

CAROLINA BEACH

Town Council Workshop

Tuesday, March 22, 2022 - 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

Council Member Joe Benson

Council Member Mike Hoffer

Council Member Deb LeCompte

ABSENT

Mayor Pro Tem Jay Healy

ALSO PRESENT

Town Manager Bruce Oakley

Assistant Town Manager Ed Parvin

Town Clerk Kim Ward

PUBLIC HEARING

1. Public Hearing on Non-Profit Funding Requests

ACTION: Motion to open the public hearing

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Council Member Benson, Council Member Hoffer, Council Member LeCompte

Motion passed 4-0

Representatives from the Pleasure Island Chamber of Commerce presented the organization's request for funding for the 2022/2023 fiscal year.

Chair Steve Stefanovich detailed what the Chamber is doing, where it's been, and where it's going. He said the organization has changed from an event company to a true Chamber of Commerce doing a few events to help support its budget.

Chamber Co-Chair LeeAnn Tluchowski thanked the Town for its support and gave an overview of upcoming events, including the Beach Music Festival, Pets in the Park, and the Cape Fear Kite Festival. She said these events allow the Chamber to support businesses and the local economy and enable it to

provide additional services, such as educational workshops and coffee events with Pleasure Island mayors.

Mr. Stefanovich said the Chamber is asking the Town for \$17,500, which includes event support as well renovation of the office and lobby located in Town Hall.

Mayor Barbee asked if anyone from the public wanted to comment. No one requested to speak.

ACTION: Motion to close the public hearing

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Council Member Benson, Council Member Hoffer, Council Member LeCompte

Motion passed 4-0

(The following presentation was delayed due to technical difficulties and took place after item 2.)

ACTION: Motion to open the public hearing for non-profit funding requests

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Council Member Benson, Council Member Hoffer, Council Member LeCompte

Motion passed 4-0

Carey Jones presented a request on behalf of Island Women. She said she is the Event Coordinator for the Flock of Food Trucks, planned for May 14 at Carolina Beach Lake Park. She said the event will be similar to last year's with the addition of a few new features.

Ms. Jones said the goal for this event is \$7,000; last year almost 1,000 people attended with \$4,000 raised. Island Women is asking the Town for \$1,000 to offset the cost of supplies and equipment and otherwise assist with executing a professional event.

Mayor Barbee asked if anyone from the public wanted to comment. No one requested to speak.

ACTION: Motion to close the public hearing

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Council Member Benson, Council Member Hoffer, Council Member LeCompte

Motion passed 4-0

DISCUSSION ITEMS

2. Presentation by Wave Transit

Megan Matheny, Deputy Director for Wave Transit, discussed the RideMICRO program. She gave an overview of the microtransit project, which is an alternative public transportation service model serving the Town.

Ms. Matheny said due to drastic changes in commuting patterns since early 2020, Wave Transit decided to implement microtransit to replace two underperforming routes: those serving northern New Hanover County and Pleasure Island. She said microtransit offers small-scale, on-demand public transit services via smaller vehicles with less capacity. Ms. Matheny said RideMICRO launched in southern New Hanover County and Pleasure Island last December 1 as part of a pilot project.

The presentation also included information about virtual stops, hours, and cost. Ms. Matheny said RideMICRO has the flexibility to make changes to address demand, offers a real-time tracking feature, and allows for future booking weeks in advance.

Council Member Hoffer asked what it would take to make the program economically feasible in this area. Ms. Matheny said the goal would be to exceed the statistic of 6.6 trips per hour on the regular fixed route.

Council Member Benson and Council Member Hoffer asked some questions from the perspective of a potential user. Ms. Matheny said the service's tech platform allows strategic use of resources to assist with scheduling and planning.

Mayor Barbee asked if the static route is still operating. Ms. Matheny said yes, it will sunset on June 30 with only microtransit going forward. Mayor Barbee said he would like to see RideMICRO ridership statistics again by June 1 to see if the service is taking hold.

Council Member LeCompte asked how many actual people use the static route. Ms. Matheny said Wave Transit counts trips instead of people but has recently implemented automatic passenger counter technology, so more will be known in the next couple of weeks.

Mayor Barbee said it will be important to get input from the community – such as the Chamber, local businesses, and the Senior Center – to find out who exactly is using Wave Transit.

3. Presentation by the Wilmington Metropolitan Planning Organization

Abby Lorenzo, Deputy Director of Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (WMPO), gave a presentation on how the group's plans are developed and implemented. She reviewed the WMPO's role, duties, project recommendations, and strategies.

4. Developing a Model for Hindcasting Chronic Flooding and Real-Time Flood Sensor Network on Canal Drive

In recent years, the Town has experienced more frequent and increased flooding of public and private infrastructure along Canal Drive and Florida Avenue bordering the Carolina Beach Yacht Basin. Flooding is primarily due to seasonal high-tide events (commonly referred to as king tides), storm-related high tides, and rainfall events. Faced with existing flooding challenges and recognizing the reality of rising sea levels, the Town performed an engineered study to assess the vulnerability of bulkheaded shorelines along Canal Drive and Florida Avenue and the influence that bulkhead condition and

elevation play on flooding in this area.

