

# CAROLINA BEACH

Town Council Regular Meeting

Tuesday, April 8, 2025 - 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

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  
Assistant Town Manager Ed Parvin  
Finance Director Debbie Hall  
Town Clerk Kim Ward  
Town Attorney Noel Fox

### ADOPT THE AGENDA

**ACTION:** Motion to adopt the agenda, removing items 9 and 15

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*

### CONSENT AGENDA

1. Set a Public Hearing for May 13, 2025, to Consider a Conditional Zoning at 1360 Bridge Barrier Road in the Highway Business District (HB) for a Bar/Tavern  
Applicant: Secret Sand Castles Unlimited, LLC
2. Set a Public Hearing for May 13, 2025, to Consider a Text Amendment to Article 3 and Article 7 of the UDO to Address Water-Oriented Uses and Personal Watercraft Sales and Rental  
Applicant: Town of Carolina Beach
3. Budget Amendments/Transfers
4. Approve Kure Beach and NC Aquarium Sewer Rates
5. Notification of Expiring Committee Terms
6. Approval of Council Meeting Minutes

Council Member Benson asked Mr. Oakley to discuss smoke testing during the Manager's Update.

**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 Benson, Council Member Hoffer

*Motion passed unanimously*

**SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS**

7. Events Update by Tim Murphy

Community Services Manager Tim Murphy said Maggie, the Town's whale float unveiled as part of the Centennial Celebration, was in the NC Azalea Festival Parade on April 5. He reviewed upcoming events:

- Retro Bathing Suit Exhibit – April 11 at Fort Fisher Museum
- Skate Dog – April 12 at CB Skate Park
- Blessing of the Fleet – April 16 at Municipal Marina
- Yogis on the Beach – April 26 at Carolina Beach Pier
- Cars of the Decades Car Show – April 26 at Lake Park
- Human 100 Drone Photo – May 3 on the sand behind the Boardwalk stage
- Sand Sculpture Contest – May 3 at the Boardwalk Gazebo
- Beach Wrestling Nationals – May 10 on the beach strand behind the Boardwalk
- Surf Dog Experience – May 17 at Carolina Beach Pier
- State of the Town – May 19 at St. Paul's United Methodist Church
- Movies at the Lake – begins May 25 and continues every Sunday through August 31
- Boardwalk Blast Fireworks/Music – begins May 23; there will be an update on additional dates next month
- Friends of CB Parks & Greenways Skate Event – May 17 at Mike Chappell Park
- Ocean Cure Adaptive Skate Event – moved to August 3 after Life Rolls On

Council Member Healy said the Skate Park observation deck is amazing and a piece of art, and he thanked Friends of CB Parks & Greenways for the \$20,000 donation. Council Member Hoffer said this group has turned into a forced multiplier, identifying needs and pushing them to the forefront by finding donors and discounted labor. He said this is a model for success in this Town and encouraged those who want something done to start the process.

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte said the marketing packet for the Rainbow Bridge project is complete and will go live soon, offering people the opportunity to purchase nameplates honoring pets.

Mayor Barbee said spinning off committees into non-profit organizations has proven to get things done.

8. Proclamation Recognizing NC Coastal Federation

Harbor Master Jarrett Anderson recognized Ted Wilgis from NC Coastal Federation for assistance with removal of abandoned and derelict vessels in the harbor and coastal waters. Council issued Proclamation 25-2326 stating the details of the mission.

9. Update from Friends of CB Parks & Greenways

This item was removed from the agenda.

10. Proclamation to Recognize April 25, 2025, as National Arbor Day

Council issued Proclamation 25-2327 recognizing April 25, 2025, as National Arbor Day. A formal proclamation recognizing Arbor Day is a yearly requirement for a community to receive Tree City USA accreditation.

Council Member Hoffer said a group, including Council Member Healy, celebrated North Carolina Arbor Day last month by putting shovels in dirt and doing plantings at Lake Park.

Mayor Barbee praised Council Member Hoffer, members of the Beautification Committee, and everyone else involved. He said small beautification efforts pay off down the road.

11. Proclamation Recognizing May as National Bike Month

Council issued Proclamation 25-2328 recognizing May as National Bike Month, honoring a request from the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization.

Mayor Barbee added that May 4-10 is Professional Municipal Clerks Week and recognized Town Clerk Kim Ward for her work.

