

**MINUTES OF THE MASTER DEVELOPMENT PLAN MEETING  
OF NOVEMBER 6, 2008 OF THE TOWN COUNCIL  
TOWN OF CAROLINA BEACH**

*November 6, 2008*

The Town Council of the Town of Carolina Beach met in a special session for the Master Development Plan public hearing on November 6, 2008 at 7:00 p.m. in the Council Chambers 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) Dan Wilcox; and Councilwoman Efirid. Also present were the Town Manager Tim Owens and the Town Clerk Lynn Prusa. Councilman Alan Gilbert and Council Jerry Johnson were absent.

Mayor Macon called the meeting to order and turned it over to the town manager.

***PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION CONCERNING MASTER DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT***

Tim Owens said tonight's meeting is basically an overview of what they have done in the master development process and what they are possibly planning to do and to give the audience a chance to make comments or ask questions about where they stand in the master development. Mr. Owens made a Power Point presentation (*see Exhibit 1 for copy of presentation excluding maps*).

Following the presentation, Gerald Bigley asked to speak. Mr. Bigley said he owns several properties in the area, and he is very disappointed and has been waiting for about 2 years to negotiate with the town again on extending Carl Winner Street, to make the right hand turn bigger and larger. About 4 years ago he donated land to the town and he has been waiting for almost 3 years to see what was going to happen. He has a big restaurant there and he is very disappointed the other two people are not here tonight since it is such a crucial meeting tonight. The main thing he wants to know is what is going to happen with Carl Winner Street. He is willing to negotiate with the town and do what is right for the town. Mr. Bigley said that God has blessed him. He came in 34 years ago and he is trying to do good with everybody. He is very disappointed the town hasn't done anything with that land.

Mayor Macon said the town manager would contact him on Monday.

Jack McCaig, Beach Harbour, said he is a developer/builder, etc. said he has seen things about this in the paper but he didn't see anything about this, if you were going to be separating where people walk and ride bikes or if there was going to be any public transportation since those items raise the property value so much in a town or city. He was wondering if the town has any plans for that. He didn't see anything about people and separating them and the dangers from one another - people on bikes and walking.

Mayor Macon said all of that is under consideration and part of the reason they are talking about changing it from a 4 lane highway to a 2 lane so that it is bike and pedestrian friendly.

Mr. Owens said on the main streets there are 16 foot sidewalks. They could consider a number of different things. He was recently in Europe and they had areas where you could do bike lanes on a sidewalk. There is a bike lane shown from Dow Road all the way down to the lake and there are different types of roads. St. Joseph shows sidewalks, sidewalks all the way up Harper and Cape Fear. They are applying for a Safe Routes to School grant to infill some of the stuff in our current town and they are also looking at Dow Road, trying to connect a bike path from the wildlife ramp all the way down to Kure Beach. He thinks bicycling/pedestrian type facilities are very important to the town and they are trying to preplan those. You will see some of that concept in core area.

Mr. McCaig said he question was mainly if there is going to be a separation so that you are not walking next to a road or riding a bike on a road. If the traffic is completely separated that raises the property value of communities so much.

Mr. Owens said that in some areas yes and in some areas no. A separated path on Dow Road to him would be ideal but there are some design standards where speed comes into play outside of the right-of-way but most everything, pedestrian stuff you have to separate somehow so it will be a mix of all of it.

Mayor Macon said that in the downtown area the speed limit is 25 MPH.

Mr. McCaig said that the aesthetic difference between walking beside cars and walking beside the beach are two different things.

Mayor Macon said that aesthetically, as far as walking, there will be a good separation in a parking area.

Mr. Owens said this (shown on overhead) is typical for urban areas, with a bicycle lane, as shown, but as you get out towards Third Street it becomes more residential and someday he could see a separated path.

Mr. McCaig said that not all streets need to be two ways and not all streets need cars on them and the values of property, the whole town, and you can get more taxes if you have that separation. His other question was about public transportation.

