

May 9, 2008 - Meeting Summation

The meeting included a broad representation from the island. Joining Carolina Beach officials, were the town manager and a councilman from Kure Beach, and board members from both the Pleasure Island Chamber of Commerce and the Pleasure Island Foundation for a Sustainable Community; and the publishers of Snow's Cut Monthly magazine.

The meeting was organized by town appointed members of the Carolina Beach Business and Economic Development Committee who are: Alan Pacek, Chair and owner of 5 Star Commercial Real Estate; Mike Kirkbride, Vice-Chair and owner of Kirkbride Homes, Tom Campbell, Secretary and owner of Beach PC; former CB Councilman Jack Lynch; Al Olivolo, the owner of an internet company; Johnny Davis a local builder, and Leann Pierce, boardwalk property/business owner and local realtor.

One of the charges of this committee is to find the ways and means to implement changes guided by the vision of the Master Plan. Project Development Financing is a new economic development tool recently authorized in North Carolina. Known as tax increment financing (TIF), in many other states, it is a means for local government to stimulate private investment by building public improvements within a targeted area. Too often, Master Plan studies end up collecting dust, rather than being acted upon to construct parking decks, bury overhead utility wires, build meeting and conference space, widen sidewalks to encourage outdoor cafes' with street energy, and and plant trees along side bike lanes to shade and green our environment. These are some of the improvements envisioned in the most recent Master Plan, as well as many of the older plans none of which happened.

The benefits of a TIF district are also being explored by others in attendance: Mayor Pro Tem Dan Wilcox and Town Manager Tim Owens from Carolina Beach; Duke Hagestrom, Paula Bradford, Greg Reynolds, and Bruce Holsten all officers of either the Chamber and/or the Foundation; Mike and Janet Hoffer from Snow's Cut; and from Kure Beach there were Councilman James Vattr and Town Administrator Michelle James, as well as a brief appearance by Mayor Mac Montgomery on his way to another meeting.

Joining Avril Pinder from New Hanover County's finance department was Shelia Boyd, a Financial Analyst with the Tourism Development Authority (TDA). Avril was impressed by by the committee's broad-based support through it's outreach to other organizations and neighboring communities, it's diligence in exploring and understanding this new to NC tool, and how the committee is integrating a TIF district within the context of Carolina Beach's Master Plan recommendations.

The central business district of Carolina Beach, including the Boardwalk, is a text book example of an area that would benefit from a TIF district. As the committee continues to refine the TIF concept to best apply it to Carolina Beach, the commitment made by Avril that future meetings will be attended by either herself or Shelia, was the perfect outcome at the conclusion of this meeting.

Alan Pacek