

**Town of Swansboro
Board of Commissioners
September 23, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes**

In attendance: Mayor William Justice, Mayor Pro Tem Jeffrey Conaway, Commissioner Pat Turner, Commissioner Joseph Brown, Commissioner Douglas Eckendorf and Commissioner Tamara Pieratti.

Call to Order/Opening Prayer/Pledge

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm and Mayor Justice led the Pledge of Allegiance. Mayor justice took a moment for housekeeping items, asking attendees to maintain decorum by refraining from clapping or cheering, to keep to a strict 3-minute time limit for comments during the first public comment section, and to save comments pertaining to the public hearing for that portion of the meeting. He requested that everyone refrain from personal attacks or accusations, noting that several unjustified attacks had been levied at board members. He also asked board members and the public to silence their phones and refrain from phone use during the meeting.

Public Comment

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

Adoption of Agenda and Consent Items

On a motion by Mayor Pro Tem Conaway, seconded by Commissioner Eckendorf, the consent items below and the agenda as amended to move item *VI a. Interlocal Agreement for IT Services* to consent and remove items *VI b Monthly Financial Report as of August 31, 2025*, *VI c Future Agenda Topics*, and *closed session* from the agenda were unanimously approved.

- August 12, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes
- August 12, 2025, Closed Session Minutes
- August 26, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes
- August 26, 2025, Closed Session Minutes
- Accepting the Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Funds and Adopting a Grant Project Ordinance for the Replacement of Main Street Dock
- Budget Ordinance Amendment #2026-2
- Tax Refund Request
 - O'Dell, Kyle Douglas & Catherine Leigh \$108.01 Tag Surrender
 - Geddes, Derek Kenneth \$3.46 Tag Surrender
 - Skrabacz, Richard Wayne & Robin Erickson \$27.16 Over Assessment
- Interlocal Agreement for IT Services

Public Hearing

CAMA Future Land Use Map Amendment for parcels on W. Corbett Avenue from RA to Suburban Town Center

Planner Rebecca Brehmer, explained the structure for the two related public hearings, noting they would open each hearing separately but allow the board to deliberate and vote on both after closing both hearings.

Planner Brehmer presented the application from Flybridge Swansboro LLC to amend the future land use map for tax parcels ID 019494 and 027733 from Rural Agricultural (RA) designation to Suburban Town Center designation. She noted this was the second application submittal for this request - the first was denied by the Board of Commissioners at their February 25, 2025, meeting. The Planning Board recommended denial at their September 2, 2025, meeting by a 6-0 vote. The parcels comprise approximately 38 acres located across from the intersection of West Corbett Avenue and Belgrade Swansboro Road.

Kyle Fountain, attorney with Lanier Fountain and Ceruzzi, located in Jacksonville, North Carolina, representing Flybridge Swansboro LLC, introduced the development team as part of the presentation in support of the proposed amendment and rezoning for the parcels on W. Corbett Avenue. The team included several experts: Brad Schuller, a land planner from Paramount Engineering; Corey Mabus, the Vice President of Construction with Carolina Commercial Contractors; Tim Clinkscales, an engineer from Paramount Engineering who contributed as the engineer for the project; and Reinhold Stephenson, a traffic engineer with DRMP specializing in matters related to traffic. Fountain voiced his gratitude for the opportunity to present and thanked everyone for their time and consideration. The team collectively provided insights into the benefits and plans for the proposed development, addressing various aspects such as engineering, construction, and traffic management associated with the Flybridge project.

Brad Schuller of Paramount Engineering presented the proposed amendment, explaining that although the CAMA plan currently designates the site as Rural Agricultural, the surrounding area along NC 24 has experienced substantial commercial growth. He noted existing commercial zoning on both sides of the property and nearby developments such as office/warehouse uses, a planned commerce park, Bojangles, Team Chevrolet, and an attorney's office. Schuller emphasized the site's strategic location on a major commercial corridor near a signalized intersection with water and sewer access, making it better suited for higher-intensity development. He outlined how the revised concept aligns with CAMA goals by promoting balanced growth, walkable mixed-use development, and environmental protection. Key updates include preserving over 16 acres (42%) as open

space to protect wooded areas and wetlands, removing one multifamily building and one commercial outparcel, and designing stormwater facilities that exceed state standards by 50%. The plan also incorporates sidewalks along NC 24 to connect with existing walkways, supporting pedestrian access and mixed-use connectivity.