12. Manager's Update

Mr. Oakley said tonight is the public hearing for community input on the FY 2025-26 budget. He gave an update on various projects:

- The Ocean Boulevard sidewalk project is way ahead of schedule and should be done well before the August target.
- The Town received its first Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reimbursement check for Potential Tropical Cyclone 8 today.
- The Town only received one bid for the stormwater cleanout project, so it must go back out to bid for 10 days.
- U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will open beach nourishment bids on April 9 at 2:00 PM; the plan is to award this ASAP and move forward in the fall.
- The Lake pump house project should begin within the next two weeks.
- Asset inventory of water and sewer lines should be completed this month.
- Temporary restroom facilities were put in place today at the Boardwalk. They will have water and sewer. The portable toilets on the FEMA lot will be removed this week. There will be additional facilities when the amusement rides arrive.

- The Town is working with the contractor to try to improve the aesthetics of the restroom construction site. There are some safety requirements that must be met, but they are brainstorming ideas to help disguise this area.
- Smoke testing will be conducted April 14-16 on the North End. Mayor Barbee praised the Water Department for getting detailed information out to the public well in advance.
- The South Lake Park Boulevard sidewalk project will be moving forward. NC Department of Transportation (DOT) will manage the project. The Town will need to pay about \$200,000 in additional engineering costs for the project to move forward under DOT, or DOT may turn over the project to the Town. It was the consensus of Council to allow Mr. Oakley to come up with a budget amendment for these costs so DOT may continue with the project.

Council Member Healy asked if Council will discuss combining committees during the April workshop. Mr. Oakley said yes, that will be on the agenda.

Council Member Healy asked if there is an update on the welcome sign. Mr. Oakley said it looks like it will be after July 1. Mr. Parvin said he will get an update.

Council Member Healy said the recent paving looks fantastic.

Council Member Healy said FEMA is planning to raise 20 houses in the Town. Mr. Oakley said Community Development Director Jeremy Hardison has worked hard on this project. Mayor Barbee said this will not be funded by the Town.

Council Member Hoffer asked about landscaping design for Centennial Park. Mr. Oakley said he will come back to Council about that.

Council Member Benson asked if there would be an open house for the beach nourishment project. Mr. Oakley said this typically happens just before construction starts, which would likely be in September or October.

Council Member Benson asked about the NC Resilient Coastal Communities Program (RCCP) grant. Mr. Oakley said this was next in the update. Mr. Parvin said staff is moving forward with the grant application, which is a four-phase process. He said the project would address flooding issues on the North End.

Mr. Hardison reported the following recent developments:

- 57 permits issued for renovation/repair/additions, etc., 3 new residential construction permits, and 7 certificates of occupancy
- 2 demolitions (405 Fayetteville Avenue and 1501 South Lake Park Boulevard)
- 2 new businesses (Oceanside Art and Gifts at 105 Carolina Beach Avenue North and Beach Break Donuts at 1009 North Lake Park Boulevard)

Mr. Hardison reported the following upcoming meetings:

- Council date TBD: Special Use Permit modification for 401 Marina Street

- Planning and Zoning Commission April 10: Conditional Zoning for a bar at Surf's Up Mini Golf at 1360 Bridge Barrier Road and a water-oriented uses text amendment
- Board of Adjustment April 22: Oceana appeal
- Planning and Zoning Commission May 8: 204 Harper Avenue rezoning and Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) update discussion

Council Member Hoffer asked for an update on new businesses coming to Proximity. Mayor Barbee said according to the Pleasure Island Chamber of Commerce, K38 is opening May 3 and Boombalatti's in June.

Mayor Barbee asked about fountains at Lake Park not running. Mr. Parvin said they were taken out to be repaired and should be back in by the start of the summer season.

Mayor Barbee said he has been asked whether there is a way to refresh old fish tiles on the Boardwalk without buying new ones. He said he would like staff to look into offering a program that would allow people to have their fish tiles refreshed at a discounted rate rather than replaced. Mr. Oakley said staff will look into this.

