

**Town Council Minutes
Morehead City, North Carolina**

Tuesday, April 13, 2021

The Honorable Council of the Town of Morehead City held the Regular monthly meeting on Tuesday, April 13, 2021, in the Municipal Chambers located at 202 South 8th Street, Morehead City, North Carolina.

This meeting was partially conducted utilizing Zoom Video Communication Inc. software due to the COVID-19 crisis and Governor Cooper's Executive Order 141 imposing the requirement to maintain six-foot (6') distancing. Those in attendance were:

COUNCIL PRESENT: Mayor Gerald A. Jones, Jr.; Councilmembers George Ballou, David Horton, Keri V. McCann, William Taylor, and Diane C. Warrender.

STAFF PRESENT: City Attorneys Derek Taylor, City Manager Ryan Eggleston, Deputy Police Chief Bryan Dixon, Human Resources Director Susan Nixon, Communications Director Alize Proisy, Parks and Recreation Director Jerry Riggs, Deputy Fire Chief Courtney Wade, Planning Director Sandi Watkins, and Public Services Director Daniel Williams and City Clerk Cathy Campbell.

OTHERS PRESENT: Elise Clouser of the Carteret News Times, Lisa Rueh, Arrington Moore, and Kayla Brown of Downtown Morehead City Inc., Lucine Beauchard, J. Hunt Brasfield, and Steve Walters.

STAFF PARTICIPATING VIA ZOOM: Finance Director Jewel Lasater.

OTHERS PARTICIPATING VIA ZOOM Dan Cullen, Ann Hill, Richard Shapero, Edward Slaven, and Diane Tootle, and Teresa Vetter.

Mayor Jones called the regular meeting of the Morehead City Town Council to order at 5:30 p.m. with a quorum present. Councilmember Ballou gave invocation and Mayor Jones led the Pledge of Allegiance.

PRESENTATIONS/RECOGNITIONS

Presentation of the NC Main Street Champion Award

Downtown Morehead City Inc. Executive Director Lisa Rueh and Mayor Jones presented the NC Main Street Champion Award to Councilwoman Keri McCann. A video was played noting that Mrs. McCann was selected as a recipient of the award because of her many years of dedication to Downtown Morehead City Inc (DMC) and to the development of the downtown area. In addition to serving as a past board chairman and committee member for DMC and

serving on the Town Council, Mrs. McCann and her husband, Jeff, host many yearlong events that draw visitors to the downtown area. Mrs. McCann is credited as the visionary behind the “Alive at Five” events and many other fundraising events.

Councilmember McCann stated that she is very proud of the award and appreciates everything the DMC staff do for downtown businesses. Mayor Jones stated that Councilmember McCann is very committed to Morehead City and she understands it takes a community to get things done. Councilmember Ballou pointed out that this past Saturday night there was as much activity on the Morehead City waterfront as on Beaufort’s and it made him happy to see it.

CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

Mayor Jones acknowledged that the public hearing scheduled for this evening was postponed to allow more attendance, and sought a motion to amend Item 3.J of the consent agenda to set the public hearing, considering voluntary contiguous annexation of the property located at 301 Highway 24 for May 19, 2021 at 1:00 p.m. Councilmember Taylor made a motion **to amend Consent Agenda Item 3.J changing the date of the public hearing concerning the annexation of 301 Hwy 24 to May 19, 2021 at 1:00 p.m.** Councilmember Warrender seconded.

Councilmember Horton raised concerns about holding the meeting in the afternoon, which might prevent working citizens from being able to participate.