There are two sources of high water that result in flooding from the yacht basin: 1) lack of or overtopping of existing bulkheads and 2) water backing up through the stormwater system. Backflow prevention devices installed on stormwater outfalls can be ineffective at preventing flooding if the valves do not seal properly, allowing water to back up into the stormwater system and come up through the catch basins or street inlets along the roadways. High water levels in the basin can also reduce or eliminate the hydraulic head necessary to transfer water from the stormwater inlets through the stormwater system and out through the outfalls that drain into the yacht basin. Significant rainfall events also result in flooding, which may be due to various factors affecting the stormwater system's effectiveness to drain the road and properties along Canal Drive and Florida Avenue.

The Town has partnered with Katherine Anarde of the North Carolina State University Engineering Department and Miyuki Hino of the University of North Carolina Department of City and Regional Planning to apply for a North Carolina Sea Grant to identify the drivers of chronic coastal flooding. This project consists of deploying a new sensor flood network, establishing an early-warning system, and conducting modeling to help better understand the sources of the flooding we experience. The early-warning system and access to real-time camera and data feeds will enable emergency response management more efficiently, enhance public safety, and limit unnecessary use of public resources. As the Town works to develop a long-term solution for flooding, use of the research findings will ensure that any investments are sustainable and effective against rising water levels.

The Town will be engaged throughout this project. At the start, staff will help guide decisions on the final locations of sensors and cameras to maximize their benefit. Staff will work with the research team to refine an online web interface for the data and develop an early-warning system that meets the Town's needs. In addition, staff will provide input on the development of flood mitigation scenarios. Staff members plan to meet with the project team on a quarterly basis to facilitate this collaborative effort.

Planning Director Jeremy Hardison said the purpose of the presentation is to introduce Council to the project. He said when staff heard there was a funding opportunity to address nuisance flooding, Canal Drive was identified right away.

Dr. Anarde and Dr. Hino presented details about the Sunny Day Flooding project, including its goals of determining how flooding affects people and communities, how frequently flooding happens, what combination of environmental factors lead to flooding, and how communities may be assisted in adapting to the future.

5. Arbor Day Proclamation

Mayor Barbee read Proclamation 22-2255, which proclaims April 29 as National Arbor Day. He said this is part of the Tree City USA initiative.

6. Discuss Agenda Items for April Council Meeting

Council Member LeCompte said she wants an update on parking lots, specifically the proposal for additional parking that she submitted. Mr. Oakley said estimates are \$20,000 to construct and prepare the FEMA lot and \$75,000 for the Harper Avenue proposal. He said the \$75,000 project would have to be added to the budget, and the FEMA lot can move forward now with a budget amendment. Council Member LeCompte said she wanted Council to discuss this during a regular meeting.

Council Member Benson asked for an update about the 105 additional parking spaces being commissioned. Mr. Parvin said some are still being implemented this week, but the project should be close to complete by the end of this week.

Council Member Benson said he was glad to hear the presentation about Canal Drive.

Mayor Barbee said he would like to see staff put together a comprehensive presentation about all of Canal Drive's issues for a future workshop. He said this would be educational for Council and the public. Mayor Barbee suggested an overview of the history and where Canal Drive is today so Council can see the situation holistically and not incrementally.

Council Member Hoffer said he would like an upcoming presentation about Hamlet Avenue, including not just the parking lot but the street end. Mr. Oakley said he had a recent discussion with other staff members about this and can likely present something at the next regular meeting.

Mayor Barbee asked how the Hamlet Avenue project is going. Mr. Oakley said it's close but lacks garage doors due to supply-chain issues. He said the Town needs to find a way to hold equipment for a little while until garage doors are available.

Council Member LeCompte said when there was rearranging of some handicap parking spots to make them closer to the Boardwalk, two were removed on Lake Park Boulevard and Cape Fear Boulevard. She suggested putting one back for people visiting businesses.

Mayor Barbee asked about handicap parking regulations the Town must meet. Mr. Oakley said the Town is mandated by the N.C. Department of Transportation to do an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) plan, which has been in the works for about a year. Mr. Hardison said the Town must have a public information workshop, which is scheduled for next month, and then staff can finalize the plan and bring it to Council the following month.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member Hoffer said the Beautification Committee will plant trees in the Town on Arbor Day, with more details coming soon. He also reminded Council about Thursday's open house for the first draft of the Saint Joseph Street/Lewis Drive multi-use path. Council Member LeCompte said she had a prior commitment at the American Legion that night and would like to see the information prior to the open house if possible. Mr. Parvin said as soon as it's available, staff can provide it to Council Members.

CLOSED SESSION IF NEEDED

None

ADJOURNMENT

ACTION: Motion to adjourn

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

Voting Yea: Mayor Barbee, Council Member Benson, Council Member Hoffer, Council Member LeCompte

Motion passed 4-0

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 AM.