

Minutes
Town of Atlantic Beach, North Carolina
Town Council Meeting
Monday, August 27, 2007

A Special Joint Meeting of the Atlantic Beach Town Council and Planning Board was held Monday, August 27, 2007 at 1:00 p.m. in the Council Meeting Room.

Members Present: Mayor Joyce Vinson; Mayor Pro Tem Eddie Dawkins; Council members Jim Bailey, Ruth Barnes, Joe Tarascio and Michael Warren

Members Absent: None

Others Present: Dave Harvell, Town Manager; Marc Schulze, Public Services Director; A.K. Miller, Police Chief; Sabrina Simpson, Administrative Services Director; Kelly Nash, Town Clerk; W. K. Dickson (Dan Dawson, Raymond Cordon); Judy Hills of Eastern Carolina Council; Todd Miller, Patti Fowler; Shannon Jenkins; J.D. Potts; Mike Kelly; Wayne Mobley; Ted Lyon; Troy Dees; Len Gilstrap and Charlie Stehman

CALL TO ORDER AND ROLL CALL

Mayor Vinson called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.
Kelly Nash, Town Clerk took roll call.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Councilwoman Barnes made a motion to approve the agenda as written. Motion was seconded by Councilman Tarascio. Vote was unanimous, 5-0.

DISCUSSION

- 1. WORKSESSION: Discussion on the overall water quality issues in the Town of Atlantic Beach; Stormwater and Wastewater – “Will the continued reliance on individual septic tank systems for wastewater treatment in the Town of Atlantic Beach adequately protect the water quality and the citizens and tourists in the future?”**

Mayor Vinson took the floor by introducing herself and thanked everyone for coming and then turned the floor over to Town Manager, Dave Harvell. Town Manager, Dave Harvell stated that the reason this joint meeting is taking place is to discuss the current storm water and wastewater issued surrounding Atlantic Beach and issues dealing with the current septic systems and what is best for the future of Atlantic Beach regarding these issues. He also stated that Mrs. Judy Hills of Eastern Carolina Council will be facilitating the meeting. He also asked at this time for each individual participating in the discussion to introduce themselves and their occupation.

(Clerk’s Note: Due to the poor quality of the recording device the titles of the following individuals were unavailable).

Todd Miller – Coastal Federation
Patti Fowler – Shellfish Sanitation
Shannon Jenkins – Shellfish Sanitation
J. D. Potts – Shellfish Sanitation
Mike Kelly – Division of Environmental Health
Wayne Mobley – Shellfish Sanitation
Ted Lyon – Water Protection
Troy Dees – Department of Water Quality
Lynn Gilstrap – Carteret Co. Health Department
Charlie Stehman – Division of Water Quality

Town Council Meeting

August 27, 2007

Page 2 of 3

Atlantic Beach Town Council also introduced themselves at this time. Mrs. Judy Hills of Eastern Carolina Council took the floor and advised on the rules and guidelines that will be followed throughout the meeting. She briefly went over the goal for the joint meeting and asked that Mr. Todd Miller start off the discussion.

Mr. Todd Miller advised that this was a loaded question and also stated that septic systems, if properly operated and maintained are pretty reliable. He did state that the main issue that the eastern Carolina areas are facing today is storm water runoff. He stated that even if a centralized septic system was implemented, if it is not properly operated and maintained you will again have problems and this is something the town needs to look at closely.

Patti Fowler noted that she was in agreement with Mr. Miller. She did state that some closed areas of Atlantic Beach, just because a wastewater treatment plant was installed would not open these areas, but the water quality is not bad, but does exceed the shellfish standards. She suggested for the town to make sure collection systems are looked at very closely if a centralized system is being considered. She also commented that the Town should stick with what they have, but implement better quality maintenance.

Councilman Bailey asked if all participants could focus on the issue of septic tanks and water quality issues associated with septic systems. He stated that he feels development needs to take a different issue and be controlled in a different way, but whatever is done, the Town needs to get correct information to be able to present it correctly to the public. He did state that he does not want to discuss growth development and miss some vital information because the main focus is not on the issue and the reason this meeting is taking place.

