

Minutes
Town of Atlantic Beach, North Carolina
Town Public Forum
October 28, 2006

The Public Forum of the Atlantic Beach Town Council was held October 28, 2006 on Storm water and Wastewater Master Planning at the Dunes Club, Atlantic Beach, NC.

Members Present: Mayor Tootsie Vinson; Mayor Pro Tem Doug Creech; Council Members Jim Bailey, Ruth Barnes and Eddie Dawkins

Members Absent: Councilman Joe Tarascio

Others Present: Chuck Cooper, Town Manager; Derek Taylor, Town Attorney; Dan Dawson, W.K. Dickson; Raymond Cordon, W.K. Dickson; Mike Orbach, Director of Duke University Marine Lab; Donna Turner, Inspections Director; Scott Kilpatrick, Police Chief; Marc Schulze, Public Services Director; Kim Glover, Deputy Town Clerk

Meeting Call to Order-Mayor Tootsie Vinson

Mayor Vinson called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. She welcomed everyone to the Public Forum. She thanked each citizen for coming out to the meeting. She turned the meeting over to the moderator, Mike Orbach.

Moderator Led Public Forum-Mike Orbach

Mr. Orbach presented the agenda for the Public Forum. First, there will be a presentation from the engineering contracting firm W.K. Dickson. The public comments will be presented and each person will have three minutes. If someone needs to make a comment and does not want to speak, it can be written down and sent in to the Town. All forms of input will be welcome. The forum will be videotaped and will be available through the Town for public examination. Mr. Orbach introduced Councilman Jim Bailey.

Project Presentation-Councilman Jim Bailey

Councilman Bailey stated he had been asked by the Council to put together the information needed by the Town to make a decision on the Stormwater and Wastewater Collection System. He stressed that at this point no decision has been made. The Town has been down this road twice before and they had never come to a final decision. It is their goal to get to the point of being able to make a decision. He stated the Town had hired W.K. Dickson as a consulting firm to help them compile all the information needed to make a sound decision. Councilman Bailey turned the meeting over to Raymond Cordon of W. K. Dickson.

Mr. Cordon introduced himself as the Director of Water and Wastewater for W.K. Dickson. He stated he had been directly involved with the studies that have been ongoing for the Town of Atlantic Beach. He told the citizens that W.K. Dickson is composed of engineers, scientists, and surveyors specializing in water, wastewater and stormwater utilities. Most of their clients are towns like Atlantic Beach. Mr. Cordon presented the Town Council and citizens the preliminary findings from the Stormwater and Wastewater Master Planning Project.

(Clerk's note: The Stormwater and Wastewater Master Planning Study is attached and hereby made a part of these minutes.)

Councilman Bailey turned the meeting back over to Mike Orbach for the public comments section.

Public Comments

1. Linda Ford-Riches, 108 Dunes Court, Atlantic Beach, NC

Ms. Ford stated she was concerned with growth control and recommended consulting with Orin Pilkey from Duke University.

2. Ron McPherson, 221 Moonlight Drive, Atlantic Beach

Mr. McPherson wanted clarification of who is going to pay for what. He asked how much percentage wise does the wastewater/stormwater contribute to the pollution of our water. He wanted to know the cost of new septic tank systems with a comparison to a central wastewater system and a stormwater system.

3. Tiffany Woodard, 308 Club Colony, Atlantic Beach, NC

Ms. Woodard stated she was at one time in favor of the central sewer system until she found out the amount of damages they are causing. She expressed no confidence in the federal, state and local environmental rules. She did state she had not heard of any sickness being caused by water pollution.

4. Paul Woodard, 308 Club Colony, Atlantic Beach, NC

Mr. Woodard stated he disagreed with the recent decision of approving the high rises at the Circle. He requested a referendum of stormwater and was also concerned about property values escalating. He reminded everyone of the vacuum sewer collection system at Trentwoods, NC that was reported to be a disaster.

5. Hal Worth, 304 E. Boardwalk Avenue, Atlantic Beach, NC

Mr. Worth stated he has lived in Atlantic Beach for thirty-two years. He said there is a serious problem with flooding at the Wilson/Terminal area and he has a lot of water in his garage every time it rains. He is in favor of wastewater collection and a public sewer system.

6. Don Clements, 117 Brooks Street, Atlantic Beach, NC

Mr. Clements is a retired local Land Surveyor willing to volunteer his services to the Town.

7. Bob Holmes, 1919 West Fort Macon Road, Atlantic Beach, NC

Mr. Holmes is a former Trentwoods Town Council Member suggested using a “Monitored Septic Tank System” (MSTS) due to a disaster with the vacuum system at Trentwoods. He stated that the estimated costs are \$60.00 a year for MSTS versus \$700.00 a year for the central system and that Nags Head is using the MSTS. He said he did not want Atlantic Beach to turn into Myrtle Beach. He reminded everyone the zoning laws could be changed with election politics.

