

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, February 19, 2026, 2:00 pm

North Topsail Beach Town Hall, North Topsail Beach, NC

Commission Members Present

William Snyder, Chairman
Larry Strother, Vice Chair
Teresa Batts, SC
John Best, TB
David Ward, SC
Kip Malcolm, NTB
Hiram Williams, SC
Frank Braxton
Tim Foster

Associates Present

Mike McInyre & Marley Peterson, Ward
Smith, Via WebEx
David Ferrell, Maynard Nexsen, Via WebEx
Ann Durand, TFG, Via WebEx
Kerri Allen, NCCF
Kathleen Riely, NCBIWA, Via WebEX
Kathy Zagzebski, Turtle Hospital, Via WebEx
Kyle Breuer, SC Town Manager
Alice Derian, NTB Town Manager
Jamie Pratt, TI Coastal

1. Call to Order, Greetings, & Pledge of Allegiance

- Chairman Snyder called the meeting to order at **2:03 PM**.
- The Chairman welcomed the commission members, associates, and the public, expressing appreciation for their interest in shoreline protection.
- John Best led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Public Comments

The meeting heard extensive testimony regarding the proliferation of water column oyster farms:

- **Sabrina Guy (Channel Bend):** Requested a resolution for a moratorium on water column leases. She cited safety concerns regarding PVC pipes, litter in waterways, and the low cost of leases (\$100/month) versus the impact on homeowners. Mrs. Guy recommended a forum be held between the towns on Topsail Island to address the oyster lease program.
- **Stan Griffin (Surf City):** Expressed concerns over sport fishing access being cut off and the lack of liability insurance requirements for oyster farmers, particularly regarding abandoned oyster farms after storms.
- **Tate Tucker (Topsail):** Noted a near 100% approval rate for leases and warned that moratoriums in other counties are driving "outsiders" into local waters.
- **George Howard:** Highlighted the need to warn tourists about injury risks from oyster beds and PVC pipes.

- **Jackie Moody:** Inquired about the legal process for enacting moratoriums.
- **Kerri Allen (Coastal Federation):** Stated the Federation supports the industry but recognizes the need for carrying capacity studies. A forum is scheduled for March-April, with geospatial mapping to follow in the fall.

3. Approval of Agenda

- **Motion:** Teresa Batts.
- **Second:** Hiram Williams.
- **Action:** Approved unanimously.

4. Minutes Approval

- **Approval of Minutes for December 11, 2025:**
 - **Motion:** Larry Strother.
 - **Second:** Hiram Williams.
 - **Action:** Approved unanimously.
- The Chairman noted the labor-intensive nature of developing minutes and acknowledged the historical work of Mike Benson.

5. Consultant & Partners Reviews

- **Federal Legislation (Mike McIntyre - Ward and Smith):**
 - Reported on government shutdown impacts and the upcoming 2027 appropriations.
 - Discussed the State of the Union (SOTU) scheduled for Tuesday and its relation to the President's proposed budget.
 - Provided updates on FEMA Hurricane Helene relief, PFAS "forever chemical" removal, and permitting reforms.
 - **Surf City:** The Surf City renourishment package moved from the Secretary of USACE to OMB for a 120-day review. Brad Schwichtenberg requested switching funds from design to construction.
 - **North Topsail Beach CBRA issue:** We continue to work with the congressional delegation and the US Fish and Wildlife Service on favorable wording for legislation. The NTB Board of Alderman has considered the proposed language and appears willing to proceed.
 - **Washington, DC Spring Legislative Trip:** Scheduled for **April 20–22** (with April 23 as a potential runover). The delegation must submit names and contact info to Ward & Smith/Ferguson Group.
 - **FEMA Act:** No additional progress has been made on this bill.
- **NC State Legislation (David Ferrell, Maynard Nexsen):**
 - The March 3 primary has slowed Raleigh activities; no substantive legislation is expected until the late-April short session.

