



**Board of Commissioners Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, August 4, 2026, at 6:30 PM
City Hall**

1. Call to Order

Mayor Winecoff called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

Attendance:

Mayor Jeff Winecoff
Commissioner Kim Sherwood
Commissioner Todd Ausborn
Commissioner Justin Lovin
City Manager Matthew Kirkland
Police Chief Kevin Smith
Parks and Rec. Director Sara Goodwin
Finance Director Brandon Stevens
City Clerk Tanya Shannon
Development Services Director Nicole Morgan
Stormwater Engineer Jim Stachura

Absent: Commissioner Teagan Hall

2. Pledge of Allegiance

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

3. Approval of the Agenda

Commissioner Lovin moved to approve the agenda, with an amendment to add discussion of Finished Floor Elevations (FFE) to agenda item 10.3, seconded by Commissioner Ausborn.

Vote 4-0; Motion Carried.

4. Potential Conflict of Interest/Association Disclosure

No BOC member indicated any conflict or association with any item on this evening's agenda.

5. Public Comments

1. Ruth Bek, N. Shore Dr., raised concerns about the difficulty of enforcing codes related to keeping chickens. She recommends that if the ordinance allowing chickens proceeds, it should require a conditional use permit. Under her suggestion, two violations would result in permanent loss of the privilege to keep chickens. She stresses that chicken coops and runs must meet proper specifications rather than relying on pre-built options that may not comply with standards. She also warns about the risks to wild animals and domestic pets, and the need to limit the frequency with which people can keep chickens, citing existing issues like septic system overflows. Ms. Bek further cautions against using chicken manure on plants, as she believes it can harm or kill them. Drawing from her experience developing similar ordinances, she describes enforcement as a persistent challenge. She argues that without conditional permits, violations only lead to required

cleanups rather than meaningful consequences, making enforcement ineffective. Her main recommendation is to use conditional permits.

2. Karen Hartigan, S Shore Dr., expresses surprise and frustration at the reappearance of the issue of allowing chickens in the city. She recalls that previous meetings determined chickens were only allowed in R-6 zones with at least five acres, not in the city proper. She opposes having chickens in residential areas and questions why the Board is revisiting the topic instead of focusing on more important matters.
3. Michael Hartigan, S Shore Dr., argues against allowing chickens in residential areas. He recalls extensive past discussions and meetings in which the consensus was that chickens are farm animals and should remain in farm zones, not residential neighborhoods. He emphasizes that city resources and staff time are being wasted on the chicken debate instead of addressing more pressing city issues, such as street repairs, stormwater planning, lake vegetation, and infrastructure improvements. Mr. Hartigan urges city leaders to focus on these urgent matters and not revisit the chicken issue, which he believes was resolved long ago.
4. Caroline McKenna, Morehead Rd., with experience in farming, shared her perspective on keeping chickens. She reflected on growing up in Paramus, New Jersey, where local codes allowed poultry ownership with certain restrictions. She emphasized her love for her current neighborhood and noted the importance of considering chickens for health, sustainability, and adaptation to economic and climate changes. She explained that those with poultry experience know how to properly manage chicken manure and highlighted the intelligence and responsibility of community members. She voiced strong support for approving chickens in all zones, even in small numbers, citing their benefits for health and well-being.

6. **Public Hearing**

Commissioner Lovin moved to open the public hearing, seconded by Commissioner Ausborn. ***Vote 4-0; motion carried.***

6.1 **TX-2026-01 – UDO Amendment: Article 7, Part IV, Sections 7-26 through 7-29.**

Ms. Morgan explained that recent changes by the Fish and Wildlife Service have altered the process for clearing permits, eliminating the previous zoning system (green, blue, red zones) and requiring all properties to undergo individual review through the new IPAC online system. This shift has led to significant delays, as the city can no longer expedite permits and now acts only as an intermediary. In response, staff drafted an amendment to relieve the city of this intermediary role, allowing property owners to work directly with Fish and Wildlife. The proposed amendment maintains the city's tree preservation ordinance but divides requirements by development type: major projects must still obtain full site plan approval before clearing, while single- and two-family homes must preserve significant trees (such as dogwoods, live oaks, American hollies over eight inches, and any tree over 24 inches). If removal of significant trees is unavoidable, mitigation is required. The planning board unanimously recommended approval of the amendment.

