

CAROLINA BEACH

Town Council Regular Meeting

Tuesday, June 10, 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

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. Annual Write-off of Outstanding Accounts Receivables
2. Budget Amendments/Transfers
3. Amend Grant Project Ordinance for American Rescue Plan
4. Set a Public Hearing for July 8, 2025, to Consider an Amendment to Article 3 of the Unified Development Ordinance to Address Fences for Non-conforming Commercial Pools
Applicant: Pleasure Island Holdings, LLC
5. Approval of Council Meeting Minutes

ACTION: Motion to approve 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

6. Recognition of the Ashley High School Girls Soccer Team

Council recognized the Ashley High School Girls Soccer Team for making it to the State Championship 3 years in a row.

7. Events Update by Tim Murphy

Community Services Manager Tim Murphy said the Town received a request from Boardwalk Amusements to use the Gazebo stage for some events June 16 through July 6.

Kyle Wagner, General Manager of Carolina Beach Boardwalk Amusements, said they would like to use the stage for nightly shows with the exception of Wednesday and Thursday, when bingo and music are already scheduled. He said the content would be family-oriented and include a Michael Jackson program, karaoke, and a comedy hypnotist. Mr. Wagner said estimated attendance would be 50-60 people, and the performers have their own lights and speakers. He said the shows would be free to attend.

Mr. Wagner also asked about using the stage for local bands one night per week, but Mayor Barbee asked to keep this request separate from the aforementioned shows because logistics for bands can be complicated, and this should go through the Events Committee.

Council Member Benson said having music on Sunday night would extend the weekend and draw more people to the Boardwalk area, but he thinks more detail on this request is needed.

Mr. Murphy said the initial programming Mr. Wagner mentioned would be a good opportunity to bring people to the Boardwalk area on days without events scheduled now, and he has no concerns with it.

ACTION: Motion to approve the 3 various shows on the 5 nights, not Wednesday or Thursday night, through July 6

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

Mr. Murphy reviewed upcoming events:

- Blood Drive – June 11 at Rec Center
- 50s Bikini Bash – June 28 at the Gazebo
- East Coast Got Em On King Mackerel Tournament – July 11-13 at Fisherman's Lot
- Family Night – begins June 17 and continues every Tuesday through July 29 at Lake Park
- Flamingo Bingo – continues every Wednesday through August 27 at the Gazebo

- Boardwalk Blast Fireworks/Music – continues every Thursday through August 21, and concludes Friday, August 29
- Movies at the Lake – continues every Sunday through August 31

Mr. Murphy congratulated Mr. Parvin on his retirement from the Coast Guard. Mr. Parvin said he served 27 years.

8. Manager's Update

Mr. Oakley gave an update on various projects:

- The Lake pump house project is underway.
- The Ocean Boulevard sidewalk project has minor items to complete before signing off.
- Henniker's Ditch has been cleaned out, and stabilization has been added.
- The 1810 Canal Drive lot is going out for bid this fall.
- The CB2045 Infrastructure Plan is in the first phase and will be ready to go out for bid in the next couple of months. This includes the force main from the Lake to Henniker's Ditch.

Council Member Hoffer asked about the expected completion date for 1810 Canal Drive. Community Development Director Jeremy Hardison said this should be a quick winter project, and after construction the Town is looking at resurfacing the parking lot to be ready in the spring. Mayor Barbee said this is the parking lot behind the pier. Mr. Oakley said the project will add another access, more parking, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility, and an observation area.

Mr. Oakley said the Town just finished resurfacing the Alabama East parking lot.

Council Member Benson asked if there was any resolution on the N.C. Resilient Coastal Communities Program (RCCP) grant. Mr. Oakley said there are no updates on this yet.

Council Member Healy asked about hurricane season and preparation of the command center. Mr. Oakley said staff will do an exercise to get ready, and Council is welcome to observe. He said the Town can also do another open house. Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte said she thinks last year's open house was helpful for residents, especially those who are new and have never experienced a hurricane.

Mr. Hardison reported the following recent developments:

- 65 permits issued for renovation/repair/additions, etc., 14 new residential construction permits, and 9 certificates of occupancy
- Demolitions occurred at 406 Ocean Boulevard (single-family home) and 501 Greenville Avenue (single-family home)
- BeBot did post-Memorial Day cleanup on June 1, and it is scheduled for June 11 (following the Beach Music Festival) as well as after July Fourth and Labor Day weekends. Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte said there is no charge to the Town for this service, which is provided by Keep New Hanover Beautiful.
- New businesses: Leaf & Love, 1010 South Lake Park Boulevard, and Kass's Laundry, 702 South Lake Park Boulevard

Mr. Hardison reported the following upcoming meetings:

- Planning and Zoning Commission June 12: commercial pool fence text amendment and water-oriented uses text amendment
- Council special meeting June 17: canceled

PUBLIC COMMENT

Nicolas Habash, who said he and his family have owned property in the Town since the 1980s, asked Council to consider reopening the parking area at the end of Florida Avenue. He said after the marina changed hands, it created a parking issue that resulted in the installation of a fence and no-parking signs along the water entrance. Mr. Habash said cars park on the street around his house now, and the area is not even accessible for pedestrians due to the fence and no designated entryway. He suggested that the Town reopen the area and charge for parking, using the money to maintain the property.

