

**Town of Swansboro
Board of Commissioners
May 23, 2022, Regular Meeting**

In attendance: Mayor John Davis, Mayor Pro Tem Frank Tursi, Commissioner Pat Turner, Commissioner Larry Philpott, Mayor Pro Tem Tursi, Commissioner Harry PJ Pugliese, and Commissioner Jeffrey Conaway.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 pm. Mayor Davis led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Comment

Citizens were offered an opportunity to address the Board regarding items listed on the agenda. No comments were given.

Adoption of Agenda and Consent Items

On a motion by Commissioner Philpott, seconded by Mayor Pro Tem Tursi, the Agenda, and Consent Items below, as well as providing authorization to release the March 28, 2022 closed session minutes was unanimously approved.

- March 2, 2022, Planning Retreat
- March 14, 2022, Regular Meeting
- March 14, 2022, Closed Session
- March 28, 2022, Regular Meeting
- March 28, 2022, Closed Session

Appointments/Recognitions/Presentations

Resilient Coastal Communities Program (RCCP) Final Report

Beth Smyre with Dewberry reviewed her final report. The project portfolio key focus items were:

1. Stormwater Mapping
2. Halls Creek Stream Restoration
3. Hawkins Creek Stream Restoration
4. Water Street Rehabilitation
5. Townwide Wetland Restoration Plan
6. Public Engagement and Education Campaign

The RCCP provided Swansboro with an opportunity to build upon previous planning efforts and establish a solid Project Portfolio to guide the Town in applying for project funding. Potential funding sources include Phases 3 and 4 of the RCCP, which funds engineering and construction, respectively, for projects that meet specific identified needs in the community. Of the 7 potential projects, the Halls Creek Stream Restoration, Hawkins Creek Stream Restoration, Water Street Rehabilitation, or Townwide Wetland Restoration Plan would be the best candidates for future funding.

In response to inquiries from the board Mrs. Smyre clarified the following:

- She would keep an eye out for possible grants to assist the Town with Stormwater mapping
- Phase 3 details were:
 - Engineering and design of a priority resilience project
 - Proposals for development of ordinances or policies to further community resiliency
 - Must include a Natural or Nature-Based Solution (NNBS)
 - Anticipated average funding level: \$45,000 per project
 - No match is required
 - Applications due Friday, June 3

Manager Webb shared that the Town would not be applying for Phase 3 and the Water Street Rehabilitation would be submitted for Phase 4 because the Town already had engineered plans for that project.

After discussion it was determined that the Town should still proceed with applying for the RCCP grant Phase 3 with the Water Street Rehabilitation project to gain a second set of engineered plans. Another look at the project could provide alternatives that could be of benefit.

Recognition of Tristan Alvis

Mayor Davis recognized Tristan Alvis for his admission to the US Naval Academy. Mr. Alvis was presented with a Certificate of Achievement and was congratulated by each board member.

Public Hearing

Temporary Sign Allowances

Planner Ansell reviewed that at the February 10, 2020, joint workshop meeting of the Planning Board and Board of Commissioners, further direction on temporary sign allowances was provided. Key takeaways included:

- 1) Feather flags are undesirable.
- 2) The 45-day per year allowance for temporary business signs was preferred.
- 3) It was not desirable to allow temporary signs for businesses in shopping centers on undeveloped outparcels.
- 4) An allowance for temporary real estate signs (open house) was desirable.
- 5) The number of temporary signs allowed should be restricted.
- 6) There should be different allowances in the Historic District and these requirements should be supported by the SHPC; and
- 7) The ordinance needs to be practical and enforceable.

Staff discovered that there were some inconsistencies with the naming conventions used throughout the ordinance and in the zoning districts shown in the table of permitted signs, so those issues were proposed to be corrected as well. There were also several references to sign types with no regulations, so those were proposed to be deleted. The requirements for political signs have been moved so as not to require a permit, and the regulations have been modified to be more consistent with the State law.

In response to inquiries from the Board on specifics in the amendment, Mrs. Ansell clarified the following:

- Offsite business signs would no longer be permitted
- 45 days/calendar year would remain for display of signs
- Use of neon or fluorescent colors on the business's permanent signs in the historic district would be prohibited

The public hearing was opened at 6:30 pm. Those who spoke were:

Fred Schatner of 129 Smallwood Road of Hubert shared that he would prefer to see feather flag instead of some of the businesses that currently looked bad and were in poor condition. He urged the board to reconsider offsite signage for businesses and for the length of signs to be greater than 45 days. He inquired how enforcement on the weekends would be handled.

Junior Freeman, owner of 714 W Corbett Avenue shared that he felt the ordinance still need more editing and urge the board to consider more than 45 days as well. Mr. Freeman commented that signs are important for businesses, and they should not have to get permission to display help wanted signs. He also commented that he felt that feather flags should be required to be brought in at night and inquired how wrapped vehicles would be treated, those were basically signs. Before proceeding with adoption of this ordinance, the Town should allow for more input from residents and businesses.

Mrs. Ansell shared that weekend enforcement would be handled by a police officer collecting the signs. Businesses who have signs collected were notified. Wrapped vehicles were not regulated, however mobile signs on trailers will remain prohibited.

The public hearing was closed at 6:50 pm.

After discussion, the consensus was to allow 1 feather flag per property with requirement for them to only be displayed during the hours in which the business was open, and the duration of display be 60 days per calendar year.