Council Member Hoffer said he hopes there is a plan to keep people from parking in the grass on the right-of-way between the Ocean Boulevard sidewalk and the road. Mr. Oakley said people will need to call in with problems because that area is not patrolled. Council Member Hoffer said the grass will get wrecked if people park on it, so he highly recommends putting something out there to keep this from happening.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENT**

Stephen Taylor of 111 Florida Avenue said he is Chairman of the newly formed 501(c)(3) North End Flood Mitigation Alliance, a non-profit organization formed to put together short- and long-term strategies to mitigate flooding on the North End. He invited Council Members to the group's next meeting on Thursday and said he hopes they can become the required Community Action Team for the RCCP grant. Mayor Barbee said this type of community action is an example of how to get things done.

Debi Taylor of 111 Florida Avenue asked Council to consider including Canal Drive and Carolina Beach Avenue North in the Town's Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

Cindy Dunn spoke about the Centennial Time Capsule Garden that will be in the lawn area in front of Council Chambers. She said water access will be needed for drip hoses and asked Council to consider funding this project, which she estimates will cost about \$1,500. Mayor Barbee asked Mr. Oakley what he needs to make this happen. Mr. Oakley said staff is already looking into this, and if something is needed he will bring it back to Council.

Kathleen Van Keuren of 1101 Canal Drive spoke in support of the North End Flood Mitigation Alliance. She thanked everybody who made it happen and said the group is committed to working alongside Council. Mayor Barbee said rules permit only two Council Members at once to attend the group's meetings.

Vinny Doria from Uncle Vinny's said he was able to obtain a permit this year for a pushcart on the beach but wanted to look into whether the cart could be motorized in an electronically assisted manner, making it easier for vendors to operate them. Mr. Oakley said Mr. Doria would need to apply to amend the ordinance. Mayor Barbee said it would then go to the Technical Review Committee (TRC) and back to Council, so he encouraged Mr. Doria to work with staff to start the process.

## **PUBLIC HEARINGS**

### **13. Public Hearing to Receive Input on the FY 2025-2026 Budget Process**

This is an opportunity for Council to gather input from the community for the upcoming FY 2025-26 budget.

**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 Benson, Council Member Hoffer

*Motion passed unanimously*

Paul Levy of 1606 Mackerel Lane said instead of beginning with a wish list, he would like the Town to begin with a philosophical approach that considers 100% equalization and no more than 3% as a revenue budget. He said all projects, wage and salary proposals, and resident wish lists would need to fall within that revenue limitation. Mr. Levy said while he thinks this is different from the way it's been done in previous years, he feels the Town should take a more corporate approach because this is such a financially uncertain year for everybody.

Council Member Hoffer said following recent property revaluations, by State law the Town must publish a revenue-neutral rate, so if someone's house doubles in value that does not mean their taxes will double.

No one else requested to speak.

**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 Benson, Council Member Hoffer

*Motion passed unanimously*

Mayor Barbee said he thinks this is a nervous and uncertain time, so the Town needs to sharpen some pencils to see what can be done. Mr. Oakley said the Town still must address a lot of needs, but the budget is needs-based and not want-based.

Council Member Hoffer said he wants to move forward with sidewalks to close the gaps around Proximity. He also requested 8-10 more bike racks around the Town.

Mayor Barbee said it can take a long time to get things moving, and projects that are happening now have been in the works for a while. He said he doesn't want to see momentum slowed and is not asking to halt things.

Council Member Benson said his priorities are bike/pedestrian issues, big-ticket stormwater projects, and options for mitigating tidal intrusion and overwash on the North End.

Mayor Barbee said the biggest chunk of a property tax bill comes from the County, and even with a revenue-neutral rate your taxes may go up a little because it's not a perfect wash.

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte asked staff to publish the calendar of meetings, open houses, and other public input opportunities again so people can plan ahead.

## **ITEMS OF BUSINESS**

### **14. Consider Adopting 2025 Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan**

As the Town grows, existing challenges to bicyclist and pedestrian safety become more apparent and new challenges could be presented. Residents, Town staff, and Council have a documented history of supporting and implementing bicycle and pedestrian projects, as evidenced by numerous recent and ongoing projects, plans, and initiatives. While the Town has been actively implementing projects from the Pedestrian Plan (2018) and Bicycle Multiuse Transportation Plan (2011), the Town needs a master plan that establishes a collective vision, conducts a comprehensive analysis of opportunities and barriers to bicycle and pedestrian activity, and creates an implementation and prioritization framework for future improvements.