Following a brief discussion, Councilmember Taylor amended his motion **to amend Consent Agenda Item 3.J changing the date of the public hearing concerning the annexation of 301 Hwy 24 to May 19, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.** Councilmember Warrender seconded and the motion carried unanimously. (5-0)

Next, Mayor Jones sought a motion to amend the Item 4.A of the regular agenda, postponing the public hearing to consider the zoning request for 301 Hwy 24. Councilmember Ballou made a motion **to postpone the public hearing, considering request to rezone 301 Highway 24 (Parcel #635615741744000) From R20 (Single-Family Residential) District to RMF-CZ (Residential Multifamily-Conditional Zoning) and CH-CZ (Highway Commercial-Conditional Zoning) Districts until May 19, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. at a location to be announced.** Councilmember Horton seconded and the motion carried unanimously. (5-0)

Then, Mayor Jones sought a motion to conduct a Special Meeting of the Town Council for May 19, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.. Councilmember Horton made a motion **to conduct a Special Meeting of the Town Council on May 19, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. for the purpose of holding public hearings to consider 1) adoption of Ordinance 2021-O-11 requesting to rezone 301 Highway 24 (Parcel #635615741744000) from R20 (Single-Family Residential) District to RMF-CZ (Residential Multifamily-Conditional Zoning) and CH-CZ (Highway Commercial-Conditional Zoning) Districts; 2) to consider amendments to the Town’s CAMA Land Use Plan which may be deemed necessary for approval of Ordinance 2021-O-11, including, but not limited to, allowance of commercial and medium density multifamily development in Neighborhood 9; and 3) adoption of Ordinance 2021-O-12**

approving voluntary contiguous annexation of 301 Highway 24 (PIN #635615741744000).
Councilmember McCann seconded and the motion carried unanimously. (5-0)

Lastly, Mayor Jones sought a motion to add a closed session to the agenda. Councilmember Taylor made a motion **to amend the Regular Agenda, adding a closed session per NCGS 1143.318.11(a)(3) to consult with attorney.** Councilmember Warrender seconded and the motion carried unanimously. (5-0)

Councilmember Ballou made a motion **to approve the Consent Agenda as amended.** Councilmember Taylor seconded and the motion carried unanimously. (5-0)

Included within the Consent Agenda were the following approvals:

- A. Approve the minutes of the March 2, 2021 Town Council Workshop meeting as presented.
- B. Approve the minutes of the March 9, 2021 Special Town Council meeting as presented.
- C. Approve the minutes of the March 9, 2021 Regular Town Council meeting as presented.
- D. Approve the minutes of the March 18, 2021 Special Town Council meeting as presented.
- E. Accept the Finance Director and Tax Collector reports.
- F. Accept Notice of Ad Valorem Tax Overpayments in the amount of \$13,621.62 for March 2021.
- G. Approve the requests for Refunds of Overpayment of Ad Valorem Taxes in the amount of \$6,218.21 for March 2021.
- H. Adopt Budget Ordinance Amendments 2021-09, 2021-10, and 2021-11 as presented.
- I. Approve Annual Audit Contract and Arrangement Letter with PBMears for FYE 6/30/2021.
- J. Adopt Resolution 2021-R-09 Setting the Date of the Public Hearing to Consider Request for Voluntary contiguous Annexation of Property Located at 301 Highway 24 (PIN #635615741744000) for ~~Tuesday, May 11, 2021~~ Wednesday, May 19, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. Under N.C.G.S. 160A-31.

- K. Approve Blue Cross Blue Shield Health Insurance Plan Proposal for FY 2021-2022 as Presented.
- L. Adopt Resolution 2021-R-11 Endorsing the Military Appreciation Day and Authorizing Action Necessary for the Event to be Held June 4-5, 2021 in Downtown Morehead City.
- M. Adopt Resolution 2021-R-12 Endorsing the Big Rock Blue Marlin Fishing Tournament and Authorizing Action Necessary for the Event to be Held June 11-20, 2021.
- N. Adopt Resolution 2021-R-13 Endorsing the Big Rock Kids Billfish Fishing Tournament and Authorizing Action Necessary for the Event to be Held July 14-17, 2021.
- O. Adopt Resolution 2021-R-14 Endorsing the “Alive at Five” Events and Authorizing Action Necessary for the Events to be Held June 25, July 16, August 20, September 2, September 16, and October 14, 2021.
- P. Adopt Resolution 2021-R-15 Endorsing the Swansboro Rotary Bluewater Fishing Tournament and Authorizing Action Necessary for the Event to be Held May 27-31, 2021 on the Morehead City Waterfront.
- Q. Adopt Resolution 2021-R-16 Endorsing the NC Ducks Unlimited Billfish Tournament and Authorizing Action Necessary for the Event to be Held June 21-24, 2021 at Ottis Landing, 705-707 Shepard Street, on the Morehead City Waterfront.
- R. Adopt Resolution 2021-R-17 Endorsing the NC Offshore Challenge Fishing Tournament and Authorizing Action Necessary for the Event to be Held May 21-23, 2021 in Downtown Morehead City.

