

*Town of North Topsail Beach*

Joann M. McDermon, Mayor  
Mike Benson, Mayor Pro Tem

Aldermen:  
Richard Grant  
Connie Pletl  
Fred Fontana  
Tom Leonard



Alice Derian, ICMA-CM  
Town Manager

Nancy Avery  
Interim Town Clerk

*Nature's Tranquil Beauty*

**Planning Board**

Program for Public Information (PPI) Committee

**Regular Meeting Draft Minutes**

Thursday, February 9, 2023 at 5:00 PM

2008 Loggerhead Court, North Topsail Beach NC 28460

Present: Hanna McCloud – Chair, Paul Dorazio – Vice Chair, Lisa Brown, Susan Meyer, Stu Harness.

Absent: Gunnar Mathews, Scott Morse, Pat Stigall.

Present Other: Deborah Hill – Planning Director, Kate Winzler – Clerk to the Planning Board, IT Director Schwisow, Fire Chief Soward, Town Manager Derian.

CALL TO ORDER Chair McCloud called the meeting to order at 5:10 p.m.

**ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA Ms. Brown made a motion to adopt the agenda. Mr. Dorazio seconded. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.**

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES Ms. Meyer made a motion to approve the January 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023 minutes. Ms. Brown seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.**

PUBLIC COMMENT none.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**COMMERCIAL PLAN REVIEW: FIRE STATION**

Planning Director Hill presented the staff report regarding the development plan review and approval of the proposed North Topsail Beach Fire Station number two.

Ms. Hill read an email from Mr. Evester Bailey (*attached*), adjacent property owner, who expressed concerns regarding the proximity of the proposed building and supporting structures to the property line, rainwater runoff, buffers, potential construction damage to his property, and if the zoning variance is restricted to the footprint of the new station. He expressed vehement opposition to other additional structures beyond the new fire station.

Ms. Hill explained that the generator platform and elevated mechanical platform had been moved within the allowable encroachment into the setbacks.

Mr. Ernie Olds of Becker Morgan explained that the access to the generator platform had been modified to a vertical ladder.

Ms. Hill asked if the grading, drainage and erosion control plan was being submitted to the Department of Natural Resources (DENR) for an erosion sediment control permit. The engineers agreed. Mr. Rob Balland of Paramounte Engineering explained that the proposed design has less impervious surface than currently exists, so there will be less runoff with improved direction.

Vice Chair Dorazio asked about the stormwater system.

Mr. Olds responded that the roof surfaces collect on gutters and are directed; none of the roof is shedding directly on to the neighbors' property.

Planning Director Hill explained that the ordinance does not require a buffer for existing use.

Vice Chair Dorazio asked if there was any buffer proposed.

Mr. Olds responded that the neighbor has a six-foot wooden fence in the backyard, but there is no fence proposed for the Town's project.

The Board discussed possible buffers as a recommendation to the Board of Aldermen.

Mr. Olds explained that the generator and mechanical platforms are elevated above the nearest doors, approximately eight feet higher than the ground. He stated that they could put a buffer in, like shrubbery, but it would not be tall enough to prevent the view of the equipment. He pointed out that the neighbor also has elevated and exposed mechanical equipment at roughly the same height. Mr. Olds explained that the fire station is designed to be as unobtrusive a background as possible: there will be no one looking out of the fire station toward the neighbor's property, there will be no light coming from the fire station into the neighbor's yard, the water heading toward the neighbor's property will be minimized, and the area between the building and the property line will be stabilized with ten feet of grass.

Ms. Meyer asked if it was feasible to place a fence around the equipment.

Mr. Olds answered that if a fence was placed around the mechanical equipment, it would need to be largely open to allow for air flow to the equipment. He continued that the generator is an engine placed inside a box with along with the generator platform could be painted to match the building.

Ms. Meyer stated Mr. Bailey's concerns seemed more aesthetic than of a concern for noise.

The Board discussed that generator maintenance operation noise is an occasional occurrence.

Fire Chief Soward explained that the fire trucks are louder than the generator will be.

Mr. Olds explained the equipment can be fairly innocuous, and the attempt to buffer it may call more attention to it. He presumed that the Town might be amenable to adjusting post-construction if something were perceived offensive.

Town Manager Derian explained that adjacent property owners should report any potential construction damages to the Town, and the Town would follow up with the contractor for remediation.

Planning Director Hill explained that the proposed development is not a zoning variance and does not include any other structures. It is an expansion from the footprint of the existing fire station; however it includes a decrease in the 88.3% impervious surface.

