



MINUTES
Town of Atlantic Beach, North Carolina
Town Council Worksession
125 W Fort Macon Road and
Electronically via Zoom
Thursday, March 14, 2024 – 10:00am



The regularly scheduled meeting of the Atlantic Beach Town Council was held Thursday, March 14, 2024 at 9 :00am in the Council Meeting Room, 125 West Fort Macon Road, Atlantic Beach, North Carolina.

Members Present: Mayor Danny Navey; Mayor Pro Tem Austin Waters; Councilmembers: Harry Archer, Renea Baker, Joey Dean, Joseph Starling

Members Absent: None

Others Present: John O'Daniel, Town Manager; Katrina Tyer, Town Clerk; Sabrina Simpson, Admin Services Director; Marc Schulze, Public Works Director; Jennifer Ansell, Planner; Jason Hutchinson, Deputy Police Chief; Mike Simpson, Fire Chief (arrived at 10:00am)

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Navey called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Pro Tem Waters made a motion *to approve* the agenda. Seconded by Councilmember Baker. Vote was unanimous, 5-0. Motion carried.

RECREATIONAL WATER SAMPLING REPORT AND DISCUSSION

Dr. Rachel Noble, with students Tom Clerkin and Steph Smith in the audience, briefly reviewed the project for new councilmembers. In the past, they have studied during king and high tides. Atlantic Beach does not have a lot of gradient areas to work with in terms of stormwater control. They pulled data on the septic systems in the Pond Drive/Old Causeway area and most were installed from 1979-1990. Her main direction this sampling season was to focus on the Town's weirs and determine if we should install UV lights to control contamination. The main objectives were to assess the water quality of weirs and associated outfalls during dry and wet weather through the use of FIB and qMST marker concentrations; examine the effect of environmental parameters (e.g. 24-h rainfall) to understand drivers of contamination; understand the implications of discharge associated with weirs into the canal systems, in the context of what is known about human health risk, by examining concentrations of HF183; and pose potential recommendations for future work.

Tom autofitted the weir on Pond Drive with an Outfall for testing. They focused on the weir on Pond Drive and tested during two dry events and four wet weather events, but also tested on two sites off Old Causeway and one off of Pelican Drive. The main findings were:

- Enterococcus exceeds USEPA standards 59% of the time
- E. coli exceeds USEPA standards 26% of the time
- Wet weather has higher concentrations of FIB than dry weather
- Tide seems to have a minimal impact
- Human fecal contamination markers quantified in 37% (HF183) and 70% (BacHum) of samples
- During December 18, 2024 storm, human fecal contamination levels were serious concern

Council inquired if there were any proactive measures they needed to take to ensure septic systems were compliant, but that falls mostly on the County. She reviewed the process used by the State to test recreational waters to ensure they are safe for swimming. NC only tests for enterococci, if the tests are higher than 104, the location is posted unsafe. Councilmember Dean asked if 59% is an alarming number based on other areas they tested. She stated she would have to look at their other tests. He also asked if the Town has taken any of this information to any of the suspect residents regarding their septic systems, but the Town has not.

Key Findings:

- Fecal Indicator Bacteria Patterns: FIB concentrations in the weirs are of serious concern, and represent an issue for risk associated with AB canals.
- Wet Weather: Both FIB and human fecal mark concentrations increase substantially in the canals during wet weather, but are not trivial during dry weather.
- Weir Function: Stormwater discharges and loss of septic function will only increase, so it may be useful to consider treatment options for weir discharge (e.g. UV)

- **Loading Studies:** We recommend understanding the load of human fecal contamination at discharges at different sites to prioritize the next steps.

Council expressed issues with the County allowing new construction to use existing older septic systems and not being inspected before adding new construction and new bedrooms. She does not feel waste treatment systems solve the problems.

She will provide a written report and a proposal for Council to review and determine if want to continue testing.

TOWN PARK

NLI presentation follow-up – Discuss any design changes

NLI reached out to staff to consider relocating the basketball court to the rear of the property to fit their design concept. After site visits by staff and Council, it was determined it would be more cost-effective to leave the basketball court where it currently is located on the north side of the Park near Fort Macon Road but to move the goal to the other end of the court.