Shannon Jenkins commented that he did not find a lot of failing septic systems. J. D. Potts stated that the ocean water quality is pristine & the sound water quality is not bad either. He advised that the Town needs to be careful as to what is being presented to the public. It was discussed that the water quality is not as bad as some think in this area and that one thing that needs to be considered is how much pollution is around Atlantic Beach.

Ted Lyon advised that the rules now are stricter than before and that one thing Atlantic Beach may consider is the management of septic systems that are already here. He stated that whatever it cost to build a centralized system, it will also cost to maintain that system.

Troy Dees advised that adequate testing for water quality is provided in Atlantic Beach and that improvements have been made over the years. He stated that on site systems are now being permitted to where alot of the sites previously were not. He noted that decentralization of wastewater is being done across the nation.

Len Gilstrap noted that since the 1990's when enforcement was full force, septic systems have been maintained very well. She advised that her department is taking care of plants as fast as they can and individual systems are being permitted properly and adequately treated. She did note that they do not have the equipment to monitor older systems prior to 1975. She feels that Atlantic Beach needs a sewer system, but no the town as a whole. She feels that there is not enough failing systems that would mandate a complete town-wide system.

Councilman Bailey wanted to get a response as to whether the Town needs to be concerned about issues raised in the 1975 EPA report that was recently publized. Troy Dees advised that the report is thirty-two (32) years old and it was before any rules were set in place.

A discussion was held as to how the sampling of water has improved, but that more sampling is needed to verify as to whether or not the Town has enough of a signification problem to move forward with what is being considered.

Councilwoman Barnes raised the issue, from the report, about flush out into the canals. She questioned that most of the homes on the canals that have been allowed to be rebuilt that as long as the homes stayed within the same footprint the same septic system was allowed to be used that was originally installed back in the 1960's and 1970's. Len Gilstrap advised that she was not aware of any systems that were installed that far back were still in use. Councilwoman Barnes noted that she could name a few that still are in existence and operating.

Councilman Tarascio commented that the Town wants to give home owners the cost of advanced systems. Troy Dees responded to this by stating that in 1992 an eighteen inch (18") sand separation was mandated. The cost for approximately thirty-five (35) to forty (40) types may be estimated at \$20,000-\$50,000 for a three (3) bedroom house. Ted Lyon stated that this is not fair to say that this is the amount citizens would have to pay.

Councilman Warren questioned the individuals from Department of Water Quality Shellfish Sanitation. He noted that it was stated that surveys were used to determine whether septic systems were properly functioning or not and if the Town goes to some type of managed plan for septic systems, how would the surveys be done. J.D. Potts responded to this inquiry, but do to the poor quality of the audio tape, Mr. Potts' comments were inaudible.

Ted Lyon stated that should the town take on the management of existing septic tank systems, both the Division of Water Quality and the local health department will work with whomever to make sure the individuals have the proper training and help the town will need and the town will not be left to fend for itself.

Councilman Warren wanted to know how the rules of 1975 are affecting the systems that were in place prior to 1975, especially when the drain fields were below or at ground water level. What kind of repair rate is being seen for this area? Troy Dees responded by stating in 1975 the concept was such that a contractor would go to a residence, draw something on permit, install it. State rules took effect in 1977. It doesn't believe that there are many, if any at all, septic systems that are prior 1975.

The discussion continued to be held between the various individuals and the Atlantic Beach Town Council on the efficiency of the current septic tank usage in the Town of Atlantic Beach

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Town Council, Councilman Bailey made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Motion was seconded by Councilmember Barnes. Vote was unanimous, 5-0. It was 3:04 p.m.

Submitted by:

Kelly L. Nash, Town Clerk

These minutes were approved at the March 17, 2008 meeting of the Atlantic Beach Town Council.

A. B. Cooper, III, Mayor