

Town of North Topsail Beach

Joann M. McDermon, Mayor
Mike Benson, Mayor Pro Tem

Aldermen:
Richard Grant
Tom Leonard
Susan Meyer
Richard Peters



David J. Gilbride
Town Manager

Laura Oxley, JD, MPA
Town Clerk

Nature's Tranquil Beauty

Board of Aldermen Special Meeting Minutes Tuesday, July 21, 2020 11:00 A.M.

Present: Mayor McDermon; Mayor Pro Tem Benson; Aldermen Grant, Leonard, Meyer and Peters; Town Manager Gilbride; Planning Director Hill; Town Clerk Oxley; Consultant Landin Holland (via teleconference)

I. Call to Order

Mayor McDermon called the Meeting to order.

II. Approval of Agenda

Alderman Peters made a motion to approve the Agenda. Alderman Leonard seconded. Mayor Pro Tem Benson made a motion to add paid parking to the Agenda. The Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

III. Paid Parking

Manager Gilbride provided an update. Town Administration has identified locations for paid parking. The Town Manager and Planning Director Hill will be mapping out the spaces. The vendor does have a "lead time" to set up the parking units; it may be difficult to have the process in place by Labor Day.

Mayor McDermon believes implementing sooner rather than later could help with traffic and parking issues. The traffic on and off the Island is still congested.

Alderman Leonard attended the meeting with the vendor. The Town needs to identify side streets and locations for parking spots. Visitors are already parking on the side streets; the Town just does not receive any revenue. The goal is to properly rollout the plan the first time, not go back and re-do when homeowners experience issues.

Alderman Grant asked for expense clarification. In his prior experience, other municipalities set up a person with a table who could collect money. This may not be ideal, but it is an effective cost savings approach. The vendor's plan has a lot of upfront costs. The Town could implement something simple at first and work towards a bigger plan. There is pressure from the public to provide an answer.

Alderman Leonard suggested a methodical rollout. His concern is that side streets will bear the consequences. Another factor is emergency vehicles.

Alderman Meyer stated that there is a lot of push back from surrounding areas. The County's lot, which would be free, is currently unavailable. She does have concern about taking an option away from a family that may not be able to afford the additional expense.

Mayor McDermon announced that the Board seems to be on the same page with moving forward and exploring this revenue option.

Alderman Peters made a motion to immediately expand parking areas for paid parking. The Motion failed for lack of second.

Alderman Leonard wanted to provide one final thought. The vendor will place a spot anywhere, because they receive money. The Board should focus on how to rollout this plan without losing the Town's character.

IV. Draft CAMA Land Use Plan

Planning Director Hill & Mr. Landin Holland of Holland Consulting Planners presented. Mr. Holland explained that the Town cannot yet approve. Today is only a discussion.

Mayor McDermon thanked Mr. Holland, Ms. Hill and the Planning Board for their work.

Alderman Leonard made some recommendations. He suggested a sentence about post WWII Ocean City. Regarding the section concerning the Labor Force, he suggested information about Camp Lejeune. Overall, the product is good. He acknowledged the hard work, including citizen comments.

Alderman Grant thought the Plan was very informative. He liked the way it was written. He agreed with Alderman Leonard's additions. He believes that Ms. Hill and Mr. Holland did an excellent job. He hopes to incorporate the principals of this plan as he makes decisions in the future as an Alderman.

Ms. Hill reminded the attendees that the CAMA Land Use Plan is a guide that many planners did not follow until new legislation was passed that required

decisions have justification, meaning comment that references the municipality's land use plan.

Mayor Pro Tem Benson echoed the Board's accolades. Ms. Hill and Mr. Holland did a great job putting the Plan together. The timing of the Census is unfortunate. He had a few concerns with the Plan. It should recognize the importance of land use policies and coastal resiliency. Essentially, when the infrastructure or plan is in place with consideration for resiliency measures such as fortified roofs or restoring dunes, the community is more prepared to recover. Mayor Pro Tem Benson recommended adding the language in the introduction.

Mayor Pro Tem Benson's second concern is the conservation of coastal wetlands. He would like a strong policy statement about conservation of coastal wetlands. Mayor Pro Tem also recommended that a Conservation D policy statement be added to prevent rezoning by future Boards.

Alderman Grant would like the Town Attorney's advice before making decisions that place any restrictions on privately owned property. He also has reservations about tying the hands of future Boards.

Alderman Meyer had concerns that some of the Mayor Pro Tem's comments were too restrictive.

Mayor Pro Tem Benson asked the consultants to create another GIS layer to clarify low-density residential.

Mayor McDermon expressed a concern about taking the document too far. She believed there is merit in keeping the document broad.

Mayor Pro Tem Benson also wanted Conservation D areas marked on the map. His goal is to protect the coastal wetlands.

Planning Director Hill explained that "wetlands" is not synonymous with "conservation." She appreciates the Mayor Pro Tem's concerns, but the Division of Coastal Management and the Army Corps of Engineers are the permitting authorities, which is an extensive permitting process.

Mayor Pro Tem Benson believes that the multi-use imagery on page 65 is out of date. He also suggested that the map's key may need modification.

Mr. Holland will try to find a better replacement.

Alderman Peters asked how the Town can become a higher priority for DOT.

Planning Director Hill suggested participating in the JUMPO.

The Mayor Pro Tem stated that the Inlet Hazard Area process has been delayed because of COVID-19, but he believes changes will occur and an update may be needed in the future.

He asked that page 77 have an addition to include coastal resiliency as a bullet point.

Alderman Meyer asked Mayor Pro Tem if he has a definition of “coastal resiliency” to add to the Plan. She believes some of these ideas already covered by zoning and building code.

Mayor Pro Tem Benson raised some concerns for potential contradictions. For example, at one point, the Plan states that it does not support marinas or boat ramps, but later, it supports access to estuary areas. He recommended deleting the “boat ramp” section.

Planning Director Hill responded that the statements do not necessarily conflict.

Other Board members discussed the potential conflict. Planning Director Hill responded that she understands the confusion and will work to clarify.

Mayor Pro Tem referenced page 85 and asked if it was meant to imply the Town is no longer allowing condominiums.

Planning Director Hill stated that it is possible to have a condo development, but the building height and setbacks requirements would be tough to overcome.

Mayor Pro Tem Benson proposed that the Planning Director and Planning Consultant review his edits, make suggestions and present to the Board.

Mayor McDermon asked for objections to the Mayor Pro Tem’s proposal. No one objected.

Mayor McDermon asked if it would be appropriate to send the suggestions back to the Planning Board. Planning Director Hill stated that she had not yet reviewed the suggestions. She will circle back to the Board of Aldermen with her recommendations on how to proceed.

V. Adjournment

Alderman Leonard made a motion to adjourn. Alderman Meyer seconded. The Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Town of North Topsail Beach
Special Board of Aldermen Meeting

Joann McDermion
Mayor

ATTEST:

Laura Oxley, JD, MPA
Town Clerk

Approved: 08/ /2020