



Board of Commissioners Meeting Agenda Item Submittal

Item To Be Considered: - **Goals/Priorities, Grant Strategies, Planning Board Work Timeline, and Visitor's Center Plan**

Board Meeting Date: **February 15, 2021** [Click here to participate in ZOOM Meeting](#)

Prepared By: **Paula Webb, Assistant Manager/Town Clerk**

Overview: At its regular meeting on February 8, 2021, the Board scheduled a special meeting to discuss the following topics. Some background/history is provided below on each item to assist the Board in its discussion.

Goals/Priorities

In June 2020, a "roll-over" list of Goals and Objectives from FY 2019-2020 was reviewed along with additional goals established since Manager Seaberg's arrival in September 2019.

- Sidewalk Construction (in partnership with the NC Department of Transportation) – **The Town has allocated \$116K towards the sidewalk projects and NCDOT has indicated a project start date in the Spring of 2021. (Photos attached.)**
- Land Use Plan Implementation into the UDO
- Update the Town's Emergency Management Plan
After receiving engineered assessments on the PSB and Town Hall – neither of which were assessed to withstand a Category 3 hurricane, the Town contracted with the Wooten Company to prepare cost estimates for upgrades at the PSB to bring the structure to a category that would withstand 150 mph winds and estimates to acquire property to construct a new facility that could house public safety and possibly other staff. In the interim, the Town has signed an MOU with Swansboro United Methodist Church to utilize a portion of their facility should the Town expect a storm greater than a Category 1. Part of that MOU was that the Town would provide a trailer able generator during any such event.

Additional goals:

- Continued implementation of action items in the Swansboro Watershed Restoration Plan (2017)
- Determination of the best location and/or improvements for the Town of Swansboro Emergency Operation Center – **see above**
- Improve the coordination of NC Department of Transportation lighted intersections
NCDOT has installed microwave devices to better channel light sequences throughout Town.

Reviewed By:

Town Manager 2/12/2021
Town Clerk _____

Finance Director _____
Town Attorney _____

Date Action Approved by Board: _____ **Action if different from Recommended:**

- Implementation of traffic (both vehicular and pedestrian) flow improvements in the Downtown area – Jeff Hochanadel/Timmons Group finalized the “draft” recommendation/directions by the Board on the downtown traffic movement. Review of that document is scheduled for February 22, 2021. The “draft” was provided to the Board on February 10, 2021.
- Priorities to be considered later in the year: Unity on Fire Dept Capital – Emergency Operations Center, Waterfront Implementations, 401K Contributions, Merit Increases, Parks Master Plan, and Public Works Vehicle/Equipment Replacements In January 2021, the Board revisited the following with the understand from Manager Seaberg that roughly \$200K was available if the Board wanted to consider any of those unfunded capital/non-capital items from June 2020.
- Merit Increases up to 3% based FY 19/20 evaluations authorized effective January 1, 2021 (action December 2020)
- 401K contribution - Manager Seaberg recommended an increase to 3% for general employees who contributed themselves. The annual increase of what was currently being paid would be \$9314, essentially increasing the amount overall each year to \$12K versus \$3100 which was what was currently paid. Board members asked that the details be provided in writing versus given verbally. Also, the number of employees currently contributing/participating. (January 2021)
- Parks Master Plan – the current plan is dated 2008. Updating the plan was important in the Town’s quest for grant assistance. Estimated cost for complete overhaul of the plan - \$50K. Board member believed the price tag too high and gave direction for Staff to seek RFQ’s/Proposals with a focus on updates that would satisfy grant agency requirements. (January 2021)
- Public Works Vehicle/Equipment Replacements - \$28K was approved for Public Works Capital items (vehicles/equipment). (January 2021)
- Fire Department Staffing/Capital - \$26K was approved for a fulltime position and \$60K set aside for a future Ladder Truck purchase. (January 2021)

Grant Strategies

On February 8, 2021, Manager Seaberg provided an overview of current town grants and shared grant agencies and types of projects those agencies fund. He seeks direction from the Board on future application(s) to such agencies and project identification. Commissioner Tursi suggested 319 funding opportunities to include stormwater mapping and Water Street improvements to prevent seawater influx. (PPT from Feb 8 attached)

Planning Board Work Timeline

Below is the Action Plan for the Planning Board for this Calendar Year (Approved February 3, 2020). Further discussions will take place at the March 2, 2021 meeting.