All above noted ordinances are filed in Ordinance Book #8. Resolutions are attached to and made a part of the minutes herein. Contracts are on file in the City Clerk’s office.

NEW BUSINESS ITEMS

Consider Authorizing Staff to Include the Classification and Compensation Recommended Option #1 in the FY 2021-2022 Draft Budget

City Manager Ryan Eggleston appeared before the Town Council requesting approval of Classification and Compensation Study Option #1 pay plan based upon the discussion held during today’s budget meeting.

Councilmember Warrender made a motion **to approve the recommended Classification and Compensation Study Option #1 pay plan.** Councilmember Taylor seconded and the motion carried unanimously. (5-0)

Consider Approval of CAMA Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Grant Preapplication for Mitchell Village Park Bathroom Facility

Parks and Recreation Director Jerry Riggs appeared before the Town Council seeking direction regarding the CAMA Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Grant preapplication in support of a Mitchell Village Park Bathroom Facility project. The application deadline is this Friday, April 16, 2021 at 2:00 p.m.

Councilmember Taylor made a motion **to approve CAMA Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Grant preapplication in support of the Mitchell Village Park Bathroom Facility.** Councilmember McCann seconded and the motion carried unanimously. (4-1; Horton was opposed)

Councilmember Horton stated that he is opposed because he feels a public hearing should have been held to determine if the neighborhood was in favor of a bathroom facility being added to the park before taking action.

Consider Acceptance of the Critical Lifesaving Upgrade Grant

Deputy Fire Chief Courtney Wade appeared before the Town Council requesting acceptance of the Critical Lifesaving Upgrade Grant from Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation in the amount of \$37,202.28. This grant would be used to replace the 41 Self-Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) Cylinders that will begin to expire this year. No matching funds are required from the city.

Councilmember Horton made a motion **to Accept the Critical Lifesaving Upgrade Grant from Firehouse Subs Public Safety Foundation in the amount of \$37,202.28 to replace SCBA Cylinders.** Councilmember McCann seconded and the motion carried unanimously. (5-0)

Consider Adoption of Budget Ordinance Amendments 2021-12 and 2021-13 In Support of the CAMA Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Grant and Critical Lifesaving Upgrade Grant

City Manager Ryan requested adoption of Budget Ordinance Amendments 2021-12 and 2021-13 in support of the forementioned grants.

Councilmember McCann made a motion **to adopt Budget Ordinance Amendments 2021-12 and 2021-13 in support of the CAMA Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Grant and Critical Lifesaving Upgrade Grant.** Councilmember Ballou seconded and the motion carried unanimously. (5-0)

CITY MANAGER'S REPORT

City Magazine Status: Mr. Eggleston sought Council's direction regarding the name of the new city magazine in light of the letter received from The Carteret News Times opposing the name, "The Mullet Wrapper." After some discussion of how locals are receiving the name fondly and the fact that the first edition is printed and ready for distribution, Council instructed the city manager to move forward with the name "The Mullet Wrapper."

Project Management List Report: Mr. Eggleston advised that he is updating the project management report to include the recently established FY2021-2022 Council goals.

Reporting on the Sugarloaf Island Stabilization project, Mr. Eggleston stated that the past studies recently shared with Council have also been provided to David Mallinson, professor for East Carolina University, as recommended by Councilmember Horton. Professor Mallinson hopes to visit the island within the next couple of weeks, after which he will submit a scope of work for consideration.