Councilmember Baker is passionate about not going another summer without anything at the park for kids to do. Last year we lost the play equipment, and this year the merry-go-round. We need to move forward.

Mayor Pro Tem Waters likes the NLI design but would like to see more added to the play area, especially in the multi-purpose lawn north of the concession stand. He would like to see options for changing the boat play station with a different type of play station. Councilmember Baker agrees and would like to see more elements added, maybe in the multipurpose area.

It was the consensus for John to report to NLI to leave the basketball court where it is and to proceed with the design as planned.

There was discussion on submitting the PARTF grant this year by the May 1 deadline. It was the consensus of Council for the planning department to submit a PARTF application using the NLI design, if denied we would at least have feedback.

Merry-go-round or Gaga Ball Court

Staff talked to different park vendors and were told the trend with merry-go-rounds is for smaller options with lower capacities for safety concerns. According to them, the 10-foot version similar to what we had has been getting phased out as towns are going either smaller or buying spinners/tilters/rockers.

It was the consensus to install a merry-go-round and gaga ball court, both with approval at the March meeting. Since the merry-go-round is more permanent, staff will ensure that it is placed where it will complement the NLI plan. The gaga ball court can be relocated easier. They prefer the larger merry-go-round with the quickest shipping time.

Splash Pad Assessment

Staff released a Request for Proposals for an assessment and cost analysis for rehabilitation of the entire splash pad system/facility to get an idea of what repairs would cost. Responses are due March 27.

Mini golf repairs

We are seeking quotes to recarpet four holes that are torn and in need of repair. We hope to establish an annual maintenance schedule since this is becoming a routine expense. Approval of a contract is expected at the March 25 meeting.

PROPOSED UDO AMENDMENTS

Freeboard

Jennifer reviewed the proposal for a 1-foot freeboard, townwide for commercial and residential. The Planning Board reviewed and recommended the proposed amendment on March 12.

It was the consensus to conduct the public hearing at the March 25 meeting. This is important to help with insurance rates.

Special Event Application Requirements

John reviewed that the recent amendment to the UDO regarding special events inadvertently required event venues to complete an event application for every event. Staff is requesting this be changed so the event application requirement is a policy, not an ordinance requirement.

It was the consenses of Council to proceed with this repeal for the April Planning Board and Council meetings and for staff to propose an amendment defining ticketed events and 200 guests.

Sidewalk Requirements

Reviewed the proposed amendment that will link the UDO to Chapter 16. A public hearing will also be scheduled for April.

REVIEW OF PROPOSALS FOR ATTORNEY SERVICES AND POSSIBLE INTERVIEWS

Neil Whitford was the Town’s attorney from 1996-2004. Council discussed the value of having someone new versus having someone with town history and knowledge.

It was the consensus to schedule interviews with each of the three applying firms on Tuesday, March 19 beginning at 9:00am.

STREET PAVING ASSESSMENT PRESENTATION (via Zoom)

Steve Lander with Withers Ravenel presented their recent assessment of the Town’s streets for paving and reviewed their process for determining their findings. If the Town repairs all the streets at one time they estimate the costs at \$2.8 million. Overall, the Town’s streets are in moderate condition. We have approximately \$500,000 in Powell Bill funds we need to spend or risk losing it. Council discussed how to prioritize the streets for paving, such as setting up a program like stormwater completing a set number of projects throughout the years or taking the hot list to ensure the money that must be used is used.

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

The police department recently assessed the street lights and found about 30 need replacing. The ones on the beach strand will be replaced with a turtle-friendly amber.

Beach nourishment will stop around the pier this year. There was not as much sand that needed to be dredged from the inlet as expected.

Council discussed the issues the Circle businesses have been bringing up since the new parking program was advertised for implementation. There was discussion of Premium Parking monitoring the western half of the gravel lot for Circle employees or just giving the Circle businesses five free passes for them to assign to their employees. There was discussion of long-term renters and their issuance of a parking pass. Council will make decisions on these items before the program begins.

ADJOURN

There being no further action taken or business before Council the meeting stood adjourned. The time was 12:55pm.

These minutes were approved at the April 22, 2024 meeting of the Atlantic Beach Town Council.

TOWN OF ATLANTIC BEACH

ATTEST:

(seal)

Katrina Tyer - Town Clerk





Danny Navey - Mayor