- 1) ~~Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance Update~~ Adopted June 8, 2020; Effective June 19, 2020
- 2) RA Residential Agricultural Zoning District (rezoning or text amendment)
- 3) Wetlands Ongoing; Engaged the Carolina Wetlands Association for guidance
- 4) Text amendment related to Conservation Zoning District to reflect the recommended CAMA Plan changes to strengthen coastal resiliency.

- 5) ~~Text amendment related to requirements for connection for development to nearby amenities~~ **Adopted June 22, 2020**
- 6) Text amendment related to the overall appearance of commercial, industrial, and mixed-use development
- 7) Text amendment related to tying square foot to the use of higher quality materials, additional stormwater control measures
- 8) Consider map amendments (zoning maps) that reflect the Future Land Use categories after the regulatory changes are made (if needed)
- 9) UDO amendments related to NCGS 160D implementation **Ongoing; Edits completed and submitted to Town Attorney for review in November. Hope to have before PB in April.**

Visitor's Center Plan

For clarification, Manager Seaberg indicates that a County TDA Grant request would be for construction, not operations (i.e., replacing decking, correct moisture issue). The Swansboro TDA awarded up to \$30K for renovations inside to include the addition of another ADA restroom, ADA shower(s), and a coined laundry facility. Other items of interest that may be included if funds allow:

- Keypad access for transit boaters after hours
- Common area cameras
- Auto shut-off for water/showers

The following questions were submitted by Commissioner Philpott for discussion:

1. A business or operational plan/concept that reflects how the facility will be staffed and operated. What is the estimated operating cost? Who will be publishing tourist pamphlets and generating other marketing materials?

The operational plan was that existing staff would continue to staff the Visitor's Center 7 days/week 10am – 5pm (hours can be adjusted based on seasonal traffic) throughout FY 20/21. We are committed to continue that staffing into FY 21/22. We feel it is important to have staff working that have knowledge of Swansboro and the surrounding area or we will not be able to advise the inquiries that come in properly. (see usage/inquiry log attached) We have put a lot of work into creating a reference notebook to cover area information, contact info, staff contacts etc. We added WIFI and most of the staff have remote access so they are working on what they would be working on if they were sitting at their desks in the office. A list of those working the VC include:

Paula Webb	Alissa Fender	Lisa Sparr
Anna Stanley	Robbie Fellows	Part-time recreation staff (on the weekend)

The Town was already paying the power and water bill so there are no additional costs there. The only additional cost was the WIFI, phone connection and additional cleaning supplies to assure the restrooms were cleaned daily.

Tourist pamphlets are provided by the vendors. We have a list of those vendors and contact them when their supplies are running low. The Chamber of Commerce is still publishing the Visitor's Guide and providing us copies. The Swansboro TDA will continue to do the marketing for Swansboro too.

2. Have staff discussion and approach other tourist related entities about partnering with the town to help run or finance operations. Examples: Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Merchants Association, Swansboro and/or Onslow County TDA, Private Contractors, etc.

Staff has not approached other entities about running the VC because we thought the Board was ok with our proposal that staff/run the VC. Further direction requested.

3. With a priority on making the best use of the limited space, request an architectural consultant to provide a scaled floor plan that shows how desired operational amenities can work within the space.

Amenities to consider are:

- ADA Restrooms (2) – will be on scaled drawing 2/15
- ADA Shower – will be on scaled drawing 2/15
- Space for Washer/Dryer – will be on scaled drawing 2/15
- Well-Appointed Visitor Welcome Area for an Attendant (Will there be Souvenir sales, etc.?) – We can budget/order Swansboro logoed items and display them for sale inside the VC office.
- Reserve Space for a Future Dock Master Office – can be accomplished inside the VC Office
- Front Foyer for Visitor Circulation and Tourist Marketing Materials – marketing material space will still be provided
- Kitchenette – to be moved inside VC Office area
- Storage Spaces – storage cabinets to be moved inside VC Office
- Front Door ADA Ramp Accessibility – not possible unless we eliminate the 2 parking spaces in the front of the building.

