



ORIENTAL TOWN BOARD MEETING
Tuesday, May 4, 2021 at 7:00pm
507 Church Street, Oriental, NC
Mayor Sally Belangia Officiating

1 The Town Board of Oriental Monthly Meeting held on Tuesday, May 4, 2021 was called to order at 7:00pm. Mayor
2 Belangia determined a quorum to be present and opened the meeting and stated we can have a public comment
3 period if anyone would like to speak. The meeting was open to the public. All documents for the meeting were
4 available through the Town’s website at www.TownofOriental.com.

5
6 Present: Mayor Belangia, Mayor Pro Tempore White, Commissioner Overcash, Commissioner Simmons,
7 Commissioner Price, Commissioner Barrow, Town Manager Diane Miller, Deputy Finance Director Tammy Cox,
8 Administrative Assistant Chantelle Allison, Police Officer Nic Blayney, Attorney M. Scott Davis, and members of
9 the public.

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11 The Agenda was approved by a MOTION from Mayor Pro Tempore White, seconded by Commissioner Simmons.
12 Unanimous vote: 5-0.

13
14 The Consent Agenda was approved by a MOTION from Commissioner Overcash, seconded by Mayor Pro Tempore
15 White. Unanimous vote: 5-0.

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17 Public Comment: Jennifer Roe, Frank Roe, and David Szerlag signed up for the Public Comment period, however,
18 Mayor Belangia inquired if they were present to discuss the Placement of Street End Signage, and if so, would they
19 mind waiting until that scheduled topic was discussed. All agreed to wait, and there were no other public comments.

20
21 Placement of Street End Signage: Per Manager Miller – Following discussion on April 6th & 14th, 2021, signs were
22 designed that are to be placed so that residents and visitors are aware that those are public benches at the street ends
23 on Neuse St., King St., and Wall St. Following additional discussions during the Budget Retreat, questions arose
24 about use, future, and access. Attorney Davis confirmed that the streets were neither closed nor abandoned, and thus
25 are streets – which cannot hold additional structures. Benches, like benches in ROW on any street, can be placed so
26 as not to interfere with access to the street. Placement of signs must adhere to this as well. The street ends are town
27 property, but not parks. FEMA inspection of same occurred last week. Manager Miller’s suggestion was to put
28 signs at the end of each road – (1) By each bench, or (2) At the pilings/ropes that are placed to discourage vehicles
29 from driving on the grass, or (3) Other areas designated as the stopping point for public vehicular traffic.

30
31 The Commissioners discussed the legal descriptions/measurements and the different mentioned locations for the
32 signs.

33
34 Mayor Belangia read a letter received from the owners of the Stallings house. Listed were concerns about
35 trespassing on their property and dock by visitors to the benches on the street ends, opposition to signs publicizing
36 the benches, and requested that should the signs be placed to promote public use – that the Town also place signs
37 that the adjacent properties are privately owned and that trespassers may be fined or prosecuted.

38
39 Jennifer Roe spoke in opposition to the signage and mentioned that other parks and public docks were missing their
40 signs (lost or destroyed by a hurricane), or never had a sign to begin with. Mrs. Roe was displeased regarding how
41 the adjacent property owners were notified of the Board’s intention to place the signs and stated some of the
42 adjacent property owners didn’t receive the notification letter from the Town until about 10 days prior to the
43 meeting and were unable to attend. Mrs. Roe felt that the Board members should have contacted the property
44 owners directly to discuss the signage. She suggested replacing the other signage that does not exist and add rock to
45 the end of Wall St.

47 David Szerlag asked the Board how the issue came up and expressed concern that signs placed down near the
48 benches on the street ends would encourage people to walk down there to read them.
49

50 The Board asked if their Attorney had any thoughts, to which: Attorney Davis stated Manager Miller was correct in
51 her research; the Board has control of the right-of-ways, the signs can be placed in the public right-of-ways as long
52 as it doesn't create a public health and safety hazard, and there is a formal statutory process in order to close a road,
53 which would then become the property of the adjacent owners. Mr. Davis confirmed that the Town has never
54 initiated the procedure to formally close the roads being discussed. Manager Miller stated the Town did go through
55 the formal procedure and closed the end of South Ave., but not the three street ends in question.
56

