

TOWN OF ST. JAMES REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
July 2, 2025

The St. James Town Council met in Regular Session at 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, July 2, 2025 in the Earl Dye Council Chamber.

Council Members Present: Mayor Jean Toner, Mayor Pro Tem David DeLong, Councilors Jim Board, Dennis Barclay, and Lynn Dutney

Staff Present: Town Manager Jeff Repp and Town Clerk Jamie Burns

Others Present: State Port Pilot Reporter Eliot Duke and 3 residents

Absent: Finance Director, Pauline Haran

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Toner opened the meeting at 4:01 p.m.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

All in attendance joined Mayor Toner in honoring our flag.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mayor Toner asked if there were any changes to the agenda as submitted. There were none. Mayor Toner asked for a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Councilor Board moved to approve the agenda. The motion passed unanimously.

Vote: 5/0

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Mayor Toner asked if there were any corrections to the minutes included in the consent agenda. There were none. Mayor Pro Tem DeLong made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda, which consists of the minutes from the May 22, 2025 Public Work session and the minutes from the June 4, 2025 Regular Meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

Vote: 5/0

PUBLIC HEARING

Mayor Toner opened the public hearing regarding text amendment changes at 4:03 p.m. and invited Town Manager Jeff Repp to present.

Town Manager Repp explained that the public hearing was being held regarding recommendations that were initiated by a request from the Town Council from their May work session to the St. James Planning Board, which met on June 3rd and voted to recommend the following amendments to the Unified Development Ordinance (UDO):

- Section 8.88 Swimming Pools: Allow in-ground swimming pools within the rear yard setback of properties in St. James to within 5 feet of the rear yard, changed from the current 20-foot setback.

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- Section 9.1.7 Alternative Parking Plans: Increase from 500 to 2000 linear feet the distance for off-site parking to be permitted in the UDO for activities in commercial districts in St. James. This change was requested by Generations Church.

Mr. Repp noted that an ordinance for action on these amendments was on the agenda later in the meeting. He stated this was an opportunity for public comment on the two proposed changes.

Mayor Toner asked if there were any questions for Mr. Repp from the council or any discussion. There were none.

Mayor Toner then opened the floor for public comment on the two text amendment changes. No public comments were made.

Mayor Toner closed the public hearing at 4:05 p.m.

MAYOR/COUNCIL/STAFF REPORTS - None

OLD BUSINESS

Councilor Jim Board commented that the general consensus he had been hearing about the new streetlights that were authorized to be installed has been genuinely positive.

Mayor Toner inquired about the project's completion timeline. Mr. Repp explained that the project's completion depended on the contractor who is doing the actual work for BEMC. He noted that the Reserve and Woodland areas were being done first, followed by Seaside. The Reserve and Woodlands work involve repainting poles and installing new fixtures, while Seaside only requires new fixtures on existing concrete poles.

Mr. Repp estimated that major portions of the project would be completed within the next 60 days, with final completion likely in the fall. He stated that the project involved just short of 500 poles.

Mayor Toner remarked that the project was progressing well and looked great. She thanked Councilor Board for his comment and noted that there had been many positive comments about the streetlights.

Mayor Toner also mentioned the previous night's fireworks as old business, hoping that some audience members had attended. She described the fireworks as fabulous, praising the contractor for doing a great job. She expressed hope that this would continue and become a tradition.

NEW BUSINESS

- 25-14 Motion to Reappoint Tom Connors to the St. James Emergency Management Group with a Term Expiring on October 6, 2027.

Town Manager Jeff Repp explained that Tom Connors is a current member of the St. James Emergency Management Group whose term has expired. Mayor Toner inquired about a swearing-in ceremony, but Mr. Repp clarified that it wasn't necessary for a reappointment.

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Mayor Pro Tem DeLong made a motion to reappoint Tom Connors to the St. James Emergency Management Group with a term expiring on October 6, 2027. There was no discussion and the motion was approved unanimously.

Vote: 5/0

- 25-15 Motion to Approve a Professional Services Agreement with Anchorpoint Planning, LLC for Planning and Zoning Services.

Mr. Repp presented a professional services agreement for planning and zoning services with Anchorpoint Planning, LLC in Wilmington. He explained that Anchorpoint is run by Wes MacLeod, the previous planner for Cape Fear Council of Governments, who has started his own firm. Mr. Repp noted that the Cape Fear COG seemed to be reducing its planning services. Mr. Repp recommended the contract to council, stating that it has the same financial arrangements as with Cape Fear COG regarding hourly rates.

Councilor Jim Board made a motion to approve the contract with Anchorpoint Planning, LLC for their professional services as their proposal indicates. There was no discussion or further questions. The motion was approved unanimously.

Vote: 5/0

- 25-16 Motion to Adopt Ordinance 2025-03 and Consistency Statement Amending the Text in Section 8.88 Swimming Pools and Section 9.1.7 Alternative Parking Plans of the Unified Development Ordinance.

Mr. Repp explained that this ordinance and consistency statement would amend the text in the swimming pool and alternative parking plans sections of the Unified Development Ordinance upon its adoption, as discussed earlier in the public hearing.

Councilor Lynn Dutney made a motion to amend the text in Section 8.88 Swimming Pools and Section 9.1.7 Alternative Parking Plans, and to adopt the attached consistency statement. The motion was approved unanimously.

Vote: 5/0

- 25-17 Motion to Adopt Resolution 2025-06 Opposing Oil and Gas Leasing off the NC Coast

Mayor Toner introduced the resolution, noting that the town council had previously passed a similar resolution opposing offshore oil and gas leasing about three years ago. Mr. Repp confirmed that the council has taken action on this issue approximately every four years.

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Mayor Toner explained that there had been a request to pass another resolution due to increased activity in this area. She then read the first “whereas” clause of the resolution, after which each council member read subsequent points.

The resolution outlined the town’s opposition to the inclusion of new offshore oil and gas leasing off the coast of North Carolina in the Eleventh National Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing Program. It emphasized the importance of a healthy coastal and marine environment to the local economy, the risks associated with offshore drilling, and the potential negative impacts on tourism and business development.

Councilor Jim Board made a motion to approve Resolution 2025-06 Opposing Oil and Gas Leasing off the NC Coast. The motion was approved unanimously.

Vote: 5/0

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mayor Toner opened the floor for public comment, noting that it was a short meeting held primarily to approve ordinances needed for Generations Church and a private property owner. No members of the public came forward to comment.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Toner wished everyone a happy Fourth of July and thanked them for attending.

At 4:16pm Mayor Pro Tem DeLong made a motion to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor.

Vote: 5/0

Mayor Toner adjourned the meeting.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jamie Burns, Town Clerk

Approved,

Jean R. Toner, Mayor