4. If a special event headquarters is desired, consider purchasing a climate controlled mobile unit that can be used year around and at various locations by Recreation, Public Safety, etc.

If current staff continues to staff the VC, the office space could also be used during festivals/events as a central headquarters.

Excerpt from September 28, 2020 BOC Minutes

Visitor's Center Discussion – At its September 14, 2020 regular meeting, the Board agreed to dissolve the lease with the Chamber of Commerce effective October 1, 2020. Once the Chamber vacated the building, the Public Works team would assess the floor issues and determine corrective actions/costs. Conceptional plans were provided in the agenda packet of what the public side of the building (restrooms) could look like with the addition of another restroom and/or showers – all was dependent on compliance with ADA regulations. More concrete plans could be submitted at later date on actual additions after the floor issues were assessed and corrected.

Short term, Staff had developed plans that would allow the Visitor's Center to remain as such with staff oversight to assure timely hours of operation, cleanliness, stocking of brochures, etc. For the remainder of FY 20/21 existing fulltime staff could work remotely Monday-Thursday 10:00am – 5:00pm and Parks/Rec part-time staff could work Friday – Sunday 10:00am – 5:00pm. In addition, the space would serve nicely as a festival/event headquarters for the future.

Long-term plans could include space for a Dockmaster and/or Marketing Director. The

TDA had also expressed interest in assisting the Town to add an additional restroom. Conceptual drawings were reviewed.

Following discussion, Board members were supportive of the operations as presented and were appreciative that staff was willing to work remotely to keep the Visitor's Center open. More financial details would be provided regarding the future proposed plans for a Dockmaster and/or Marketing Director.

It is my understanding that Parks/Rec Director Anna Stanley is working on financial details for a proposal on a Dockmaster in FY 21/22 or later year.

Sidewalk Projects Locations

Sidewalk Project

- Project Description:
 1. This is a joint project with the NC Department of Transportation to design, permit, and install more sidewalks along W. Corbett Ave/NC Hwy 24, Old Hammocks Road, and Hammocks Beach Rd.
 2. This project has the following set of priorities and the team will proceed through each set until funding is exhausted:
 - Sidewalk installation along NC -24 (Corbett Ave) from SR 1511 (Hammocks Beach Rd) to SR 1514 (Phillips Loop Rd);
 - Old Hammocks Beach Rd from SR 1513 (Deer Island Rd) to existing sidewalk near Fredericks Ln;
 - SR 1511 (Hammocks Beach Rd) from Moore's BBQ sidewalk to Park Place Dr.
- Project Funding:
 1. Total project cost is \$483,302. NC DOT's portion is \$366,668 (75%) and the Town's portion is \$116,634 (25%).
 2. Construction is anticipated to commence March or April of 2021 depending on weather





Grant Opportunities

Section 319 NPS Pollution Control Grant

- Grant Deadline: Pre -Application is likely due March 2021
- Grant Match: 40%
- Grant Maximum: \$300,000
- Eligible Activities: Continued implementation of the 2017 Watershed Restoration Plan

NC Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Grant (Currently funding the Boardwalk Project)

- Grant Deadline: Pre -Application is due April 16, 2021
- Grant Match: 25%
- Grant Maximum: No Max for this Grant - Please note that for the 2021 cycle, there is only \$1M to be divided amongst 20 Coastal Counties and their Municipalities
- Eligible Activities: The Town could continue work on the Dock Walk Project; look into installing a fishing pier/kayak launch at Ward Shore Park; look into installing additional kayak launch sites

NC Boating Infrastructure Grant Program (Funded the Church St Docks)

- Grant Deadline: Likely August 2021
- Grant Match: 50%
- Grant Maximum: \$200,000 - 2 levels of funding (this is the max for the previous cycle FFY2021...we would pursue FFY2022)
- Eligible Activities: Examples include Boat slips, piers, mooring buoys, dinghy docks, gangways; Restrooms, showers, laundry facilities; Dockside utility services (water, electricity, Internet); Fuel stations; Floating or fixed breakwaters, retaining walls, bulkheads; Planning, permitting, engineering services

NC Coastal Management Land Use Planning Grant (Used on our last CAMA LUP Update)

