

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

February 4, 2010

The Town Council of the Town of Carolina Beach met in special session on February 4, 2010 at 9:00 a.m. in the training room at the Municipal Administration Building, 1121 N. Lake Park Blvd., Carolina Beach, North Carolina to meet with representatives from Peter J Smith and Associates concerning the streetscape plan. The following were present: Mayor Joel Macon; Mayor Pro Tem (MPT) Pat Efird; Councilman Dan Wilcox; and Councilman Lonnie Lashley. Also present were Town Manager Tim Owens; Town Clerk Lynn Prusa; Town Attorney Steve Coggins, and Finance Director Dawn Johnson. Councilman Bob Lewis was absent.

Mayor Pro Tem Efird called the meeting to order, and announced that Mayor Macon is running a little late. Councilman Lewis was unable to attend due to his work schedule.

Mr. Owens said that Peter J Smith could not be here today but he sent two representatives from his company to give an overview of the process to date.

The first to speak was Mr. Paul Carabott. He talked about the streetscape design and the direct link between the streetscape and the Master Development Plan. This project was a recommendation in the MDP and was part of the strategy to revitalize the town. Also part of this study Progress Energy, AT&T and Charter Cable looked at the potential to go underground with the overhead utilities. They have identified some preliminary construction cost and phasing. This provides the framework to take the next step which is the detailed design. There are certain details to be resolved with DOT with the design but fundamentally they support the plan being presented today.

With the streetscape plan he said we are not looking to move cars faster but to slow cars down. We want people to park their cars, get out and go into the businesses, etc.

The plan calls for bicycle lanes and to improve the aesthetic quality of the town to include street trees and green the community.

There are 3 types of streets they are considering and they are referred to as the main street core, the main street transition and the transit street.

Mayor Macon arrived at approximately 9:15 a.m.

Mr. Carabott then turned the presentation over to Andrew Schrauth. He began by talking about the area referred to as the main street core, boundaries extending from Lake Park Blvd. from Harper down to Hamlet and Harper and Cape Fear east to the Ocean. Those are the main downtown streets. 98 ft. of right of way, 88 ft of asphalt with about 98% of that space dedicated to vehicles not leaving much for pedestrians or commercial businesses to utilize the access to get people in. We want to reconfigure so there will be a better balance between the two and we are looking at 2 travel lanes 1 in each direction and a center turn lane with a bike lane on each side and parallel parking on each side and

an 8' pedestrian zone on either side and each pedestrian zone broken up into 2 areas with a clear zone for walking a zone closer to the street to organize the street amenities such as street trees, lights, etc. We want to reorganize the whole space so it is easier to get around with shade trees, etc. He said we carried the sidewalk pattern across the street, pulling it around and across the street so it is tied in with the sidewalk. There is a major pavement inscription at each street intersection. Councilman Lashley asked about the percentage of asphalt compared to pedestrians Mr. Schrauth said with parallel parking it adds up to quite a bit. Someone asked about the percentage of parallel parking design and how it helps too to slow the traffic down. He said the percentage of pedestrian versus asphalt is about 60/40 in that range on Lake Park Blvd. It reduces slightly because when we go to the side streets it narrows in the pedestrian zone. The size of the bike lanes are as recommended by DOT with 4' in width with 1-1/2' or off set between the bike lane and parking. On the southern side of the main street core it narrows and parking in on one side. On Charlotte there is one pedestrian crosswalk and it will have to be signed and marked as recommended by DOT. He went over the landscaping along the streets. He went over the transition lanes with 80' right of way and narrows when moving further south. From Fayetteville to Woody Hewett there would be a 60' right of way with 2 lanes of travel and 2 bike lanes all the way down to Woody Hewett.

On Lake Park we would be decreasing parking but overall we would be increasing the amount of parking because we are shifting it to the side streets.

Next he went over the north main street transition. We carry the 2 travel lanes and center turn and at Harper a dedicated left turn lane. There will be 2 bike lanes on either side. Also there will be two curb cuts. It would be closed off at the corner of bank for safety. We have organized that and at McDonald's we have given the bank their access there and clumped the two so pedestrians can manage all the cars coming out there. They will need to get the businesses input on this. It isn't as convenient but it should function better for the public. Also for safety reasons further on down across from Carl Winner we suggested closing a curb cut at the Blue Reef with access on Florence. Further out north on the transition street there is 65' right of way and we would keep it 3 lanes with a center turn lane and at times we would restrict the north bound traffic from taking a left turn on Lumberton and Goldsboro for safety reasons. There would two bike lanes on St. Joseph and that is where it will end. There would continue to be landscaping. They reconfigured some of the curb cuts. Also at St. Joseph to reorganize and suggesting one 90 degree opening to simply that area. Also at St. Joseph with a welcome sign something to suggest you are here so people start slowing down and looking around.