- **Shellfish/Oyster Leases:** The Farm Act study and moratorium provisions are expected to move forward in the short session.
- **Budget:** NC remains without a budget due to a tax reduction package hold-up, impacting shallow draft and mitigation funds.
- **Raleigh Legislative Day:** Tentatively discussed the 5th or 12th of May
- **Concerns were expressed about the Shallow Draft Inlet fund and the Coastal Storm Damage Mitigation Fund**
- **It would be good to begin discussions with Representative Smith and State Senator Jackson prior to the Legislative session beginning.**
- Kathleen Riley: No update except a reminder that the NCBIWA semi annual meeting will be held on April the 23rd and 24th

6. Old Business & Updates

- **Vitex Dune Project:** Currently on hold until the spring growing season (April/May). The contract was amended to ensure proper notification before treatment.
- **Oyster Lease Hearing:** Discussion of the NCDMF Shellfish Leasing Tool, which shows the areas around Snead's Ferry and Alligator Bay that have proposed leases. Stump Sound will be the NOAA project study area for the North Carolina Sea Grant and The North Carolina Coastal Federation study.

7. Town Updates

- **Topsail Beach:** Established a stormwater flooding subcommittee to review survey data. Finalizing budget for Public Service Building work with a March bid date. The South End property will be transferred to the Division of Coastal Management upon closing by the North Carolina Coastal Land Trust in late April. There will be public hearing at the upcoming CRC meeting regarding closing cost to accomplish the property transfer.
- **Surf City (Kyle Breuer):**
 - **Stormwater:** Roland Avenue pavers to be completed by the end of March.
 - **Infrastructure:** A 16" waterline resilience project is underway for redundancy. A March 2nd meeting will discuss the DOT 50/210 roundabout and concerns regarding bridge traffic stacking.
 - **CRAC Meeting, March 25th** The Advisory Council met before the Coastal Resources Commission meeting. The Advisory Council reviewed the CRC agendas and provide feedback for their meeting. The agenda contained a proposed sentiment criteria update for compatibility (natural sand that works for our beaches) for projects, Inlet hazard areas - setbacks and standards.
- **North Topsail Beach (Alice Derian):**

- **PTC 8 Dune Work:** Finishing ahead of schedule this month despite the winter storm delay.
- **Stormwater:** Grant-funded projects at Richard Peters Park and Gray Street have a bid opening on March 10; engineered by Ardura (formerly WK Dickson).

8. New Business

- **2026 Meeting Dates:** Teresa Batts moved to keep the March meeting in light of public comments and concerns about aquaculture.
- **Regulatory Updates:** The CRC will discuss hardened structures (Buxton, NC) and the potential for grants to purchase threatened homes at "fire sale" prices for conversion to public access.
- **Team Member Recognition:** Introduced **Kip Malcolm** (NTB Alderman) as a permanent member. He volunteered to assist with minutes using his copious notes, meeting recordings, and AI tools.

9. Partner Reports

- **Karen Beasley Sea Turtle Hospital (Kathy Zagzebski, Executive Director):** 2025 saw the 2nd highest nest count (91) and record tours (50,600). A celebration of life for Jean Beasley is scheduled for **April 11. We are currently taking in cold stunned turtles. We have received 22 turtles from the New England States and 78 from North Carolina. In 2025, The Sea Turtle Hospital had their highest number of turtles yet. They admitted 167 turtles. Applications are open for internships.**
- **Keri Allen from the North Carolina Coastal Federation**
 - Conducted site visits on island today.
 - Currently looking at another potential living shoreline site on Topsail Island
 - Legislative agenda - Living shoreline cost share funding, Abandoned and derelict vessel provision needs adoption for funding/federal funds. A number of vessels need to be removed. Senator Lee is sponsor
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10. Next Meeting

- **Thursday, March 26, 2026, 2:00 PM – Surf City Town Hall.**

11. Adjournment

- **Motion:** Larry Strother
- **Second:** Hiram Williams
- **Action:** Approved unanimously.