Corey Mabus, representing Flybridge Swansboro and Carolina Commercial Contractors, presented a comprehensive overview of the housing needs and economic benefits Flybridge aims to address. According to Mr. Mabus, there existed a substantial rental housing shortage in Onslow County, currently estimated at 5,031 units. Mr. Mabus noted that the median family income in the Jacksonville Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) was \$80,807. Flybridge proposes a project with a median rent of \$1,500/month, a figure positioned as attainable for households earning \$60,000/year, approximately 75% of the area median income. Mr. Mabus emphasized that the project would cater to workforce housing needs without relying on subsidies, indicating the development's target demographic includes teachers, first responders, young adults, retirees, and working families.

Highlighting the economic viability and quality of the project, Mr. Mabus detailed that Flybridge would be established as a 4-star community, offering high-quality housing with strong finishes and amenities, yet not falling into the luxury or subsidized housing categories. He stressed that the planned development would not become a Section 8 designated housing project.

Mr. Mabus also addressed concerns about potential impacts on the local school system. Drawing from national data, he noted that about 13% of households living in multifamily units have school-aged children. Applying this average, Flybridge anticipated about 40 households among the proposed 300 units to have children, spread across various grade levels rather than straining one particular school. The presentation indicated that the new Eastern Middle and Elementary Schools, scheduled to open by 2029, were intended to alleviate capacity issues at existing Swansboro schools through planned redistricting measures. Currently, Swansboro Elementary was projected to operate at 16% under capacity, supporting the argument that the area can accommodate additional families without immediate strain.

On the economic impact front, Mr. Mabus projected that the Flybridge development would significantly boost local revenues by generating permit fees that were expected to be more than double the annual forecasted revenues for the town. He quantified the development's contribution to Swansboro's tax base, estimating it at an 8.15% increase, which he asserted surpasses the combined growth of the past three years. Mr. Mabus

concluded by conveying that Flybridge aligns with the town's strategic goals and economic vision, portraying the project as a meaningful investment poised to spur local economic development while also fulfilling significant housing shortfalls.

The public hearing was opened at 6:46 pm, for comments on both public hearing items.

During the public comment period, thirty-two citizens voiced opposition to the Flybridge proposal, citing concerns about infrastructure limitations, growth impacts, and preserving Swansboro's small-town character. Key issues included the ONWASA wastewater treatment plant nearing capacity and relying on a single lengthy pipeline with no upgrades anticipated before 2030, as well as fears of an unsustainable population increase given over 1,450 housing units already planned in nearby Hubert. Opponents also criticized proposed rent levels as unaffordable for many single-income workers, raised environmental concerns, and warned of increased traffic congestion—particularly with Queens Creek bridge repairs in the future—while questioning whether the projected \$200,000 annual tax revenue would adequately support additional demands on police, EMS, schools, and infrastructure. In contrast, three citizens expressed favorable or neutral views, noting benefits such as ADA-accessible housing to better integrate disabled residents, the need for multifamily options for aging populations transitioning from single-family homes, and improved housing accessibility overall. Some comments also questioned the clarity of the land use plan and expressed skepticism about compatibility with Swansboro's character, particularly regarding the inclusion of three-story buildings, which are uncommon in the town. The following individuals spoke:

- Lauren Brown, 504 Greenfield Place
- Jake Brown, 314 N. Plantation Lane
- Meredith Meilleur, 220 River Reach Drive
- Steven Land, 902 Morganser Drive
- Ed Binanay, 222 Elm Street
- Elaine Sioufi, 717 Phillips Drive
- Ralph Kohlmann, 60 Pickett Court
- Wayne Herbert, 102 Oyster Bay Road
- Jeff Brooks, 114 Oyster Bay Road
- Craig Powell, 703 Hibiscus Court
- Laurent Meilleur, 220 River Reach Drive
- Susan Gasperson, 223 Walnut Street
- Frank Cizerle, 303 River Reach Court
- Jamie Petani, 2102 Holly Hills Court
- Ashleigh Gardner, 101 Longwood Drive

