

Minutes
Town of Atlantic Beach, North Carolina
Advisory Committee on Wastewater and Stormwater
Thursday, March 29, 2007

The meeting of the Atlantic Beach Advisory Committee on Wastewater and Stormwater (ABACOWS) was held Thursday, March 29, 2007 at 6:00 p.m. in the Council Meeting Room.

Members Present: Billy Brewer, Donald Clements, Thomas Lenweaver, John Lotspih, George Richardson, Alan Shelor and James Willis, III.

Members Absent: Bruce McFerren

Others Present: Larry Moolenaar, Facilitator; Mayor Tootsie Vinson; Council Members Jim Bailey and Mike Warren; Tommy Combs, Interim Town Manager; Marc Schulze, Public Services Director; Raymond Cordon and Dan Dawson from W. K. Dickson; Troy Dees and Len Gillstrap from Carteret County Department of Environmental Health.

Mr. Moolenaar called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.

1. Minutes of March 22, 2007 Meeting:

Mr. Moolenaar began the meeting with a discussion of the minutes for the March 22, 2007 meeting. Mr. Lotspih wanted to clarify a statement that he made regarding insurance for residences on slabs that would need to be raised. Reference Page 2, Item #4 "Committee Discussion", paragraph 5 with correction to read as follows: 'Mr. Lotspih questioned about some residences being on slabs. Was anyone going to look into insurance to cover the structures while they are being raised or how is this going to be handled?'

With Mr. Lotspih's clarification being noted to all, the committee agreed to accept the minutes as written.

2. Public/Committee Comments:

Mr. Brewer stated that he felt funding needed to be looked into at some point. He commented about a possible grant option, types, what the city is eligible for, and if this option has been pursued in anyway by Council members.

Mrs. Tiffany Woodard - 308 Club Colony: Mrs. Woodard stated she has been in contact with certain individuals that live in the Town of Trent Woods about the problems they are having with their town-wide sewer vacuum system. She made contact with Trent

Woods Town Council and asked Shane Turney, Trent Woods Town Council Member to attend tonight's meeting so he can explain the problems Trent Woods is having with their sewer vacuum system.

Mr. James Willis: Mr. Willis stated that he read North Carolina General Statute Chapter 160(a); article 23 "Municipal Service Districts". He commented that in this statute, the State of North Carolina through the General Assembly has laid out for the towns a program by which they can set up the municipal service district for sewer and include in that district every landowner and person in the town that wants sewer while at the same time leaving out every person that does not want it. Therefore, he feels monies could be save all around.

Mr. Jeff Van Buren: 147 Bayview – Mr. Van Buren wanted to comment on the stormwater issue. Mr. Van Buren feels that each area of the stormwater issue needs to be evaluated individually, propose solutions, and finally look at overall funding. He presented, to the committee, a copy of a proposed evaluation he felt may help the situation.

(Clerk's note: A copy of Mr. Van Buren's proposed evaluation form is attached and hereby made a copy of these minutes).

Mr. Richardson wanted to clarify that the engineers of W. K. Dickson have broken down the cost and not just "blanketed" the whole stormwater situation with a figure. They have identified numerous projects and the cost regarding those.

3. Presentation: Carteret County Health Department – Troy Dees and Len Gillstrap:

Mr. Moolenaar then turned the floor over to Troy Dees, Environmental Health Supervisor and Len Gillstrap, Environmental Health Program Specialist, both of Carteret County Health Department. They presented a presentation on On-Site Wastewater Systems for Atlantic Beach. Mr. Dees also advised that there were two (2) reference handouts available for anyone who may be interested.

(Clerk's note: A copy of the presentation and two handouts are attached and hereby made a part of these minutes).

Mr. Moolenaar opened the floor to public comment at this time.

4. Trent Woods Vacuum System – Mr. Shane Turney:

Mr. Shane Turney – Town Council Member of Trent Woods, North Carolina. Mr. Turney agreed to speak at the meeting for two reasons; 1.) He is on the Town Board of Trent Woods and Trent Woods has already had to deal with the wastewater issues that are on the table now before the Town of Atlantic Beach and 2.) because Trent Woods has been referenced specifically on the Atlantic Beach website in regards to

their sewer vacuum system and the information that was cited is not completely accurate and wanted to clarify the discrepancy.

