Minutes
Town of Atlantic Beach, North Carolina
Town Council and Planning Board Joint Meeting
125 West Fort Macon Road
Monday, November 25, 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

The special joint meeting of the Atlantic Beach Town Council and Atlantic Beach Planning Board was held Monday, November 25, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. via Zoom and in the Town Boardroom, 125 West Fort Macon Road, Atlantic Beach, North Carolina.

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

Planning Board Members Present: Chairman Neil Chamblee, Vice Chair Curt Winbourne, David Johnson, Phil Jones, Llewellyn Ramsey, Billy Whitford, Sharron Wilson

Members Absent: None

Others Present: John O'Daniel, Town Manager; Jane Gordon, Town Attorney; Katrina Tyer, Clerk; Elisabeth Webster, Planning Director; Mike Simpson, Fire Chief; Casey Arthur, Deputy Fire Chief; Marc Schulze, Public Works Director; Sabrina Simpson, Admin Services Director; Chelsey Humphrey, Finance Director; Dave Clifton, Police Chief; Grace Herbert, Officer; Ron Cullipher, Engineer; Earl Warren, Architect

CALL TO ORDER
Mayor Navey called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. Mayor Navey led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDAS
Councilmember Dean made a motion *to approve* the agenda as prepared. Seconded by Councilmember Baker. Vote was unanimous, 5-0. Motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA
a. Finance Report
b. Budget Amendment #7
c. Tax Collection Report
d. Tax Releases and Refunds Report
e. Minutes: 10/10/24WS; 10/28/24

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

CITIZEN COMMENTS
Kevin Knox, 203 Money Island Drive. This is his second month here about the stop sign. People are still not stopping at the stop sign at Money Island and Dobbs Street; this behavior needs to be changed. The police department is still writing warnings, not tickets. Write them a ticket, and let's make some revenue. We still need a stop sign on Tryon Street and Money Island. Other intersections have 4-way stop signs, so that is not an excuse. He has complained for 14 years. He will wear a suit to these meetings if he has to be more presentable to get a stop sign on Tryon Street going to the beach. Please.

Chief Clifton commented that he has officers out there stopping and educating people to stop at the sign on Money Island and Dobbs Street. People are not speeding. The majority of the issue is residents in the neighborhood, not vacationers. They are California stopping. Chief Clifton stated that there have been no major incidents since he has been here.

A lady in the audience spoke. She lives on Glenn Street and does not want another stop sign. She stops for the sign.

Council discussed amongst themselves. Mayor Navey would like staff and Council to take a look at this issue.

Councilmember Waters does not know if a stop sign will help, but if it were installed, it would shorten the distance, slow people down, and may improve the situation. Councilmember Archer agreed and suggested a flashing light on the Money Island and Dobbs Street stop signs.

It was the consensus to research before the next work session and have a Resolution prepared for the December meeting.

MSP 24-2 THE GROVE 100 and 110 Atlantic Blvd.

Elisabeth began reviewing the major site plan concept proposal for constructing two seven-story buildings with ground-floor golf cart parking and residential storage, approximately 8,000 square feet of commercial space on the second level, and 29 residential units on the upper floors. In addition, seven single-family units and approximately 1,295 square feet of commercial space are being proposed on the south side of Atlantic Blvd. The other parcels will have addresses as the project progresses. She read from the 2004 ordinance establishing a Circle Development District (CDD) that expressed Council's intent for the Circle at the time. Our 2013 ordinance protects the Circle as the core of the town. Properties were being sold between 2002-2004, then the CDD was created.

She continued to answer questions from the Boards. The Circle district has no lot restrictions. The triangle center has a height limit of 180 feet (the Town's water tower is 136 feet). The height limit on the south side of Atlantic Blvd. is different; the development is served by a private sewer that the owner maintains and operates. There were discussions on the height of the proposed plans and parking elevation.

Elisabeth explained staff has reviewed the plans, and the project went through a Technical Review Committee, and it meets the rules. The flood ordinances for the plan will change in January.

Jones wants to know how many parking spaces are on the plan compared to now. The town will be losing the current paved lot and the gravel lot. There will be less public parking because Bunn will be using his land. There will be 120 fewer public parking spaces.

Councilmember Baker asked about the entrances and exits on East and West Drive. Cullipher confirmed that the town will lose about six on-street parking spaces. Cullipher reminded everyone that the ordinance states that they must allow the public to use their parking.

