

CAROLINA BEACH

Town Council Workshop

Tuesday, February 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

Mayor Pro Tem Jay Healy

Council Member Joe Benson

Council Member Mike Hoffer

Council Member Deb LeCompte

ALSO PRESENT

Town Manager Bruce Oakley

Assistant Town Manager Ed Parvin

Finance Director Debbie Hall

Town Clerk Kim Ward

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

1. Employee Recognition

Planning Director Jeremy Hardison recognized Building Inspector Darrel Johnson for 5 years of service.

Public Works Director Brian Stanberry recognized Senior Stormwater Construction Specialist Rich Holt for 25 years of service.

2. Presentation by Wave Transit

This item was removed from the agenda due to the presenter's absence.

3. Beautification Committee's Presentation on Becoming a Tree City

Cindy Dunn and Scott Pate of the Town's Beautification Committee presented information about the Tree City USA program from the Arbor Day Foundation, including an overview of its value and benefits. Ms. Dunn said the purpose is to present a concept for Council to consider in the future.

Mr. Pate said the Tree City USA program encompasses the following standards:

- Tree board or department

- Tree care ordinance
- Community forestry program with annual budget of at least \$2 per capita
- Arbor Day observance and proclamation

He said the Town would need to take the following steps to meet those standards:

- Consider establishment of a tree board or responsible party and where it will live
- Current tree ordinance may not be sufficient to meet Tree City USA standards
- Review current Town budget for expenses that qualify as tree expenses; determine minimum gap to meet Tree City USA requirements
- Review existing Town event calendar to see where an Arbor Day celebration may occur and determine level of event
- Application deadline is December 31

Mr. Pate said the committee's recommendations are as follows:

- Establish a tree board; consider using members of the committee, along with members of Pleasure Island Habitat and local arborists
- Review and update the Town tree ordinance to comply with certification
- Partner with local organizations to establish an Earth Day/Arbor Day event in our community for April 2023
- Apply for Tree City USA designation by July 2022

Mayor Barbee asked about the next steps for Council. Town Manager Bruce Oakley said the next steps would be declaring a proclamation for Arbor Day, designating a tree board, checking to see if the \$2 per capita budget is met, and asking the tree board to start reviewing the tree ordinance.

Council Member Hoffer said the Town is lagging behind other municipalities in this area when it comes to trees. He said trees take a long time to come to maturity, and the Town should get them in the ground during next year's planting season in January and February. Council Member Hoffer said some private funds could be raised to match what the Town puts in, but the Town just has to commit to doing it.

Mayor Barbee said it sounds like Council is supportive of the endeavor and asked if anything needs to be done now. Mr. Oakley said he can have the Arbor Day proclamation ready for an upcoming Council meeting.

PUBLIC HEARING

4. Public Hearing for Financing Freeman Park

Mr. Oakley said the Town asked for bids for financing \$3.25 million, part of the purchase price for Freeman Park. He said the Town received 9 bids, and the recommendation is to go with Truist, which is offering a 2.3% interest rate with no pre-payment penalty. Mr. Oakley said the Local Government Commission (LGC) requires a public hearing before moving forward.

Mayor Barbee asked what the next steps are after the public hearing. Mr. Oakley said the Town will submit paperwork to the LGC, and with the other funds lined up a closing date will be set.

ACTION: Motion to open the public hearing

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

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

Motion passed unanimously

Cathrine Robbins asked for more information on the loan, including terms of payment.

Finance Director Debbie Hall said the financing term is for 10 years at 2.3%. She said the Town is financing \$3.25 million and has a fixed principal payment of \$325,000 per year with no pre-payment penalty. Ms. Hall said the LGC application must be in by March 8 for consideration at the April 5 meeting. She said the rest of the \$7 million purchase price is made up of \$350,000 in this year's budget for the sand fund, \$2.3 million in reserves for the sand fund, and \$1.1 million of room occupancy tax carryover funds.

Mr. Oakley said there are grant applications out that may help to significantly reduce the debt.

