

**Town of Swansboro
Planning Board
Regular Meeting Minutes
September 2, 2025**

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:30pm. Board members in attendance were Christina Ramsey, Tim Vannoy, Tom Pieratti, Sherrie Hancock, Frank Jones and Doug Rogers. The board had one ETJ vacancy.

Mr. Vannoy expressed concerns about moving forward with a previously tabled item, questioning whether amendments could be made to the package while it remained tabled. He further stated that the agenda did not adequately reflect changes that had been made to the agenda packet.

Town Clerk Alissa Fender clarified that when the agenda item was tabled, it was tabled for the next meeting, and the agenda could be presented with changes at that subsequent meeting. She also noted that the agenda memo did reflect the changes that were made.

Planner Rebecca Brehmer stated that the application itself had not changed. The content of the applicant's request for the CAMA land use amendment and conditional rezoning remained the same, and the modifications were minor, further reducing what was being requested.

Mrs. Ramsey redirected the discussion to focus on the agenda as provided, and the item up for discussion was approval of the minutes.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Mr. Pieratti, seconded by Mrs. Hancock the August 5, 2025, Regular Meeting Minutes were approved 4:1.

Ayes: Mr. Pieratti, Mrs. Hancock, Mr. Jones, and Mr. Rogers

Noes: Mr. Vannoy

Public Comments

Mrs. Ramsey opened the public comment period, sharing that each speaker would be allowed three minutes to speak and requested that attendees hold their applause to maintain orderly proceedings.

Frances Corbett, Tim Peters, Ed Binanay, Wayne Herbet, Jamie Petani, Laurent Meiller, Chris Cassell, Todd Gardner, Finn Gardner, Lauren Brown all spoke in opposition to the Flybridge development with the following concerns:

- The proposed development would strain existing infrastructure, particularly roads, which were already experiencing traffic congestion.
- The project could alter the town's small-town character and overall quality of life.
- Schools, public services, may not be able to accommodate the additional population.
- The development did not align with the town's land use plan.

- Approval could encourage further overdevelopment and set a precedent for future projects, potentially harming the town long-term.

Business

CAMA Future Land Use Map Amendment for parcels on W Corbett Avenue from RA to Suburban Town Center (Tabled from August 5, 2025)

Planner Brehmer reviewed that Flybridge Swansboro LLC had submitted an application for a future land use map amendment. The amendment proposed would change the site located at 1481 W. Corbett Avenue from a RA (rural/agricultural) designation to a Suburban Town Center designation.

Planner Brehmer further shared that this was one of three steps (1. CAMA Future Land Use Plan Amendment, 2. Conditional Rezoning, and 3. A Special Use Permit) needed for approval of a future mixed-use development project consisting of multifamily housing and commercial outparcels. The parcel of 39 acres of land was located directly across from the intersection of W. Corbett Avenue and Belgrade Swansboro Road. The CAMA Future Land Use Map designated this land as Rural/Agricultural, deeming it important to preserve what was left of our rural views and working farmland. Changing this designation to a Suburban Town Center would deem this land suitable for medium-to-high intensity uses on the NC 24 corridor. It was important to note that this amendment was a crucial step in Flybridge Swansboro, LLC being able to meet one of the four criteria required in a Special Use Permit application, which was needed for multi-family development.

The application's history was also reviewed. She shared that the applications had first been heard and denied by the Planning Board on January 7, 2025, and by the Board of Commissioners on February 25, 2025. The second submittal had been brought before the Planning Board on August 5, 2025, and was tabled to this meeting. Planner Brehmer noted several small changes in the current proposal, including the removal of Outparcel 6 (previously a commercial outparcel on the left side of the property) and a reduction in the number of apartments from 324 to 300 units by eliminating one apartment building. The applicants had also proposed potentially phasing the project. Planner Brehmer stated that the CAMA Future Land Use Map Amendment for parcels on W. Corbett Avenue from RA to Suburban Town Center and the Zoning Map Amendment to rezone the same parcels from RA to B-1 Conditional Zoning would be presented together.

Kyle Fountain, attorney with Lanier Fountain and Ceruzzi, representing Flybridge Swansboro LLC, presented, and was joined by Corey Mabus, Vice President of Carolina Commercial Contractors, Mike Nicoles with Paramount Engineering and Rynal Stephenson, Chief Traffic Analysis Engineer with DRMP's Transportation Market Sector. The team jointly outlined the benefits and plans for the proposed development, addressing key aspects including engineering, construction, and traffic management related to the Flybridge project.