- Jody Seratin, 110 Oyster Bay Road
- Anne Shuller, 140 Front Street
- Lee Shuller, 140 Front Street
- Robert Gasperson Jr., 223 Walnut Street
- Tim Peters, 210 Pigeon Lane
- Todd Gardner, 304 Limbaugh Lane
- David Epperson, 246 Channel Marker Loop
- Clayton New, 11 Creekside Woods
- Francis Corbett, 158 Dr. Corbett Road
- Michael Chase, 303 Baffle Court
- Constance Crocker, 111 Jones Road
- Doug Rogers, 406 Elm Street
- Cyndy Gibbs, 204 Venice Court
- John Hunnings, 81 Pickett Way
- Keith Walsh, 149 Hawkins Landing
- Joyce Johnson, 195 Peninsula Manor Lane
- Rachel Lovejoy, 210 Knightheds Drive
- Mike Guthrie, 210 Knightheds Drive
- Jennifer Ketner, 114 Water Street
- Tom Pieratti, 708 Meeting Park Lane

Mayor Justice shared his remarks prior to concluding the hearing. He reiterated his previous stance as the deciding vote against the project, stating that nothing had changed his viewpoint. Mayor Justice shared that he had received a phone call sharing negative feedback from Raleigh regarding the project. Additionally, he highlighted the lack of planned road improvements for the next decade, referencing his involvement with development committees. He emphasized his duty to represent the interests of the citizens.

The public hearing was closed at 8:54 pm.

Zoning Map Amendment to rezone parcels on W. Corbett Avenue from RA to B-1 Conditional Zoning

Rebecca Brehmer briefly introduced the companion rezoning request for the same 38.92 acres from RA to B-1 Conditional Zoning for the proposed multifamily and commercial project. The timeline and planning board recommendation were the same as the CAMA amendment, except the developer withdrew the first rezoning application at the February meeting rather than receiving a denial.

The concept plan showed 300 apartments (reduced from 324) and 5 commercial outparcels (reduced from 6). Requirements included a 6-foot wooden fence along residentially zoned properties, buildings set back over 90 feet from existing homes, and any structures over 35 feet were subject to 200-foot setback from the corridor.

[Since both hearings were conducted together, the public comment and presentations described above applied to both the CAMA amendment and rezoning.]

A motion was made by Mayor Pro Tem Conaway, seconded by Commissioner Turner, to deny Resolution 2025-R11 for the CAMA Future Land Use Map Amendment and Ordinance 2025-O8 for the Zoning Map Amendment.

Before voting, board members shared their thoughts on the Flybridge proposal: Commissioner Jeffrey Conaway explained that he had cross-referenced the petition signatories with his election voters and found significant overlap. He felt this made his decision to oppose the project clear.

Commissioner Pat Turner acknowledged Flybridge's presentation but stated her vote would prioritize what Swansboro citizens want and need.

Commissioner Doug Eckendorf expressed conflict between supporting growth and respecting the overwhelming citizen opposition. He emphasized the need to consider future generations while acknowledging the current residents' concerns.

Commissioner Joe Brown defended his support for the project, citing the need for tax revenue and infrastructure improvements. He expressed frustration with personal attacks he had received and reiterated his belief that Flybridge could benefit Swansboro but stated that he would vote with the majority of the board.

Commissioner Tamara Pieratti noted that while many opposed the project, there were also supporters who felt intimidated to speak out. She emphasized the need to manage inevitable growth and suggested that many questions about the project had been answered.

Mayor Justice called for a vote upon completion of the discussion and the motion carried 4:1 for denial of Resolution 2025-R11 for the CAMA Future Land Use Map Amendment and Ordinance 2025-O8 for the Zoning Map Amendment.

Ayes: Conaway, Turner, Eckendorf, Brown

Noes: Pieratti

Public Comment

Francis Corbett of 125 Dr. Corbett Road commended the board for its recent decision and urged members to rewrite the town's land use plan, stating it was unclear and was

originally developed with excessive reliance on outside consultants rather than local input. She expressed concern about proposed state legislation that could remove local authority over planning decisions and encouraged the board to oppose such measures. Additionally, Ms. Corbett highlighted school capacity challenges based on her experience as a former principal and stressed the need for proactive traffic solutions, specifically advocating for a bypass around Swansboro and direct engagement with the Department of Transportation.

Adjournment

On a motion by Mayor Pro Tem Conaway, seconded by Commissioner Turner, the meeting adjourned at 9:17 pm.