Mayor Winecoff asked Mr. Kirkland if he had additional conversations with Fish and Wildlife, and what their responses were.

Mr. Kirkland confirmed that, as Ms. Morgan mentioned, the city has been in contact with Fish and Wildlife since mid-June. Their initial response arrived on June 26, recommending that the city amend the ordinance to require an IPAC determination before issuing permits. Alternatively, they suggested the city consider a town-wide habitat conservation plan, which would involve a planning effort and could result in a town-wide incidental take permit, allowing for targeted tree removal.

He said they also discussed concerns regarding the new IPAC system. After the last meeting, when the Board directed staff to prepare a text amendment to the ordinance, we notified Fish and Wildlife and informed them of the upcoming public hearing. We clarified that our intention is to direct applicants to US Fish and Wildlife for necessary permits, but coordination with their office would no longer be a requirement for issuing local permits. This change would remove the city from its current role as an intermediary in the approval process.

Fish and Wildlife was receptive to this approach and appreciated that we will continue to inform applicants that state or federal permits may still be required. They were made aware that the local ordinance change could be adopted as soon as tonight. He said he has personally tested the IPAC system and found that most projects will require property owners to hire a qualified biologist for a biological species survey, which Fish and Wildlife confirmed. He said our goal is not to bypass the Endangered Species Act, but to remove the city from the permitting process. Applicants may still need authorization from US Fish and Wildlife, but local permits will no longer be contingent on that approval.

Public Hearing Comments

1. Ruth Bek N. Shore Dr. expressed confusion and concern about the ordinance's mitigation requirements for the removal of significant trees. She pointed out inconsistent language regarding whether mitigation should be set at 25% or 100%, and noted that the mitigation table does not include any examples requiring 100% mitigation. She feels that the 25% mitigation threshold for individual lots is insufficient, especially since large trees like live oaks and longleaf pines take between 60 and 100 years to reach their size and significance. Ms. Bek argued that such a low threshold does not provide enough incentive to preserve these important trees or adequately replace what is lost. She also questioned whether current tree protection perimeters and clearing restrictions are being maintained in the ordinance, expressing concern that most lots would be left with only minimal tree cover. Ultimately, she believes stronger protections and higher mitigation are necessary to maintain the community's natural character.
2. Dawn Smith, Eagle Lane, expressed concerns that changes to the UDO would accelerate tree cutting, which goes against community efforts to preserve trees. She feels that transferring monitoring responsibilities to a higher agency would reduce local oversight and control. She emphasized how long it takes pines to mature and warned that current policies could lead to increased clear-cutting and harm to wildlife. Ms. Smith also questioned whether the community is ready for more development, given issues with septic and stormwater systems, and urged reconsideration of both the tree size requirements and the shift of responsibilities. She acknowledged the challenges of implementing new government systems and asked officials to take another look at the proposed changes.
3. Hank Troscianic, N. Shore Dr., acknowledged the complexity of the issue and the city's difficult position in such matters. He recalled a previous attempt at a citywide Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) that was largely funded by grants and did not cost taxpayers. Mr. Troscianic emphasized the importance of keeping dialogue open among all stakeholders, suggesting that renewed discussions could lead to useful modifications of the HCP and attract additional grant funding. He also highlighted the value of habitat management practices, such as prescribed burns, to reduce wildfire risk. Overall, he advocated for ongoing communication to find collaborative solutions and potentially make processes like tree removal more efficient.
4. Scott Langbeen, George II Highway, said, "I don't live here, but I've worked here for twenty years. Regardless of the outcome of tonight's decision on the UDO revision, I want to appeal to the mayor and the council to consider both short-term and long-term solutions, as Hank suggested. Please avoid severing the relationship with the US Fish and Wildlife Service, because if that happens, most of the growth in this town will stop. My suggestion is to work toward restoring the previously used red, green, and blue system on an interim basis and to open a dialogue with the US Fish and

Wildlife Service, no matter what decision is made tonight. In the long term, I recommend creating a habitat conservation plan. Common sense, in my opinion, would be to form a group of citizens and local businesspeople willing to participate in this process if the town decides to disengage, to help deal with this sudden change, which is already affecting growth in town."

