

# CAROLINA BEACH

Town Council Workshop

Tuesday, May 23, 2023 - 9:00 AM

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



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## 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

### DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. New Employee Introduction

Police Chief Vic Ward introduced new Beach Ranger Rich Hanks.

2. Marketing Advisory Committee Budget Presentation

Jeff Hogan, Chairman of the Marketing Advisory Committee, presented the fiscal year 2023/2024 marketing budget. The total budget is \$1,387,386, which is a 7.63% decrease from the \$1,502,068 budget in fiscal year 2022/2023.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy said you can tell the Marketing Advisory Committee works based on all the out-of-state license plates seen in the Town. He said the committee collects a lot of data and won't hesitate to change course if something isn't working.

Council Member Hoffer said he thinks the model outpaced itself years ago. He said it's a big change, and he hasn't started pushing for it.

Mayor Barbee said there has been lots of discussion, and it's going to be a long slog to change it. Mr. Hogan said Polk County tried to make the change, but the State legislature said no.

**ACTION:** Motion to approve the Marketing Advisory Committee budget as presented

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*

3. Eagle Scout Presentation by Nicholas Bramhall

Nicholas Bramhall gave an update on his Eagle Scout project. He is proposing to put four benches on the southern side of Cape Fear Boulevard in the block between the Gazebo and Lake Park Boulevard. Mr. Bramhall said he will raise funds for the project as well as build, paint, stain, and transport the benches. He said his only request is that the Town install and bolt down the benches.

Mayor Barbee asked about the budget for the project. Mr. Bramhall said it's about \$1,200 to \$1,300, although he is working with builders to get discounts to decrease the cost.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy said he would like to look at ways to increase seating for events at the Gazebo. Mr. Oakley said the project must go through the Technical Review Committee (TRC). Mayor Barbee asked Mr. Bramhall to work with staff to find the proper place for the benches if the locations he is proposing don't work.

Council Member Hoffer said providing benches and shade downtown has been a priority of the Beautification Committee, so this project meshes with that goal.

Mayor Barbee thanked Mr. Bramhall for helping the community.

4. Flood and Adaptation Modeling Work on Canal Drive

Dr. Katherine Anarde of North Carolina State University (NCSU), Dr. Miyuki Hino of the University of North Carolina (UNC), and Thomas Thelen of NCSU gave a presentation on flood and adaptation modeling work on Canal Drive. Through the Sunny Day Flooding Project, the group has been working with the Town for the past two years to examine the flooding problem on Canal Drive and Florida Avenue.

Dr. Anarde covered the following:

- Sea level rise is projected to increase flood frequency.
- Tide gauges are used to predict the number of high tide flood days each year.
- How frequently do these floods happen now (at locations far from tide gauges)?
- Are there other factors (besides tides) that contribute to flooding? Local examples include Clam Shell Lane April 2023, Starfish Lane October 2022, and Oystershell Lane January 2023.

Mr. Thelen said the camera looking north suggests water first arrives to Clam Shell Lane from the north. The group has developed a model to simulate flooding from tides, wind, rain, and infrastructure.

Regarding the January 2023 flooding event, Mr. Thelen said water would not have reached Canal Drive if the forcing was tides only. He said the addition of wind forcing resulted in the flooding of Canal Drive.

Dr. Hino said the next steps for the project are as follows:

- Finish validating the flood model (fall 2023)
- Collect input from the community on flood impacts and mitigation strategies of interest (fall 2023-spring 2024)
- Model mitigation strategies of interest and analyze community impacts (spring 2024)

Mayor Barbee said this scientific approach validates what many people feel, so it's great to see the data line up. He asked if there is an alarming capability on sensors that would deliver an opt-in email notification when water is in the drain. Dr. Anarde said they have set up a flood alert system in beta mode, and it can be put in full production mode. She said they have been trying to iron out the problem of false alarms that occur when drains are full but water is not on the road. Dr. Anarde said they can keep working on it and employ other methods, such as a camera, so there are fewer false alarms.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy said he thinks it's important to get public feedback. Council Member LeCompte suggested inviting the group to the next utilities open house. Mr. Oakley said they may want to come to a stormwater open house later in the year. Mayor Pro Tem Healy said he doesn't want the group to be disappointed if attendance is low.

Mr. Hardison said staff can do specific outreach for Canal Drive northern properties.

Mayor Barbee said staff should make sure the group is in the loop about stormwater projects.

Council Member Benson said staff should leverage the Operations Advisory Committee to help where needed.