8. Bob Peele, Tar Landing Resident, Atlantic Beach, NC

Mr. Peele read from a letter submitted by the Tar Landing Homeowners Association.
(Clerk’s note: The letter is attached and hereby made a part of these minutes.)

9. Rosie Liles, 204B Robin Ave., Atlantic Beach, NC

Ms. Liles is a fairly new resident of Atlantic Beach having been here for two years. She stated she has no confidence in the proper enforcement of setbacks, development rules and building codes. She recommended MSTS with inspections every five years.

10. Dr. Scott Rice, 402 Henderson Blvd., Atlantic Beach, NC

Dr. Rice is a local Primary Care Physician with a background in bio-chemistry. He asked for some feasibility studies regarding the septic tank utility. He also asked that the study include the research of other pathogens and not just coliform. He has observed that some redevelopments have actually improved conditions. He stated he had seen presented the cost of both commercial and residential properties and asked for more information on the costs to commercial properties.

11. Jane Barndt, East Bogue Blvd., Atlantic Beach, NC

Ms. Barndt said when there is a lot of rainfall, they cannot flush their toilet. She stated all residents should be required to fix septic tank systems. She felt if the presentation would have been made earlier she could have filled out the survey better.

12. Ned McClendon, Hoop Hole Creek, Atlantic Beach, NC

Mr. McClendon said he had been a resident of Atlantic Beach since 1989. He is worried about his taxes going up. For all he cares, they could take the bridge out and bring back the ferry. He feels the problems are not caused by the full-time residents and thinks they could exist with the present system. They are the ones who elect the Council. He said there should be a homestead exemption.

13. Kenneth Alexander, 109 Freeman Lane, Atlantic Beach, NC

Mr. Alexander retired about twelve years ago and he invested his retirement in two apartments. He wants to leave them to his children and grandchildren. He is worried these costs are going to be too much. He wanted to know if there was going to be two projects or one.

14. Don Miller, Atlantic Beach Causeway, Atlantic Beach, NC

Mr. Miller is definitely in favor of a central sewer system, but not the vacuum collection system. He feels the Town needs to move forward with a system that is for everyone.

15. James Willis, III, 104 Atlantic Beach Causeway, Atlantic Beach, NC

Mr. Willis stated he has lived in Atlantic Beach since 1934. He said while the two issues today are stormwater and wastewater, the most important priority should be maintaining adequate sand on the beach, which is going to cost even more. If the Town has no beach, the Town will not need a sewer system. He said he was concerned that the proposed system has no alternative for an emergency discharge.

16. Ken Hyde, 415 Club Colony, Atlantic Beach, NC

He stated at Club Colony every time there is significant rainfall they have the Club Colony Lakes. Reason being there are only impervious surfaces everywhere you look. Mr. Hyde was concerned about irresponsible development.

17. Mack Churchill, East Ft. Macon Road, Club Colony, Atlantic Beach, NC

Mr. Churchill stated the Council has failed to tell citizens that the Town has purchased Food Lion property for \$4 million. He said previous engineers said costs would be approximately \$100.00 month, how could it be the same figure now? He feels the Town has more of a drainage problem than a sewer problem.

18. Billy Brewer, 200 Atlantic Beach Causeway, Atlantic Beach, NC

Mr. Brewer is a thirteen year resident of Atlantic Beach. He was concerned about the environmental future for his children and grandchildren.

19. Edward Folk, 302 Shoreline Drive, Atlantic Beach, NC

Mr. Folk spoke out against using chemicals and is a strong believer in the organic lifestyle. He has had no expenses with his existing septic tank system for the last twelve years. He feels a central wastewater system and stormwater improvements would be proposed to provide money in the pockets of the Town officials.

20. Ron Schrimper, 305 West Atlantic Ave., Atlantic Beach, NC

Mr. Schrimper said he has owned property here for twenty-five years. He applauded the Town Council for having the Public Forum. He would like to have more information on the costs of doing nothing. He realizes that would be a difficult task to ponder. Mr. Schrimper's

cousin, who has twenty-five years experience in working with water systems in Houston, Texas, informed him that the state of Texas is doing away with septic tank systems in rural areas and replacing them with central wastewater and treatment plants. He stated that in this community, septic tanks have worked well in the past because we have a seasonal population but that seems to be changing.

21. Bob Hedrick, 212 Atlantic Beach Causeway, Atlantic Beach, NC

Mr. Hedrick's family has owned property in Atlantic Beach since 1950. He said he remembered the days when the beach was undeveloped. If the development had been stopped then ninety-five percent of the citizens would not be here. He believes there is no way to stop development. He thinks it is the responsibility of the Town Council to control development responsibly, and the only way to do it is with stormwater and wastewater facilities. If we wait the cost is only going to go up.