Councilmember Dean is concerned about how close the structure will be built to the Festival Easement. Elisabeth reminded that with zero setbacks, it will be built right up on it. It would be good for Attorney Gordon to review the Festival Easement.

Councilmember Starling asked about the decking and steps at the pool area. Cullipher confirmed that the pool, residential, and commercial are in Phase I. He is concerned that the houses will be built, and the commercial will not. Elisabeth stated that they must build within 2 years by ordinance and state law. Cullipher stated that in Phase I, the commercial part with the houses is only 1,300 square feet and will be built simultaneously with residential units.

Councilmember Baker is concerned about the commercial buildings, what type of business will go there, and if they will be large enough to be used. She wanted to know if the commercial buildings could be enlarged. The current commercial buildings on West Drive are not big enough to bring businesses to town. If commercial development is our vision, vacant commercial development will not accomplish it. Cullipher stated there is room for adjustments in the units if someone requests. The design could change from 15x15 commercial to 15x30 or 15x45. The ordinance states there has to be 75% commercial frontage; the other 25%, in this case, is parking.

Jones is concerned that there is not enough parking for the existing businesses now; how can they build and bring in more without providing more parking?

Chamblee stated that we are losing 125 paid parking spaces. Cullipher stated that they are providing 170 shared spaces. Of that, approximately 30% are available for public use, and 135 are available for a fee. He was asked to clarify the number of parking spaces on the plan versus the current ones. There will be less public parking since the town currently uses two of Bunn's lots for public parking, which will go away for construction, losing about 120 spaces.

There was a discussion on closing Central Drive and losing 55 spaces in 2003. Councilmember Archer read the minutes from 2003 when Council sold the property. The buildings were empty and in bad shape. Property owners sold the property to Bunn to save the Circle. In the 1990s, it became a bad place, and Bunn was the only buyer. Chamblee reminded everyone that this is Bunn's property. The property was sold to him to clean up and develop.

Councilmember Archer wants to see the Town buy the pavilion lot or see if Bunn will change his plan from the tall buildings.

Councilmember Archer made a motion *to enter* Public Hearing. Seconded by Councilmember Baker. Vote was unanimous, 5-0. Motion carried. The time was 7:11pm.

Mike Ferrell. He wanted to talk about parking, but his question has been addressed.

Vada Palma, 116 Island Quay Court. She was on the board when the clean sweep of Council happened because of sewer. The area was blighted. Mr. Bunn saved this town from the area that it had become. No one had told the previous owners before Bunn what to do with their property. He has always complied with everything we needed, and she hopes we will appreciate what he has done. It is his property, and it is his right to build on his property. She does wish there were more public places, but if the person who owns the property has other wishes, then so be it. She does hope Council will consider a public parking deck somewhere.

Vickie Williams – not here.

Mike. He does not want to speak on this topic, but as a former fireman he just wants to remind everyone to look after your firefighters and make sure these structures are safe and capable for them to get in and out of.

Don – signed in, but does not wish to speak.

Lib Sheppard, 102 Oak Forest Lane, has been here since 1990. She is worried about the water, electricity, and firefighters, and she is getting worried about sewage. If we had a bad hurricane, we would have an island full of sewage. The water is not going to be there forever. We have to be careful. She is worried about the Castle Hayne aquifer.

Janice Bynum,142 Sound Drive, The Tackle Box, and The Bite on Atlantic Blvd. She has been in business for 43 years on the Circle. She supports Bunn and his development; she has no problem with the plan. He has been good to her. There is not enough parking for businesses now. She asked if parking for golf carts or vehicles is proposed under the units. Where are the employees going to park? She had been told from day one that when she bought her property, there would be a multi-level parking deck. Businesses need parking for employees and customers.

Phyllis Gay, 103 Gleen Street. She bought her home here in 1995. She loved her kids going to the fun things. Now we have good events. We want people to come here. She thinks the town should take the center part and thinks building there is a bad idea. She does not have to repeat what Janice says about where the people will park. She thinks the town must find a way to regain the parking lot.

Mayor Navey reminded the audience that the town recently bought the four lots at the Circle and has an easement for events.