5. Kathy Curtis, Colonial Rd. acknowledged builders' concerns about a proposed amendment and the challenges they face. She also heard criticism surrounding the RCW (Red-cockaded Woodpecker) and concerns about its impact on BSL's natural beauty. Ms. Curtis addressed several points: Regarding the idea that RCWs can simply relocate if their trees are cut or if there is a fire, she explained it is not that simple. RCWs nest in mature live longleaf pines that can survive most wildfires and controlled burns. The birds may temporarily leave during a fire but return when it is safe, like people returning after evacuation. In response to claims that there is ample habitat elsewhere (Orton, conserved land, nearby towns), Ms. Curtis noted these areas are not enough for the RCW's survival. She emphasized the small, declining population—just sixteen thousand birds compared to billions of humans. RCWs require years to excavate a cavity and depend on this specific habitat for survival, unlike humans who can live almost anywhere. Addressing the comment that too many pine trees create fire hazards, Ms. Curtis said the real problem is excessive understory brush. Controlled burns could solve this, but are not feasible near homes. She suggested amending Article 5, Section 9 to require property owners of undeveloped lots to bush hog (but not clear) their lots at least every three years. This would reduce brush, improve airflow, and limit invasive species. Ms. Curtis explained that delays for builders are mainly due to DOGE's layoffs of Fish and Wildlife staff and the city's lack of ordinance enforcement—not the RCW or concerned citizens. As a result, Fish and Wildlife no longer designates colored zones. Any frustration, she argued, should be directed at those responsible, not the struggling RCW. Finally, Ms. Curtis highlighted the Alliance for Keep Your Trees' "Code and Canopy" guide for developing tree ordinances. She recommended lowering the size threshold for significant longleaf pines (to twelve inches or greater DBH) and encouraged city staff to use the Code and Canopy handbook. She offered to provide the link if needed.
6. Amber Townsend, High Point Rd., said the RCW is not the only thing at stake here. At the last planning board meeting she attended, it became clear that the town has historically never enforced the collection of fines for ordinance violations. She observed that this lack of enforcement creates a sense that anything goes—residents could have chickens, maybe even a donkey, or put a shed in their front yard without fear of consequences. More alarmingly, developers and corporations are able to purchase acres of some of the most biodiverse and stunning land, clear-cut it, and leave it barren indefinitely, all because there is no accountability. She emphasized that fancy words on paper do not guarantee integrity, particularly when it comes to corporations and developers whose priorities are profit, not community well-being. She noted that during the meeting, there was discussion about amending the definition of significant trees. However, she pointed out that even if every species and size of tree in BSL were considered significant, it would be meaningless without real consequences for their destruction. Without accountability, compliance becomes merely an optional suggestion. She concluded by expressing her strong support for citywide habitat conservation.
7. Stephanie Hanson, 896 Boros Rd., raised concern that a UDO amendment was issued on the same day as a Planning and Zoning Board meeting, giving members insufficient time to review it. She recommended tabling the amendment for further discussion. Ms. Hanson pointed out that the IPAC system, though manageable, shifts responsibility from the city to citizens, which she disagrees with. She noted a 50% decline in the RCW (Red-cockaded Woodpecker) population, attributing it to poor local stewardship. Citing a recent survey, she emphasized that nature and natural resources are a top concern for citizens, particularly regarding trees and the environment. Her main request was to allow more time for research and discussion before moving forward with the amendment.

Commissioner Ausborn read a statement from the Department of Interior, available on their website. The statement concerns the Endangered Species Act and includes testimony from Marshall Jones, Deputy Director of the US Fish and Wildlife Service, delivered on July 13, 2005. The hearing focused on requiring private property owners to implement conservation measures under the Act. Since more than seventy percent of federally listed species depend on private lands, successful species recovery relies on the cooperation of private landowners and the regulated community. Because there are no legal requirements for private landowners to improve or restore habitats for listed species, incentive-based conservation is essential. These efforts are also important to encourage homeowners and landowners to collaborate with the federal government.

Commissioner Ausborn said the problem is that, currently, the Fish and Wildlife Service has placed liability on the City of BSL. Our staff does not decide whether a builder can remove trees or clear a lot; these decisions typically require Fish and Wildlife approval. The proposed change would allow applicants to work directly with Fish and Wildlife, bypassing the city. Although Fish and Wildlife may not yet have a fully established process, this is our only viable option. If we continue under the current system, the city assumes liability, which could result in legal and financial consequences if developers pursue litigation because Fish and Wildlife is not fulfilling its responsibilities.

