

**Town of Swansboro
Planning Board
Regular Meeting Minutes
June 2, 2026**

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 5:36pm. Board members in attendance were Christina Ramsey, Tom Pieratti, Frank Tursi, Jamie Petani, Frank Jones and Doug Rogers. Sherrie Hancock was absent.

Approval of Minutes

On a motion by Mr. Pieratti, seconded by Mr. Tursi the March 3, 2026, Regular Meeting Minutes were unanimously approved.

Business

Unified Development Ordinance Text Amendment to §152.016 Definitions to Basic Terms

Planner Rebecca Brehmer reviewed that, following the discovery of a discrepancy in the Unified Development Ordinance §152.016, Definitions of Basic Terms, regarding the definition of “Fence (Protective),” a text amendment had been proposed for accuracy.

Planner Brehmer explained that the current definition incorrectly stated that a fence extends to a “minimum height of 6 feet” when it should have specified a maximum height. She also noted that design standards should not have been included within the definition. The current definition read: “a structure of wood, stone, brick, block, steel, or other metal extending from the surface of the ground to a minimum height of 6 feet and such materials and construction which creates a physical barrier,” with a reference to §152.196(E) for specific criteria.

The proposed new definition would read: “a man-made structure of a barrier typically made of wood, metal, chain link, vinyl, masonry, or other material used to enclose a property, define a boundary, or provide security or privacy,” while maintaining the cross-reference to design standards in the ordinance for height and location criteria.

Planner Brehmer explained that the revision was necessary because there had been an enforcement issue in which a structure was interpreted as a fence, but the existing definition was too restrictive to allow proper enforcement action. She noted that the Town attorney had assisted with the revision and that specific design requirements, such as height, should have been addressed in a separate section rather than within the definition itself.

In response to inquiries from the board, Planner Brehmer clarified the following:

- The term “other material” was included to address enforcement situations involving non-typical fence materials that still function as fences.
- The previous definition was too specific, which limited the ability to enforce standard fence regulations in certain cases.
- The revised language allows for unique but reasonable fencing materials while maintaining discretion to reject inappropriate materials.

On a motion by Mr. Rogers, seconded by Mr. Pieratti the proposed Unified Development Ordinance Text Amendment to §152.016 Definitions of Basic Terms was unanimously recommended for approval to the Board of Commissioners along with the Comprehensive Plan Consistency Statement.

Unified Development Ordinance Text Amendment to §152.400-462 Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance

Planner Brehmer reviewed that the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) had released the updated 2026 Model Flood Damage Prevention Ordinances for local coastal communities in North Carolina to be incorporated into the Town's flood ordinance. She emphasized that the update ensured compliance and consistency with National Flood Insurance Program participation requirements.

Planner Brehmer noted that the amendment had been developed with input from the Town Manager, herself, and the Eastern Branch (NFIP) Planner, using primarily required updates and very few optional changes to create the best fit for the community. The amendment covered §152.400 through §152.462 of the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance. In accordance with required procedures, the Flood Management Appeals Board reviewed the draft ordinance and recommended approval to both the Planning Board and the Board of Commissioners at its May 18, 2026, Special meeting.

In response to inquiries from the board, Planner Brehmer clarified the following:

- The majority of the amendment consisted of required National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) standards for participating communities, with only two additional standards included that were not required but were considered beneficial to the community.
 - The amendment included the following general updates:
 - New or revised definitions
 - Addition of the coastal A Zone (a newer flood zone between the AE and VE zones)
 - Updated references to elevation certificate forms
 - The two non-required standards incorporated were:
 - A prohibition on recreational vehicle (RV) placement in VE zones due to recent flooding-related incidents in other communities
 - Limitations on structural fill in certain flood zones, requiring compliance with engineering standards
- The RV prohibition applies in coastal VE hazard areas and coastal A zones and is outlined in §152.445 (M) of the ordinance.
- Regarding enforcement-related questions, appeals would be directed to the Floodplain Administrator for interpretation, with judicial appeal options available under applicable General Statutes, consistent with other zoning ordinance violations.
- The ordinance language was provided by the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and the State, and that the updated version primarily expanded upon the existing language rather than completely replacing it.
- The enforcement section had been significantly updated, as it had previously been lacking

Mr. Tursi expressed concerns during discussion, stating that the language in the ordinance needed clarification. He noted that if the Town could not control utilities or lacked agreements with utility

providers, then including enforcement provisions related to utility control did not make sense. Planner Brehmer offered to review the issue and, if the Board agreed, make minor amendments based on her findings. She suggested these updates could proceed to the Board of Commissioners unless the Planning Board preferred to review them first.

Planner Brehmer reminded the Board that the Town's flood ordinance had historically operated in this manner, utilizing draft ordinances provided by the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) to maintain program participation. She noted that failure to implement requested standards could negatively impact the Town's rating and participation in the program, which is why she supported the system despite its imperfections.

On a motion by Mr. Rogers, seconded by Mr. Pieratti, the proposed Unified Development Ordinance Text Amendment to §152.400-462 Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance was unanimously recommended for approval to the Board of Commissioners along with the Comprehensive Plan Consistency Statement.

Chairman/Board Thoughts/Staff Comments

Planner Rebecca Brehmer announced that the July Planning Board meeting would be her last due to military orders relocating her family. She stated that the Town is preparing to post her position, with the job listing currently under review for updates.

The Board expressed regret at her departure and thanked her for her service.

Public Comments

Lauren Brown, of 105 Pine Ct, Cape Carteret, commended the board's efforts to improve the Unified Development Ordinance, and offered two suggestions for consideration. First, she encouraged using the new public safety building as an opportunity to model stormwater management and flood resilience, referencing Onslow County's low-impact development approach as an example. Second, she suggested a broader review of the UDO to better align with the land use plan, with emphasis on environmental protection, undeveloped land, and long-term resilience. Ms. Brown also proposed identifying grant opportunities and establishing shared priorities to improve the Town's ability to respond to funding opportunities.

Mr. Pieratti supported planning ahead for grants, noting that funding is often available, but deadlines are short and can limit time for Town or Board approval. He suggested identifying priorities in advance to improve the Town's ability to respond quickly.

Mrs. Ramsey noted these topics aligned with Future Land Use planning discussions, and Planner Brehmer clarified that while funding for a new plan was not currently included, discussions had occurred regarding setting aside funds for future planning efforts.

Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Pieratti, seconded by Mr. Jones the meeting adjourned at 6:12pm.