

CAROLINA BEACH

Planning and Zoning Commission Meeting

Thursday, January 8, 2026 - 6:00 PM

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



MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Hogan called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

PRESENT

Chairman Jeff Hogan
Vice Chairman Bill Carew
Commissioner Melanie Boswell
Commissioner Ethan Crouch
Commissioner Todd Piper
Commissioner Lynn Conto
Commissioner Brad Jones

ALSO PRESENT

Community Development Director Jeremy Hardison
Senior Planner Gloria Abbotts
Planner Haley Anderson

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

1. December 11, 2025 Minutes

ACTION: Motion to approve the minutes

Motion made by Vice Chairman Carew, seconded by Commissioner Crouch

Voting Yea: Chairman Hogan, Vice Chairman Carew, Commissioner Boswell, Commissioner Crouch, Commissioner Piper, Commissioner Conto, Commissioner Jones

Motion passed unanimously

STAFF REPORT ON RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Mr. Hardison reported the following:

Permitting

- 43 permits (renovation, repair, grading, additions, fences, etc.)
- 7 residential new construction
- 5 certificates of occupancy

Demo

- 517 Greenville Avenue (single-family home), with plans to be subdivided for two duplexes or townhomes

New businesses

- Rutt's Cinnamon Rolls, 105 Carolina Beach Avenue North
- Smoker's Island Vape Shop, 1206 North Lake Park Boulevard, Unit F
- Reflect Boutique, 1000 North Lake Park Boulevard, Suite 111 (Proximity)

Updates and upcoming

- Council January 13: 205 Raleigh Avenue rezoning MX to CBD
- Planning and Zoning Commission February 12: Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) updates/statutory updates
- January 17: BeBot will be cleaning the beach beginning at 10:00 AM
- Staff is working on securing new monitors for the meeting room
- The Town has been approved for Tree City USA designation for 2025
- Publix intersection
 - Adding a traffic signal head on the fourth leg of the intersection exiting Ace Hardware
 - Adding signalized pedestrian crossings with marked crosswalks
 - Adding a protected left turn for the southbound approach

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

PUBLIC HEARING

2. Text Amendment to Amend Article 3, Sec. 3.4 Table of Uses and 3.9 Nonresidential Use Standards for Hotels in the MF District to Have Accessory Bars
Applicant: Max Sussman

Applicant Max Sussman is pursuing this text amendment to allow alcohol sales as an accessory use for hotels and motels within the Multi-Family (MF) zoning district.

Ms. Anderson presented the details. She explained that the proposal would add hotels and motels as a permitted use through Conditional Zoning (CZ) in MF. It would also allow hotels and motels in the district with more than 15 units to have accessory bars and retail uses within the hotel, limited to 25% of the gross floor area in areas such as lobbies, dining areas, pools, and recreation areas.

Ms. Anderson provided historical context, noting that before 2000, hotels, motels, and complementary uses were permitted in this district when it was designated as RA-5A. The 2000 ordinance update removed commercial uses and reduced density from 35 to 17 units per acre. This change made the three existing hotels in the district (Sea Ranch, The Oceaneer, and Golden Sands) non-conforming.

Staff supports the proposal, noting that it is in conformity with the Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) Land Use Plan, which designates the area for medium-density residential and low-intensity commercial. Ms. Anderson explained that despite allowing hotels and motels in the district, the

reduced density requirement of 17 units per acre would make it difficult for new large hotels to be developed, as a 16-unit hotel would require 40,000 square feet of land.

Ms. Anderson noted that if a hotel or motel has already gone through the CZ process, it would not need to do it again to add a bar unless it was expanding. She said in this case a bar would be allowed by right as the text amendment is currently written, but the Commission could require them to go back through CZ. Ms. Anderson also pointed out that a new hotel or motel would have to go through CZ anyway.

ACTION: Motion to open the public hearing

Motion made by Chairman Hogan

Voting Yea: Chairman Hogan, Vice Chairman Carew, Commissioner Boswell, Commissioner Crouch, Commissioner Piper, Commissioner Conto, Commissioner Jones

Motion passed unanimously

Mr. Sussman of 608 South Lake Park Boulevard addressed the Commission, thanking staff for their assistance and explaining that the text amendment would allow The Oceaneer Hotel to include a small market for guests and provide event space. He emphasized that these hotels represented a \$20 million investment in the Town and preservation of local character. Mr. Sussman said this would allow them to elevate the visitor experience and clarified that they weren't seeking to create late-night bars but rather provide amenities like beer, wine, or cocktails for guests to enjoy at the pool or watching sunsets.

