

CAROLINA BEACH

Town Council Workshop

Tuesday, July 22, 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 Joe Benson

Council Member Mike Hoffer

ALSO PRESENT

Town Manager Bruce Oakley

Deputy Town Manager Ed Parvin

Finance Director Debbie Hall

Town Clerk Kim Ward

DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Employee Recognition

Community Development Director Jeremy Hardison recognized Senior Planner Gloria Abbotts for 5 years of service with Community Development.

Mr. Oakley recognized Mr. Parvin for 20 years of service with the Town.

2. Presentation by U.S. Army Corps of Engineers on Wetland Permitting

Council requested information from staff on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) permitting program for lots with wetlands. Brad Shaver of the USACE Regulatory Division, Wilmington District, gave a presentation on wetland permitting, explaining the distinction between wetlands and jurisdictional wetlands. He said USACE must balance property rights with environmental impacts and only denies about 2% of permits per year nationwide.

Mr. Shaver said developers in the Town can use a mitigation bank, meaning they can pay to fill in wetlands here with the money going toward buying wetlands in areas outside the Town. He said there would be challenges with having a small mitigation bank that only covers the island.

Council Member Hoffer said the Town's concern is often flooding and where water will go, and he questioned how turning down only 2% of permits helps to address this issue. Mr. Shaver said USACE can impose conditions for developers to get a wetlands permit.

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte questioned how the mitigation bank would benefit the Town if wetlands here are being filled in and there is nowhere for water to go. She said that is the hardest part for people to understand. Mr. Shaver said he's not saying it's ideal, but the Town or State can be more restrictive than USACE.

Mayor Barbee asked if the Town is authorized for rule making around wetlands. Mr. Oakley said the Town is not allowed to do anything more restrictive than the State in general regarding stormwater, but there are things the Town can do regarding zoning, such as rezoning to Conservation.

Mr. Parvin said some new regulations came about during the recent Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) process, such as limiting the amount of fill that can go on a lot and limiting impervious area. Mayor Barbee said these actions address impacts but don't necessarily regulate wetlands.

3. Sunny Day Flooding Project Update

The Sunny Day Flooding Project's research team, including the following individuals, presented updates:

- Dr. Katherine Anarde of North Carolina State University (NCSU)
- Max Cawley of the Museum of Life and Science in Durham
- Dr. Miyuki Hino of the University of North Carolina (UNC)
- Thomas Thelen of NCSU

The team spent the past year exploring flood resilience strategies through workshops held on the following dates: June 24, 2024, November 24, 2024, February 25, 2025, and May 25, 2025. They went over pros, cons, costs, and considerations for the following:

- Minimum bulkhead elevation
- Stormwater pumps
- Pumps + minimum bulkhead elevation
- Canal along Canal Drive
- Flood barrier

They also reviewed how strategies might work under future conditions, when floods on Canal Drive are likely to become deeper, longer, and more frequent with sea level rise.

The team also discussed community preferences for strategies and community aspirations for what comes next. They said for the short term, residents prefer minimum bulkhead elevation and/or pumps, and for the long term they want to see a flood barrier, a canal along Canal Drive, an increase in the minimum bulkhead elevation, and pumps. They said almost all workshop and open house participants share a desire for the Town to implement a flood resilience strategy or a sequenced set of strategies to keep pace with rising sea levels. They concluded that no single strategy deals with all the different drivers of flooding, both under current and future sea level scenarios, and there are tradeoffs with

each strategy, but the Town and residents will need to start making decisions based on their values and vision for the future.

All materials from the workshops are available at www.go.ncsu.edu/cb

Council Member Healy said he appreciates all the work the team has done and said the findings are eye-opening because there really is no solution. Dr. Anarde said the Town can buy time with some strategies. Council Member Healy said a bulkhead would be expensive, so it's a tough situation.

Mayor Barbee said if Council had to solve every Town problem with a 100-year vision, they would not solve many problems at all because of so many unknowns. He said this gets the Town thinking about what can be done to improve the situation and starts the conversation.

Council Member Hoffer said there are mitigation strategies but no guaranteed solutions, and the Town may have to learn to live with the situation by enacting early warning systems and improving road closures. He said citizens will also need to think about the cost of these strategies and who should pay for them.

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte said residents have learned what they must do to survive flooding, but she worries about visitors because you can't educate everyone who gets a short-term rental on Canal Drive on how to handle a king tide or flooding event.

Council Member Hoffer said the Town should do a better job making sure people are not driving past road closures and through high waters.

Mr. Oakley said the Town does what it can with available resources and would need to add employees to have someone constantly monitoring road closures.

4. North End Town Update

Staff gave a presentation on updates to recent private and public infrastructure and projects on the north end.

Mr. Hardison discussed short-term approaches to help mitigate flooding on the north end and things the Town can be doing right now. He said staff looked at bulkheads below 3 feet and sent letters to gather information. Mr. Hardison said based on those letters, several property owners made improvements, including:

- 1013 Canal Drive
- 1005 Canal Drive
- 217 Florida Avenue
- 211 Florida Avenue
- 1205 Canal Drive

He said the following properties have low elevation and act as a gateway to the yacht basin:

- 1007 Canal Drive

- 1305 Canal Drive
- 317 Canal Drive
- 1017 Canal Drive
- 107 Florida Avenue

Council Member Healy asked if staff had ever talked to a real estate agent about whether a bulkhead increases property value. Mr. Hardison said he has not.