22. Pat Mason, Attorney, Ocean Ridge Homeowners Association, Atlantic Beach, NC

Mr. Mason stated that the Homeowners Association is not opposed to stormwater treatment but is opposed to a central wastewater treatment facility. He is concerned about the air quality due to proposed wastewater treatment plant (WWTP) odors next to Ocean Ridge. He feels the current proposed WWTP location should be changed to a remote location.

23. Jim Peadon, 502 Ocean Ridge, Atlantic Beach, NC

Mr. Peadon stated he is the vice-president of the Ocean Ridge Homeowners Association. He recommended that the projects be broken into two separate ones, stormwater and wastewater. He is worried about the beach losing its family atmosphere. Mr. Peadon commended W.K. Dickson for the presentation today.

24. Bill Taft, Ocean Ridge, Atlantic Beach, NC

Mr. Taft is worried about the proposed WWTP location adjacent to Ocean Ridge. He said it was his understanding that about \$500,000 is being spent on this study and \$250,000 has been spent already. He suggested that the Town take the remaining \$250,000 and use it to include studying the septic tank systems.

25. Jerry Barbour, Sand Villas Utility Board, Atlantic Beach, NC

Mr. Barbour stated Sand Villas is getting ready to spend \$650,000 to replace their sewer system and the owners at the Villas are not willing to pay for that system and then have to pay for what the Town is proposing.

26. Rich Romaine, 121 Bayview Blvd., Atlantic Beach, NC

He asked that surveys in the near future be put out in a timely manner. He lives in North Raleigh and it is hard for him to get down here sometime. He suggested web/email based information and surveys.

27. John Branch, 303 Asbury Ave. Ext., Atlantic Beach, NC

Mr. Branch is concerned about the area being hit by a hurricane and what impact that would have on any WWTP operation. He is more comfortable with septic tank systems because they are not as vulnerable to hurricanes. He would like to know if the Town could have any assurance they would not be out \$60 million dollars if a hurricane destroyed the sewer system.

28. Charles Bowen, 231 Bayview Blvd., Atlantic Beach, NC

Mr. Bowen said one problem has not been mentioned. He asked who will clean up the sounds and the bays. He requested more enforcement of discharges from boats.

29. Karen Koenig, 404 E. Terminal Blvd., Atlantic Beach, NC

Ms. Koenig asked for some monetary figures on stormwater.

30. Jean Kilgore, 516 Ocean Ridge Dr., Atlantic Beach, NC

Ms. Kilgore would like to separate the stormwater from the wastewater. She asked who will be able to vote on the issue.

31. Tiffany Woodard, 308 Club Colony, Atlantic Beach, NC

Ms. Woodard suggested the Town should consider creating a loan program to assist septic tank owners with repairs. She feels a central sewer system will only cause high density development. Fixed income residents will not be financially able to remain in their homes.

32. Mickey Stokes, 414 E. Glenn St., Atlantic Beach, NC

Mr. Stokes stated the crowd had seen what the surveys said and the people who filled them out read their monthly newsletters and Island Review. If they had seen those and come to some of the monthly meetings they would know what was going on with the Food Lion property purchase. The property was bought for the sewer system or Town use. He expressed concern that most comments were unfounded complaints about the Town officials.

33. Scott Rice, MD, 402 Henderson Blvd., Atlantic Beach, NC

Dr. Rice stated that as an avid surfer and a Primary Care Physician, there is a public health issue to deal with. He has seen the results of pathogens. He suggested a septic utility be studied.

34. Gladys Freeman, Caswell St., Atlantic Beach, NC

Ms. Freeman said that she had empty lots near her and citizens bring their pets to use the bathroom on them, which contributes to the polluting of the water standing on the lots when it rains.

35. Janet Duran, Atlantic Beach, NC

Ms. Duran stated we should have addressed this problem thirty years ago.

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Councilman Bailey stated he had heard a lot of issues today he had never considered before. He said he had made consistent notes today and the whole Council would be reviewing them. He thanked everyone for coming today and for their questions and comments.

Mayor Vinson thanked Mike Orbach for coming and being the moderator for the Public Forum. She also thanked Councilman Bailey for all his hard work on the Stormwater and Wastewater Committee. She said she hoped the meeting had been as informative to the citizens as it had been to the Council. She thanked all the citizens of Atlantic Beach for coming. The meeting adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Submitted by:

Kim Glover, Deputy Clerk

These minutes were approved at the December 18, 2006 meeting of the Atlantic Beach Town Council.

Tootsie Vinson, Mayor