Wood Consulting is nearing completion of the Stormwater Plan. It is expected that the report will be shared with Council in May and that a special workshop meeting will be scheduled thereafter for the presentation.

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) project is moving forward. A contractors meeting was held this morning in preparation for bid solicitation. Planning Director Sandi Watkins shared that a couple of properties may drop off due to applicant issues. A more in-depth review will be provided later.

CITIZEN REQUESTS/COMMENTS (2 Minute Time Limit)

Instructions were given again on how to indicate a desire to speak for those participating by telephone or Zoom.

Steve Walters, 101 Edwards Drive, Morehead City: Mr. Walters expressed concern for safety of family, friends and those traveling Highway 24 based upon the proposed rezoning of 301 Highway 24. He stated that they regret that the decision was delayed, and assured Council that any further delay would not diminish their concern. He stated that the Council and public are in this decision together, and that they will continue to provide information that will aid in the decision-making process.

J. Hunt Brasfield, 169 Lands Inn Road, Morehead City: Mr. Brasfield noted that the hearing concerning the rezoning of 301 Highway 24 had been postponed five times since November 2020, and that the public was notified again this morning, the day of the scheduled hearing, that it would be delayed again. He shared that the opposition has spent thousands of dollars gathering information to show the risks that the proposed rezoning will create and asked that there be no further delays.

Lucine Beauchard, 221 Land End Road, Morehead City: Ms. Beauchard thanked Council for their attention to the documents provided to them. She assured Council that they (coalition opposing the rezoning request) would work collectively to make sure the Council has the facts needed to make an informed decision, and that they will work together with the Town to build a community where businesses flourish, and our neighborhoods feel safe while advancing into the future.

COUNCIL REQUESTS/COMMENTS

Councilmember Warrender congratulated Councilmember McCann on her well-deserved award.

Councilmember Taylor also congratulated Councilmember McCann stating that he cannot think of anyone who deserves it more. He thanked everyone who has written letters, emails or spoke with him regarding the rezoning request. Stating that he traditionally believes property owners should have the right to use their property as they desire, he also understands that surrounding property owners have rights as well. He agreed that it was best to postpone the meeting to give everyone a chance to attend and be heard.

Councilmember Horton extended congratulations to Councilmember McCann as well and stated that Jack's was a key catalyst in spurring the resurgence of downtown and the waterfront. He too felt it was best to delay the hearing. He assured those in attendance that Council is taking the matter very serious.

Councilmember McCann thanked everyone for their kind words and support. She shared that she is humbled to even be considered for the award and very proud to have been chosen. Concerning the rezoning, she stated that not everyone is going to be happy with Council's decision; however, she assured that everyone will know the reason for her decision when it is finished.

Mayor Jones thanked everyone for attending and participating in the meeting tonight.

APPROVE THE MARCH 2 AND MARCH 9, 2021 CLOSED SESSION MINUTES AS PRESENTED

After reviewing the minutes provided by City Clerk Cathy Campbell, Councilmember Ballou made a motion **to approve the March 2 and March 9, 2021 closed session minutes as presented.** Councilmember Warrender seconded and the motion carried unanimously. (5-0)

CLOSED SESSION PER NCGS 143.318.11(a)(3) TO CONSULT WITH ATTORNEY.

Councilmember Horton made a motion **to enter into Closed Session at 6:24 p.m. per NCGS 143.318.11(a)(3) to consult with city attorney.** Councilmember Taylor seconded and the motion carried unanimously (5-0).

Councilmember Taylor moved **to return to OPEN SESSION at 7:07 p.m.**
Councilmember Horton seconded and the motion carried unanimously. (5-0)

ADJOURNMENT

There being no other business to discuss, Mayor Jones adjourned the meeting 7:07 p.m.

Gerald A. Jones, Jr., Mayor

Attest:

Cathy Campbell, City Clerk