On a motion by Commissioner Conaway, seconded by Commissioner Turner, Ordinance 2022-O4 was approved as amended. The amendment was identified as consistent with an adopted comprehensive plan. The motion passed 3:2.

Ayes: Conaway, Turner, Pugliese

No: Tursi, Philpott

The board took a recess from 7:10 pm to 7:16 pm.

Political Sign Requirements

Mrs. Ansell reviewed that an amendment was proposed to clarify the allowances for political signs to:

- 1)Align the ordinance regulations with NC GS § 136-32, Regulation of signs.
- 2)Remove the requirement for a sign permit making enforcement more manageable; Candidate would still be required to obtain regulation details from Town Hall to display signs
- 3)Clarify the penalties for placement of signs which do not meet these criteria.
- 4)Clarify the types of signage allowed under this section; and
- 5)Clarify the size limitations for signage under this section.

An important part of the ordinance amendment would not permit the display of more than one sign per candidate per parcel/private property. State law regulates signs placed in the right-of-way.

The public hearing was opened at 7:29 pm.

Fred Schatner of 129 Smallwood Road in Hubert inquired how signs that endorsed more than one candidate would be treated. Mrs. Ansell shared that it would be permitted unless there was another sign for any one of those candidates.

The public hearing was closed at 7:30 pm.

On a motion by Commissioner Conaway, seconded by Commissioner Philpott Ordinance 2022-O4 as proposed was approved unanimously. The amendment was identified as consistent with an adopted comprehensive plan.

Business Non-Consent

Financial Report - April 30, 2022 - Finance Director Johnson reviewed details from the monthly financial report, attached herein with the PowerPoint presentation of the meeting.

Future Agenda Items

Future agenda items were shared for visibility and comment. 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:

- Discuss at a future meeting on audio or video access for board meetings
- Historic Preservation Commission requested a joint meeting

Public Comment

Citizens were offered an opportunity to address the Board regarding items listed on the agenda. No comments were given.

Manager's Comments

Manager Webb entertained any questions from the managers brief in the packet. In reference to the brief there were no further inquiries. She shared the Final Budget would be submitted by end of the week and reminded the Board about the upcoming Employee social and Memorial Day closures.

Board Comments

Commissioner Philpott provided the Board with a memo to update them on the EOC Committees recent meeting and progress. (See attachment A)

Mayor Pro Tem Tursi stated that he felt more clarification should be gained on the EOC funds that were provided. He also felt the committee was not following the direction of the board.

Mayor Davis shared he had received numerous compliments from citizens on the sidewalks that were in process of being installed.

Closed Session

On a motion by Commissioner Turner, seconded by Commissioner Pugliese, the board entered closed session at 8:07 pm pursuant to NCGS 143.318-11 (a) (6) to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, conditions of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee; or to hear or investigate a complaint, charge, or grievance by or against an individual public officer or employee.

Pursuant to a motion duly made in closed session, the Board returned to open session at 8:51 pm. It was noted that no action was taken.

Adjournment

On a motion by Commissioner Conaway, seconded by Commissioner Philpott, the meeting adjourned at 8:52 pm.

To: Mayor and Board of Commissioners

From: Larry Philpott, Chair, Swansboro Emergency Operating Center Planning Committee

Subject: Emergency Operating Center Project Update

The first meeting held on April 27 was focused on the general intent of the state grant and how it should be used for its intended purpose. In making this determination, the committee was reminded the cost of the entire project; site prep, architectural design, construction, contents and if needed, property, had to be performed within the \$6 million budget. Furthermore, the committee was asked to consider other options besides constructing a new public safety/emergency operating facility.

At the committee considered exploring various concepts and/or partnering with other agencies, it concluded the grant was awarded primarily for constructing a Swansboro based emergency operating center that would also house Swansboro's Fire and Police Departments. This was also the opinion expressed by staff.

Several members expressed the need to visit some public safety facilities. In determining several key components, it was recommended hiring a consultant to help with site requirements and in determining the size of the building vs. the budget. The fire chief and town manager were requested to provide related information at the next scheduled meeting.

The second meeting was held on May 11. Actions, observations and recommendations are as follows.

The town manager reported the grant could be used for contracting consultants. The fire chief was asked to schedule two site visits on the next meeting date, May 25, specifically, at Atlantic Beach and Beaufort. It was also suggested to schedule a visit at the new facility in Southport.

For acquiring a consultant, the committee recommended staff develop a "request for qualifications" (RFQ) to solicit a firm that could assist in determining a location for the new facility and to provide expertise on construction costs. As for a proposed site, the committee recommended two locations, on the current town hall campus or at a site yet to be named. The firm would later be expected to provide architectural design and civil engineering services, oversee bidding the project and provide construction management.

For the purpose of soliciting a consultant, it was suggested to set the size of the building between 12,000 and 16,000 sf. The current public safety building totals about 11,000 sf. Committee members familiar with projects of this size suggested 2 to 3 acres would be sufficient if property acquisition was required. To give perspective, the Hampton Inn sits on 3.09 acres.

Consideration was also given to the current public safety facility and how it could be repurposed. A suggestion was made to relocated Public Works. Further discussion on this is needed.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, May 25. Tentatively, committee members will leave town hall about 9 am and meet at Atlantic Beach FD at 10 am and at Beaufort FD after lunch.