Mr. Brad Schuler of Paramounte Engineering stated that the current impervious surface is 12,157 square feet, and will be reduced to 11,968 square feet, a decrease of 189 square feet on-site. The driveway to Island Drive will be replaced with pervious concrete, resulting in an additional 370 square foot reduction in impervious surface.

Mr. Balland stated the new impervious surface percentage will be 72.5%.

Ms. Hill stated that the aesthetics of the new FEMA compliant fire station building will be of major benefit to the community and the Town.

Ms. Hill read an email from Ms. Bernadette Hudson to the Planning Board (*attached*) specifying a concern for the flooding in the area.

Chair McCloud stated that the new reduced impervious surface percentage along with the answers to Mr. Bailey's previous questions should address Ms. Hudson's concern.

Planning Director Hill offered to draft a response for Chair McCloud's signature.

Chair McCloud agreed.

The Board did not have any additional questions for Planning Director Hill.

Mr. Ernie Olds, Principal Architect with Becker Morgan Group, addressed the Planning Board. He introduced architect Bryce Reid, planner Brad Schuler, and engineer Rob Balland. Mr. Olds recapped the project as a four-bay modern fire station, with elevated bays as high as the location allows. The crew quarters, including sleeping, eating and working areas are at the FEMA required elevation plus two, or fourteen feet. It is an enhanced designed facility per the North Carolina Building Code, engineered to resist 162 miles-per-hour winds. Mr. Olds has maximized the usefulness of the site to deliver the most value to the Town, being attentive to roof drainage, stormwater, impervious calculations, durability of materials, and proper FEMA guided design to deliver a facility that will serve the Town well for hopefully fifty years.

Chair McCloud thanked the engineers and architects for their work to revise and meet the regulations of the Town and in so doing the best for the Town. She stated her appreciation for their expertise and efforts to make this project a compliment to North Topsail Beach.

**Vice Chair Dorazio made a motion that the Planning Board recommend that the Board of Aldermen approve the Commercial Plans for North Topsail Beach Fire Station #2. Ms. Meyer seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.**

The Planning Board took a break at 5:54 p.m.

The Planning Board resumed at 5:58 p.m.

#### DISCUSSION

Chair McCloud asked how the Planning Board could address suggesting a buffer be placed between the new Fire Station and the adjacent property.

Planning Director Hill explained that the Planning Board could have included that in their recommendation to the Board of Aldermen.

Chair McCloud asked if the Planning Board could make an amendment to their motion.

Ms. Brown asked if the Planning Board could make a separate recommendation.

Ms. Hill left that decision up to the Planning Board.

Ms. Meyer stated the desire to amend the motion.

Vice Chair Dorazio suggested there should be at least a four-foot fence running along the property line to separate the commercial lot from the neighboring residential lot. He explained that in Surf City, every commercial building must have a fence between it and the adjacent residential lots. He stated he understood North Topsail Beach does not require this, and he believes placing a buffer would be the right thing to do.

**Ms. Meyer made a motion to rescind the motion that was passed about however it was worded sending it to the Board of Aldermen. The motion failed for lack of a second.**

Mr. Harness stated that he disagreed with amending the original motion. He suggested it be part of continuous improvement later.  
There was discussion.

Ms. Meyer asked about the ongoing Town stormwater project.  
Planning Director Hill explained the North Carolina Resilient Coastal Communities Program (NCRCCP) resilience grant project is wrapping up phase three with finished drawings for permitting which will be presented to the Topsail Island Shoreline Protection Commission on February 24<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Hill invited the Planning Board to attend the meeting. She explained that in late March or early April the Division of Coastal Management should have the application process announced and available for Phase Four: construction. It is up to Topsail Beach, Surf City, and North Topsail Beach to decide if they want to work through this as a team, or if it is best to continue separately. There are additional grants the Town may apply for to address additional stormwater sites.

Chair McCloud asked if the new fire station are was a stormwater priority.  
Planning Director Hill confirmed.

Ms. Meyer suggested notifying citizens of the stormwater project.  
Planning Director Hill warned against over-promising and under-delivering. She wants to educate the citizens that there are many other areas the Town is working on besides the beach.  
Mr. Harness asked if the existing fire station is a contributing factor to the existing stormwater issues in that location.

Planning Director Hill replied neutrally.

Chair McCloud pointed out the notable reduction in impervious surface percentage. The Board and Planning Director Hill agreed.

Planning Director Hill explained that she published notice for text amendments to fences, duplexes, and parking spaces. Fences and duplexes require more research.

