

CAROLINA BEACH

Town Council Regular Meeting

Tuesday, January 10, 2023 - 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 Council Member LeCompte and Pledge of Allegiance.

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

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

Motion passed unanimously

CONSENT AGENDA

1. Set a Public Hearing for February 14, 2023, to Consider a Request to Rezone 209 Charlotte Avenue from Mixed Use (MX) to Central Business District (CBD)
Applicant: Michael Urti
2. Set a Public Hearing for February 14, 2023, to Amend Chapter 40, Art. III. – Zoning District Regulations, Art. V. – Off-Street Parking and Loading Requirements; Parking, Art. VI – Landscaping and Development Specification Standards, Art. IX. – Development Standards for Particular Uses, and Art. XVIII. - Definitions to Create Standards for Event Venues
Applicant: Michael Urti
3. Asset Inventory Assessment (AIA) Grant
4. Create a Capital Project Fund for the Starfish Lane Dock Project and Approve Budget Ordinance No. 23-1192 in the Amount of \$175,000

5. Island Greenway Extension
6. Approval of Council Meeting Minutes from December 13 and 20, 2022

Mayor Pro Tem Healy read from Resolution No. 23-2278, which supports a feasibility study for the extension of the Island Greenway into Kure Beach and Fort Fisher. He said this is a big deal and something the Town has been seeking for years.

Mayor Barbee said this is on the consent agenda because all Council Members fully support it.

ACTION: Motion to adopt the consent agenda

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

SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

7. Events Update by Tim Murphy

Tim Murphy, Recreation Programs Superintendent/Community Events Coordinator, said events will kick off again in March. He introduced Beau Gunn, Patrick Conley, Matt Hamlet, and Kevin Murphy, who made a presentation regarding a special event application for private property.

Mr. Conley, who came before Council previously regarding an event at Shuckin' Shack, said that effort helped to raise \$52,000 for the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society and thanked Council for allowing blocking off of parking spaces to accommodate the crowd.

Mr. Conley said he and Mr. Hamlet are co-founders of the Carolina Beach Bar Club, which has been active for about six years and raised \$500,000 for various causes. He said the group has the opportunity to help Ocean Cure this year and in the future but will need Council to make an exception to the moratorium on special events between Memorial Day and Labor Day. Mr. Conley said electronic dance music artist GRiZ comes to the area every July and performs two sold-out shows in Wilmington and a beach show. He said the beach event, GRiZMAS in July, was held at Fort Fisher last year but posed some logistical challenges. This year, Mr. Conley and the others are seeking approval for the event to be held Sunday, July 30, from 2:00 to 4:00 PM at the privately owned Carolina Beach Pier on the North End. They expect the show to last two to three hours and presented an approval letter from the new owners of the pier.

Mr. Conley said they have met with the Police Department and jumped through all the necessary hoops to have a recommendation for approval at the committee level. He said the goal is to raise \$20,000 to \$30,000 at the event. Plans call for a shuttle to take an estimated 3,000 attendees from the parking lot at Pelican Lane and Carolina Beach Avenue North, which event organizers will lease for the day.

Mayor Barbee asked Mr. Murphy about any possible issues that exist. Mr. Murphy said parking is the main issue, but he thinks the shuttle plan and working with rideshare services is a viable option. Mr.

Murphy said he has met with the organizers several times, and they have been before the Events Committee multiple times. He said they have talked about creative ways to control traffic and that Police Chief Vic Ward is confident the Police Department can handle the event. Mr. Murphy said there have been numerous discussions to get to a point where staff is now comfortable and confident.

Council Member Hoffer asked if event organizers are proposing to close the beach. Mr. Murphy said the event will serve alcohol, so the whole area will have to be fenced.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy said he heard all positive feedback about last year's event.

Council Member Benson said to maximize the fundraising potential for the event, he would be in favor of striking the requirement for the designated leased parking lot and telling attendees to park where they can with some possible pickup spots for a shuttle. Mayor Barbee said he would like to stick to what was agreed on by Chief Ward. Mr. Conley said if The Proximity lot is an option the event could possibly use that for free, but it likely won't be available at that time.

Council Member LeCompte suggested reaching out to Bank of America, which is closed on weekends, to see if the parking lot can be used with a stop for the shuttle.

Mayor Barbee said he would like to see a designated parking area for attendees who want to bring their bikes and take advantage of multi-use paths and the Island Greenway. He said this would be a good opportunity to promote the Town.

ACTION: Motion to approve GRiZMAS in July 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

Council Member LeCompte mentioned Boards Across CB from the Carolina Beach Mural Project. Donated surfboards, skimboards, and skateboards serving as artist canvases – which are currently on display at participating local businesses – will be available for public viewing February 6-7 at the Courtyard by Marriott before being auctioned.