57 Mayor Pro Tempore White confirmed this topic was discussed at the Town Board Meeting on 4/6/2021, and the
58 Budget Retreat 4/14/2021, both of which open to the public – and therefore made a MOTION to go ahead and install
59 the signs - to be placed as Manager Miller had described earlier in the discussion, and install signs by the adjacent
60 private properties stating “Beyond this point is Private Property” so people would understand. Commissioner
61 Overcash seconded the motion.
62

63 Mayor Belangia asked the Board if there was any discussion; Commissioner Barrow suggested creating one sign to
64 be placed at a central public location that would show all public points of interest. Commissioner Overcash stated
65 his preference to have all signs placed in uniform locations at each street end rather than staggered, and mentioned
66 concern for the adjacent property owners' privacy. Commissioner Simmons agreed that “private property” signs
67 should be placed to protect the private property owners. Commissioner Barrow disagreed and did not want to take
68 responsibility for marking other properties as private. Jennifer Roc stated she posted her own “private property”
69 sign. Parks & Rec Chair Bonnie Crosser preferred a consolidated sign for all points of interest. The Commissioners
70 discussed alternate locations for one sign that shows all points of interest.
71

72 Based on various suggestions/opinions, Mayor Pro Tempore White AMENDED the MOTION to table decisions on
73 the topic until the July 6, 2021 meeting. Commissioner Overcash seconded the motion. Unanimous vote: 5-0.
74

75 ARP Guidance: Manager Miller gave an update on the distribution of ARP funds of \$250,000. The Town should be
76 able to start planning and budgeting for use of those funds.
77

78 Set Public Hearings: Manager Miller requested that the Board set the Public Hearing for the 2021-2022 Budget for
79 Tuesday June 1, 2021 at 7pm. The Planning Board requested a Public Hearing for potential changes to the GMO,
80 addressing issues such as (1) zoning for animal services changes, (2) max driveway widths, (3) inconsistencies with
81 mfd home restrictions, (4) adding ADA compliance allowances without SUP [as changes to Building Code and
82 hurricane damage rebuilds are already excepted]. A draft of the exact changes will be formalized at the Planning
83 Board's May 19 meeting. Proposed changes will be advertised properly prior to the Public Hearing, with drafts
84 available immediately following the Planning Board May meeting (open to the public). Commissioner Barrow had
85 a question about upcoming ADA changes, and Manager Miller replied that the ECCOG will be out to do their
86 survey within the next couple of weeks. Mayor Pro Tempore White made the MOTION to set the Public Hearing for
87 the 2021-2022 Budget and proposed Planning Board changes on Tuesday June 1, 2021 at 7pm. Commissioner
88 Simmons seconded the motion. Unanimous vote: 5-0.
89

90 National Public Works Week Resolution: May 16-22, 2021 is National Public Works Week, Manager Miller
91 suggested a Resolution to recognize our Public Works Department as they carry out the duties of not only the Public
92 Works, but also Water Treatment and Parks & Recreation Maintenance. Our small department maintains and
93 beautifies all Town of Oriental facilities that many much larger departments could not and should be recognized for
94 their extraordinary effort. Commissioner Overcash made the MOTION to approve **Resolution #2021-06**. Mayor
95 pro Tempore White seconded the motion.
96

97 Mayor Belangia asked the Board if there was any discussion; Commissioner Barrow had concerns about using the
98 words “Stronger Together” as it may be referenced as a political statement, and suggested the Town treat the Public
99 Works Department to lunch. Manager Miller confirmed that there was already a plan to take them to lunch and
100 offered to remove the “Stronger Together” wording from the resolution.
101

102 Commissioner Overcash AMENDED the MOTION to approve **Resolution #2021-06** but strike the “Stronger
103 Together” wording. Commissioner Simmons seconded the motion. Unanimous vote: 5-0.

104
105 Streetlights: Inquiries about removing streetlights – cost to remove based on the remainder of the ten-year contract
106 (most expire in 2025) is approximately \$200 per light. The Town does not have a policy in place regarding
107 residents’ requests to remove overly bright streetlights. Consideration for all affected residents on the street would
108 need to be made, due to potential safety issues, neighbors in agreement with the light removal, and who bears the
109 cost for the removal. Commissioner Barrow discussed the Dark Skies Ordinance and solar options, and if the
110 Planning Board should discuss this topic. Manager Miller would like to discuss with the Planning Board for their
111 point of view on the Dark Skies Ordinance and research options for creating a Policy.

