

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING
OF THE TOWN COUNCIL
TOWN OF CAROLINA BEACH**

August 23, 2011

The Town Council of the Town of Carolina Beach met in a special meeting with the members of the ad-hoc Lake Park Blvd. Committee on August 23, 2011 in the council room at the Municipal Administration Building, 1121 N. Lake Park Blvd., Carolina Beach, North Carolina. The following were present: Mayor Joel Macon, Mayor Pro Tem (MPT) Pat Efirid; Councilman Dan Wilcox; Councilman Bob Lewis and Councilman Lonnie Lashley. The following members of the Lake Park Blvd. Committee were present: Dennis Barbour, Jerry Bigley, LeAnn Pierce, Ron Clontz, and Mike Kirkbride. The following representatives from NCDOT were present: Chad Kimes and Katie Hite. Also present was the Town Manager Tim Owens and Town Clerk Lynn Prusa.

The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the possibility of contracting with NCDOT to perform the work and bid the project to return Lake Park Blvd. back from 3 lanes to 4 lanes from Carl Winner to Hamlet/Fayetteville Avenue among others issues concerning parking, street alignment, crosswalks and other related matters.

Mayor Macon turned the meeting over to the town manager.

Mr. Owens went over the meeting goals:

- Review and discuss construction options for returning Lake Park Boulevard back to a 4 lane roadway in the CBD
- Review and discuss possible improvements to Lake Park Boulevard as a 4 lane section that might improve bike and pedestrian safety and use
- Discuss and consider options for the Harper/Lake Park Boulevard intersection alignment
- Discuss and consider locations for high visibility crosswalks

He went over resurfacing options:

Micro-Surfacing

- Placement of a thin asphalt mix over the entire road surface after the lines have been removed.
- Estimated cost for the entire roadway is \$110,000 to \$164,000
- NCDOT may need to resurface the roadway within 8 to 10 years
- May have a different appearance and texture than standard asphalt mix

Mill and Fill

- Mill all travel lanes and leave parking areas in place as they current exist. Place back asphalt in the areas that are milled.
- Estimated cost at \$192,800
- This method of resurfacing will blend with existing asphalt and the new work should be virtually undetectable
- Longer life span

He said there is a 12 ft. standard lane width and similar to previous striping. He said 11 ft. all lanes would allow for 2 additional feet on each side for parking back out and sidewalk when redeveloped. The 12 ft. outer lanes and 11 ft. inner lane would allow for an additional 1 ft. on each side of the street for parking back out space and sidewalk when redeveloped.

The owner of the Fat Pelican, Danny McLaughlin, was in the audience and he asked about the price to resurface. He also asked, if the first option is cheaper but not as long lasting, wouldn't it be better to do that now since it is not long term and we may change it back later? The Mayor said if we change it back to 4 lanes it won't get changed again. The only thing is if we do the Master Plan we will probably just change the sidewalks to 2' on each side. Mr. McLaughlin asked about the life of roadways. Mr. Owens said 6-8 years for micro-surfacing and 15-20 regular asphalt and it will look more like what is out there now.

There was a question from a lady in the audience about whether we will have to dig up the street again because of drainage issues, sewer lines, etc. and would it be better or not to go with the less expensive option. Mr. Owens said we may have to do that anyways and if we do the micro-surfacing people are not going to be happy with the way that it looks. He understands what is being said, but that is something Council will have to decide.

Next, the manager went over the pros and cons of 4 lanes with angled parking:

Pros

- Same as old design
- Allows for more parking next to businesses

Cons

- Not typical of a well designed CBD
- Limited visibility to back out

The manager and Ms. Held went over with Council and the committee a plan/layout design and went over the lane widths.

Mr. Owens said in this scenario there is no room for a bike path.

Ms. Hite clarified that all 4 lanes in the area of Harper Avenue to Carl Winner would be 11'.

A resident, Tony Jenzano, commented that he thinks it is safer not to have biking downtown because people get a feeling of confidence with that bike path and they don't pay attention.

Mr. McLaughlin said he doesn't know of another town that has a bike path on the main street and he asked if anyone else knew of any towns that do. Several people answered and said they do know of other towns that have bike paths on main streets.

