

**TOWN OF DUCK
TOWN COUNCIL
MID-MONTH MEETING
November 17, 2021**

The Town Council for the Town of Duck convened at the Paul F. Keller Meeting Hall at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday, November 17, 2021.

COUNCIL MEMBERS PRESENT: Mayor Don Kingston; Mayor Pro Tempore Monica Thibodeau; Councilor Nancy Caviness; Councilor Sandy Whitman; and Councilor Rob Mooney.

COUNCIL MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

OTHERS PRESENT: Town Manager Drew Havens, Director of Community Development Joseph Heard; Police Chief Jeffrey Ackerman; Fire Chief Donna Black; Town Attorney Robert Hobbs; Director of Marketing and Special Events Christian Legner; Finance and Human Resources Administrator Jessica Barnes; Andrew Topp from VHB; Chris Dewitt from VHB; Lauren Blackburn from VHB; Brian Mayhew from NC Department of Transportation; and Deputy Town Clerk Kristiana Nickens.

OTHERS ABSENT: Town Clerk Lori Ackerman

Mayor Kingston called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

**PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION OF TRAFFIC STUDY BY ANDREW TOPP
AND CHRIS DEWITT WITH VHB**

Director of Community Development Joe Heard was recognized to speak. Director Heard stated that a few months ago, Town staff received emails and comments from the public regarding concerns over traffic in Duck, looking at causes and the public's perception of what was going on. He stated that Council opted to request staff to facilitate a traffic study so questions brought to Council and staff could be answered. He stated that he was grateful that VHB was able to help the Town out with the traffic study. He stated that representatives from VHB were present to give a short presentation.

Andrew Topp of VHB was recognized to speak. Mr. Topp went on to give a short presentation on the recent traffic study that was conducted in Duck earlier in the year to Council and the audience.

Mayor Kingston asked if the weather was consistent for the weeklong study. Andrew Topp stated that it was, adding that there was a little bit of rain, but the weather was pretty clear. He noted that weather does impact speeds and travel times.

Councilor Caviness asked what the capacity in Corolla was for that week. Andrew Topp stated that he did not know but some of the information they received throughout the season indicated that it was quite high.

Mayor Pro Tempore Thibodeau asked about the turning intersections. She asked if they were actual crosswalks, intersections, or both. Andrew Topp stated that he would review each one in his presentation, but in all of the cases that were studied, it was an intersection and a crosswalk, adding that sometimes it was not a public intersection because it could have been a driveway. Mayor Pro Tempore Thibodeau clarified that the turning lane helped with vehicles that turn left from Duck Road. Andrew Topp stated she was correct.

Mayor Pro Tempore Thibodeau thanked Andrew Topp for his presentation. Mayor Kingston pointed out that there was no quick and easy solution to the traffic issue. Andrew Topp agreed. Mayor Kingston noted that a lot of great data was presented. Mr. Topp explained that there were things that would or could help but at the same time there were negative consequences to them. He added that the Mid-Currituck Bridge traffic studies that were conducted showed an effect for vehicles in areas north of Duck as well as Currituck County as they would be able to access the mainland a lot faster with the bridge.

Mayor Pro Tempore Thibodeau stated that the analysis of the Mid-Currituck Bridge would bring the traffic down, but the projections show that by 2040 that it would be higher even with the bridge due to the build out of Corolla. Andrew Topp stated she was correct, adding that they do get involved in the traffic forecasting and a lot of that study was looking ahead at what the population projections were as well as the projections for visitors and seasonal variations. He noted that generally, traffic has steadily increased over time, which is why it takes so long to build a bridge.

Mayor Pro Tempore Thibodeau pointed out that Andrew Topp had showed some data and even though the Town was not at the peak summer, it was operating at capacity on the road. Andrew Topp agreed.

Councilor Whitman asked if the Mid-Currituck Bridge was built, what percentage of traffic will use the bridge that were already in Corolla or north of Duck. Andrew Topp explained that that they have an origin destination where there are a lot of different points and then they have a table. He stated that he would look more into the information and report back to Council.

Councilor Caviness stated that she has lived in Duck since 1995 and the traffic was a known pattern. She added that the volume was different, but it was the same thing that was happening in 1995 except there were more vehicles. She noted that what wasn't happening in 1995 that is happening now was that the Town now has a pedestrian infrastructure, and the pedestrians were doing what the Town wanted them to do, which was using the boardwalk, walking on the sidewalks and crossing at the crosswalks. She asked if there was any way to look at the pedestrian numbers to get a sense of how many

vehicles were not on the road since people would be walking instead of driving. Andrew Topp explained that NCDOT publishes average annual traffic all over the state system. He stated that in 2002, the annual average was 11,000 cars per day. He stated that in 2003, it was 11,000, in 2004 it was 11,000 and then dipped to 9,900 in 2005. He added that from 2002 to 2007, it was consistently 11,000 and then in 2008 it went down to 9,500. He stated that from 2009 to 2012 it was 5,300 due to the recession. He stated that in 2013 it was 6,800 and in 2017 it went back up to 9,900. He pointed out that over the years, the volume has been pretty flat and dipped when the housing market crashed. He added that the total volume has not changed that much, and it may be part of people using the infrastructure with walking more.

Councilor Caviness pointed out that in 1995 a 4,000 to 5,000 square foot house was considered a big house. She thought the houses had two or three vehicles but now as the houses get bigger, there are more vehicles. She thought there may not be more rental units or more housing units, but there were certainly more cars. Andrew Topp thought it may be because of how the market has changed over the years. He thought there were more occupied second homes more often during the year.

