

# CAROLINA BEACH

Town Council Workshop

Tuesday, July 23, 2024 - 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 Deb LeCompte

Council Member Jay Healy

Council Member Joe Benson

Council Member Mike Hoffer

### ALSO PRESENT

Town Manager Bruce Oakley

Finance Director Debbie Hall

Town Clerk Kim Ward

### DISCUSSION ITEMS

1. Employee Recognition

Public Works Director Brian Stanberry recognized Robert Ridgeway in Stormwater for 5 years of service with the Town.

2. Sunny Day Flooding Project Update

Community Development Director Jeremy Hardison introduced flood research team members, who gave an update on the Sunny Day Flooding Project, which focuses on floods that happen during everyday conditions outside of extreme storms.

Dr. Katherine Anarde of North Carolina State University (NCSU) reviewed how often it flooded in the Town during the past year. She said flooding occurred at Clam Shell Lane and Canal Drive 71 times between May 1, 2023, and May 30, 2024. She also discussed concerns about how saltwater flooding affects vehicles.

Thomas Thelen of NCSU focused on how important tides are versus wind and rain in causing flooding. He said wind and rain compound with tides to exacerbate flooding in the Town.

Dr. Miyuki Hino of the University of North Carolina (UNC) reviewed how floods are impacting Town residents and what strategies to mitigate flooding are preferred by them. She gave details about survey results and workshops. She there were 363 survey responses broken out into four geographic zones.

Workshop goals:

- Identify flood mitigation strategies that are in line with residents' preferences and values
- Test the effectiveness of those strategies today and in the future

Details:

- First workshop was held on June 10
- 15 workshop participants randomly selected from interested survey respondents
- Subsequent workshops (4 total) will take place from fall 2024 through spring 2025
- After the workshops are complete, a summary of results will be presented to Council and a report will be shared publicly

Dr. Hino gave a recap of workshop #1 and reviewed the next steps. She said the team is distilling the results into specific strategies that can be tested in the flood model, such as:

- Pumping floodwaters (to ocean or infiltration areas)
- Continuous bulkhead around the Yacht Basin
- Reconfigurations of Canal Drive
- Increasing infiltration within flooded areas (e.g., with permeable pavements)

In future workshops, they will:

- Discuss the effectiveness of different strategies for various flood drivers (rain, tides, etc.) and time periods
- Refine a set of preferred flood mitigation strategies based on the results

Live flood sensor data is available at [go.ncsu.edu/cbflood](http://go.ncsu.edu/cbflood).

Council Member Benson asked about infiltration. Dr. Anarde said the team will need to look at the dune infiltration idea in terms of the pumping volume and not necessarily the engineering behind any of the strategies. She said their work is mainly investigative and does not include feasibility studies or other consultant-type information.

Mayor Barbee said he likes the team's unbiased and data-driven approach, so he doesn't want to give them any information that can be a biasing factor, such as cost. Dr. Anarde said feasibility information does not bias them because they are driven by what is coming out of the workshops.

Mayor Barbee asked for a quick update on bulkheads. Mr. Oakley said the bulkhead on Starfish Lane has been completed, and Scotch Bonnet Lane and Clam Shell Lane are scheduled next. He said the Town is doing some stormwater improvements at Captain's Quarters, and there is still funding for the Florida Avenue bulkhead, but the Town does not have cooperation from neighboring properties right now. Mr. Oakley said there have been discussions with State Rep. Charlie Miller about bulkhead legislation, which may come back up in the next session.

Council Member Healy asked if the team is working at other places and whether the process is the same. Dr. Anarde said the most similar town they are working with in terms of infrastructure is Beaufort, which has started putting backflow prevention devices on their stormwater pipes and added permeable pavement at higher elevation points. Dr. Hino said they have been able to push forward here because Town staff has been helpful and supportive, which is not the case everywhere.

Mayor Pro Tem LeCompte said Beaufort has different topography, so it has been able to implement a lot of more of the living shoreline model.

Council Member Hoffer asked what legislation would look like. Mr. Oakley said the intent was that where there is development or redevelopment, a bulkhead should be built to a certain level. He said the goal was not to be punitive, but if there are nuisance issues the Town would work with the property owner. Council Member Hoffer asked if this could also apply to an existing lot that's not being developed. Mr. Oakley said they think that was the sticking point. Council Member Hoffer said he would advocate for the Town to work with people but also have the authority to get them on board. Mr. Oakley said they have discussed the possibility of some kind of funding mechanism if there was a nuisance issue or bulkhead that needed to be installed. He said for the Town to spend money on private property without the owner's permission, that would require legislation.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy asked about the recent article in The Washington Post and whether the team provided information for it. Dr. Anarde said they worked with them to show different areas of flooding, fact check some of their statements, and model sea-level rise. She said it's not just about tides anymore, and they are not worried about 2050 but more concerned about tomorrow.