Mr. Owens said they showed some park area here, the Town Hall and the Recreation Center and the intent is to tie all of that in either through attached paths or sidewalks or all of it. All of this would try to be interconnected. The town's plan shows it a little better.

Mr. McCaig said that in Portland, Oregon, they are not losing any property value right now, it is going up. Where in some other parts of the country, their property values are going down because they don't have those things in their communities.

Mr. Owens said this was planned as a community and multi-modal center so that someday there could be a possibility for a bus route there or trolley service or something of that nature. That was conceptually what the design was, that this could be a senior center and a library and a teen center as well as hub for public transportation.

MPT Wilcox said they tried to get the trolley service down here last year and we are trying this year for public transportation.

Mr. Owens said they just sent out an RFP to see if anyone was interested.

Mr. McCaig said he knows that WAVE Transportation is very much in favor of getting down here and he knows the town is working on finances with them.

MPT Wilcox said they have had numerous meetings about these things and talked about bits and pieces of the cost at each of those meetings and Mr. Owens went through some of them tonight. He asked if he had a total. He said it looks like it is about \$220,000 to \$250,000 that it is going to cost the town to get to the point where we have surveys and striping. Mr. Owens said yes, the master plan is \$130,000; \$65,000 for Peter J. Smith to do the development documents; \$120,000 in surveying; roughly \$40,000 for the traffic engineering part of it; \$100,000 for the utility companies. That should probably get us to where we need to do the re-striping, surfacing, etc. MPT Wilcox said that is about \$225,000 in addition to the Master Plan. Mr. Owens said yes and that doesn't even touch on what we need to do underground utility-wise - that is a million dollars to fix our infrastructure and Lake Park. The other aspect of it is to get out the bids, you will have to do some engineering documents and bid documents which will cost a percentage of \$250,000 to \$500,000.

MPT Wilcox said we have a point we have to get to before September which includes doing all these surveys and studies and engineering and put all of this information in place and that is going to cost us, as a town, \$250,000 to get to that point and that is not implementation on many of those items, it's just the engineering, design, streetscape, streetscape design, striping plans, surveys, technical studies and things of that nature.

Mr. Owens said that is right and the intent is to go back and resurface and hopefully we can receive an appropriation from entity, state, federal, whatever, grants. He doesn't anticipate that whole project area being built at once. The good thing is we have a plan if a master developer would come in here or the core area wants to get together and redevelop, that area is planned for that growth and the implementation can coincide with some redevelopment or it may take 5 or 10 years or it may take 2 years.

MPT Wilcox said the Master Plan is multi millions of dollars. He is making the point that the town is committed. The Council is committed to the point where they are looking at spending another \$250,000 just to get this technical information available before the roads are resurfaced.

*(Note for the record: Councilman Johnson arrived at approximately 7:37 pm.)*

Mr. Owens said that is correct. He continued with the presentation. He concluded by saying there is a lot going on, a lot of projects, a lot of grants - a lot of good projects they are doing for the town .

Gerald Bigley said he would like to get those parking meters removed behind is restaurant. They are ugly and disgraceful looking. Also, if they want to build a parking deck - he is the president of JF Enterprises, Inc. and he would be very interested in doing something with the town with that too. Also, the land behind his property there, to bring the water almost up to the front street and he would like to talk to the town about that too. He said the town is moving forward and he appreciates it very much.

