



**MINUTES**  
**Town of Atlantic Beach, North Carolina**  
**Planning Board Meeting**  
**125 W Fort Macon Road**  
**Tuesday, July 11, 2023 at 6:00pm**



The regularly scheduled meeting of the Atlantic Beach Planning Board was held Tuesday, July 11, 2023 at 6:00p.m. in the Town Boardroom, 125 West Fort Macon Road, Atlantic Beach, North Carolina.

**Members Present**

Neil Chamblee, Chair  
Curt Winbourne, Vice Chair  
Phillip Hursey  
David Johnson  
Phil Jones  
Llewellyn Ramsey  
Sharron Wilson

**Members Absent**

**Others Present**

Jennifer Ansell, Planner  
Katrina Tyer, Clerk  
Elizabeth Webster, Planner  
Casey Arther, Fire Marshal

Prior to the meeting, Katrina issued Oaths to Neil Chamblee, Phil Jones, and Llewellyn Ramsey (terms expire June 30, 2026).

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Chamblee called the meeting to order at 6:00pm and addressed the very large crowd in attendance advising that tonight's agenda is for discussion on the proposed amendments for the Causeway Corridor only.

**EXCUSE ABSENT BOARD MEMBERS**

None.

**APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES**

Winbourne made a motion *to approve* the April 4, Special Meeting, April 4, Regular Meeting, and the May 2, 2023 Regular Meeting minutes. Seconded by Ramsey. Vote was unanimous, 7-0. Motion carried.

**ZTA-23-2 - CAUSEWAY SMALL AREA PLAN/COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR (COR) TEXT AMENDMENTS**

Jennifer reviewed the proposed amendments again, which include zero setbacks, a 6-foot sidewalk, and unlimited height restrictions, reminding the board that Yard and Company feel the setbacks and height will be developer-led. She would like further discussion on the consensus at the last joint meeting to limit the height allowances. She explained again the idea behind these amendments is to encourage more mixed-use development and less single-family usage and to keep the ground level more active with walking and activity.

The Board discussed options of eliminating stand-alone construction, limiting height based on the number of stories so there will not be a 5-story building of 16 feet stories exceeding the 45-foot height restriction for the rest of the town, how to eliminate more traffic and busy activity in this area, and setbacks to allow for a view between buildings and less congestion.

Staff reminded the board they can make a recommendation for anything they feel is appropriate.

There was consensus to limit the height so tall buildings are not the only thing you see when you cross over the bridge, and to especially not see buildings taller than the water tower and recommended a residential height limit of 45 feet and 55 feet for commercial and mixed-use.

To achieve the visual public water access points, they discussed and recommended a 5-foot side setback.

The joint meeting proposed to allow a percentage of outdoor storage for inventory based on the square footage of the building. Outdoor storage is not allowed under the current ordinance. After discussion, the board wanted more time to review and discuss.

They are not ready to define public art so the definition would be clear in the ordinance.

Fire Marshal Casey Arther spoke on the fire department's preference for requiring side setbacks. Zero setbacks allow fire to travel to other buildings from the outside. These fires are the most dangerous because they may cut off the egress of the occupants in adjacent structures with no warning since all the notification devices or fire protection systems are inside structures. Life safety issues could include smoke inhalation where smoke detectors alert the occupants, but sprinkler heads may not activate due to the lack of heat. Rescue and Firefighting efforts are both hampered by impact-resistant windows, they do not stop radiant heat. Impact-resistant windows are typically made of thick Lexan and are extremely hard to penetrate, hindering a direct rescue. He noted hardy board siding is fire-resistant.

### **Public Hearing**

Winbourne made a motion *to open* the public hearing. Seconded by Jones. The time was 6:57pm.

John and Judy Sanders, Lot 32 Bogue View MHP. He appreciates the board's comments and respects growth but asks the amendments to be done as represented tonight. Not to let out-of-town developers come in and tell us what we need rather than us telling them what we need.

