# MINUTES
# Town of Atlantic Beach, North Carolina
# Planning Board Meeting
# 125 W Fort Macon Road
# Tuesday, January 6, 2026 at 6:00pm

A meeting of the Atlantic Beach Planning Board was held Tuesday, January 6, 2026 at 6:00pm in the Town Boardroom, 125 West Fort Macon Road, Atlantic Beach, North Carolina.

**Members Present**
Neil Chamblee, Chair
David Johnson
Llewellyn Ramsey
Billy Whitford
Sharron Wilson
Curt Winbourne

**Members Absent**
Phil Jones

**Others Present**
Elisabeth Webster, Planning Director
Katrina Tyer, Town Clerk
John O'Daniel, Town Manager
Casey Arthur, Fire Marshal
Renea Baker, Councilmember
Courtney Fry, Cullipher Group
Fred Bunn, Developer

**CALL TO ORDER**
Chairman Chamblee called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

**EXCUSE ABSENT BOARD MEMBERS**
Ramsey made a motion *to excuse* Jones due to medical reasons. Seconded by Johnson. Vote was unanimous, 6-0. Motion carried.

**MSP 24-2 FMB THE GROVE – PHASE II (100 and 110 Atlantic Blvd)**
Elisabeth presented the details of the application, by the Cullipher Group on behalf of FMB at the Grove LLC, for review of a major site plan consisting of two 7-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 stories. In addition, eight residential units are being proposed on the south side of Atlantic Boulevard, with approximately 1,295 square feet of commercial. The property is zoned Circle A and Circle A-1, with flood zones A-8 and A-9. The presentation included aerial views and site plans showing the layout of the proposed development, including the north and south sides of Atlantic Boulevard and two vacant lots off East Drive.

Phase One
- Pre-application conference – September 2024
- Application Submitted – October 1, 2024
- Public Hearing Notification
  - Carteret News Times - November 10, 2024
  - Letters sent November 8, 2024
  - Sign Posted November 6, 2024
- Concept Proposal Public Hearing (Joint PB & Council) – November 25, 2024

Phase Two
- Application Submitted – September 24, 2025
- Technical Review Committee – December 9, 2025

Winbourne stepped out at 6:02pm (coughing). Returned at 6:05pm.

Fire Marshal Casey Arthur raised significant life safety concerns regarding aerial apparatus access to the buildings. He explained that the proposed commercial units at the front of the property would obstruct fire department access to the residential units behind them. He demonstrated this issue with photographs showing that a fire truck ladder would need to extend over the commercial buildings to reach the residential units in case of an emergency.

Fire Marshal Arthur explained that:
- The aerial apparatus access road must be 26 feet wide
- Buildings with eaves over 30 feet high require aerial apparatus access (The Bite and Hang Ten did not trigger this requirement because they are not 30 feet to the eaves)
- The access road must be between 15-30 feet from the building
- The commercial buildings were currently designed at 28 feet high, which would block ladder access to the residential buildings

Arthur recommended reducing the commercial building heights to approximately 19.5 feet to allow proper ladder access over them to reach the residential structures. He also mentioned concerns about the sidewalk and street lighting that would need to be addressed.

Another concern raised by both the Fire Marshal and board members was corrosion of sprinkler systems in the salt-air environment. Arthur noted that other buildings in town have experienced significant corrosion of sprinkler systems, leading to costly replacements. Ramsey noted this did not seem fair to pass this future expense on to the property owner if the sprinkler systems corroded and required replacement, suggesting enclosing the system. He suggested potential solutions, including using powder-coated pipes for improved corrosion resistance, considering stainless steel components (though noted as cost-prohibitive), or enclosing the sprinkler systems to protect them from salt spray.

Ramsey asked staff to determine a medium for sprinkler systems and consider a possible ordinance amendment.

Courtney Fry with the Cullipher Group stated they are considering rotating the design by 90 degrees. Visually, they will look the same. They were working on addressing the fire safety concerns by:

- Lowering the commercial units by over two feet
- Proposing to relocate street lighting and a hydrant to allow proper fire apparatus access
- Working with an architect to adjust roof pitches to allow proper ladder angles

Wilson also raised questions about parking, specifically whether there would be dedicated spaces for the 29 residential units. Bunn confirmed that each unit would have dedicated parking spaces, including spaces for golf carts.

Elisabeth stated she still had questions to address with Cullipher about the floor area ratio on the amended plans submitted by Cullipher just last week.

After discussion, the Planning Board decided that several issues needed to be resolved before the project could move forward:

1. Finalizing language regarding what can be placed on the two Town-owned lots and oceanside
2. Developing a solution to address sprinkler system corrosion problems
3. Resolving fire department access issues

Wilson made a motion *to remand* the major site plan to the Technical Review Committee for further review of amended plans to be submitted. Seconded by Johnson. Vote was unanimous, 6-0. Motion carried.

Cullipher stated that they have all of their permits and urged against delaying this project.

There was discussion about scheduling a special TRC meeting and, if needed, a special Planning Board meeting to allow the project to move forward in time for the January 26 Town Council meeting, rather than waiting until February. Staff agreed to explore the possibility of scheduling these special meetings.

**PLANNING BOARD/STAFF COMMENTS**
None.

**ADJOURN**
There being no further action taken or business before the Board the meeting stood adjourned. The time was 6:45pm.

These minutes were approved at the February 5, 2026, meeting of the Atlantic Beach Planning Board.

TOWN OF ATLANTIC BEACH

Neil Chamblee, Chairman

ATTEST:

Katrina Tyer, Town Clerk