Mr. Turney stated that there are some misconceptions regarding septic systems and public sewer systems. The Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Environmental Health and Natural Resources state that septic systems on average are 95% efficient and public sewer system are, at best, 80% efficient. So if a town is thinking about converting, at best, it loses 15% efficiency. One misconception is that public sewer systems are environmentally friendly - NOT TRUE. Septic systems are preferred by the Environmental Protection Agency and the Department of Health and Natural Resources. They overwhelming support septic tank systems, especially managed septic systems, over sewer systems. This data is available on their website. Mr. Turney advised that Council and this committee need to ask themselves just exactly what they are after. Whether protecting existing homeowners and existing waterways and environments are at the forefront or if increasing development is. If the town is after increased development, public sewer system is the way to go. But if not, then the town does not have to look at that as an option. He stated another misconception is: if you do have a developed public sewer system the town will then be required to have a mandatory hookup for all citizens. This is NOT A REQUIREMENT by North Carolina. It is something that the local board can legislate. The Town of Trent Woods, when looking at options for wastewater sewer systems, decided on the vacuum system because it was cheaper, not better. He stated there were several problems they were faced with regarding this decision. Even though it was the cheapest route it was also the most problematic. The problems stated being: 1.) initial prediction of eighteen (18) months for installation has turned into four (4) years and still not complete; 2.) the pits located in front of the homes and pump stations not working and pipes in general, leaking which created cavities in the ground. Mr. Turney suggested that everyone involved do the research, do not make a quick decision and know what you are getting into. He also stated that the Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Environmental Health and Natural Resources websites have a lot of good and useful information.

5. Development of April 5, 2007 Agenda:

Mr. Moolenaar proceeded to discuss the development of the agenda for the April 5th, 2007 meeting and noted some of his suggestions being: 1.) look back at all the information the committee has received on the past few meetings; 2.) go through the various questions that have been submitted to the committee.

Mr. Willis suggested that he would like to go through the Denny Breese theory.

Mr. Brewer suggested that the committee find out more about repair costs for some of these systems that are failing so they can effectively relay costs of installation, repair, etc. to the public.

Mr. Tommy Combs added that the best thing to do is to find a company that can say this is what it costs to do certain things.

Mr. Clements suggested that the committee take the information that has been gathered so far, go forward with it by discussing it amongst themselves and start looking at possible solutions and prioritizing issues.

Mr. Richardson's suggestion was to start with the various questions that have been submitted to the committee for review.

Mr. Lenweaver commented that the committee needs to have a financial picture of the possible costs of construction in phases. He feels it would be difficult to get the citizens to be in favor of a public sewer system that is going to cost \$60 million and a stormwater system that is going to cost \$6 million without the citizens knowing how it is going to affect them individually. He feels that it would be difficult to get the citizens in favor of a public system when you start telling them they will have to pay a \$3,500 hookup fee, their own plumbing fee, a monthly charge, etc. He wants to find out financially how it would be implemented.

Mr. Richardson suggested the committee find out from other municipalities what other costs had to be raised in order to cover the costs of those citizens that did not hook up to a public system.

Mr. Brewer suggested that the committee visit other localities in order to obtain the information needed to move forward.

Mr. Moolenaar summarized in saying that the agenda for the next meeting would consist of discussing the information gathered so far, possibly visiting other localities, getting cost estimates, and go through some of the questions submitted.

Mr. Combs stated that Mr. Randall of the Department of Water Quality will be speaking, he believes, just prior to the April 16, 2007 Town Council Meeting to explain Phase II to towns that have questions if the committee was interested in attending to hear Mr. Randall speak.

6. Public Comment:

Karen Koenig – 404 E. Terminal Blvd. Ms. Koenig feels there are two things that are important and they are: 1.) to get historical data on Atlantic Beach area compared to areas that are south of Atlantic Beach that have public sewers; and 2.) feels that the information regarding the East Terminal basin was not addressed properly and there was not any type of solution that came from the last monthly Town Council meeting.

Mr. Shane Turney advised that if anyone wanted to know the impact of public sewer system on shellfish population after the system was installed, they can contact the Wrightsville, Carolina and Curry Beaches.

With no further public comment, Mr. Moolenaar advised that the public is welcome to attend the meetings, but next week, public comment will be restricted in order to give the committee a chance for discussion amongst themselves.

With no further business before the committee, Mr. Moolenaar adjourned the meeting at 8:17 p.m.

Submitted by:

Kelly L. Nash, Administrative Assistant