Mr. Fountain described the property as an open field and woodlands with direct access to Highway 24/Corbett Avenue and explained that they had requested both a future land use

map amendment from RA to Suburban Town Center and a conditional rezoning from RA to B-1.

Mr. Fountain reviewed the town's future land use designations, noting that the subject property, unlike the northern RA-designated area, had not been used as working farms and was partially zoned B-1 for business. He contrasted the RA designation's rural characteristics with the site's location along Highway 24, and argued that the Suburban Town Center designation, which encouraged medium- to high-intensity mixed-use development, was more appropriate. Mr. Fountain referenced goals from the 2019 CAMA land use plan, amended in 2023, which included managed growth, walkable mixed-use villages, and transforming Highway 24. He emphasized that approval of the land use amendment would still have required additional reviews and approvals before development could proceed.

Mike Nicoles with Paramount Engineering presented the conditional rezoning plan, noting the property's adjacent to B-1 and light industrial zoning and its location on a main corridor with available sewer and water. He explained that conditional rezoning was tied to the presented site plan and could not be modified to allow different developments. He reviewed changes to the concept plan, including reducing the number of units to 300, removing one commercial outparcel, maintaining buffers along residential areas, preserving 42% of the site as continuous open space for wildlife habitat, and setting all buildings back 200 feet from Highway 24 with a maximum height of 40 feet.

Rynal Stephenson, Chief Traffic Analysis Engineer with DRMP's Transportation Market Sector, presented the traffic analysis, noting that the Traffic Impact Analysis had been prepared and coordinated with NCDOT and the town. The study was approved, with required improvements including turn lanes on Highway 24, alignment of the development driveway with the Belgrade traffic signal, roadway improvements to reduce stacking and queuing, and enhancements at the Queens Creek Road intersection. He acknowledged existing school-time congestion but stated the improvements would help traffic flow.

Corey Mabus with Carolina Commercial Contractors representing Flybridge Swansboro presented the revised proposal for 300 multifamily homes, and five commercial outparcels, describing the project as responsive to Swansboro's strategic and future land use plan goals for walkable, connected development. He stated that the homes were intended for local workers, including teachers, first responders, restaurant staff, young families, and retirees, and noted that the median rental price would be \$1,550 per month. Mr. Mabus reported that the project would have generated over \$230,000 annually in tax revenue for the town and more than \$430,000 for Onslow County to support schools, emergency services, and infrastructure, and observed that many opponents did not live within the town limits or contribute to the tax base.

Mr. Mabus reviewed how the project aligned with Swansboro's Economic Development Strategic Plan goals:

- The site connected residential and commercial uses in a walkable format with ADA accessibility and nearly 50% open space.

- Preserved all identified wetlands, implemented stormwater controls, and used native landscaping with low-impact design.
- Used a local architect to ensure the architecture reflected the town's character.
- Included five commercial outparcels and 300 homes to support local business growth and provide workforce housing.

Mr. Mabus highlighted concerns associated with the plan—such as rapid growth, a limited tax base, traffic impacts on Highway 24, and potential wetland disturbances—and explained how the project addressed these issues through managed growth, increased tax revenue, traffic improvements, and wetland protection measures. He noted that the site had been identified as underutilized and suitable for redevelopment, citing survey results and plan goals that indicated community support for mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly development.

Mr. Mabus emphasized that the site's location at a signalized state highway intersection, surrounded by B-1 zoning, aligned with the strategic plan's guidance for mixed-use development. He added that the proposed development included amenities such as a pool, playground, pickleball court, gym, business center, and a walkable commercial district.

Zoning Map Amendment to rezone parcels on W Corbett Avenue from RA to B-1 Conditional Zoning (Tabled from August 5, 2025)

Planner Brehmer reviewed that Flybridge Swansboro LLC was also seeking a conditional rezoning for +/- 38.92 acres on parcels of land identified as Tax Parcel ID 019494 and 027733, from RA (Rural/Agricultural) to B-1 CZ (business conditional zoning) to develop a proposed multi-family and commercial project.

The conditions proposed by the developer were as follows:

1. Strategic placement of development to enhance and preserve the natural buffers already present by providing additional separation from multifamily development, specifically along the rear of the property where residential development was already present.
2. Even with the stormwater facilities proposed along the rear portion of the site, existing jurisdictional wetlands will be preserved along the eastern side of the property.
3. In accordance with the conditional zoning district section of the UDO, the site plan shows a 200ft corridor setback and in turn there was flexibility to allow a 40ft mean height for the multi-family buildings. This was 5ft above the standard 35ft building height requirements.
4. The proposal includes a variation of the off-street parking requirements for multi-family housing. Details found in application narrative.

