

Richard Grant, Mayor  
Connie Pletl, Mayor Pro Tem



Aldermen:  
Kip Malcolm  
Mark Barefoot  
Laura Olszewski  
Larry Strother

Alice Derian, ICMA-CM  
Town Manager

Alexis Stanfield, NCCCC  
Town Clerk

## Planning Board Committee Report

January 7, 2026

### **Planning Board**

*PRESENT: Fred Fontana - Vice Chair, Lisa Brown, Teri Ward, Charles "Rusty" Walker – Alternate, Keith Wilkerson – Alternate, Jan Bellamy-Genee*

*ABSENT: None.*

*Staff: Deborah J. Hill MPA AICP CFM – Planning Director, Brady Goldman CFM CZO – Planner, Donna Sayre CZO, Clerk to the Planning Board*

*Attorney : Chip Payson / Sumrell Sugg, PA*

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The Planning Board held their regular meeting on Thursday, December 11, 2025, at 6:00 p.m. Planning Director Hill introduced new staff, Planner Brady Goldman and Permit Specialist/Clerk to the Planning Board and Zoning Board of Adjustment Donna Sayre, in her absence.

### **OLD BUSINESS**

#### **North Topsail Beach Mitigation Action Plans (2026)**

Planning Director Hill explained the Town's Hazard Mitigation Plan history and that in 2021, the Town joined Onslow County and its other municipalities with New Hanover, Brunswick, Pender County to develop the Southeast North Carolina Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan. The benefit to FEMA is fewer plans to review and the benefit to the Town is to gain access to technical support and funding opportunities that would be harder to secure alone.

Planning Director Hill explained that FEMA has six categories and CRS has six categories, which have been consolidated to form the basis for the Town's Mitigation Action Plans (2026), to ensure scoring for both FEMA's Hazard Mitigation Plan requirements, as well as NFIP's Community Rating System (CRS) recertification. Planning Director Hill thanked IT Director Schwisow for his work in organizing the Town's website and keeping it updated, which facilitated the inclusion of the Town's projects into the Town's Mitigation Action Plans (2026).

Planning Director Hill stated that with the anticipated higher tax values and increased cost of insurance premiums, our job as planners is to be able to recognize this challenge and to say what we can do to mitigate increased costs for property owners. Currently, the Town has a CRS ISO 5 rating. Some property owners may not be aware that they receive a 25% discount on their flood insurance premiums. As we prepare our (CRS) reports, we want to make sure that we are starting early enough and that we are going section by section.

Vice Chair Fontana asked the resiliency grants would help improve our rating. Planning Director Hill responded that it is all cumulative. When you add up all the things that you do and you report them and you have the documentation for all these activities. If you can increase your points, then yes, and that is the only way to improve your ISO rating. But there are also conditions and prerequisites that must be met. But it is anticipated that the two stormwater projects would certainly alleviate the flooding by the new fire station and at Richard Peters Town Park.

Mrs. Ward asked if our ISO rating of 5 is comparable with other towns of this size or is there a ranking. Planning Director Hill responded that there are 3 or 4 other local governments that also have a 5, but there is only one other that is better.

Mr. Walker asked for examples of some of the projects that we would need to look at to improve that rating. Planning Director Hill referred to the Mitigation Action Plans (2026), projects in wetlands, living shorelines. She explained that these activities may also be included in the Town's CRS Program for Public Information.

Mr. Walker asked are these just checking boxes or actual projects. Planning Director Hill stated that the checking of boxes is providing the documentation for what is done routinely, which is a large percentage of the scoring. But there is also encouragement for storm water projects, living shoreline projects, beach nourishment,

Vice Chair Fontana asked if the material presented is our portion of this regional plan. Planning Director Hill explained that each county and municipality has their section. Hopefully those mitigation action items, the strategies are a reflection of what the town's policy is and what the Board of Aldermen's policy is. And when you look at what the projects are, they are all projects that the Board has approved, the two stormwater projects, the beach nourishment projects, the living shoreline projects, the higher standards that the town has adopted. Those were adopted and approved by the Board of Alderman. Hopefully there will be some continuity in those policies and in that program so that we can maximize the credit that we receive.

Vice Chair Fontana stated by recommending to the Board of Alderman that we that they approve this mitigation plan does not obligate them to do anything that that in addition to what they're already doing. Planning Director Hill responded that all the categories are covered sufficiently and it is consistent with the projects that the Board has already approved and that are ongoing and the policies that they have approved and are current. Onslow County Emergency Services has reviewed the Town's Mitigation Action Plans (2026).

Ms. Brown asked with reference to the items indicated as complete, does that that imply that we don't continue? Planning Director Hill responded that we can take credit for the actions that are completed, but we may also have separate action items that the town will continue to pursue.

Mrs. Ward made a motion to recommend adoption of the Mitigation Action Plans (2026). Mr. Walker seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

The Planning Board Meeting adjourned at 7:42 p.m.