

Richard Grant, Mayor
Connie Pletl, Mayor Pro Tem

Aldermen:
Kip Malcolm
Mark Barefoot
Laura Olszewski



E. L. Faison, ICMA-CM
Interim Town Manager

Alexis Stanfield, NCCCC
Town Clerk

MEETING DATE: June 11, 2026, 6:00 PM

TO: Planning Board

FROM: Planning Director

DEPARTMENT: Permitting & Inspections Department

SUBJECT: Ordinance Amending the Unified Development Ordinance to Establish the Official Zoning Map in Electronic GIS Geodatabase Format

SUMMARY: To convert a paper zoning map into an officially adopted electronic zoning geodatabase (Onslow County GIS-based map)

The proposed ordinance would amend the Unified Development Ordinance to designate the Town's official zoning map in electronic GIS geodatabase format using the Onslow County GIS-based map as the Town's zoning map of record. North Carolina law allows zoning maps to be maintained in digital format if approved by the local government and kept available for public inspection. This amendment is intended to modernize map administration, improve accessibility, and clarify that archived paper maps are retained only for historical reference.

The draft also identifies the Planning Director as the zoning map administrator, provides for maintenance of the authoritative electronic map in coordination with Onslow County GIS, establishes how adopted map amendments will be incorporated, and states that the Board of Aldermen retains sole legislative authority over zoning designations and amendments.

Consistency and Reasonableness: The proposed text amendment is reasonable and in the public interest because it improves the administration and accessibility of the zoning map without changing underlying zoning districts through this ordinance. It is consistent with the Town's adopted land use policies and with North Carolina General Statutes permitting zoning maps in digital format.

Proposed Ordinance

ORDINANCE NO. [INSERT NUMBER]

AN ORDINANCE AMENDING THE UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE TO ESTABLISH THE OFFICIAL ZONING MAP IN ELECTRONIC GIS GEODATABASE FORMAT

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Aldermen of the Town of North Topsail Beach, North Carolina, as follows:

Section 1. Authority. This ordinance is adopted pursuant to the authority granted by Chapter 160D of the North Carolina General Statutes, including G.S. 160D-105, G.S. 160D-601, G.S. 160D-602, and G.S. 160D-604.

Section 2. Findings and Purpose. The Board finds that North Carolina law permits zoning maps to be maintained in digital format approved by the local government and maintained for public inspection; that the Town has historically relied on paper zoning maps; and that adopting an electronic GIS geodatabase as the official zoning map will improve administrative efficiency, public access, and long-term record management. The purpose of this ordinance is to designate the Town's official zoning map in electronic GIS format and clarify the status of prior paper maps.

Section 3. Amendment to Unified Development Ordinance. Section 3.03, Official Zoning Map, is hereby repealed and replaced to read as follows:

Section 3.03 Official Zoning Map

A. Establishment of Official Zoning Map. The boundaries of zoning districts established by this Ordinance are shown on the map entitled the Official Zoning Map of the Town of North Topsail Beach, North Carolina, which is hereby adopted and incorporated by reference as part of this Ordinance.

The Official Zoning Map shall be maintained in electronic format as a Geographic Information System geodatabase utilizing the Onslow County GIS-based zoning map and related data layers as the Town's official zoning map record, as approved by the Town. The electronic map shall be maintained for public inspection in the office of the Town Clerk, Planning Department, or such other office designated by the Town.

B. Status as Official Record. The electronic GIS-based Official Zoning Map is the official and authoritative record of zoning district boundaries within the Town. Any prior paper zoning map is superseded as the controlling zoning map on the effective date of this ordinance, but may be retained for archival and historical purposes.

C. Custodian and Administration. The Planning Director, or designee, shall serve as the Zoning Map Administrator and shall be responsible for administration of the Official Zoning Map. The Town may coordinate with Onslow County Geographic Information Services for technical hosting, maintenance, and updating of the GIS geodatabase; however, the Town retains sole authority for all zoning designations, zoning district boundaries, and legislative map amendments.

D. Incorporation of Amendments. All zoning map amendments adopted by the Board of Aldermen shall be incorporated into the Official Zoning Map as soon as practicable after adoption. The effective date of a zoning map amendment shall be the date established by the adopting ordinance, regardless of the date on which the electronic geodatabase is updated.

E. Versioning and Archival Copies. The Town shall maintain archival copies or versioned records of the Official Zoning Map sufficient to document the zoning map in effect as of the date of each adopted amendment, in accordance with applicable records retention requirements.

F. Interpretation and Discrepancies. In the event of uncertainty regarding a zoning district boundary, the Planning Director or designee shall interpret the boundary in accordance with this Ordinance and any applicable rules of construction. In the event of a discrepancy between the authoritative GIS geodatabase and any printed, static, or publicly accessible reproduction, the authoritative GIS geodatabase shall control.

G. Public Access. The Town shall make the Official Zoning Map available for public inspection during normal business hours and may provide online or printed reproductions for convenience. Such reproductions are informational only unless certified or otherwise designated by the Town as an official copy.

H. Clerical Errors. If a clerical or scrivener's error is identified in the Official Zoning Map that does not reflect the action of the Board of Aldermen, the Planning Director may authorize correction of the error, provided the correction is documented and does not result in a substantive change to zoning district boundaries. Any substantive change shall require a zoning map amendment in accordance with applicable law.

Section 4. Effective Date. This ordinance shall become effective on [INSERT EFFECTIVE DATE], at which time the electronic GIS-based Official Zoning Map shall serve as the Town's official zoning map.

Section 5. Severability. If any section or provision of this ordinance is held invalid, such invalidity shall not affect the remaining provisions of this ordinance.

Section 6. Adoption. Adopted this [INSERT DAY] day of [INSERT MONTH], [INSERT YEAR].

SPECIFIC ACTION REQUESTED: Recommend approval of the proposed text amendment and forward a consistency and reasonableness recommendation to the Board of Aldermen.