8. American Flood Coalition Presentation by Tony McEwen

American Flood Coalition's Carolinas Director Tony McEwen provided a legislative update on flood policy/resources. He said he is asking Council to consider membership and lending a voice so the group can continue to make advances on public policy as it relates to flood resilience and sea level rise adaptation.

Mr. McEwen gave background and details about the group as well as updates on flood-related policy in North Carolina. He said the group is active in 21 states and has over 60 members in North Carolina. Mr. McEwen said the key states of focus are the Carolinas, Florida, and Texas. He highlighted the

Southeastern North Carolina Resilience Tour, which was created to showcase achievements at the four-year anniversary of Hurricane Florence. Stops included Boiling Spring Lakes and Burgaw.

Mayor Barbee said it's important to depoliticize this issue because it affects everyone. He said he is very supportive of what the group is doing and stressed the importance of having someone to offer a voice at the State and Federal levels.

Council Member Hoffer asked what is required to become a member. Mr. McEwen said there is no fee, and the group often returns resources back to local communities. He said the group is funded by family foundations and bipartisan policy organizations.

ACTION: Motion to adopt Resolution No. 23-2277, a resolution providing for the Town to become a member of the American Flood Coalition

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

9. Manager's Update

Mr. Oakley gave an update on various projects and events.

Lake Park Improvements

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has signed off on the lake dredge project. The Town is working with engineers and plans to put out bids by February or March.

The Town is soliciting proposals for playground equipment for the Brandy Myers Memorial Playground.

Marina

The marina project is progressing quickly. Concrete has been poured for the bulkhead on the east side, and crews are working through electrical issues. Once those are resolved, they will start moving boats to the south side so they can complete work on the east side.

Mayor Barbee praised Harbor Master Larry Denning for keeping the Carolina Beach Inlet Association updated on this project. Mr. Oakley said Project Manager Paula Kempton is doing a great job managing this and other projects with assistance from Project Manager Ben Meister.

Council Member Hoffer asked about possible spring or summer road closings related to this project. Mr. Oakley said the only part that will be closed is the right-turn lane on Canal Drive, and everything else should be open and free.

Budget/Strategic Plan Retreat

Online surveys are due by Wednesday evening. The Town has received over 950 responses so far.

The budget open house is January 18 from 4:00 to 6:00 PM.

Council's budget retreat is January 26-27 at Fort Fisher.

Asset Inventory Assessment Grant

The Asset Inventory Assessment (AIA) grant that Council voted on in the consent agenda is providing \$400,000 for the Town to assess all infrastructure, mainly pipes and pump stations, so crews know where everything is located.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy asked about the time frame for this inventory. Planning Director Jeremy Hardison said the Town is ready to start now, and it's a two-year project.

Council Member Hoffer asked who is doing the inventory. Mr. Hardison said the grant is from the N.C. Division of Water Resources, and there is a private company working with the Town.

Council Member Benson asked if the Florida Avenue reclamation project has only resulted in one quote. Mr. Oakley said there have been discussions with two other companies that are submitting numbers soon. He said once this gets going, possibly in the spring, the Town plans to move as quickly as possible.

Council Member Benson asked if the Scotch Bonnet Lane and Starfish Lane projects are happening this winter. Mr. Oakley said the Starfish Lane project will start moving forward very soon.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy asked for details about why equipment to install a turn lane into the State Park was present but then disappeared. Mayor Barbee said N.C. Department of Transportation (DOT) contracts will not pay if the contractor paves below a certain temperature, so the contractor moved the equipment to work on other projects during cold weather. He said crews will be back to work on the project soon.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy asked for an update on Saint Joseph Street. Mr. Oakley said he thinks it's in DOT's hands, and the Town is waiting to get notice to proceed.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy asked about paving on Carolina Beach Avenue North. Mr. Oakley said that is coming this spring. He said the Town will do Florida Avenue first and then work on Carolina Beach Avenue North, and other paving projects should be starting in February.

Council Member LeCompte asked about the Ocean Boulevard sidewalk. Mr. Oakley said the engineer is finalizing drawings and stormwater plans, and he hopes the project will start in the spring but it's uncertain until drawings come back and DOT reviews them.

Council Member Benson asked staff to reach out to Duke Energy about reassessing the spacing of lights based on population density, especially along South Lake Park Boulevard and a few other places. He said needs may be different from when there was a smaller population here. Mr. Oakley said he can inquire about this. Mayor Barbee said the section from Hamlet Avenue to Lake Park is fairly dark, and lots of people cross the road in this area during the summer. He acknowledged that protecting sea turtles may be an issue. Mr. Oakley said Duke Energy has switched over to mainly dark-sky compliant

fixtures that shouldn't affect sea turtles. Mayor Pro Tem Healy said years ago the Operations Advisory Committee did an inventory on every single light pole in the Town, but he is not sure what happened to it.