Commissioner Sherwood said that she read the proposed amendment many times and that, in her view, the trees are more protected under this amendment than they were before. She said she agrees with the large trees being lowered. She said she would like to see it at 12 or 16 inches. She feels that there is good tree protection and that staff goes out and does what they need to do, including counting trees.

Mayor Winecoff questioned the 25% mitigation required when removing significant trees. Ms. Morgan explained that this is the current ordinance, but the Board could increase the requirement. Mayor Winecoff clarified that city permits are delayed by Fish and Wildlife. Ms. Morgan confirmed and noted that the ordinance does not override other state, federal, or local regulations for private property owners. Mayor Winecoff shared that Mr. Hargrove told him the new Fish and Wildlife director wanted him at their first meeting, which he attended. Fish and Wildlife emphasized the need to preserve an area for the RCWs. Mayor Winecoff pointed out that the city already has protected land that could be used for RCW protection and that the city needs to work on the Habitat Conservation Plan that would include the RCWs. He expressed concern about residents struggling with the online IPAC system and suggested the city help those unable to apply for Fish and Wildlife approval.

Mr. Kirkland addressed the ordinance under consideration, emphasizing that it does not prevent staff from seeking long-term solutions. He acknowledged the current burden on property owners due to recent changes by the US Fish and Wildlife Service, which now require citizens to navigate the IPAC system rather than relying on the previous red and green-blue maps. Mr. Kirkland explained that the ordinance aims to stop enforcing a local permit requirement, as responsibility for compliance already falls on citizens according to federal policy. He assured the Board that staff is committed to exploring broader, long-term options, such as updating the city's draft Habitat Conservation Plan (HCD), pursuing a citywide incidental take permit, and potentially leveraging preserved land to meet requirements. He clarified that discussions with Fish and Wildlife are ongoing, and the agency has been supportive and open to partnership, focusing on technical assistance rather than enforcement. Mr. Kirkland reaffirmed the city's willingness to continue working toward long-term solutions if that aligns with the Board's direction.

Commissioner Lovin expressed concern about the current definition of a significant tree, noting that it takes 100 years for a tree to reach 24 inches in diameter. He recommended lowering the threshold for significant trees to 16 inches—the Board reached consensus for a 16-inch standard.

With no further comments, Mayor Winecoff requested a motion to close the public hearing. Commissioner Sherwood moved to close the hearing, and Commissioner Lovin seconded the motion. ***Vote 4-0; motion carried.***

The Board agreed to lower the threshold for significant tree from 24 inches to 16 inches. They also discussed increasing tree mitigation requirements from 25% to 50%. Commissioner Ausborn expressed concerns about the associated replacement costs, which vary depending on tree size. Commissioner Lovin moved to table the proposed amendment and refer it back to the Planning Board for further review, with Commissioner Sherwood seconding the motion. ***Aye; Commissioner Sherwood, Lovin, and Ausborn. Nay: Mayor Winecoff. Vote 3-1 motion carried.***

6.2 TTX-2026-02 UDO Text Amendment: Article 9 Section 9-2-2- Plot Plan Requirements.

Mr. Kirkland stated that the hearing was contingent upon the approval of proposed UDO Amendment: Article 7, Part IV, Sections 7-26 through 7-29. Following this, Commissioner Lovin moved to table both proposed amendments for further review by the Planning Board, with the motion seconded by Commissioner Sherwood. ***Vote 4-0; motion carried.***

Consent Agenda

- 7.1 Approval of BOC Minutes
July 7, 2026 Regular Meeting
- 7.2 Public Works
- 7.3 Public Safety/ Animal Control
- 7.4 Parks & Recreation Department
- 7.5 Finance Department
- 7.6 Planning & Zoning
- 7.7 Code Enforcement
- 7.8 Building Inspections
- 7.9 Stormwater Department

Commissioner Lovin moved to approve of the Consent Agenda and seconded by Commissioner Ausborn. ***Vote 4-0; motion carried.***

8. Committee/ Boards Reports and Minutes

8.1 BSL/Fire Rescue- No Report

8.2 Planning Board

Chair Launderville stated that the July meeting was a record setter. Not only was it lengthy, but she said we had the highest public attendance in recent history. She said we discussed in detail the lack of a Major Site Plan and/or progress regarding the proposed grocery store and the lack of new information on this property, which was cleared for this purpose and other potential commercial use some time ago. She said there was a lot of public input regarding the inability to obtain necessary permits for clearing land and removing significant trees. She said the Board reviewed and approved both proposed text amendments regarding these issues. Article 7, Part IV, sections 7-26 through 7-29, and Article 9, Section 9-2-21 of the UDO. She said we will be reviewing the last chapter of the Comprehensive Land Use Plan this month and hope that it will be available for the Commissioner's review at the September meeting.

