he needed a vote on parking passes and that the Town could provide them for the morning of launch day.

ACTION: Motion to approve parking passes as requested by the Veterans Memorial Reef organization
Motion made by Mayor Barbee
Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Rouse, Council Member Losito
Motion passed unanimously

Mr. Oakley said staff would look into the garden request and added that the Town had some built-upon requirements, but he said he was sure staff could work with them. Mayor Barbee thanked Mr. Marcinowski for his service and bringing the matter forward.

Council Member Rouse suggested that, to expedite review if staff found the garden feasible, Council designate one member to serve as a liaison on the mock-up rather than involving all five. Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte volunteered.

7. Manager's Update

Mr. Oakley gave an update on various projects:

- The stormwater force main project, funded in the bond and long in the works, would begin at the end of October on Spartanburg Avenue, with a road closure while pipe work was done. Council Member Rouse asked whether the water drained into the lake. Mr. Oakley said yes. Mr. Parvin added that the main closures would be between Dow Road and Sixth Avenue. Mayor Barbee said residents in that area, especially on Sumter Avenue, were excited to finally see this happen.
- Permanent restrooms at 1810 Canal Drive are being delivered. The parking lot will close the next day to prepare, and the restrooms will be set with a crane on Friday, with intermittent closures on Canal Drive. Notices will be posted on social media and the Town website.
- Demolition of the Lake Park bridge and bathroom was underway. Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte said it was almost finished, and Mr. Oakley said it had started earlier than planned.
- The Snow's Cut stabilization project would begin around December, with possible intermittent closures near Bridge Barrier Road at the oyster shell donation spot and Snow's Cut Trail, on a two-year project.
- The Town received North Carolina Clean Marina certification, credited to Harbor Masters Larry Denning and Jarrett Anderson.

- A visitor kiosk has been installed at the marina in coordination with the Wilmington and Beaches Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), with local information and a selfie opportunity, and it was being test-run for possible expansion. Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte asked who loaded the information. Mr. Oakley said the CVB controlled the content and would coordinate with the Town and Pleasure Island Chamber of Commerce. Mayor Barbee asked whether it was paid from the CVB's advertising budget. Mr. Oakley said some Town funds helped with installation, and he confirmed that no tax dollars were used.
- The Town has received a $3.5 million award from the New Hanover County Endowment for the park and event stage. Mr. Oakley showed a conceptual rendering, stressing it was simply an idea. Staff met with the Development Finance Initiative of the UNC School of Government, and they will present to Council at 9:00 AM on Tuesday, November 10, in a special workshop, with the regular Council meeting that evening. The group has real estate and financial experts and would help the Town plan not only the park but other lots among the five purchased, whether sold or developed. The first step, if the Town proceeded, would be community engagement. Mayor Barbee said finding the right partner mattered because this was a huge investment. Mr. Oakley said a key piece of advice was coordinating this project with others so they work seamlessly, and the Town might solicit proposals. Mayor Barbee invited Council to state their commitment, adding that he was "100% supportive." Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Rouse, Council Member Healy, and Council Member Losito offered words of support, with Council Member Rouse calling it "a generational opportunity." Mayor Barbee thanked Mr. Oakley and staff for the quickly assembled endowment grant. Council Member Rouse thanked him for bringing in the UNC School of Government, and Mr. Oakley said Ms. Fox had recommended it, adding that the fees would be minimal compared to hiring a firm.
- SpringHill Suites construction will mobilize on October 19. Work was expected to continue into late June 2027, and Carolina Beach Avenue North would be closed from October 19 to June 2027. Due to flooding concerns, the developer agreed to open the road if flooding or emergencies required. The Pelican East Lot would be closed and with a planned reopening by Memorial Day weekend. The Fisherman's Lot would be closed January 1 with a planned reopening in May, with the Town compensated for the closure.

Mayor Barbee said after Planning and Zoning Commissioners recently said they felt rushed, he would like to see possible training for Council, the Commission, and staff to make the process work better. Mr. Oakley said training could be scheduled.

Mayor Barbee also proposed a new-resident orientation workshop or open house, with department heads presenting on the water system, sewer system, and the Town Manager's role. Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte suggested adding basics such as trash day and when to retrieve cans, noting short-term rentals on her street leave cans out seven days a week. Mayor Barbee said he thinks the primary topic should be how the Town works in an interactive format.

Council Member Rouse, who served on the Commission for nine years, said Council had asked Community Development at the start of the year, in strategic planning, to bring as much compliance to the Land Use Plan as possible. He said staff did what was asked, the Commission found it a lot to review, and there was "no fault." Council Member Rouse said the goal was to find a more effective process.

PUBLIC COMMENT

David VanDamme asked Council to have the Town look into banning the sale of kratom. He said his nephew died on May 16, a month after his 17th birthday, of an overdose. Mr. Van Dam said the product can legally be purchased by a 10-year-old because there is no age limit, though it was not purchased in the Town. He noted two Mississippi college students had died from the product, that Columbus and Dare counties have bans, and that other places were considering them. Mr. Van Dam warned of tourism harm if a teen died on the beach after buying it at a gas station. Mayor Barbee thanked him and offered condolences.