## 5. Manager's Update

Mr. Oakley gave an update on various projects:

- Chemours letter: This document was required by law and went out to properties that at some point in history had a well. There are no longer any wells for drinking water within the Town, so those who receive the letter may just check the box indicating they are served by a municipal water system and return it. People can access the public water report online to see there are no PFAS (forever chemicals) in the Town's water system. The Town will do public outreach to let residents know the letter is not cause for concern, and anyone with further questions may call or email Public Utilities Director Mark Meyer.
- Radio station: The telephone line is now working, but the broadcast signal is weak, so the Town is looking into increasing the strength of the signal.
- Lake dredge and stabilization: The project started yesterday. All dredge material will stay on site and be used on the banks. The goal is for this to be complete by fall, and then playground, restroom, and other Lake Park improvements will happen over the next six months. Mayor Barbee explained that this project is using a different strategy than in the past, as spoils from

the middle of the lake will be used to build up and stabilize the sides. There will be a second phase that adds a new pump and directional drill. The entire project should be completed in 2024. Council Member Hoffer asked if there will be an odor during the work. There could be some smell, but it should be minimal because large volumes of sludge are not being piled up on the sides as in the past.

- Contractors' meeting: Mr. Parvin said this year the Town partnered with the County, which has its own Inspection Advisory Council. Items of discussion included a tutorial of the County's Customer Online Application & Services Tool (COAST), permitting requirements, steps for completing an application, and stormwater and utility issues. Mr. Parvin said turnout was good.
- Beach mats: Mr. Parvin said areas of interest for expanding the program are Alabama Avenue, Sand Dollar Lane, and the Marriott. He said these locations will need TRC review and State authorization. Mayor Pro Tem Healy asked if the Town looking at how many handicapped parking spots are in those locations. Mr. Parvin said the Town completed an accessibility plan about a year ago and added some new handicapped spaces in various areas last fall. He said there is a spreadsheet of all the locations.

## 6. Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Town Manager's Budget Message

Mr. Oakley presented the fiscal year 2023/2024 budget message, which points out key details in the proposed budget:

- State law requires that the proposed budget, together with a budget message, shall be submitted to the governing board no later than June 1
- Balanced budget with no property tax increase
- Sales tax, room occupancy tax (ROT), and property tax revenue are all up
- 3% water/sewer rate increase; 5% solid waste rate increase based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI)
- 3 full-time positions, 2 part-time positions, and 6% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for Town employees
- Capital projects: Skate Park expansion, paving, stormwater improvements, water/sewer engineering
- Fund Balance 40+%

Mr. Oakley presented a slide with specific figures. He said there will be a budget public hearing at the June Council meeting, the fourth public hearing on this budget.

Mayor Barbee said staff has gone above and beyond what is required for a Town budget. He said transparency and public involvement have been goals for Council.

Council Member LeCompte asked if a Building Inspector will be available to support the Town before, during, and after any upcoming storms. Mr. Oakley said the Town has received commitment for that.

Council Member LeCompte asked if the proposed budget includes \$1,500 requested by the Walk of Fame to continue that project. Mr. Oakley said he can find room in the budget if Council wants this. Council Member LeCompte said this has been funded in the past but did not make it as part of the non-

profit requests earlier during this budget process. Council gave consensus to include \$1,500 for the Walk of Fame in the budget.

## 7. Annual Committee Appointments

On June 30 of each year, several committee members' terms expire. This year, there are 23 members with expiring terms, and 22 of them are interested in being reappointed. There is also one vacant seat on the Board of Adjustment that must be filled.

Council made the following committee appointments:

- Beautification Committee – Cindy Dunn, Dawn Betz, and Karen Graybush
- Bike/Ped Committee – John Dismukes, Nicole Kohler, and Steve Graybush
- Board of Adjustment – Ken Thompson, Patrick Boykin, Wayne Hartsell, and David Marshall
- Marketing Advisory Committee – Brad Bradley and Tom Ulring
- Operations Advisory Committee – Matthew Shuttleworth, Paul Levy, and Stephen Taylor
- Parks and Rec Committee – Eric Lachance, Danielle Kurtz, Jasmine McKee, and Sarah Finn
- Police Advocacy Committee – Amanda Amyot, Bill Skinner, Christina Lopez, and Stephen Graybush

Council Member LeCompte encouraged those who didn't get appointed to attend committee meetings. Mayor Barbee said the best way to get on a committee is to start going to meetings.

## COUNCIL COMMENTS

Council Member LeCompte said she held a roundtable about the possibility of a social district on May 15, and 12 people attended to voice concerns, explore pros/cons, and offer suggestions. Council Member LeCompte plans to have another social district roundtable on May 30, and she also will travel to Wilson to find out more about the social district there.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy said he is concerned about the way downtown looks right now. He said staff does a good job, but the Town needs to rein in things before they get out of hand and look too trashy.

Mayor Barbee said he would like staff to explore requiring parking lots in the Central Business District (CBD) to go through the Conditional Zoning (CZ) process instead of being a permitted use. He said parking decks already require CZ, but he thinks lots should be treated the same, so the public has a chance to speak if a parking lot is going next to their property. Council gave consensus for staff to consider this and bring back thoughts.

## CLOSED SESSION

### 8. Closed Session – Real Estate

**ACTION:** Motion to go into closed session to discuss a real estate matter in accordance with NCGS 143-318.11(a)(5); the properties being discussed include Parcel IDs R08807-013-005-000 and R08807-013-004-000

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*

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

**ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Barbee adjourned the meeting at 10:40 AM.