8.3 Parks and Recreation Board

Robyn Balda of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board reported that the Board met on July 15. The Board enthusiastically welcomed its newest member, Jason Biggs. Summer camp will wrap up

next week on the 14th, and the team is already planning fall and winter activities, including new teen programs and overnight trips with Amy. The Board also decided to form a planning subcommittee in addition to the existing facilities and communication committees. This new group will focus on strategic planning for Parks and Recreation, and the previously discussed teen initiative will be included under this committee going forward. The Board, with support from Parks and Rec staff, will host a community cornhole tournament on October 24. More details will be available soon, and registration will open on Rec Desk. I hope to see everyone Friday evening at Spring Lake Park for the concert.

8.4 Special Events Committee

Chair Hogan announced that the Mayor's Cup has been finalized for this Saturday, August 8, with a shotgun start at 9:00 a.m. Hot dogs will be served after the game. There are 130 golfers registered. Additional sponsors this year will allow us to make a donation again, which will not come from the city budget. Planning is underway for the fall festival; please save the date for Saturday, October 17 at the Community Center. Mulligans will be sold for \$5.00, and last year's 50/50 raffle raised \$500.00.

8.5 Library Commission

Tammy Sollenberger reported that the library commission did not meet in July, but they continue to process materials, clean, and perform regular library maintenance.

9. City Manager's Monthly Report

Mr. Kirkland provided updates on the dam projects, noting Upper Lake Dam was successfully impounded, North Lake Dam is nearing readiness, and both Sanford and Pine Lake Dams are progressing toward a contracted completion date of May 18, 2027. He also covered municipal updates from Brunswick County, including property tax reevaluations and a successful FEMA emergency exercise involving local fire rescue.

Stormwater projects have made significant progress, with major ditch clearing completed and new grants pursued for additional improvements. Public safety efforts include updating emergency response plans and securing new equipment with state funding. Community information efforts will add the Brunswick County Road Conditions Map to the town website, and Parks and Recreation is wrapping up summer camps with fall events planned.

Finally, development services reported nearing completion of the comprehensive lanes plan, adapting to new federal procedures, and monitoring legislative changes. The report emphasized infrastructure progress, safety, and ongoing community engagement.

10. Old Business

10.1 Discussion on proposed Resolution supporting legislation authorizing the use of SCIF funds for road repairs related to dam construction.

Commissioner Sherwood initiated a conversation about using the remaining SCIF (State Capital Infrastructure Fund) money—currently about \$7 million—for road repairs related to dam construction. She clarified that repurposing SCIF funds for anything other than their original intent requires legislative approval, which can be a lengthy process. To get ahead of this, she proposed that the Board send a resolution to legislators soon, so permission could be obtained to use the funds for road repairs, especially on detour routes affected by the dam project. She emphasized the importance of starting this process promptly due to the time it takes for legislative actions. Commissioner Sherwood sought the Board's support to formally request authorization to use the funds for this purpose, highlighting both the need for infrastructure repairs and the procedural steps required.

Mayor Winecoff raised objections about accessing certain bond funds before a major project is complete, citing concerns that FEMA will withhold 25% of funding (amounting to \$3–3.5 million) until the project's conclusion. He emphasized the financial risks, pointing out that additional costs (like \$2.7 million for Pine Lake Dam) could arise and that the town could be left paying more if snags occur before final payments are approved. He insisted that the bonds should not be touched until the project is finished and then ask for the request.

Commissioner Ausborn agreed, noting the project's incomplete status and highlighting that repeated road repairs would be wasteful while construction is ongoing—roads might be rebuilt only to be torn up again.