Mayor Barbee said the Town had no choice but to block off the area because of the way the property was deeded. He said this neighborhood has a resident-only parking zone. Mr. Oakley said people who live there can call Pivot Parking or Town Hall for enforcement. Mr. Parvin said people with a re-entry sticker may park in the grass, not in the street, and enforcement is complaint-driven.

Jordan Glaser said the Ocean Boulevard sidewalk looks great, but he requested that stormwater coming from the west be directed toward Henniker's Ditch.

PUBLIC HEARINGS

9. Zoning Map Amendment to Consider a Request to Rezone 204 Harper Avenue from Mixed Use (MX) to Central Business District (CBD)
Applicant: STLNC, LLC

Applicant STLNC, LLC, has submitted a petition to consider rezoning 204 Harper Avenue from Mixed Use (MX) to Central Business District (CBD) zoning. The neighboring property to the east is under the same ownership, formerly Welcome Inn (205, 207, and 209 North Lake Park Boulevard), and is currently in the CBD. The applicant has requested the rezoning to have consistent zoning and land uses for the entire property so all business-related decisions and operations fall under the same zoning guidelines.

For consistency and the purpose of redevelopment, it is best practice for the entirety of a property to be within the same zoning district. Redevelopment of the property would require recombination of the property. One of the standards for creating zoning districts is to follow plotted lot lines. Guidance for the interpretation of zoning district boundaries comes from Section 1.7 of the UDO. Previously, 204 Harper Avenue had a single-family structure, and the adjacent common ownership parcels were formerly Welcome Inn. The adjacent use to the west is single-family, to the north is a multi-family structure, and across the street to the south is a hotel.

HISTORY

The property was in the same ownership for over 50 years. The single-family house and Welcome Inn were built in the 1930s. In 2023, the structures were demolished after a new hotel was approved for

the site in 2022. The hotel had not started construction, and the property was recently purchased. The permit for the hotel authorization expired September 14, 2024.

The 1984 zoning ordinance and zoning map had both properties, 204 Harper Avenue and the property where Welcome Inn was, in B-1: Central District. In 2000, 204 Harper Avenue was rezoned to MX, and the Welcome Inn property was rezoned to CBD.

TECHNICAL REVIEW COMMITTEE (TRC) COMMENTS

Staff discussed the preference for zoning lines to follow contiguous property ownership but did note the expansion of the CBD into a district that allows for single-family residential. The property to the north does have a permanent 10-foot access easement that would create a buffer between the single-family homes and any new development. Changing the property from MX to CBD does present the potential for increased water and sewer capacity needs because the CBD allows for higher density.

LAND USE PLAN

The property is shown on the Future Land Use Map as Mixed Use Commercial and is described as a higher-density area with a mix of uses, within the district and individual buildings. Residential uses are allowed only on upper stories; ground floor is encouraged to be active. 4- to 5-story structures are possible, unless a property is adjacent to low- or medium-density residential with attractive street facades. NCGS 160D states that if a zoning map amendment is adopted and the action was deemed inconsistent with the adopted plan, the zoning amendment has the effect of also amending any Future Land Use Map in the approved plan, and no additional request or application for a plan amendment is required.

ACTION: Motion to open the public hearing on this matter

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

Senior Planner Gloria Abbotts presented the details, including a review of the history of the property, surrounding uses, dimensional standards, and permitted uses.

Staff recommends approval of the zoning map amendment and Land Use Plan amendment, and the Planning and Zoning Commission voted 5-1 to recommend approval.

Council Member Hoffer said this has been voted down before and asked if it is coming up again because of new owners. Ms. Abbotts said it's the same owner and it's been a year since the original request, so the owner is back to make the request again. She said nothing has changed since the previous request.

Mayor Barbee asked if the applicant wanted to speak.

Attorney Ned Barnes of 814 Carolina Beach Avenue North, who represents the applicant, said the applicant was not present due to an injury. He reviewed ways they contend the proposed rezoning is

consistent with the Land Use Plan. He said the rezoning would bring the property into conformity with adjacent lots that are zoned CBD, offering compatibility with the surrounding area. Mr. Barnes said the 10-foot easement for the property at 206 Harper Avenue creates a setback between the residential area and future development. He said there will be no impact and public services because water, sewer, trash, and other utilities are already in place, and he contended that if the zoning classification was appropriate in 2000 it is even more appropriate today.