- Grant Deadline: Not Listed (this opportunity is not always funded by the State during budget shortfalls)
- Grant Match: none listed
- Grant Maximum: There is no set maximum but previous awards range between \$15,000-\$20,000
- Eligible Activities: This Grant fund has been used for LUP Development; Shoreline Erosion Control Plans, Coastal Hazard Infrastructure Vulnerability Assessments, Drainage Infrastructure Improvement Assessments, Various Flood Studies

NC Coastal Recreation Fishing License Program (Used for the Bicentennial Park Fishing Pier in 2017)

- Grant Deadline: Typically, in July of every year. I have contacted the coordinator and she stated that this will not be available for this cycle do to COVID issues
- Grant Match: none listed
- Grant Maximum: no max listed...just a limit of funding divided between approved applications...2017 the last viable grant cycle
- Eligible Activities: this resource was used for the fishing pier at Bicentennial. Can be used in other locations is desired

NC Park and Recreation Trust Fund (Used on Municipal Park in the past)

- Grant Deadline: May 3, 2021
- Grant Match: 50%
- Grant Maximum: \$500,000
- Eligible Activities: This fund can be used to the acquisition of land, park development, park redevelopment, etc.
- A possible project for Swansboro could be moving Pineland Park from a road ROW to real property.

NC Trails Program

- Grant Deadline: Likely Pre -App due April 2021
- Grant Match: 25%
- Grant Maximum: \$100,000
- Eligible Activities: Examples include New Trail/Greenway Construction; Trail/Greenway Renovation; Approved Trail/Greenway Facilities & Trail Head/Trail Markers; Purchase of Tools to Construct &/or Renovate Trail/ Greenway; Land Acquisition for Trail Purposes

Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

- Grant Deadline: Likely Pre -App due March 2021
- Grant Match: 50%
- Grant Maximum: \$500,000
- Eligible Activities: Examples include creating parks and open space; protect wilderness, wetlands, and refuges; preserve habitat; and enhance outdoor recreational opportunities.

NC Land & Water Fund – Acquisition (previously CWMTF)

- Grant Deadline: February 2022
- Grant Match: no required match but investment in the projects is highly recommended
- Grant Maximum: no set max. Funding is based off of funding provided by Legislative Budgeting Cycles
- Eligible Activities: Examples include Property acquisition in order to protect and conserve riparian buffers for the purpose of providing environmental protection for surface waters and urban drinking water supplies and establishing a network of riparian greenways for environmental, educational, and recreational uses; Property acquisition in order to conserve land that represents the ecological diversity of NC; Property acquisition for Greenways

NC Land & Water Fund – Restoration (previously CWMTF)

- Grant Deadline: February 2022
- Grant Match: no required match but investment in the projects is highly recommended
- Grant Maximum: no set max. Funding is based off of funding provided by Legislative Budgeting Cycles
- Eligible Activities: Examples include Stream Restoration; Stream Enhancement; Streambank Stabilization

USDA – Rural Development Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant

- This is a Loan/Grant program that could fund work on the Public Safety Building
- Funds available:
 - Low Interest loans
 - Grants (eligibility for grants- must be below 60% of the NC nonmetro median household income. NC \$54,602...60% = \$32,761; Swansboro=\$48,922) Unfortunately we do not qualify
 - A combination of loan/grant
- Funding Priorities: Communities with population 5,500 or less

Golden LEAF Foundation – Open Grants Program

- Grant Deadline: open year round
- Grant Match: no required match but investment in the projects is highly recommended
- Grant Maximum: \$200,000
- Eligible Activities: the Foundation looks for projects in the following focus areas of **Economic Investment and Job Creation** , **Workforce Preparedness and Education** , **Agriculture**, and **Community Vitality**.
- We recently used this grant source to close the funding gaps in our generator replacements at Town Hall and the Public Safety Building

NC Department of Commerce— Economic Grants

- There are various Economic Grants through the NC Dept of Commerce that could be used for job growth, job retention, and infrastructure. These are reviewed on a case -by-case basis, so we would inquire when the need is present.