Noreen Selvaggio of 1412 Spot Lane raised concerns about construction vehicles occupying a lot. She said the lot has one handicapped spot and six others, and contractors had blocked four of the six with cones and moved garbage cans and signs warning of ticketing and trespassing and rope. Ms. Selvaggio reported that a crane and a trailer carrying beams had at times blocked the whole lot, including the handicapped space. She said two residents received tickets despite having parking passes, and the contractors had space on their own site or could park on the street or elsewhere. Ms. Selvaggio asked Council to reserve the spaces for residents and parking-pass holders and to give feedback. She thanked Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte for meeting with the group.

Courtney Ivey of 1231 Pinfish Lane, Mr. Van Dam's sister-in-law and the mother of the young man who died, said she would work to get kratom and similar products off the market. She urged Council to be a leader in setting an ordinance and said kratom can be bought by a 10-year-old for under $20. Ms. Ivey said she would contact each Council Member about the ordinance process and would keep returning. Mayor Barbee offered condolences.

Mike Mytych of 906 North Lake Park Boulevard proposed two conservation initiatives. The first was a public garden and composting site on the island or in the Public Works expansion on Bridge Barrier Road, and he offered his experience engineering an institutional composting system. The second concerned recycling. Mr. Mytych said recyclables placed in the Town's two-compartment public bins were commingled and sent to the landfill, except cardboard, and that staff confirmed this was due to staffing costs. He recommended the Town pursue a Community Waste Reduction and Recycling grant from the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality, up to $40,000 with a 20% local cash match, noting the current round had passed. Mr. Mytych recommended clear labeling of public bins with images and noted that the grant does not fund staff, labor, or ongoing collection. He also congratulated the Harbor Masters on their new office and marina showers and the Police Department on recognition from the State Bureau of Investigation for improved public safety.

Mary Grady said Christmas by the Sea had been on the Boardwalk since 2009 but was at the lake last year because of Boardwalk construction. She noted it was back at the lake this year and said people were concerned it would stay there.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

8. Hearing on the Preliminary Assessment Roll for the 1000 Block of South Second Street for Street, Stormwater, Water, and Sewer Improvements
   Applicant: Town of Carolina Beach

ACTION: Motion to open the public hearing
Motion made by Mayor Barbee
Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Rouse, Council Member Losito
Motion passed unanimously

Community Development Director Jeremy Hardison presented the details. He said the 1000 block of Second Street is a new street segment extending from Greenville Avenue to the back of Carolina Sands. It is an existing 80-foot right-of-way, 290 feet deep, with an existing stormwater pump station and a 10-foot open ditch. Two owners petitioned for the improvement to gain access to their properties. The ditch made design difficult, including crossing it for the first owner and providing an emergency turnaround, since a typical cul-de-sac was not possible and the Town wanted only one crossing. The final cost came in under budget at $490,103.46. The Town contributes one-third, and the remaining two-thirds is divided between the two owners by road frontage, which works out to slightly over $1,000 per frontage foot. The hearing allowed affected owners to comment, after which the notice would be published and the collection process begin.

Council Member Rouse disclosed that he currently has a property listed for sale for one owner, a house being built, and asked Ms. Fox whether he should recuse. Ms. Fox said the question was whether he would have a direct financial impact depending on how he voted, that the answer is fact-specific, that he has a duty to vote, and that he should not vote if there is a direct financial impact. Council Member Rouse said he would not have a direct impact and wanted to be transparent. Ms. Fox asked whether anyone on Council believed he had a direct impact. Mayor Barbee said it did not seem so, since Council Member Rouse is effectively a service provider, as Council Member Losito would be if he did their taxes, though he said that was only his opinion. Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte noted the project had been approved before tonight and before Council Member Rouse or Council Member Losito joined Council. Mayor Barbee said Council was voting only on the assessments. Ms. Fox said Council was approving the preliminary assessment roll already established and published, after hearing from affected owners.

Mayor Barbee invited affected owners to speak. Scott Sutton asked how long owners had to pay, noting that his friend was building houses to sell and he would like to wait to pay until one sold. Mr. Hardison said the resolution gave one year to pay.

The other owner was not present.

Ms. Fox said the resolution in the packet was confusing and asked that the motion be approved with revisions to conform to NCGS 160A-228. She explained that two paragraphs belonged to the earlier NCGS 160A-227 resolution. Paragraph 2, preparing the preliminary assessment roll, had already occurred. Paragraphs 6 and 7, including the public hearing, were what got Council to this stage. Ms. Fox said paragraphs 2, 6, 7, 8, and 9 should be struck because the extra text would confuse anyone examining the record later. She believed a document swap had occurred in the packet.

ACTION: Motion to adopt Resolution No. 26-2360, striking paragraphs 2, 6, 7, 8 and 9, to confirm the final assessment roll of the 1000 block of the South Second Street improvement project pursuant to

NCGS 160A-228
Motion made by Mayor Barbee
Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Rouse, Council Member Losito
Motion passed unanimously at 7:25pm.

Mayor Barbee noted that he had not yet closed the public hearing.

ACTION: Motion to close the public hearing
Motion made by Mayor Barbee
Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte, Council Member Healy, Council Member Rouse, Council Member Losito
Motion passed unanimously

The motion to accept the resolution was made and passed again as a formality.

ADJOURNMENT
Mayor Barbee adjourned the meeting at 7:20 PM.