3. Resolution Authorizing the Town of Carolina Beach to Submit an Application to the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization for the Surface Transportation Block Grant Program for a Sidewalk Project Located Adjacent to South Lake Park Blvd from Carolina Beach Lake to Alabama Avenue

The Town has been working with the N.C. Department of Transportation (DOT) on cost and design for a sidewalk from Carolina Beach Lake to Tennessee Avenue. DOT has approximately \$150,000 allocated to the project; the Town would be responsible for contributing funds for the remainder. A grant was recently announced under the Federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA) Surface Transportation Block Grant Program. These grant funds could be utilized by the Town for its portion. The grant requires a minimum 20% Local match. DOT has calculated the cost of extending the sidewalk to Alabama Avenue. Council must adopt a resolution to authorize Town staff to submit a grant application to the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (WMPO).

Mr. Hardison presented the details, including estimates for the cost per segment:

Carolina Beach Lake to Carolina Sands – \$640,000  
Carolina Sands to Tennessee Avenue – \$165,000  
Tennessee Avenue to Alabama Avenue – \$675,000  
Total – \$1,480,000

He also reviewed contribution amounts:

DOT – \$183,118

WMPO grant – \$1,037,505

Town match – \$259,337

Mayor Barbee said the money needed from the Town is already approved if the grant is awarded. Council Members expressed support for moving forward with the application.

Council Member Hoffer asked how this would affect the project the Town has already kicked off with DOT. Mr. Hardison said the award for this grant would occur in October, and nothing would be done with DOT until after the repaving of Lake Park Boulevard so this would not delay any of the project already in the works. He said this would be a DOT project working with their engineers, and the Town would not be the middleman other than financially.

Council Member Healy asked about the length of the application process. Mr. Hardison said the pre-application deadline is August 9, and the final submittal is due September 13 with an award expected in October. Mayor Barbee said this would be a much shorter process because the funds are given by WMPO rather than directly by the Federal government, so he thinks the Town has a good chance.

**ACTION:** Motion to approve Resolution No. 24-2310, a resolution authorizing the Town of Carolina Beach to submit an application to the Wilmington Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization in the amount of \$1,296,882

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*

4. Second Reading of Resolution No. 24-2307 Supporting New Hanover County's Ordinance on Abandoned Vessels

On June 17, 2024, New Hanover County Commissioners approved an ordinance authorizing its Sherriff's Office to identify and – when needed – remove abandoned vessels from waterways in the unincorporated areas of the County. The County asked Council to consider supporting this ordinance by approving a resolution. Council had a first reading of the resolution at the July 9, 2024, meeting.

Mayor Barbee said for the Town to allow the Sheriff's Office to work in our jurisdiction, Council must approve the proposed resolution.

**ACTION:** Motion to approve Resolution No. 24-2307 supporting New Hanover County's ordinance on abandoned vessels

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*

## 5. Discussion on Community Building Repairs

Mr. Oakley reviewed a cost estimate to fix the Community Building, which needs \$30,000 worth of plumbing and other repairs. He said the facility is closed now, but in the future groups may continue to use it while having access to outdoor portable toilets recently brought in for the volleyball courts. Mr. Oakley said the Town already budgeted \$70,000 this year for roof and interior repairs, but the additional \$30,000 being proposed tonight is not budgeted. He said he will come back with options for Council to review and discuss at the August 27 workshop, adding that the \$100,000 figure is a bare minimum of what is needed at the facility.

Mayor Barbee said he would like to take a holistic look at the situation and not spend \$100,000 on Band-Aids.

Council Member Hoffer said he hopes the conversation will include how much the building is currently being used.

### **COUNCIL COMMENTS**

Council Member Healy reported that he entered a work order in SeeClickFix regarding a detour sign that had not been removed, and within an hour it was gone. He praised staff for their responsiveness to SeeClickFix requests.

Council Member Hoffer expressed concerns about bicycle and pedestrian safety. He said the Town has had too many incidents recently, and everyone is responsible for their own safety.

Council Member Benson said he would like to look into traffic-calming devices for neighborhoods that are experiencing speeding motorists.

Mayor Barbee said he is extremely concerned about e-bikes and how they are being modified to operate as motorcycles. He said they can be very positive when used responsibly, but that is not happening. Mayor Barbee said WMPO and many communities have requested legislation regulating these bikes, and he is frustrated that nothing has been done. He urged the Police Department to bring forward anything they think Council can do to help the situation.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Mayor Barbee adjourned the meeting at 10:15 AM.