Taylor Smith, 113 AB Causeway. Speaking on behalf of the residents at Crystal Coast Condos, they are at the line of COR-1 and COR-4. She has concerns with noise and potential restaurants, bars, and rooftop bars. Noise travels along the sound. She questions if there will be limits on how late the bars are open and the noise. Traffic is a concern now; she does not know what more people will do to the traffic problem. Their septic field is adjacent to COR-4, and she wants to know the cost of connecting to the sewer. If they have to rebuild their units with commercial, they will lose tenants.

Jim Lynch, 103,109 and 111 Old Causeway. He has a plan for ten residential units, four units are already built out. With the amendments he does not know if he can duplicate the four existing units. He likes Chairman Chamblee's plan to listen to the comments tonight.

Lisa 115A Davis Blvd. She wants to know how this will affect Davis Blvd. Elisabeth explained the current structures (mostly mobile homes) are grandfathered in.

Ruffin Poole, 128 Bowen St. Understands change is difficult for everyone and appreciates the board's time listening to comments. The canals are public access. He asked the board to please incorporate sidewalks and crosswalks and to work with NCDOT to provide safe access crossing Fort Macon Road. He does not feel good letting his kids ride their bikes alone because of safety.

Kent Warren, 105A Old Causeway Road. He did not receive a notice but did see the signs and would like more time to research the proposal. He is concerned about the depth of properties. As a property owner, he wants to keep what they have and control what they have on it. We bought property here for a reason and do not want to see but so much change. The area is residential and already too congested to add commercial. Start on the Causeway, not on their road.

Karen Piner Parsons, full-time resident at 212 Pond Drive. She is a partner in the trailer park on both sides of Davis Blvd. The water side is not affected but the other side is. She does not think this is a horrible plan. She understands there is going to be development and we have to do something. She is confused by the stories and height discussion but encourages a height restriction. She is not sure what the answer is for fence material and is curious about what other communities have done for attractive fencing. Suggested the town get a traffic impact study before approving any plans.

Susan Hassell, 528 N Kinston Ave. She moved here because she loved the area. She is concerned with the safety of children and urges setbacks on Fort Macon Rd.

Denise Clark, lives near Fort Macon Rd. She does not understand why the town is trying to reinvent the wheel, why not just make the existing Causeway better? Make the businesses that are there more noticeable. Encouraging more businesses means more people, which increases the need for more police and fire, which is a problem already.

Johnny Hudson, full-time resident at 318 Davis. Wants to know what is considered the front of Davis Drive, he does not want to walk out and see a dumpster. He is concerned with noise, he attends the Beach Music Festival and loves it, but knows what it sounds like at his house.

Staff answered some questions from the public and Chairman Chamblee thanked everyone for coming and for their comments.

Ramsey made a motion *to close* the public hearing. Seconded by Johnson. The time was 7:31pm.

### **Planning Board Discussion and Recommendation**

Chairman Chamblee wants these amendments to be explained better and how they affect people, especially on Davis Blvd. He would also like additional discussion on the color codes of zones. He agrees the height limit should be 55 feet. We need to make sure these ordinances can stand on their own if the sewer plan is not completed.

Johnson wants more information on how traffic is being factored in because it is only going to get worse.

Ramsey wants the town to talk to NCDOT on the need for a third bridge on the island.

Wilson asked staff to define front and rear setbacks for the lots in the Davis Blvd. area.

It was the consensus of the board *to table* a recommendation for staff to review this draft again and incorporate the changes and comments addressed tonight and for the Planning Board to review again next month.

### **PLANNING BOARD/STAFF COMMENTS**

None.

### **ADJOURN**

There being no further action taken or business before the Board the meeting stood adjourned. The time was 7:40pm.

These minutes were approved at the October 3, 2023 meeting of the Atlantic Beach Planning Board.

ATTEST:

  
Katrina Tyer - Town Clerk

TOWN OF ATLANTIC BEACH

  
Neil Chamblee, Chairman