No one else requested to speak.

ACTION: Motion to close the public hearing

Motion made by Chairman Hogan, seconded by Commissioner Boswell

Voting Yea: Chairman Hogan, Vice Chairman Carew, Commissioner Boswell, Commissioner Crouch, Commissioner Piper, Commissioner Conto, Commissioner Jones

Motion passed unanimously

Commissioner Conto praised those involved with the project but expressed opposition to the expansion of alcohol sales. She said of the three hotels this would pertain to, she sees this as only benefiting The Oceaneer, adding that she is fine with adding retail sales by right.

Commissioner Crouch said while he shares previous concerns, he is generally in support of the proposal because of the limited nature of the text amendment, adding that he is hopeful this would prevent any unintended consequences or wide-scale growth of bars in areas outside of the Central Business District (CBD). He said he thinks it will be a nice amenity for the hotel and is grateful for the investment.

Commissioner Piper said he doesn't have a problem with a self-service retail area that allows guests to grab a beer, but he has concerns about permitting the setup of portable bars for events.

Mr. Hardison commented that the current proposal would allow for a bar by the pool similar to that of the Hampton Inn.

Commissioner Boswell said she worried this might lead to future bars on beaches and questioned whether it was a form of spot zoning, adding that she is all for the retail component.

Commissioner Jones said he also supported retail sales but was concerned about what might happen with future ownership changes if bars were allowed.

Vice Chairman Carew said it feels like this text amendment is being used to craft something that is not intended to be part of what this district is, warning that there are always unintended consequences that can't initially be seen. He said this would be a great thing to have, but it does not feel right to him and would likely not have the support of adjacent properties. Vice Chairman Carew said they must look at the intention of the zoning map from 2000 and carry it forward as best as possible. He said he would like to say yes because of the entrepreneurs behind this proposal, but he thinks they need another way to get there.

Chairman Hogan noted that bars outside seem to be the holdup, so he asked if there can be a text amendment for beer and wine sales as retail only inside, and if they want to have bars outside then they can get an Alcohol Law Enforcement (ALE) permit. Mr. Hardison said the possibility of establishing two separate categories could be explored, with stricter parameters for bars that involve being served.

Commissioner Boswell suggested tabling the matter and bringing it back, adding there are too many gray areas with the way the text amendment is currently written.

Commissioner Crouch said it doesn't sound like there is consensus without major rewrites.

ACTION: Motion to reopen the public hearing

Motion made by Chairman Hogan, seconded by Commissioner Boswell

Voting Yea: Chairman Hogan, Vice Chairman Carew, Commissioner Boswell, Commissioner Crouch, Commissioner Piper, Commissioner Conto, Commissioner Jones

Motion passed unanimously

Chairman Hogan asked Mr. Sussman if he would rather the Commission table this item, giving him the opportunity to try to figure out a better way to have a text amendment come through, or vote now. He reminded him that the Commission is a recommending board, and Council may or may not follow the recommendation.

Mr. Sussman said the support of the Commission is important to what they are trying to accomplish, so he would like to revisit the matter with staff and try to get this to a point where everybody feels comfortable.

ACTION: Motion to close the public hearing

Motion made by Chairman Hogan, seconded by Commissioner Boswell

Voting Yea: Chairman Hogan, Vice Chairman Carew, Commissioner Boswell, Commissioner Crouch,

Commissioner Piper, Commissioner Conto, Commissioner Jones

Motion passed unanimously

ACTION: Motion to table the item

Motion made by Vice Chairman Carew, seconded by Commissioner Boswell

Voting Yea: Chairman Hogan, Vice Chairman Carew, Commissioner Boswell, Commissioner Crouch,
Commissioner Piper, Commissioner Conto, Commissioner Jones

Motion passed unanimously

NON-AGENDA ITEMS

Commissioner Boswell inquired about a wall being built on Lake Drive. Mr. Hardison confirmed it was not in the easement and that the owner had obtained necessary permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to fill wetlands and build a retaining wall.

Commissioner Conto asked about attendance for the February meeting. Commissioners confirmed there would be a quorum despite several planned absences.

ADJOURNMENT

Chairman Hogan adjourned the meeting at 7:00 PM.