Commissioner Lovin clarified that there was no intention to act immediately and emphasized the need for further discussion and for the matter to be reviewed by the state. He indicated that the topic would be revisited in the future.

There was no action taken on this agenda item.

10.2 Budget Amendment 1- Development Services Position

Mr. Stevens explained that this budget amendment will convert the Planner position to the Director of Development Services position, as approved by the Board of Commissioners at the July 7 Regular BOC meeting. There is no financial impact to the city. Although an appropriation from fund balance was initially discussed to cover the increased cost, it was later determined that personnel funds from the Public Works Director position, now managed by the Stormwater Engineer, can be used. As a result, existing budgeted funds are being reallocated for the new position.

Commissioner Sherwood moved to approve the budget amendment for the Development Services position, and Commissioner Lovin seconded. ***Vote 4-0; motion carried.***

10.3 Discussion of Finished Floor Elevations (FFE)

Mayor Winecoff discussed finished floor elevations and flood risk areas, emphasizing the use of up-to-date maps alongside historical flood data. The staff is also reviewing locations with a history of flooding, sites in low-lying areas, and those identified as vulnerable by the stormwater engineer. Ms. Morgan reported she is actively working on this issue and will have materials ready for the planning board's review next week. The objective is to prepare for a public hearing at the September meeting as work continues. Mayor Winecoff added that, following last month's discussion, staff is moving forward with targeted elevation requirements for areas known to be prone to flooding. Mayor Winecoff inquired whether any action is needed at this time. Ms. Morgan replied that no action is necessary unless the Board wishes to continue the discussion. She confirmed that work is progressing and anticipates a public hearing at the September board meeting.

11. New Business

11.1 Consideration of an Amendment to the City's Fee Schedule to Revise Civil Penalty Fees for Tree Ordinance Violations-

Ms. Morgan explained that this agenda item depended on the decision about the proposed UDO text amendment for Article 7, Part IV, Sections 7-26 through 7-29. (proposed amendment to the city's Tree Preservation Ordinance to remove the city's role as an intermediary in the federal review process). No action was taken.

11.2 Change Order # 9: FEMA funds for Repairs from PTC#8

Mr. Stevens explained that due to damages from the events of PTC#8 at the Dam Project, all temporary setups were destroyed. FEMA has approved and obligated funds totaling \$2,567,604.78 to cover the damages. The city will initially use funds from the NC OSB&M SCIF account to pay for Change Order 9, and will be reimbursed by FEMA within 90 days, resulting in no financial impact to the city. City staff recommends approving Change Order 9 and following this funding process.

Commissioner Lovin moved to approve Change Order #9 regarding FEMA funds for repairs from PTC#8. Commissioner Ausborn seconded the motion. ***Vote 4-0; motion carried.***

11.3 Resolution to Sell Surplus Property-

Mr. Stevens said the request is for approval to declare older police vehicles as surplus property for the 2026-2027 fiscal year. He explained that Enterprise Fleet Solutions will sell these vehicles and use the proceeds to invest in four new leased vehicles. According to Mr. Stevens, this approach will reduce the city's expenses for new vehicles and lessen the staff's workload because Enterprise Fleet will handle the entire sales process. He also noted that the fiscal year 2026-2027 budget already includes these anticipated changes.

Commissioner Lovin moved to approve the Resolution to sell two older police vehicles as surplus property and seconded by Commissioner Ausborn. ***Vote 4-0; motion carried.***

11.4 Allowing Chickens and Other Feathered Livestock in All Zones (Excluding Roosters)

Commissioner Lovin advocated for allowing domesticated fowl, such as chickens and ducks, and all non-exotic animals subject to reasonable standards that protect neighboring properties in all residential zoning districts. He emphasized individual property rights, food security, educational opportunities for children, and community sustainability as key benefits. He proposed reasonable standards, such as limiting the number of chickens per lot, prohibiting roosters, maintaining clean coops, requiring setbacks, and enforcing nuisance and animal cruelty ordinances. Commissioner Lovin supported responsible ownership and suggested a public hearing and referral to the planning board to further study the matter, highlighting the need for community input.

Commissioner Ausborn expressed general support for allowing chickens and referenced other municipalities, like Cary, NC, that permit backyard chickens and even have competitions for coop design. However, he raised concerns about enforcement costs, questioning whether the city could afford to hire staff to ensure compliance. Ultimately, Commissioner Ausborn did not support the proposal at this time due to practical considerations.