Next, Mr. Owens went over the pros and cons of 4 lanes with parallel parking:

Pros

- Consistent with Master Plan and expanding pedestrian areas
- Reduces visibility issues backing out

Cons

- Will reduce number of parking spaces by about 30% from about 70 spaces to 45 spaces
- Town would have to add additional parking on Harper and Cape Fear at an additional cost (not known)
- Total cost of the milling and asphalt could go up by \$30,000+

Mr. Bigley stressed that he feels the town should go back to what it used to be and with the angled parking.

Mr. Owens thanked Katie Hite for her hard work on the plan.

Mayor Macon asked Mr. Kirkbride what his opinion is of the bike path and the possibility of having none. Mr. Kirkbride said he doesn't think the shared lane in a two block section served well and he prefers sharrows there and not diagonal parking personally, because he hates backing out, but he understands the businesses' standpoint and if we want to forgo safety temporarily and do sharrows ...

Mr. Owens said in the future if we do sidewalks and in that 8' area you could add 4-6' on each side and he shared with Council another plan.

Councilman Lashley asked Mr. Kirkbride to explain what is a sharrow. Mr. Kirkbride said there is a bicycle sign in the lanes to show people that if there is a car in that lane the priority goes to the bike and the bike can ride in that lane. Wilmington is adopting

several sharrows and it is being received well there for traffic claming problems and it was done at the request of some of their neighbors. Our situation is a little different but we know we are going to have bicycles in town and the sharrows give room to that. Mr. Owens said that typically the lane is a little wider. Mr. Kirkbride said the big cities are adopting this too because they see bicycles as another mode of transportation.

Carolyn Butler of 307 Greenville said she thinks the rental bikes should be directed off the main road to 4th Street and down that way. She thinks we all agree that we need to keep angled parking and we cannot keep the bike lane. She suggested that the town try to get the rental companies to move off of the main drag.

Councilman Wilcox said we can tell people what kind of behavioral patters we want them to have all day long but it doesn't matter. People have been riding on the streets and behind those diagonal parking spaces for years. He said that every year he sees more people come across the bridge with their bicycles and kayaks, in their vehicles and one of the purposes of making the CBD healthier is to connect the community and CBD and bicycles and pedestrians is the way to make it happen. People are still going to be riding downtown and we need to provide the safest scenario that we can.

Mr. Owens said sharrows may/may not be allowed but you can do share the road type signage.

Mr. Jenzano said I agree with Dan that people are going to ride their bikes and with the bike paths they still ride on the sidewalks because it is human nature. I don't know if it is safer or not, but the majority of traffic is cars and I feel that the bikes if they want to ride downtown through that two block area I don't see the reason why they cannot walk their bikes. If they are going to town to Wilmington or Kure Beach then we need something on the back road. If they are going to McDonald's then they can ride their bike to a certain point then walk their bike to McDonald's. I don't think we should base our whole road system on a bike path.

Councilman Wilcox said he believes the general consensus is to eliminate the bike lanes. The question is that people are still riding bikes down there and what is the safest way to create some markings because people are going to be in that lane at some point and time? One of options is signage.

Mr. McLaughlin said we were sharing the roads before. He likes the idea of signs and eliminating the lines. He said that he rides his bicycle more than he drives some of his vehicles and we have been sharing the road for years.

Mr. Barbour said I think we are all in agreement. First of all if we go back to four lanes there is no question that you cannot leave everything in with diagonal parking. It appears the consensus is diagonal parking which is what our committee assumed would happen if we go back to four lanes. If you push the time back there were people riding down the lanes or pushing bikes down the sidewalks and everybody got along. Drivers when they

are respectful will stop and let people cross to go over to McDonalds or Hardees. It could have some kind of signage that says to share the lanes with bikers.

Mr. Kirkbride said that if you go to a town like Boulder or Breckenridge Colorado or a town that is very bike oriented the feeling is dependent on quite enjoyment. We are a resort town that is dependent on quite enjoyment. He likes the idea of getting to one end of town to the other quickly but on the other hand if you take a snap shot of our town compared to a town like Breckenridge versus our town – just in the pedestrian crossing element at a pedestrian crossing in Boulder all 4 lanes of traffic stop and there is a level of awareness that we just don't have here. If you come to our pedestrian stops at our town people will wait forever on that curb before attempting to cross because cars go through hot fast and don't think about stopping like in town such as Boulder that has a well developed bike orientation. There is an entirely different feel. So anything we can do to share would be great and in our favor. A two block long bike lane isn't a good thing. He is okay with letting go of the bike lane because the two block area was awkward. He said that some towns put a cone in the middle of the crosswalk with signage to stop for pedestrians in the crosswalk and he would like to see our town adopt some of those safety requirements that will benefit us in the long run. Other towns such as Boulder, CO, have a level of awareness about crosswalks that we don't have.