Mayor Barbee asked if anyone from the public wanted to speak.

Wick Wickliffe of 210 Harper Avenue requested that Council vote no on this matter as it did in the past. He said he has concerns about the rezoning having a negative impact on the neighborhood and the Town as a whole. Mr. Wickliffe said parking is already a serious issue, and converting this property to commercial will intensify the problem and further burden existing limited infrastructure in the Town. He said the rezoning would set a dangerous precedent for future commercial encroachment into residential areas, leading to a cascading effect that could irreparably change the character of the neighborhood and the Town. In addition, Mr. Wickliffe cited concerns about traffic, safety, noise, flooding, and surrounding property values.

Taylor Blumenfeld, the daughter of Mark Gates, who lives at 206 Harper Avenue, said she respectfully opposes the rezoning. She said she always felt safe at their home and wants her young daughter to have that same sense of security. Ms. Blumenfeld said the rezoning could change the character and safety of the area by increasing traffic, straining parking availability, and adding congestion and noise. She also mentioned the potential for issues with environmental impact and stormwater needs. Ms. Blumenfeld said they are not against growth, but they want thoughtful and respective development. She asked Council to preserve family life on the island and vote no.

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

Council Member Healy cited staff and the Commission's recommendation and said in looking at the map, it seems the Town has already set precedent for this. He said it makes sense for Council to approve this request.

Council Member Benson said regardless of what happens, the Town has a means by which to cite a property owner whose stormwater is impacting public or private property.

Council Member Hoffer said he set precedent himself 18 months ago when he voted against this request the last time it came before Council, and nothing has changed. He said zoning is a contract between the Town and property owners for what will be built, and he is concerned about the CBD slowly creeping back if the Town doesn't adhere to current zoning regulations. Council Member Hoffer said the whole point of MX is to be a buffer zoning between the CBD and purely residential neighborhoods, and the owners of 206 Harper Avenue bought their house years ago expecting MX to

be next to them. He said it doesn't make sense why someone who voted against this a year and a half ago would change their mind now.

Mayor Barbee said he generally agrees with everything the 2 public speakers said, but when 206 Harper Avenue was built the property next to them had a business designation. He said the Town changed it to MX, and as a compromise during the proposal for a hotel on that site 206 Harper Avenue was granted a 10-foot access easement. Mayor Barbee said he voted in favor of this last time and will vote for it again. He said he agrees "CBD creep" is a bad thing, but he doesn't think that's what's happening here.

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte said for her it goes back to whether this parcel was originally zoned for business, which she missed the first time around. She said this is the same thing that happened with Kindred, and nobody had a problem with that.

Council Member Benson said a Conditional Zoning (CZ) permit for any development on the property would require give and take on setbacks and buffer zones.

Council Member Hoffer said he's willing to bet that the 10-foot easement for 206 Harper Avenue doesn't run the entirety of the back west property line of 204 Harper Avenue. He said it probably runs about halfway back, so in that area there would be no setback in the middle of a block of residential neighborhoods.

Mayor Barbee said this property previously got split into 2 zones for whatever reason, and if he owned the property that would've bothered him. He said even with MX, there are a lot of options for what can be built on that lot by right other than a house.

Council Member Hoffer asked why the zoning needs to be changed if they can already build so many things on this property with MX. He said this discussion centers on something that happened 25 years ago, and he questioned why the property owner at that time did not express any concern about the zoning change.

ACTION: Motion of approval whereas in accordance with the provisions of the NCGS, the Council does hereby find and determine that the adoption of the zoning map amendment for 204 Harper Avenue is consistent with the goals and objectives of the adopted Land Use Plan and other long-range plans and the potential impacts on the surrounding area are mitigated by the approved conditions; a statement approving the proposed zoning map amendment and declaring that this also amends the Land Use Plan to meet the vision of the community is taken into consideration in the zoning amendment

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

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

Voting Nay: Council Member Hoffer

Motion passed 4-1

10. Consider Adopting the Proposed FY 2025-2026 Budget

Mr. Oakley presented the Budget Ordinance for Council's review and approval.

ACTION: Motion to open the public hearing to consider adopting the 25-26 budget

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

The proposed budget figures are \$23,430,601 for the General Fund and \$12,444,057 for the Enterprise Fund. The proposed new tax rate for Carolina Beach is 0.1417, down from 0.2350. The budget includes 3 additional firefighters and 3 additional Police personnel to be hired in January. It also includes a 3% cost-of-living adjustment in July and up to a 2% merit increase in January for employees. Some of the projects and equipment included are Well 15H, Alabama Avenue vessel, Advanced Meter Infrastructure (AMI), stormwater force main from the Lake to Henniker's Ditch, Spartanburg Avenue and Henniker's Ditch crossing, and a new street sweeper.