112
113 Police Report: Officer Blayney will meet with the Town’s IT representative to discuss compatible equipment; he
114 spoke with the Sheriff’s office about reporting software and the mobile CAD system compatibilities, and will start
115 sending in for Grant reimbursements. The new police vehicle is still in progress. Officer Blayney discussed the
116 month’s Police Calls. Manager Miller advised the Board that Officer Wichrowski suffered an injury and will not be
117 able to work for a period of time, still TBD. Officer Blayney confirmed that Town Dock boat registrations are still
118 being monitored.

119
120 Manager’s Report: Manager Miller discussed the Financial Report and future Budget amendments, upcoming
121 events - Shred Event on May 8, Bulk Waste Pickup on May 8, Haz-Mat drop-off at Courthouse on May 15. There is
122 a potential for 10-12ac of property off Silverbrook Rd. to be annexed as a multi-family development; currently there
123 is approximately 3% satellite properties annexed. Five AED’s granted to the Town by the Dottie Gray Ambulance
124 Fund have been installed at The Bean, Toucan, M&M’s, Silos, and Brantleys; the rest of the Grant money will go
125 towards training 4 people at each restaurant on proper usage procedures, although anyone can use the AED through
126 verbal prompts the machine provides. Whittaker Pointe - planting is scheduled for the 2nd & 3rd weeks of May, the
127 permit for the wings on the drop-down structures were approved, but the jetty extension was denied. SB349
128 (Increasing Housing Opportunities) - On April 26 was re-referred to Finance, if favorable review, re-ref to Judiciary,
129 if favorable review, re-ref to Rules and Operations of the Senate. SB279 (Local Govt Regulate Navigable Waters)
130 Apr 8- passed 3 readings in Senate, passed to House, passed 1st reading, Referred to Committee on Rules, Calendar,
131 and Operations of the House. Manager Miller provided updates on projects at Rec Park to clean up, address safety
132 issues, make ADA accessible, and provide new activity/space for use. Powell corrections are complete, signed,
133 stamped, ready for 2021-2022 FY. Manager Miller discussed mowing and the right-of-way, which is the resident’s
134 responsibility. She noted concerns about drainage issues, blowing the grass cuttings into the road or into the ditch,
135 and how to recoup costs if the Town has to mow for the resident. Hurricane Prep- NWS issuing advisories early,
136 meeting for preps with EM Team and presentation for residents. The Annual Consumer Confidence Report for our
137 water system had no violations; it is posted on our website and the link to that report goes out in the note section of
138 our water bills this month. Public Works employees Demetrius Green and Thomas Jones just finished C-
139 Distribution School and will sit for exam in August.

140
141 Committee Reports: HWAC March DRAFT Minutes, HWAC April DRAFT Minutes, Planning Board April
142 DRAFT Minutes, Parks & Recreation April DRAFT Minutes were presented for review.

143
144 Commissioner Overcash wished to personally commend Parks & Recreation Chairperson Bonnie Crosser for the
145 work she has done with Parks & Rec, noting there has been more progress done recently than in years past.

146
147 **CLOSED SESSION:** Mayor Pro Tempore White announced the need for Closed Session Pursuant to
148 N.C.G.S.§143-318.11(a)(5)(i) to discuss the price and other material terms of a contract or proposed contract for the
149 acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange, or lease; Mayor Pro Tempore White made the MOTION
150 to go into CLOSED SESSION. Commissioner Overcash seconded the motion. Unanimous vote: 5-0. Time
151 Recorded: 8:11pm.

152
153 **OPEN SESSION:** Resumed at 8:20pm.

154
155 Commissioners Comments: none

157
158 Next meetings scheduled: Budget Meeting – May 5, 2021 at 8:00am, Public Hearings for Budget and Planning
159 Board GMO Revisions – June 1, 2021 at 7:00pm, Town Board Meeting to follow the Public Hearings – June 1,
160 2021
161
162 Commissioner Simmons made a **MOTION** to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Overcash. Unanimous vote: 5-
163 0.
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165 Meeting **ADJOURNED** at 8:22pm.
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171 _____
Sally Belangia, Mayor

Diane H. Miller, Town Manager/Clerk

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175 Approved _____, 2021