Danny McLoughlin, Fat Pelican, Carolina Beach, said the parking lot across the street is not owned by the town, he believes, and if that parking lot is removed and the streets are done like the plan says with one lane coming down in front of his place, traffic will back up. If someone develops the parking lot, there is not parking lot besides the little bitty one over in the corner that is not advertised in front of the Marriott. We won't have any parking on that side of the CBD unless they walk a block or 1 ½ blocks. Traffic waiting to pull in for parallel parking - we haven't had any accidents down there that he knows of with people backing out into traffic but with one lane, with somebody waiting to get into a parking place, it's going to back traffic up. He doesn't know how the surveys were done but it seems like to him that summer traffic will be backed up all the way to the bridge if they come through the middle of the town. Parking is the main issue for him. He has spent a long time with parking and losing the spaces out in front of his place will not help his business or anybody else's business in that block. It will look pretty but we could still make it look good with these places that are marked out with white lines. They could be making little planters like they did around the big poles where the women came out and he thinks it didn't cost the town anything except for watering. We could beautify that street without having to make it one lane with planters out in the middle of it. He thinks they tried that in Fayetteville and had to tear it out. A 12 foot wide sidewalk, with nobody to walk on the sidewalk, it won't do you any good. If he looks up the street, he watches more traffic than he does pedestrians. They need a place to get out and walk on the sidewalk and a reason to walk on the sidewalk. He does not want to see that plan go through. It doesn't make much sense to him.

MPT Wilcox said that the town just authorized Wilbur Smith to do a study on that traffic flow through the center of town. They do have traffic counts from July and high season counts they have been taking through the years that they can apply to that study. Mr. McLoughlin said if we lose that parking near the Marriott then we won't have any on that end of town.

Jack McCaig said he just wanted to further clarify because this is a plan that has been going forward for quite a long time, correct?

MPT Wilcox said they really don't have a plan and it is important to understand that they have some concepts that they are looking into and some studies are being done. It is just a starting point where we are saying, here are some sketches, some ideas and now a lot of studies and information has to be gathered in order to see what works and what doesn't work.

Mr. McCaig said energy costs are rising and that this community is having its property values go lower as those energy costs rise because there is no easy way to get to bigger cities like Wilmington so that connection/drive becomes more expensive. Having this as a bedroom community, not just a beach community, for that bigger city, probably more people could access it if there was public transportation. If this is a plan, your design for the future, he thinks that is extremely important to have integral to that plan. Moving these people from here to there cheaply and not overloading the streets like the Gateway project in Wilmington that they are trying to get up and going again, it had difficulty because there isn't public transport there. And they want more development and more value to their property so you can get more taxes and do more things. He is suggesting that if you want to keep the values going up, that has to be a main part of the plan.

MPT Wilcox said he agrees with him that public transportation is important across to Wilmington. He sees it mainly as helping our service industry which, if that was all it did, would be substantial. Depending on who you talk to, you get different opinions on how many people would actually use it as a mode of transportation to and from Wilmington for work and things of that nature.

Mr. McCaig said if you look at other towns where it has been successful and why and how that has either kept or raised the property value even when some of the other places are losing their property values. What did they do and why did that generate so much more revenue for those municipalities by having that in place and generating maybe a smaller revenue stream from that in the beginning but eventually become integral to the community and that revenue stream rises but the property value and that revenue stream from that property value raising, that happens very quickly.

Mayor Macon said when it comes to public transportation, as far as from Wilmington, it becomes an issue of what is the cost vs. the benefit and how much are the taxpayers going to bear for the cost. We are a fairly small island, you can walk pretty much anywhere you need to go and anything further than that you can ride a bicycle. In general, transportation is not so much of an issue as it is what you are talking about for the county as a whole. As he said it becomes an issue cost-wise vs. use.

Mr. McCaig said it does but he thinks you are talking about safety of walking. He spoke with a police officer the other night and he said he does not let his wife walk down the boardwalk after dark. Mayor Macon said he has lived here since he was 13 years old and

has walked all over the island and has not had a problem. Mr. McCaig said it is safer if you weren't getting hit by a car, if you were walking on the sidewalk, and that is what you are working on he knows that and that is great.

MPT Wilcox said the Greenway Bike Committee is working on a bike path that will tie the whole island together and they recently submitted some draft information from other towns like Hilton Head and a number of other places that have that in place and, with regard to Hilton Head, it has been so successful they are trying to figure out a way to extend it across the bridge to actually do some of what you are doing but not in public transportation but to make it a bike path to get from the mainland over to the island.