Council Member Hoffer said he wants to emphasize that the Brandy Myers Memorial Playground work should include improvements to the Lake Park bathroom facility. Mr. Oakley said part of the design is a new restroom with a picnic shelter. Council Member Hoffer requested that something be done in the short term to tidy up the facility.

Mayor Barbee asked if staff can make signage on the Cape Fear Boulevard multi-use path consistent with what's on the Island Greenway. Council Member Hoffer said the Bike/Ped Committee discussed this last night and is working on a recommendation.

Mayor Barbee said the Town has received a request from the Mural Committee to put a mural on a pump house at Lake Park. He said a grant with a short timeline is available. It was the consensus of Council to support this request.

Mayor Barbee said Kure Beach Council expects to pass a reciprocal parking agreement with the Town on January 18. Mr. Oakley said staff will be sure that is approved before selling any parking passes.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Roy Erwin of 301 Settlers Lane in Kure Beach said he and many other residents are against the Island Greenway extending through the fire lane on the west side of Settlers Lane. He said there are security, safety, and privacy concerns and that the proposed area runs behind 62 homes, most of which are 25 feet from the fire lane. Mr. Erwin said Kure Beach Council wants to do a feasibility study to show other possible routes, such as the Greenway running parallel to Dow Road. He said this is a fire lane, not a bike path, and needs to stay that way.

COUNCIL COMMENTS

Mayor Barbee said Kure Beach has its own Council, and the resolution tonight was to support that Council moving forward with the Island Greenway. He said his understanding is that Kure Beach Council Members are looking at alternative paths, which is not really the concern of Carolina Beach. Mayor Barbee said the intent was to encourage Kure Beach Council to proceed in a way that makes residents happy.

Council Member Hoffer said the Island Greenway was never meant to be for Carolina Beach only, and the hope was always that Kure Beach would join. He said he understands the concerns and hopes Kure Beach will work with Carolina Beach to designate safe routes for kids.

Council Member Hoffer said the Friends of Carolina Beach Parks and Greenways group has started its own tree nursery on the Island Greenway behind Food Lion. He said the intent is to create a holding area for smaller donated trees so they can be nurtured until they are bigger and ready to be presented to businesses and residents. Council Member Hoffer said Pleasure Island Habitat made a donation yesterday, and his pledge is that no money will be requested from the Town for this project. He said all funding will come from private donations, and all of the work will be done by volunteers.

Council Member Benson asked if staff will come back with a redesign for the east end of Cape Fear Boulevard and Canal Drive. Mr. Oakley said the Town is working with the engineer, and Council will hear more about this at the upcoming retreat.

Council Member Benson said he and the Chairman of the Operations Advisory Committee will be at the Planning and Zoning Commission meeting Thursday to watch the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) process to see where simple efforts on public property in and around Canal Drive may mitigate debris getting into the storm drains and where this might fit into the broader UDO when everything is rewritten.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy said he wanted to give a shout out to the CB Trash Walkers group that meets on Saint Joseph Street at 8:30 AM every Wednesday to collect trash. He said so far this group of volunteers has picked up over 2,300 pounds of trash. Council Member Hoffer said the N.C. Wildlife Federation has a trash-for-trees program, and he hopes to use those trees to stock the nursery.

Mayor Pro Tem Healy said the budget survey ends tomorrow, and he asked everyone to respond with their valuable input.

Council Member LeCompte said a recent poll conducted at Pleasure Island Animal Hospital asked if the Town should allow dogs outside Boardwalk businesses with their owners to enjoy restaurants and activities. She said the suggestion is that this should be permitted, while dogs should not be allowed on fireworks nights and during special events such as parades.

Council Member LeCompte thanked Finance Director Debbie Hall for implementing a 4-blocker to show a snapshot of where the Town is financially.

Council Member LeCompte said representatives from the Katie B. Hines Senior Center have reached out for ideas about how to better advertise their monthly pancake breakfast because they have been constrained by the Town's sign ordinance. She suggested kiosks at the Boardwalk and Lake Park, and Mr. Oakley said this could be done.

Council Member LeCompte said she has been touring the Town's stormwater operations, which she called an "amazing process." She said a citizen brought to her attention an initiative through the N.C. Department of Environment Quality (DEQ) called the N.C. Resilient Coastal Communities Program. Council Member LeCompte said she has spoken to staff about this and plans to attend a webinar about it in February.

Mayor Barbee said the Cape Fear Council of Governments' annual meeting is coming up. This will be held on February 23 at the Brunswick Senior Center. He said there is a Town and State dinner the night before, which is a good opportunity for Council Members to rub shoulders with State representatives if they have time.

Council Member LeCompte asked staff to advertise the budget open house as much as possible.

Ms. Fox said the Town filed the variance request for the Boardwalk bathroom facility in December, and this will be heard on February 23 at the Coastal Resources Commission (CRC) meeting in Ocean Isle Beach. She said she will provide updates on this process as they are available.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Barbee adjourned the meeting at 7:20 PM.