Ms. Linda Lashley of 1818 S Lake Park Blvd., thanked Mr. Kirkbride for approaching that subject. She has been observing crosswalks. She said that when a pedestrian puts his foot down at a crosswalk she stops but she has almost had people smash into her bumper because it isn't very clear what we do here. The law needs to be posted where we can all see it, because if some obey it and some don't we are going to create havoc. She asked the police chief to tell everyone what the law is.

The police chief said the state law does say that you have to stop for pedestrians in the crosswalk but that is new to us. Mr. Owens agreed that it is new to North Carolina and other areas do have signage posted.

The Mayor said also at Carl Winner we need a sign that says it is okay in North Carolina to take a right turn on red.

Mr. Clontz said in Gatlingburg, Tennessee their crosswalks jump out at you at are easy to see.

Mr. Owens said it sounds like the consensus is to have 4 lanes with parallel parking, high visibility crosswalks. Council would also like to hold a public hearing in September. Council was in general agreement to budget another \$8,000 for crosswalk.

Katie Hite said the outside lanes will be 14-15' between Charlotte and Harper. Mayor Macon said that would give extra room for sharrows and diagonal parking. Ms. Hite agreed. Tim said this would also allow for a wider sidewalk in the future.

A motion was made by Mayor Macon to keep the diagonal parking with 4 lanes, make the inside lane 11 ft which will give a little more room with the diagonal parking. The lane will not be a bike lane but would be big enough to accommodate a sharrow; make the outside lane a sharrow with signage if DOT will allow it; and approve \$200,000 to come from the Tourism Fund as recommended and use the mill and fill process. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

There was discussion about the locations of the crosswalks and how many are needed. Councilman Wilcox said he is concerned that if we put in too many crosswalks then we might create a problem with stopping traffic. He said maybe we should put in two and see what the traffic does and then maybe add more.

Mr. Owens said we already have plans to put crosswalks in at Texas and Alabama.

Linda Lashley asked if you really want to put in 5 crosswalks in a row in the Wilmington Beach area.

Mayor Macon said that Alabama, Ocean and Tennessee are not right beside each other.

A motion was made by Councilman Lashley to put crosswalks in at Alabama, Ocean and Tennessee. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Mr. Owens said he thinks that is good and then we can go back and evaluate.

Mr. Kirkbride asked about putting the cone in the middle of the crosswalk during the summer. Mr. Kimes said if they have space for it then they can consider it.

Mr. Barbour said the committee is pretty much done with the recommendations and he asked Council if the committee should be disbanded if you think our job is done.

Councilman Lewis asked about correcting the timing of traffic signals. The lights are still 4-6 minutes and that should be changed when we go back to 4 lanes. Mr. Kimes said we will have a whole new signal design.

A motion was made by Mayor Macon to dissolve the traffic committee. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Mr. Owens said he would like to give Council an update concerning Hurricane Irene.

Mr. Bigley said he would like there to be some rational decision made on closing the bridge. Chief Younginer said the bridge will be closed when the winds are 45 mph sustained.

Mr. Owens said the hurricane is current turning a bit to the east. He gave Council an update on what the staff has been doing to prepare. We have been in touch with the volunteers and will probably meet Thursday night to organize with the damage

assessment team. The bridge will be closed when we have 45 mph winds and it will be closed in conjunction with Kure Beach. The EOC will most likely open Friday morning. They are predicting that the hurricane will hit land Saturday morning. The lake is being pumped now and we rented extra pumps. The planning director is talked to the amusement folks about securing the rides.

Mayor Macon thanked Councilman Wilcox concerning his efforts relating to the inlet situation and for the successful meeting. He also thanked Dennis Barbour, Ray Rothrock and others that showed up.

Mayor Macon made a motion was made to go into a closed session to discuss attorney client matters in compliance with NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3). MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Council returned to open session.

Mayor Macon made a motion to adopt Resolution No. 11-1060 (Exhibit 1) authorizing the filing of condemnation action to acquire public street right of way and easement interest to reconnect Carolina Beach Avenue North to Harper Avenue intersection. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn N. Prusa
Town Clerk

Approved: _____