Tom Campbell with the Master Development Plan Implementation Committee asked what is the logic in the transition from 4 lanes in each direction down to 3 lanes around the St. Joseph area? Why not bring it all the way down to Carl Winner? Mr. Schrauth said from my understanding 3 lanes can operate as efficiently as 4 lanes. People understand more what they are doing with 3 lanes. There are a lot of people that just take a left there. We suggest there has to be a trial period with a lot of signage and with public info that we are going from 4 lanes down to 2 with a center turn lane with striping and signage on the road for drivers.

He then went over the transit streets which are Harper and Cape Fear. At Harper they are suggesting a central parking zone with 1 car on each side with ample roadway on each side of that with bike lanes on each side of those with parallel parking and sidewalks to the edge of the right of way. The right of way is about 100' and because of that we are suggesting street trees of the right of way but you should work with the homeowner. Also with the parking because existing now the residences park on the grass we suggest that 10 parking spaces be reserved for the residents with signage. Also we show a crosswalk at Third Street and a traffic circle to resolve the wider open and loose intersection. All of this would have to be accepted by DOT and all parties before it is implemented. We get more parking on this street to offset what we lose on Lake Park Blvd. On Cape Fear they have done a similar thing but less of a right of way with only angled parking in the center row. Also they are suggesting another traffic circle, and a large area in front of Sea Merchants for their deliveries.

At this point he asked for questions.

The manager commented that the Master Development Plan Implementation Committee looked at the plan and came up with some suggestions that he will compile and share with Council at some point.

Councilman Wilcox said he assumes when you are looking at these items involving DOT that you have some good feel that DOT is going to be okay with it. Mr. Schrauth said they met with DOT and it seems that they bought into the concept. Mr. Owens said basically they suggested that we take it to the MPO and get it endorsed as a concept, but until that time it is still up in the air. They did endorse the 3 lane surface. We are going to have a public hearing Tuesday night to consider going to 3 lanes. The term is "road diet." They suggest that we do it now and should be at their cost unless there are some cost overruns.

Councilman Wilcox said we need to make sure that some of these things are realistic. He has concerns about the Bank of America scenario and the elimination of parking down by The Grind. The manager said the concert is done in other towns and it is a negotiation process. These are suggestions and people may not agree to it and the Reef is another one that may not go over.

This is all contingent on underground utilities and such. Mr. Schrauth said it is his understanding they have come up with a plan. Mr. Owens said in addition to the cost estimate he would like to see the other elements we don't know such as town's portion, permitting, etc. Mr. Wilcox said did anyone look at the private side's expense. Mr. Owens said Sid Livingston did look at that and we have tasked DOT to come back to us in 30 days with some more refined comments other than nodding heads. Mr. Wilcox said we need to talk to county and find out what they are going to require of the homeowners. The problem is there is some question about what the code is.

Mr. Carabott said within the study area there are 187 on street parking spaces today. The plan identifies 205 on street parking spaces but some have been relocated and what we lose on Lake Park Blvd going from angled to parallel you recover on Harper and Cape Fear. Mr. Owens said a lot of that will be a wash because of the location of transformers. Mr. Carabott agreed that it will be close. Right now homeowners living on Harper park their vehicles on the grassy areas and those aren't being considered so if we take those 10 places and deduct that number then we are really close again to a wash, but the key thing is that we really haven't lost any spaces.

Another thing he touched on is that they are trying to fundamentally change this street from a thoroughfare to a main street – a real pedestrian area with retail shopping, etc. Certain intersections will require a 45 feet turning radius because of trucks, but other areas that are more residential in nature they would like to tighten up. So across the board they will not be able to apply across the board all engineering standards that DOT would typically apply or we will end up with a state highway.

Next he talked about design character. They are trying to create a character that is unique to Carolina Beach. A lot of the comments in the study were about preserving the history of Carolina Beach and recapturing the spirit so they have gone back to that time period of the 50's and 60's which is futurism/post-war modernism. He shared with Council some sketches of things such as sun shelters, benches, signage, lighting, etc.

One of the design characteristics mentioned was using a colored concrete and Councilman Wilcox mentioned his concerns about matching up colors when areas need to be replaced.

In conclusion he talked about phasing in the plan and provided cost estimates (Exhibit 1).

The Mayor said we need an agreed on design and then we can move on with the details based on DOT, etc. He suggested that we need to finalize what our decision is about the plan. Mr. Wilcox said we need to get it to the Master Development Plan Implementation Committee. The manager suggested a more detailed discussion at a workshop at which time they could really eyeball it and then eventually adopt or endorse it.

Councilman Wilcox asked about the walkways areas and island refuge. Mr. Owens said they will allow hopefully one at Hamlet and Atlanta with the new pavement. Councilman Wilcox said whenever we get to this project it will have to be in concert with the underground utilities so it will be a major project. Mr. Owens said we could probably phase it in.

Mayor Macon said we need to finalize the design and then the next step will be the details. Mr. Owens said he can put it on the March agenda to determine what the next direction will be.

There being no further business to discuss, MPT Efird made a motion to adjourn.
MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn N. Prusa
Town Clerk

Approved: _____