Mayor Barbee said there is no State legislation to force building bulkheads, but something has to give because right now all that can be done is public shaming, which doesn't seem effective.

Mr. Oakley said there is eminent domain, but that could be tied up in court. Mayor Barbee said there is also the matter of where the money will come from to buy the properties under eminent domain.

Mr. Hardison said the Town owns over 1,500 linear feet of frontage on the canal, so they need to make sure they are doing their part. He said they have built new bulkheads on several street ends and plan to do so on several more, using 5.7 feet as the standard height:

- Dolphin Lane
- Scallop Lane
- Sea Gull Lane
- Starfish Lane
- Town marina

Public Works Director Brian Stanberry gave additional project updates.

Stormwater backflow valve replacement

Marina South-Carl Winner: \$77,000

Marina East-Canal (4x): \$21,000

Starfish Lane: \$10,000

Infrastructure improvements

Starfish Lane stormwater/bulkhead: \$150,000

Florida Avenue stormwater/reclamation: \$175,000

Florida Avenue water/sewer slip line: \$250,000

Routine maintenance

Tidal traffic control arm upgrade: \$60,000

Vactoring of stormwater pipes: \$40,000 annually estimate

Street sweeping of Canal Drive: \$50,000 annually estimate

High tide traffic control staff: \$30,000 annually estimate

Funded improvements

Clam Shell Lane bulkhead: \$75,000

Scotch Bonnet Lane bulkhead \$120,000

Captain's Quarters stormwater: \$120,000

Sea Gull Lane bulkhead/access: \$125,000
Florida Avenue bulkhead: \$100,000

Mr. Hardison said the Town has applied for a resiliency grant and is hoping to hear something within the next month.

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte asked staff to look into something similar to stoplight cameras to deter people from driving around gates and causing wakes on nearby properties.

5. Appropriate Funds for Revenue Bond Financial Analysis

The Town is contracting with Willdan financial consulting services to update the revenue bond feasibility model for the upcoming bond issuance. The contract amount is \$54,800, which will be reimbursed to the Town when the bonds are sold. Reimbursement Resolution 25-2324 was approved on March 11, 2025.

The request is for Council to appropriate \$54,800 to 30-800-046 W&S Admin Professional Services from the Utility Fund fund balance for the revenue bond financial analysis.

Mr. Parvin said the Town is moving forward with projects and hopes to have them bid by the end of the year.

ACTION: Motion to appropriate funds for the Town Manager to enter into an agreement to do the revenue bond financial analysis

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

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

Motion passed unanimously

6. Authorization for the Bike/Ped Committee to Draft an Application for Obtaining a Bicycle Friendly Community Designation

At the April meeting, Council adopted the new Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan, which included an implementation schedule that identified the League of American Bicyclists' program to designate municipalities across the country as Bicycle Friendly Communities.

Mr. Parvin presented the details.

ACTION: Motion to approve a resolution supporting the Town of Carolina Beach's desire to apply to the League of American Bicyclists to become a Bicycle Friendly Community

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

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

Motion passed unanimously

Mayor Barbee said per the Town's new procedures regarding committees, Council consensus is needed for the Bike/Ped Committee to work on this task. Council gave consensus for this.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte:

- Suggested reviewing the permitting process for Central Business District (CBD) businesses operating only during the day to allow parking lot use in the evenings for additional income.
 - Council supported exploring an annual permitting process.

Council Member Healy:

- Expressed concern that e-bikes are out of control and said the Town needs to somehow find a way to manage the situation.
 - Mayor Barbee said legislation regarding e-bikes is in front of the State; he said it got held up by budget meetings but expects it will eventually pass.
 - Mr. Oakley said it's hard to catch the offenders, but Police are talking to their parents when possible.
 - Council Member Hoffer said there are already some laws on the books that can help, such prohibiting more than one rider on a bike and requiring helmets for kids under a certain age, so he hopes Police can put some more energy into this.

Council Member Benson:

- Suggested obtaining cost estimates for Canal Drive flooding mitigation.
- Inquired about a beach renourishment survey estimate from USACE.
- Mentioned that the North End Flood Mitigation Alliance has invited State Legislators to their next meeting.

Council Member Hoffer:

- Will attend the NC BikeWalk Transportation Summit, held in Hickory in September, and is suggesting that the Town host the event in the future.
- Requested staff contact the County for damage assessment training related to hurricane season.
- Raised concerns about Airbnb trash infractions and requested that staff issue violations based on the number of complaints that are being entered into SeeClickFix.

Mr. Oakley added that the Town will have an Emergency Operations Center Open House on July 31 at 4:00 PM.

Mayor Barbee:

- Shared feedback from his survey regarding traffic, beach umbrellas, obstructions on the beach, and holes being left by visitors and requested that staff review beach strand rules for the next season to include the items listed above.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Barbee adjourned the meeting at 11:30 AM.