



MINUTES
Town of Atlantic Beach, North Carolina
Planning Board Meeting
125 W Fort Macon Road
Tuesday, October 3, 2023 at 6:00pm



The regularly scheduled meeting of the Atlantic Beach Planning Board was held Tuesday, October 3, 2023 at 6:00p.m. in the Town Boardroom, 125 West Fort Macon Road, Atlantic Beach, North Carolina.

Members Present

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

Members Absent

Others Present

Jennifer Ansell, Planner
Katrina Tyer, Clerk
Elisabeth Webster, Planner
John O'Daniel, Town Manager

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Chamblee called the meeting to order at 6:00pm. Mayor A. B. Cooper, III, was present.

EXCUSE ABSENT BOARD MEMBERS

None.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

Wilson made a motion *to approve* the July 11, 2023 and August 8, 2023 meeting minutes. Seconded by Jones. Vote was unanimous, 7-0. Motion carried.

ZTA-23-2 – CAUSEWAY SMALL AREA PLAN/COMMERCIAL CORRIDOR (COR) TEXT AMENDMENT

This matter was continued from the September 5 joint meeting with Council for further discussion.

Jennifer reviewed the amendments that have been discussed thus far and agreed upon at the joint meeting:

Use Requirements:

- Commercial uses in COR-1
 - Limited to 2,000 square feet.
 - Cannot occupy more than 20% of the ground floor area.
- Ground floor commercial uses
 - Must occupy at least 60% of the ground floor area in the COR-2 zone and consist of general retail/commercial/office/service or light manufacturing.
 - Must occupy at least 70% of the ground floor area in the COR-3 zone and consist of retail/restaurant/café/gym/galleries or artisan shops; office and professional (personal) services limited to 50%.

Building Height:

Current height limits are 45 feet for residential and 55 feet for non-residential and multi-family, with incentives for mixed-use development.

- Proposed new heights:
 - 45' for COR-1
 - 55' for COR-2 and COR-3
 - Removal of vertical mixed-use incentives
- Maximum of 4 stories allowed throughout

The board agreed with the building heights as proposed.

Chairman Chamblee asked about the pending flood maps, possible approval date, and if buildings would be required to be above the floodplain. Jennifer stated there are other options for elevation in commercial areas that cannot be used for residential, they would have to be elevated or floodproof. Floodproofing requires engineer approval and other things, such as breakaway walls. She does not feel these requirements would be much different than what we have now.

Front setbacks:

Proposed Requirement	COR-1	COR-2	COR-3
Street Setback*	16 feet	0 feet	0 feet
Planting Zone Width	6 feet	6 feet	5 feet
Sidewalk Width	6 feet	6 feet	10 feet

*60% of the building front must be at the front setbacks within the COR-1 and COR-2 overlay zones; 80% within the COR-3 zone.

Side setbacks:

- Proposed side setbacks
 - 10 feet throughout
 - 7 feet on 50-foot-wide lots
 - 10-foot *minimum* spacing between buildings in the same development

There was discussion on allowing 5 feet on 50-foot-wide lots to allow more flexibility due to the mixed-use requirement.

Parking:

- Use existing parking standards for all uses in COR Zone
- Proposed ordinance allows additional flexibility:
 - Compact and golf cart parking may account for 15% of required parking.
 - Residential parking must be provided on site; allowance for off-site facilities within 500 feet in COR-1 and COR-2, 1,000 feet within COR-3
 - Up to 25% of parking may be located on-street within NCDOT right-of-way; requiring encroachment agreement.
 - Applicant may submit a parking study through the required Major Site Plan process for consideration to allow a reduction in the number of on-site spaces required.

The proposal uses existing parking standards in all of the COR zones, but it does allow for some flexibility.

Jennifer reviewed the examples the board had asked for demonstrating current properties and how the development would look with rear parking, sidewalks, etc. under the proposed ordinance.

Hursey wants to see a caveat for golf carts and bicycle parking. He wants the board to discuss the mandatory requirement for parking and to be more flexible to allow for golf carts. There was discussion on how far people would walk to visit the Causeway. He thinks requiring parking on the lot will hinder development. Jennifer reminded the board there is flexibility to offer offsite and right-of-way parking and that developers do receive a credit for bike parking.

Ramsey stated we have to consider there is a major highway running through this development area and it is a lot to ask a property owner to give up a lot of land for beautification and parking. The proposed ordinance still allows for 25% of the parking to be allowed in the right-of-way.

There was a lot of discussion on the location of the sidewalks next to the buildings and the detriment to the landowner to require them to install a sidewalk. Mayor Cooper explained the concept behind installing the sidewalks adjacent to the business is to encourage movement and activity near the storefront. Most commercial districts are designed to be walkable at the storefront.

Wilson feels the whole idea behind this plan is beautification. Mayor Cooper explained, Council and staff submitted the 2019 Alta plan to the state, but it is up to NCDOT to provide funding.

Johnson feels the sidewalk on the roadside is dangerous, it makes sense we should move it away.

Chairman Chamblee feels the board has a lot of questions that they do not think they can get answers to. He feels they cannot keep debating it because they just do not have answers or funding. He does not know if they should move forward or just keep kicking the can down the road. There is no need to wait for approved septic and highway funding. He is worried the cost of construction and added commercial costs will make it harder for people to develop their smaller lots so they will sell, leading to bigger development.

Ramsey wants to know if the manager and staff should visit each business owner and get their opinions. Mayor Cooper reminded the board there have been multiple public notices and public meetings with public input.

Jones hopes every person who owns property has all of the information they need to understand this.

Mayor Cooper thanked the board and feels the ordinance is closer to complete than it was months ago.

All members agreed it is time for the Planning Board to end discussions on this and to put it in the Council's hands.

Hursey reminded the board they did not make firm recommendations regarding setbacks.

They discussed their options to approve, approve with modifications, or not recommend approval.

Hursey made a motion to approve with concerns and to recommend to Council. Seconded by Johnson. Vote was 6-1, with Winbourne opposing.

The board requested to recall the vote and vote again.

Hursey made a motion *to approve with concerns* and to recommend to Council. Seconded by Johnson. Vote was 4-3, with Winbourne, Ramsey, and Wilson opposing.

PLANNING BOARD/STAFF COMMENTS

None.

ADJOURN

There being no further action taken or business before the Board the meeting stood adjourned. The time was 7:03pm.

These minutes were approved at the November 9, 2023 meeting of the Atlantic Beach Planning Board.

ATTEST:


Katrina Tyer - Town Clerk



TOWN OF ATLANTIC BEACH


Neil Chamblee, Chairman