Before voting, board members shared their thoughts on the Flybridge proposal:

Mr. Jones questioned the traffic mitigation claims, noting that the town engineer's review indicated all side roads would be negatively impacted. He expressed skepticism about claims that the town was "not growing," citing ongoing Highway 24 development, and characterized the proposal as a "transformation project" rather than managed growth, noting it would add

25% to the town's population. Mr. Jones stated that he had reviewed both the current and 2010 versions of the land use plan, acknowledging them as important historical documents developed through community input, he felt the town should have updated the plan to reflect current conditions before proposing such a transformational project.

Mr. Rogers addressed concerns regarding the land use plan, agreeing with Jones that, while imperfect, it represented the community's will. He noted that portions of the plan could be selectively cited to support a position but emphasized the stated goals on page 34 managing growth, preserving charm and character, maintaining quality of life, and addressing traffic congestion. Mr. Rogers stated that if the plan was outdated or ambiguous, the town should update it to reflect current community priorities before considering the development and questioned whether the project aligned with what the community wanted.

Mr. Pieratti expressed concern over what he perceived as Selective attitudes within the community. He stated that all residents, whether new or long-term, should feel welcome in Swansboro and questioned whether the town continued to embody its motto as "the friendly city by the sea." Mr. Pieratti pointed out that only a small portion of the community, about 4.5%, had participated in creating the CAMA Land Use Plan and emphasized the need for broader input given the town's changing demographics. He acknowledged that traffic impacts would increase with new housing but noted that both supporters and opponents of the project could cite the CAMA Land Use Plan to justify their positions. He concluded by encouraging the community to come together to revisit the plan and determine the best path forward for Swansboro.

Mrs. Ramsey provided context on the Planning Board's role, noting that, despite the Land Use Plan's age, it remained a solid guide that had received positive feedback. She explained that while the board had requested funding to update the plan, none was allocated, and updates typically took multiple years. She noted that individual preferences were not part of the decision-making process.

Mr. Vannoy inquired about the likely residents of the proposed development, noting that rental prices corresponded with military Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) rates and suggesting that Marines from Camp Lejeune would likely be the primary tenants. He also questioned the proposed phasing plan and annexation into Swansboro.

Mr. Mabus responded that with the demographics at their Sanford property, it was reported that approximately 60% of residents were military and that only about 12% of the units housed children. He explained that rental pricing was structured to align with the monthly Basic Allowance for Housing (BAH) of \$1,600 or less for military families. He added that many of their tenants were younger individuals who could not yet afford to purchase a home and noted that there were few homeownership opportunities in the area attainable for someone with a BAH at that level.

He further explained that, if the project were approved immediately and engineering plans proceeded without delay, construction would take approximately three to four years. The

300 units would be delivered in phases, with slightly more than half completed in the first year and the remainder in the second year, allowing for gradual occupancy. Mr. Mabus affirmed the development's intent to be annexed and indicated that the application would coincide with the special use permit following rezoning.

Mr. Vannoy also noted agreement with other board members that the CAMA plan needed updates but stated that the proposed project, as a high-density urban development, did not align with Swansboro's plan.

Planner Brehmer clarified a question on the Traffic Impact Analysis (TIA), noting a small technical inconsistency raised by Mr. Laurent regarding the intersection's level of service. She explained that the town traffic engineer had determined that, except for widening Highway 24 to six lanes, no practical improvements could bring the intersection up to a Level of Service C or better. Both the town traffic engineer and NCDOT had approved the TIA despite this issue, as fixing it would require a complete redesign of the intersection by DOT.

On a motion by Mr. Vannoy seconded by Mrs. Hancock, the proposed CAMA Future Land Use Map Amendment for parcels on W Corbett Ave from RA to Suburban Town Center was denied for recommendation to the Board of Commissioners.

On a motion by Mr. Rogers, seconded by Mr. Jones, the proposed conditional rezoning for +/- 38.92 acres on the parcels of land identified as Tax Parcel ID 019494 and 027733, from RA (Rural/Agricultural) to B-1 CZ (business conditional zoning) was recommended for denial to the Board of Commissioners along with finding that it was not consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.

Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Pieratti, seconded by Mr. Rogers, the meeting was adjourned at 7:37 pm.