Ms. Hill mentioned the CRS Cycle Verification Meeting is scheduled for April 18, 2023.

Ms. Hill informed the Planning Board that the Town is working on an elevation project under the hazard mitigation grant program (HMGP).

Mr. Harness asked for more information about the hazard mitigation grant project.

Planning Director Hill explained a hazard mitigation grant can be for elevation or acquisition. She explained the North Topsail Beach history with hazard mitigation grants since Hurricane Florence.

Planning Director Hill thanked the Planning Board for their work on the fire station. She stated that she was pleased with the results, making sure that it is in compliance with NFIP and FEMA.

Chair McCloud thanked Planning Director Hill and Clerk Winzler for their work on the fire station project.

Mr. Dorazio stated that the fire station will be a real asset to the Town.

ADJOURNMENT Mr. Dorazio made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Meyer seconded. Motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

The Planning Board meeting adjourned at 6:08 p.m.

APPROVED

This 9th day of March 2023



Hanna McCloud  
Chair

CERTIFIED

This 9th day of March 2023



Kate Winzler  
Clerk

From: Alice Derian <aderian@northtopsailbeachnc.gov>  
Sent: Wednesday, February 8, 2023 3:22 PM  
To: Deb Hill <dhill@northtopsailbeachnc.gov>  
Subject: Fwd: NTB Planning Board Statement

Attachment 1 p. 1

Sent from my iPhone

Begin forwarded message:

From: [evest8@aol.com](mailto:evest8@aol.com)  
Date: February 8, 2023 at 2:12:29 PM EST  
To: Alice Derian <aderian@northtopsailbeachnc.gov>  
Cc: Melinda Mier <mmier@northtopsailbeachnc.gov>  
Subject: NTB Planning Board Statement

Caution: This is an external email. Please take caution when clicking links or opening attachments. Contact the IT Department if you're unsure of the legitimacy of this email.

NTB Planning Board Chair

Re: Proposal for NTB

Fire Station #2

From: Evester Bailey

2757 Island Drive

NTB NC 28460

I am the property owner of the home next to the existing fire station and proposed new station. I have reviewed the proposed site plan and have several concerns and questions.

1. It appears that the building and supporting structures are extremely close to the property line. What is the town ruling on setback distances from the property boundary lines? It appears that a permanent support platform for a generator or HVAC equipment extends to the edge of the property line if not beyond it. Please explain the ordinance or code that allows this to occur.

2. If the proposed building is built above the existing grade to avoid ground flooding, will there be any runoff from rain water flowing onto my property?

3. The architectural rendering does not show the type of fencing or scrub buffer between my property and the proposed site. Please explain the type of barrier that will be installed.

4. What is the policy for handling any construction damages to my property during the building phase of the project?

5. Is this zoning variance restricted to the footprint of the new stations or does it cover the entire area including the public works area? I am vehemently opposed to other additional structures (beyond the fire station being added to this site. This would pose an excess burden to me and the other surrounding property regarding a situation of public buildings in a residential area.

My family has owned this property since 1971 and we have had a positive experience with the fire station and its personnel as our neighbor. I am confident that this relationship will continue with the new structure. Please provide me with some assurances that this site will not continue to expand at the expense of the loss of property value to existing neighbors.

Thanks you for your time and the work you perform for the town.

Pursuant to North Carolina General Statutes, Chapter 132, email correspondence to and from this address may be considered public record under the North Carolina Public Records Law and may possibly be disclosed to third parties.

From: Hudson, Bernardette C <bernardette.hudson@coldwellbankeratlanta.com>  
Sent: Thursday, February 9, 2023 5:08 PM  
To: Deb Hill <dhill@northtopsailbeachnc.gov>  
Cc: aderian@northtopsailbeachnc; govmmier@northtopsailbeachncgov  
Subject: NTB Planning Board Chair/ Proposal for NTB Fire Station

Attachment 2

Caution: This is an external email. Please take caution when clicking links or opening attachments. Contact the IT Department if you're unsure of the legitimacy of this email.

Deb, thank you for the information on the upcoming planning meeting tonight.

My family and myself are looking forward to working with the City of North Topsail, however there are many concerns that have not been addressed. You are aware of the concerns that I have expressed over the past several years concerning the use of the property the city wanted to purchase and devaluation of our lots.

We have no problem with the fire station however we feel that more time should be taken to address flooding in the area that this structure as presented may pose.

Regards,

Bernardette Hudson

**REALTOR®**

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RESIDENTIAL BROKERAGE

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