The plan establishes the following vision: to enhance the livability of Carolina Beach by creating an appealing, walkable, and bikeable environment for both residents and visitors. It includes recommendations for projects, policies, and programs that support this vision and, if funded and implemented, will help the Town deliver on the plan's goals of improving and emphasizing safety, enhancing accessibility, promoting a culture of active living, and prioritizing future bicycle and pedestrian projects based upon current conditions.

Local input was collected through four steering committee meetings, two public events, an online survey, and field review. Recommendations were developed using local input, previous plans, network analysis, destination mapping, and gaps and needs assessments.

Mr. Parvin introduced Project Consultant Jordan Powell with VHB. Mr. Powell presented vision and goals, report sections, a public engagement summary, and recommendations.

Mayor Barbee asked how the Town is doing compared to similar places. He said the commitment is there, but progress seems slow. Mr. Powell said while he can't discuss other cities, he said the Town is a wonderful place for this type of work because there is support of from Council, committed and devoted staff, and residents actively engaged in seeing projects move forward. He said there is little resistance to the big-picture vision, and getting buy-in on this is the first step toward progress. Mr.

Powell said he thinks the Town is doing great, and there is already incredible infrastructure in place. He said the plan includes both big and small projects, and the Town should be pursuing both will full force.

Council Member Healy said the plan is very well done, and he appreciates the time and effort put into it. He said connectivity is important for the Town and can ease parking pain.

Mayor Barbee said there will never be enough parking, so making walking and biking more functional is the only real way to fight that problem.

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte thanked the steering committee and Bike/Ped Committee for a great job.

Council Member Hoffer said he is glad the development of the plan included lots of input from everybody, not just the committees, and he is glad to see recommendations for connecting existing facilities. He said the Town is not going to do all of these things in the next 10 or even 20 years, but it gives lots of options for the public, staff, and Council to determine what should move forward based on timing and opportunity.

Mayor Barbee said the plan provides a framework as grant opportunities come up.

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte said the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (WMPO) requires the Town to have a plan in place to apply for Statewide Transportation Improvement (STIP) grants. She asked if the plan must be approved tonight or whether the public should see it before Council votes on it. Mr. Oakley said the plan has gotten plenty of public input, so Council is free to move forward tonight.

**ACTION:** Motion to approve the 2025 Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan

Motion made by Council Member Hoffer

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

*Motion passed unanimously*

15. Consider Amending Article V - Stopping, Standing, and Parking to Create an Allowance to Authorize Public On-Street Parking Spaces to Be Specifically Designated for Hotel/Motel Uses  
Applicant: Dan Tollens, Carolina Beach Inn, LLC

This item was removed from the agenda.

**COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte said she recently attended a workshop with coastal engineering and oceanic experts from the University of North Carolina Wilmington and elected officials from several regional beach towns focusing on how they can work together to partner with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. She said they will be putting together a report on the information gathered.

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte said she is glad the Town is getting caught up on long-term projects, and she wants to see the Town move into more of a maintenance-focused budget. She said there are some



things around the Town that need TLC and she has volunteers that will help paint and do other tasks, but she wants staff to be involved in some projects also.

Council Member Hoffer asked for a status of the crosswalks at Dow Road/Harper Avenue and Spartanburg Avenue. Mr. Oakley said parts for the crosswalks have been ordered and are estimated to be delivered in 12-15 weeks.

Council Member Hoffer said Cape Fear Garden Club is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year. He said the Town is looking to work with the club on an Arbor Day planting initiative and other interesting projects.

Council Member Benson asked for the status of the crosswalk at Winner Avenue and North Lake Park Boulevard. Mr. Oakley said the Town is working with Lazy Pirate on an easement for that, and things are in a good place with hopes it will be accomplished soon. Mayor Barbee said the owner of Lazy Pirate is very willing to help with this matter.

Council Member Benson told Mr. Oakley he wanted to meet with him to talk about some matters related to Harper Avenue. He also asked about putting a fountain on the east side of the Lake.

Mayor Barbee reminded everyone not to believe everything they hear on social media. He encouraged people to call or email Council Members and/or staff with questions.

#### **CLOSED SESSION**

16. Closed Session – Attorney/Client

**ACTION:** Motion to go into closed session to discuss an attorney/client matter in accordance with NCGS 143.318.11(a)(3); the matter being discussed is 23 CVS 3744 Carolina Beach Land Holdings, LLC, vs. Town of Carolina Beach

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 called the meeting back to order and said Council took no action during closed session.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Barbee adjourned the meeting at 8:00 PM.