Mr. McCaig said that connecting public transportation to other places would really make this so more people would fill these houses that aren't filled in the winter and the ones that aren't getting filled because of the price issue. He thinks it would drive more people here and the value would raise again. He knows that is difficult. You have to show that there is a revenue stream and then get money lent or raise money for a bond issue off of that projected revenue stream. He says that has been successful at other smaller communities. You have a great beach and town here but what are the issues, why is Wrightsville Beach property higher? What are those differences and what are those differences at other communities along our east coast and west coast. Public transportation and the integration other communities in getting people here easily, cheaply and safely is a really big thing to make that happen. That is all he is suggesting and is just trying to help out.

Gerald Bigley said he has been here 34 years and right now he has 22 pieces of property and not a one has fallen below the value of the property. He thinks the Town Council they have right now is the best one they have had in the 34 years he has been here and the best staff they have had.

Mr. Owens said he would place the power point on the website for anyone who might be interested.

Mayor Macon said there have been plans before and what he thinks this Council is committed to is actually implementing this plan. Right now, what MPT Wilcox said is that it is a concept and we're paying to have further study, have traffic engineers come up with the most feasible plan to accomplish what they are trying to accomplish here. The important thing everyone needs to know is that we have had a lot of meetings about the Master Plan, we have adopted the Master Plan and we are trying to implement the Master Plan. We are trying to move forward and make something happen and that is really the goal here that everybody needs to understand and the reason that we are having all of these meetings is to not only inform the public of what we're doing but to get input. Danny, this is the first one you have been to in a while and it's good that you have come to give us some input on this.

Mr. Owens said we actually have a Master Development Plan Committee that we are trying to establish as well so if anybody is interested, there are only 4 people who have

put in applications at this point. We are trying to shoot for a little more than 4 folks so if you are interested the town clerk will give you an application.

MPT Wilcox said he thinks the key to remember is that anything that the town manager talked about, which is a lot, that is probably 1/10<sup>th</sup> of all the issues that are being covered. There are hundreds of pieces to what we are trying to do here and all of them conspire to make this a more attractive place to live, make it a better vacation destination - to improve our town. There are some bigger chunks of that like the pier, the parking deck or some other things but there are a ton of small aspects like widening sidewalks, improved green space and things that make our town more attractive. It is a lot to get your head around and that is why we have had so many meetings and why we are going to have a bunch more meetings and there is going to be a committee that's going to help to steer that process. He is excited about it and he thinks this is the first time that a plan has ever been developed to this level and certainly the first time that once the plan was developed that any administration that he knows of has actually followed through on funding and beginning parts of the implementation of the plans. It's something that is exciting. We're waiting for people for the Master Plan Implementation Committee.

Mayor Macon said that Council voted earlier this year 5-0 to pursue a parking deck. Staff has looked at different locations all over town and we are not done looking. Obviously a very feasible location for a parking deck is property we currently own but that is not the only place we are looking at and what we did is just try to put a concept together to see how many spaces we could get on that property at fairly minimal cost to the town and there are other properties being looked at. Obviously to put in enough parking to facilitate the pier, which is what we have to do, can be a significant parcel of property or you have to build a parking deck. It is a bit of a catch 22 and staff is looking at all those issues and trying to find the best, most feasible way to make that happen in order to have the parking for the pier which is obviously something that everyone wants here. Nothing is set in stone. It's open to discussion. Nothing is finalized so for everyone to get in an uproar about something like that is a little bit premature because we don't know what we are going to do. We just know that we have to do something in order to provide the parking for the pier.

Fred Grady, 608 Cape Fear Blvd., commended Ed Parvin for his work on grants for the Harbor Commission and they very much appreciated it.

There being no further public comment, **Councilwoman Efirm made a motion to adjourn. MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.**

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn N. Prusa  
Town Clerk

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