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte asked about the Fire Inspector position that would be created as a result of transferring the Building Inspector position, which is now handled by the County. Mr. Oakley said the Town can start advertising for this now but won't finalize hiring until after the fiscal year ends.

Council Member Healy thanked staff for a revenue-neutral budget. He said it's important that the public knows this new budget will take a pause on projects for now. Council Member Healy said it's unclear how tariffs will affect the Town, considering steel and aluminum just went up 50% this week.

Mayor Barbee asked if anyone from the public wanted to speak. No one came forward.

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

Council Member Barbee said he's excited about the budget being revenue-neutral because tax increases during revaluation years are difficult to justify, so he appreciates staff tightening up and doing what was necessary.

Mr. Oakley said the Town is still waiting on the County to adopt its budget and their sales tax will affect the Town, but staff used a worst-case scenario to plan this budget.

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte asked everyone to write to County Commissioners to ask them to stay revenue-neutral.

Council Member Healy said resident voices are important because County Commissioners want their vote. He said if the County doesn't go revenue-neutral, it trickles down and the Town has to pay for it.

Council Member Hoffer said he agrees it's not a good time to talk about raising taxes because it's confusing to people, so a revenue-neutral budget was important to him as well. He said he had some anxiety about adding staff but feels better about it after talking to Fire Chief Alan Griffin and considering how much is asked of the Police Department. Council Member Hoffer said Council can't expect more without providing the resources to accomplish it.

Mayor Barbee said both the Police and Fire teams run very efficiently and are about delivering services.

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte said the Town is fortunate to have its Police and Fire teams.

Council Member Benson said the Lake needs a hard look due to algae and asked staff to make sure this happens. He also asked about whether a Magistrate could be available via video teleconference to keep Police Officers from losing hours driving over the bridge with every arrest. Mayor Barbee said because the Town doesn't have a jail, they could not be held overnight and would still need to be transported unless the Magistrate released them right away. Council Member Benson said it would be helpful to know if they would need to be held before spending time driving them off the island.

ACTION: Motion to approve Budget Ordinance No. 25-1258 for the operating budget for fiscal year 2025-26

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

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

11. Adopt Resolution for the Town of Carolina Beach Water System Resiliency Assessment Project
Applicant: Town of Carolina Beach

Two years ago, the Town received a grant to conduct an asset inventory assessment of its public utility infrastructure, and resolutions acknowledging receipt and approval are being considered.

Mr. Hardison introduced Verd Anna Pettigrew of engineering firm Jacobs, who gave a presentation on the scope of work and findings.

Mr. Oakley said the Jacobs team and Town staff put a lot of work into this, and representatives with the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) Division of Water Infrastructure said this is one of the best reports they have seen.

Mayor Barbee said the Town is finally at a point where its initiatives are more planned and data-driven, and this is a measure of the process maturity of the Town.

ACTION: Motion that Town Council adopt Resolutions No. 25-2334 for sewer and 25-2335 for water for the Town of Carolina Beach utilities system resiliency assessment project

Motion made by Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte

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

Benson, Council Member Hoffer
Motion passed unanimously

12. Annual Committee Appointments

Council made the following annual Committee appointments:

- Beautification Committee – Stefanie Young and Meghan Gonzalez
- Bike/Ped Committee – Mike Maume and Scott Pate
- Marketing Committee – Jeff Hogan, Cole Hudson, and Christi Siegel
- Operations Committee – Gerard Taylor, Tiffany Bryan, and Steve Wright
- Planning and Zoning – Jeff Hogan and Bill Carew
- Police Advocacy Committee – Roger Monk, Matthew Shuttleworth, and Kitty McClellan

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte said the Rainbow Bridge looks amazing, and she thanked staff for cleaning up the debris left by Duke Energy.

Council Member Healy congratulated Mr. Parvin on his Coast Guard retirement.

Council Member Benson praised staff for preparing a revenue-neutral budget.

Council Member Hoffer mentioned a request from the Beautification Committee to keep the landscaping simple around the Marina. He also said they are seeking a grant to plant some trees and install irrigation at the Bridge Barrier Road nursery site.

Mayor Barbee also praised staff for preparing a balanced revenue-neutral budget. He said it has been a busy season so far and room occupancy tax (ROT) numbers look great, so he thinks it's going to be a wonderful summer for the Town if hurricanes can be avoided.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Barbee adjourned the meeting at 8:00 PM.