Marshall Barnes, 111-B AB Causeway. He agrees with Janice that Bunn has been good and supports them. He saved the Circle; it is his land to do what he wants. He does not think the 15x15 commercial space is practical. He thinks we need someone to look at the realism of if this is really going to work. He disagrees with the intent for the public to walk from shop to shop. If we lose parking, we lose tourists, and then we really are in trouble. He is also concerned about the shared parking concept because if the public uses the spaces, then the people who own the condos will be unable to park. He wants to ensure the Boards meet the vision of the Circle Elisabeth first mentioned; if not, they failed. He does not think this meets that vision.

Cullipher explained that there is one spot designated for each condo owner.

Travis Lynde, Full Moon Restaurant, 505 AB Causeway. This summer, he noticed people parking in the DOT right-of-way on the Causeway; some were there a whole week. He is concerned that if there is no parking at the Circle, they are taking parking from them. We are all fighting for parking in Atlantic Beach.

Johnny Hudson, 318 Davis Blvd. He has been here since 1970. He thinks the numbers need to be looked at again. If 75% of the first floor is commercial and allows golf cart parking, the percentages need to be looked at.

Rusty Dunnavant, 129 Sound Drive. He is not sure the infrastructure we have now, such as the roads, groceries, and restaurants, is where it needs to be to support this influx of people. Do we even have fire trucks that can support 7-story structures? He is also concerned about the aesthetics and the loss of the view of the ocean as you cross the bridge replacing it with seven-story buildings.

Councilmember Starling explained we have the fire apparatus capable of handling a 7-story structure.

Councilmember Baker made a motion *to exit* Public Hearing. Seconded by Councilmember Dean. Vote was unanimous, 5-0. Motion carried. The time was 7:33pm.

Discussion/Comments
Mayor Pro Tem Waters asked Cullipher about parking. There was more open discussion about parking and whether the homeowners would do their own policing of parking. Cullipher confirmed that they would.

Mayor Navey asked about the planned trash shoot. Engineer Warren stated it is a 5x5 at the bottom for 25 units with four trash receptacles. Trash will be shuttled to the trash shoot to be compacted. Staff will haul it to the dump at the offsite lot. There are concerns about whether trash needs are being met with recycling, rollouts on the street, and offsite receptacles. Cullipher said he would relay these concerns.

Councilmember Archer and Winbourne would like to see a parking deck at the Circle triangle. There was additional discussion about where the town can hold events.

Councilmember Baker questioned if the fitness and indoor/outdoor dining plan in the commercial space is private or public use. Cullipher stated it is public use.

Chamblee addressed the Planning Board, explaining their options for proceeding. Winbourne confirmed with Elisabeth that this meets the UDO, and she confirmed it does.

Board Recommendation
Councilmember Dean confirmed that Phase 2 will be back for a second review. Elisabeth clarified that it will, and Phase 2 will show the full plans. There is no timeframe for submitting Phase 2. If we change any of the UDO rules, they will be allowed to choose which set of rules they want to follow. Councilmember Baker wants Cullipher to address the parking issues.

Winbourne made a motion *to recommend* approval of the Concept Proposal MSP 24-2 THE GROVE 100 and 110 Atlantic Blvd. as submitted. Seconded by Wilson. Vote was 7-0. Motion carried.

Councilmember Starling made a motion *to approve* the Concept Proposal MSP 24-2 THE GROVE 100 and 110 Atlantic Blvd. as submitted Seconded by Councilmember Dean. Vote was 5-0. Motion carried.

MAYOR/COUNCIL/PLANNING BOARD COMMENTS
Mayor Navey thanked Elisabeth for her first big project. He recognized former Councilmembers Vada Palma and Janice Byman for attending tonight.

TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT
John reminded everyone of the blood drive at the fire department tomorrow and that we are closed Thursday and Friday for Thanksgiving, so there will not be a weekly update this week.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned. The time was 7:55 p.m.

These minutes were approved at the January 28, 025 meeting of the Atlantic Beach Town Council.

ATTEST:

(seal)

Katrina E Tyer
Katrina Tyer-Town Clerk

TOWN OF ATLANTIC BEACH

Danny Navey
Danny Navey - Mayor

*Clerk's Note: this public hearing was originally scheduled and advertised in the Carteret-News Times and on the Town's website for November 12, 2024. Due to improper notice to adjoining property owners and posted notice on the property, the public hearing was re-scheduled for November 25, 2024, and re-advertised properly.