Mayor Kingston thanked Andrew Topp for his presentation.

PRESENTATION/DISCUSSION OF PEDESTRIAN CROSSWALK STUDY BY BRIAN MAYHEW WITH NCDOT AND LAUREN BLACKBURN WITH VHB

Brian Mayhew of NCDOT and Lauren Blackburn of VHB were recognized to speak. Mr. Mayhew and Ms. Blackburn went on to give a short presentation on the results of the pedestrian crosswalk study that was completed earlier in the year to Council and the audience.

Mayor Kingston pointed out that a lot of recommendations were made. He asked if the recommendations and activities were completed by NCDOT, the Town or jointly between NCDOT and the Town from an expense standpoint. Brian Mayhew thought at this point, they were recommendations for consideration. He added that if they were to move forward, there would need to be some conversations with Division 1 to work through some processes of funding options that the department has or cost sharing between the Town and NCDOT or in some cases, some that would need to be only by the Town such as the lighting. He added that NCDOT has programs available to consider, noting that some of the recommendations were minor, with some that they could work with Division 1 on. He thought the first step was for Council to absorb some of the recommendations that were made and think them through.

Mayor Pro Tempore Thibodeau asked if the focus was primarily on pedestrian safety with regard to the observations and recommendations. Lauren Blackburn stated that it was. Mayor Pro Tempore Thibodeau stated that Council had received some pushback on the number of existing crosswalks. She pointed out that she liked the idea of realigning a few crosswalks, but the idea of adding a few could be a tough conversation to have with the public.

Mayor Kingston asked if any consideration was given to reversing the flow of traffic around the building at the Wee Winks crossover. Lauren Blackburn explained that they did not collect traffic counts at the Wee Winks shopping center. She pointed out that the recommendations were conceptual, and she encouraged Council to collect additional data to help describe a better traffic flow. Brian Mayhew added that the concept that was shared was from the perspective of leaving the crosswalk where it currently existed and possibly enhancing it with a refuge island and then adjusting the circulation based on that. He explained that the reason they took that approach was because they knew the crosswalk used to be slightly north of where it exists at the intersection of Wampus Drive. He stated that they received feedback from the Town that the crosswalk had been moved from that location because of concern over conflicts with turning vehicles. He added that it could go either way in that they could adjust the flow to one-way through Wee Winks in either direction, but that decision would involve the relocation of the crosswalk.

Councilor Whitman asked if the additional calming islands would be painted or raised. Lauren Blackburn explained that, for the most part, they would be raised islands as that was what they were recommending, but there were a couple areas that wouldn't need raised islands and could have painted ones. She stated that any of the areas where they were focusing on the turning movement conflicts, a raised island would be needed for reinforcement.

Town Manager Havens stated that Fire Chief Donna Black had commented that the third lane helps fire apparatus to get through Town. He stated that the raised islands force the trucks back into travel lane. He pointed out that it was a wrinkle in the plan, adding that the raised islands were great unless a fire truck or ambulance had to come through Town.

Chris Dewitt of VHB was recognized to speak. Mr. Dewitt stated that when the pedestrian plan was completed in 2014, they considered some additional raised islands with the same feedback, which was why they were limited to the one at Sunset Grille as well as the one near Four Seasons that did not include a crosswalk. He stated that they had recommended one at Christopher Drive and the concern about emergency vehicles was why that wasn't an eventual part of the plan.

Mayor Kingston thanked Brian Mayhew, Lauren Blackburn and Chris Dewitt for their presentations.

CLOSED SESSION

Mayor Pro Tempore Thibodeau moved to enter closed session in accordance with Section 143-318.11(a)(1) of the North Carolina General Statutes to prevent the disclosure of information that is privileged or confidential, pursuant to the law of this State or of the United States, or not considered a public record within the meaning of Chapter 132 of the General Statutes.

Motion carried 5-0.

The time was 3:03 p.m.

Upon return from closed session, Town Attorney Hobbs stated that Council reviewed and approved closed session minutes for the following dates:

- | | |
|---|---|
| June 17, 2020 | July 16, 2020 |
| July 20, 2020 | July 24, 2020 |
| August 5, 2020 | August 26, 2020 |
| September 2, 2020 | September 16, 2020 |
| October 7, 2020 | November 4, 2020 – 4:00 p.m. meeting |
| November 4, 2020 – 7:00 p.m. meeting | November 18, 2020 – three closed sessions |
| December 4, 2020 | December 10, 2020 – three closed sessions |
| December 11, 2020 – two closed sessions | January 6, 2021 |
| February 3, 2021 | March 3, 2021 |
| April 7, 2021 | May 5, 2021 |
| June 16, 2021 | August 4, 2021 |

Town Attorney Hobbs noted that all closed session minutes listed above would be sealed and remain as such until any further action by the Town Council.

Mayor Kingston noted that the next meeting would be the Regular Meeting on Wednesday, December 1, 2021, at 6:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

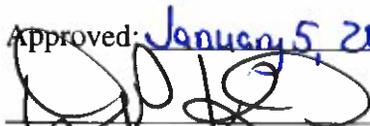
Councilor Whitman moved to adjourn the meeting.

Motion carried 5-0.

The time was 4:13 p.m.



 Lori A. Ackerman, Town Clerk

Approved: January 5, 2022


 Don Kingston, Mayor

