

**Town of Swansboro  
Board of Commissioners  
March 11, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes**

In attendance: Mayor William Justice, Mayor Pro Tem Jeffrey Conaway, Commissioner Pat Turner, Commissioner Joseph Brown, and Commissioner Douglas Eckendorf. The board had one vacancy.

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**Call to Order/Opening Prayer/Pledge**

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm and Mayor Justice led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Public Comment**

Justin Milarkey, of 219 Commerce Street in Greenville, North Carolina, spoke on behalf of two Perry family members and shared that he hoped there could be a thoughtful approach on the agenda item "Resolution Authorizing Acquisition of Real Property by Proceedings in Eminent Domain" related to their property.

Cynthia Lacorte of 220 S Elm Street expressed concern over the board members acting outside their areas of expertise and urged better community collaboration and input from citizens.

Rachel Lovejoy of 210 Knightheds Drive addressed the board about the importance of improving accessibility throughout town. She shared personal experiences and concerns related to inadequate pedestrian infrastructure and encouraged the Board to consider accessibility in all future planning and development decisions. She emphasized that better walkability would benefit the entire community, including individuals with disabilities, seniors, and children, and asked the Board to involve knowledgeable residents in the process.

**Adoption of Agenda and Consent Items**

On a motion by Commissioner Brown, seconded by Commissioner Turner, the below consent items and agenda as amended to remove item VI-A: *Resolution Authorizing Acquisition of Real Property by Proceedings in Eminent Domain* and to edit closed session to be pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (3) to consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body, which privilege is hereby acknowledged; and (4) To discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body, including agreement on a tentative list of economic development incentives that may be offered by the public body in negotiations; and (5) to establish, or to instruct the public body's staff or negotiating agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body in negotiating the price and other material terms of a

contract or proposed contract for the acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange, or lease, was unanimously approved.

- January 14, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes
- January 14, 2025, Closed Session Minutes
- Budget Ordinance Amendment #2025-8

### **Business Non-Consent**

#### *Engineering Service Selection for Sidewalk Project*

Town Manager Jon Barlow presented an overview of the sidewalk project aimed at enhancing pedestrian accessibility throughout Swansboro. He reported that the project would span approximately 7,000 linear feet, or 1.33 miles, with planned improvements in areas such as Highway 24, Main Street Extension, Hammocks Beach Road, Old Hammocks Beach, and Queens Creek, focusing on locations with existing gaps in pedestrian infrastructure. Barlow recommended Arendell Engineers to be selected for the project, as their proposal met all town criteria. The scope of work included land surveying, civil engineering design, bidding, and construction administration services, ensuring a comprehensive framework for successful project delivery.

On a motion by Mayor Pro Tem Conaway, seconded by Commissioner Brown, with unanimous approval, authorization was provided to enter into contract negotiations with Arendell Engineers to provide engineering and design services for the sidewalk project.

#### *Future Agenda Topics*

Future agenda items were shared for visibility and comments. In addition, an opportunity was provided for the board to introduce items of interest and subsequent direction for placement on future agendas. The following items were addressed:

- Hold workshop for UDO/CAMA Land Use Plan Review

### **Public Comment**

Wayne Herbert of 102 Oyster Bay Road spoke in support of Ralph Coleman for a vacant commissioner's position. He highlighted Coleman's experience as a Marine Corps colonel and senior attorney, praising his professional approach and dedication to duty. Mr. Herbert emphasized Coleman's potential to bring objectivity, integrity, and credibility to the board.

Lauren Brown of 601 W. Broad Street expressed her support for Tim Vannoy's appointment to the vacant commissioners' position. She commended Mr. Vannoy's preparation and consideration to make decisions during his time on the planning board. Brown also expressed appreciation for the recent decision to deny the Flybridge

development rezoning, stating it was not consistent with the land use plan to protect green space and wetlands.

Jamie Petani of 2102 Holly Hills Court shared that she wanted to see about getting warning lights similar to those in Morehead City to alert drivers of upcoming red lights at the intersections in town. She also suggested adding backboards to traffic lights to improve visibility during sunrise and sunset. Ms. Petani reiterated her opposition to the Flybridge development.

### **Board Comments**

Mayor Pro Tem Conaway acknowledged the ongoing traffic issues and committed to looking into potential solutions, while noting the challenges posed by natural factors and changing conditions.

Commissioner Eckendorf emphasized the need for pro-growth policies to create job opportunities that would encourage young people to remain in Swansboro. He identified the housing shortage as a key barrier to growth and a concern for potential investors and called for a review of the UDO and land use plan to make the town more investor-friendly while supporting controlled development.

Commissioner Brown emphasized the potential benefits of growth, including increased profitability for existing businesses and attraction of new businesses. He referenced the recent decision to pass on 324 apartments and noted the apparent contradiction in claims of a housing shortage.

Mayor Justice encouraged cooperation and consensus-building within the community, acknowledging the diverse views present and the need to work together despite differences.

### **Closed Session**

On a motion by Mayor Pro Tem Conaway, seconded by Commissioner Eckendorf the board entered closed session at 6:34 pm pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (3) to consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body, which privilege is hereby acknowledged; and (4) To discuss matters relating to the location or expansion of industries or other businesses in the area served by the public body, including agreement on a tentative list of economic development incentives that may be offered by the public body in negotiations; and (5) to establish, or to instruct the public body's staff or negotiating agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the public body in negotiating the price and other material terms of a contract or proposed contract for

the acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange, or lease, was unanimously approved.

Pursuant to a motion duly made and seconded in closed session the board returned to open session.

Mayor Justice reported that no action was taken on the property acquisition, however a decision was made related to Economic Development for JOED and Project Coffee.

On a motion by Commissioner Brown, seconded by Commissioner Eckendorf, providing a loan in the amount of \$250,000 to JOED for Project Coffee contingent upon verification of fund availability by the Town Finance Director was unanimously approved.

### **Adjournment**

On a motion by Commissioner Brown, seconded by Commissioner Eckendorf the meeting adjourned at 8:02 pm.