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 Healy, Council Member Benson, Council Member Hoffer, Council Member LeCompte

Motion passed unanimously

ACTION: Motion to approve Resolution 22-2253 to accept the terms of the proposal from BB&T Truist Bank

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

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

Motion passed unanimously

ACTION: Motion to approve Resolution 22-2252 authorizing the Finance Director to file an LGC application

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

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

Motion passed unanimously

ITEMS OF BUSINESS

5. Manager's Update

Mr. Oakley gave the following updates:

- Beach nourishment/Coastal Storm Damage Reduction: Work has begun, and the online tool showing specific locations will be available soon.
 - Public information session on February 25 at 2:00 PM
- Non-profit request: The Island Men group has requested 2 Freeman Park passes to auction off for a fundraiser, and this requires Council approval.

ACTION: Motion to approve The Island Men's request for 2 annual Freeman Park passes

Motion made by Council Member Benson

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

Motion passed unanimously

- Consultant contract: The agreement with former U.S. Rep. Mike McIntyre expires at the end of the month, and Council must decide via consensus whether to extend or modify the contract.

Mayor Barbee said Mr. McIntyre has been a fantastic resource for the Town, but it might not be possible to keep him indefinitely.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy suggested putting the services on hold for a while.

Council Member LeCompte asked about the cost. Mr. Oakley said \$10,250 per month is the retainer fee, and a new contract would likely be for a year.

Mr. Oakley said he thinks all of the projects that Mr. McIntyre was hired to help with have come to fruition, so it would be acceptable to pause the contract.

Mayor Barbee said the consensus is that Mr. McIntyre is a valuable resource and the Town wants to keep the relationship going, but the contract will be paused until there is another need for Washington, D.C., lobbying.

- Parking map: The Town is looking at the potential for 105 new parking spaces.

Mr. Oakley said he was requesting direction from Council about any changes to previous decisions about parking due to the need for ordering signs and equipment.

Mayor Barbee said former Mayor LeAnn Pierce suggested Council reach a compromise so staff can move forward with the parking program. He said as a result, he wanted to propose dropping January and February from paid parking.

ACTION: Motion to seek a compromise amongst Council to give clear direction and basically split off-season parking in half (charging in November and December but having free parking in January and February)

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

ACTION: Motion to amend the motion on the floor to strike November and December as paid months, maintaining the 4 months of free parking
Motion made by Council Member Benson

Council Member Hoffer said for November through February he wanted to leave bags on the parking meters so those spaces have free parking but charge for parking in the lots.

Council Member LeCompte said Council still hasn't fully heard from the public, and she doesn't like making these kinds of decisions in a workshop. She suggested putting the issue on the March 8 agenda.

Mayor Barbee said he wanted to avoid going back to a start-to-finish parking discussion. He withdrew his motion, which also withdrew Council Member Benson's motion to amend.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy said he wants to see more numbers and data. He said there are two ways to generate revenue, one of which is parking, and if the Town takes away from that the money will have to be made up somewhere else. Mayor Pro Tem Healy said there is also inflation to account for, and he doesn't want to raise taxes. He said everybody wants things such as parks and infrastructure, but no one wants to pay for them.

Mayor Barbee said he thinks Town residents lost big today and added that he was upset that Council failed to reach a compromise.

Council Member Hoffer asked about the Hamlet Ocean Rescue project. Mr. Oakley said it's moving forward quickly and on schedule to be completed by Easter. He said the parking lot will be resurfaced and mentioned that Council Member Hoffer had made suggestions about adding golf cart spots and bike racks.

Council Member Hoffer said he hopes the Town will at least keep pedestrian access somewhat free through the Marriott parking lot. He suggested not covering it up with shrubs and parking spots, which would keep people from stepping over the curb. Mr. Oakley said there is nothing to stop the Marriott from putting up a fence, but the Town can keep from putting up its own landscaping or fencing. He said without an easement, the Town can't control what the Marriott does.

Council Member LeCompte asked about scheduling a session with the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (WMPO). She said she would like to see this on an upcoming workshop agenda.

6. Discuss Agenda Items for March Council Meeting

Mayor Barbee said he wants to see regular updates about seasonal readiness and current projects. He also asked about the timing of the Town's revenue and expenses forecast.

Council Member Benson said he wanted a parking discussion and a lake dredge update on the March agenda.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy said he wanted an update on the marina project.

ADJOURNMENT

ACTION: Motion to adjourn

Motion made by Mayor Barbee

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

Motion passed unanimously

The meeting adjourned at 10:20 AM.