Rough List of Visitor Center Usage/Inquiries

10/22/20 Thursday	Restroom visitors Looking for things to do	10 Total
10/23/20 Friday	Looking for Swansboro stickers Restroom visits Grabbing brochures Asking for directions	9 Total
10/24/20 Saturday	Restroom Visitors Asking for Places to Eat Looking for Brochures 	28 Total
10/25/20 Sunday	Restroom Visitors Grabbing Brochures 	11 total
10/26 Mon.	R. Room Grabbing brochures of eateries & Asking Chatting about areas to live in ENC	10 total
10/27 Tues.	Restroom Visitors Inquiries on place to eat Inquiry on Fishing Charters	8 total
10/28 Wednesday	Restroom Visitors ① Woman in lobby looking @ brochures. Asked where downtown was... ② Couple used bathroom & asked about Antique places ③ Man wanted Map of all of Swansboro ④ Couple wanted to go to Bear Island - gave HB Park directions	12 total
10/29 Thursday	Restroom visitors ① looking for BBQ places to eat ② list of restaurants & map of area ③ Wanting area info	10

10/30 10/30 Friday	Used the bathroom IIII IIII Grabbed brochures IIII Asked about near restaurants IIII	(18 total)
11/1 Sunday	Bathroom IIII IIII IIII II Grabbed brochures I Pay boat fee I	(19 total)
11/2 Monday	Bathroom IIII IIII Ferry to Hammocks II Boat ride area I Looking to get a tax I.D. I	(12)
11/3 Tuesday	Bathroom Usage IIII Computer Warriors arrived at 130 to configure remote access, phones etc.	(3)
11/4 Wednesday	Bathroom Visitors IIII IIII Couple looking for area info - took restaurant & DT info & Lady Swan Couple looking for DT info & restroom & restroom Woman asking about candlelight & Flotilla & restroom	(11)
11/5 Thursday	Restroom Visitors II	(2)
11/6 Fri.	Bathroom IIII Brochures/Asking Questions III	(9)
11/7 Sat.	Bathroom IIII IIII IIII Area Info III	(17)
11/8 Sun.	Bathroom IIII	(4)
11/9 (mon.)	Bathroom IIII IIII IIII area info I	14 (4)

11/10 Tues Restroom Visits ~~IIII~~ III ⑧
 1 Inquiry on Cigar Shop hrs. FYI usually 11-1130 is its nice weather George plays golf in am.
 1 Brochure drop off - Coast Guard Literature
 1 Inquiry on location of Chamber of Commerce
 11 total
 11/11 Wed VC Office closed Veterans Day

11/12 Thurs Restrooms III
 Visitors - Dock info
 "Elet brochures II
 11 total

11/13 Friday Restroom II ②

11/14 Saturday Grabbing brochures IIII
 Bathroom ~~IIII~~ ~~IIII~~ ~~IIII~~ ~~IIII~~ 20 total
 Ask about restaurants I
 Asked about events going on I

11/15 Sunday Asking for Directions II
 Restroom ~~IIII~~ IIII 11 Total

11/16 Monday Bathroom ~~IIII~~ ~~IIII~~ ~~IIII~~ 26
 Brochures ~~IIII~~ ~~IIII~~
 Exploring - just moved to Becraft

11/17 Tuesday ⑧ Restroom Visitors: ~~IIII~~ I
 Brochures: II

11/18 Wednesday 10 Restrooms: ~~IIII~~ ~~IIII~~ II
 Called Swansboro Paddle Boarding - need more pamphlets
 Ask About Lunch Recommendations I
 Ask About walking trails I Referred to Croatan and Hammocks Beach State Park
 Brochures II

Study

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Q

total

Sw. 1

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Questions 11

46

11/73

23

10

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11	24	70
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info & brochures

11/6/20
Tuesday

Lestrum: |||||

Monday

Ferry to Outer Banks:

Brochures: 1

14

Wiednosc

bil

11/1 pr

Restroom: ~~14~~ 11

Walking Trail Participants 1

Bakery Inquiry

10

11/7/20

11/11/11

Restrooms Open

Office closed for Thanksgiving

117070

11/28/20

Saturday

Restroom ~~||||~~ ~~||||~~ ~~||||~~ ~~||||~~ ~~||||~~ ~~||||~~ ~~||||~~

49

Monday

11/30

1:750

opened @ 11:30

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Questions 11

108