Mayor Winecoff urged caution and a thorough study before moving forward. He suggested researching other municipalities' experiences, consulting with legal counsel about potential liabilities, and considering the area's existing wildlife issues. The mayor argued that such a significant decision should be made by the residents through a voter referendum rather than solely by the Board, especially given possible enforcement and cost challenges.

Overall, the comments reflected a mix of support for individual rights and community benefits, balanced with concerns about enforcement, cost, and the appropriate process for decision-making.

Commissioner Lovin moved to send the potential zoning areas for chickens to the Planning Board for full review and a recommendation to the BOC and seconded by Commissioner Sherwood. Aye: Commissioner Lovin, Sherwood and Ausborn. Nay: Mayor Winecoff. **Vote 3-1; motion carried.**

11.5 Request to waive interest on sewer assessment fees.

Mr. Kirkland explained that Hank Troschianic requested a waiver of the sewer assessment interest for four properties, totaling about \$460. Although most properties initially paid the assessment, 18 remain unpaid and have accumulated significant interest over five years. Mr. Troschianic is not asking to waive the assessment fee, only the interest, but Mr. Kirkland lacks administrative authority to grant this and brought the request to the Board.

Mr. Troschianic argued that it's unreasonable to pay interest on an assessment for a service not yet provided, as his lots on Morningside and Parkway cannot receive permits or access the sewer. He compared it to buying a car but being unable to drive it. He acknowledged the assessment itself but objected to paying interest when the service is unavailable, emphasizing this as a matter of common sense and fairness.

Commissioner Lovin made a motion to waive the interest fees on the sewer assessment for Mr. Troschianic and seconded by Commissioner Ausborn. **Vote 4-0; motion carried.**

Mr. Kirkland pointed out that approximately 14 other properties owe interest on sewer assessments. Would the Board also like to authorize staff to waive those interest fees?

Commissioner Ausborn moved to grant staff the authority to waive interest fees only for the remaining 14 property owners on Morningside Rd. and Parkway Dr., with the motion seconded by Commissioner Lovin. **Vote 4-0; motion carried.**

12. Mayor and Commissioners Reports

Commissioner Sherwood commended Mr. Kirkland for initiating agenda meetings before the agenda is released. She noted that this allows the Board to thoroughly review all agenda items, particularly the consent agenda, which often lacks clarity for many. Commissioner Sherwood also urged the Board to prioritize discussions about the unused golf course property. She emphasized that residents of South Shore see the abandoned property daily and that its current condition is an eyesore for the community. She expressed her hope that the Board will make decisions regarding its future use sooner rather than later.

Commissioner Lovin said he has talked enough about chickens tonight and has nothing more to add.

Commissioner Ausborn said he did not have much to add this evening, except to comment on the discussion about chickens. He explained that there is still too much unknown information to make an informed decision at this time.

Mayor Winecoff reported that he had been out in the community during the recent rain, inspecting ditches and identifying areas of concern. He contacted Mr. Kirkland to address these issues and noted that residents had also reached out regarding overgrown vegetation in the ditches, which is hindering water flow. Mayor Winecoff requested that steps be taken to address these concerns. He also revisited the topic of driveway tiles, reminding the group that this had been discussed last year. He emphasized that improvements to stormwater drains and ditches are ineffective if water cannot properly flow through driveway culverts, many of which are now blocked by overgrowth or debris. He asked Mr. Kirkland to prioritize efforts to clear these obstructions to ensure the proper functioning of the city's drainage system.

Additionally, Mayor Winecoff shared that the city held its first joint meeting with the county to discuss long-term solutions for sewer and water services. Topics included the county's plans, potential partnerships, and the timeline for initiating these projects, which will require significant time and investment. The mayor stated that the city is exploring grant opportunities and state funding assistance. He stressed the importance of hosting two to three public meetings to gather input from residents and determine whether to proceed with a city-wide sewer initiative, noting that this is a complex and overdue issue. Many properties near the lakes are experiencing septic failures, and some areas still lack access to clean water, with residents relying on wells that often produce poor-quality water. Mayor Winecoff pointed out that delaying these improvements will only increase costs for the city. He encouraged residents to participate in upcoming public hearings to help decide the future of water and sewer infrastructure. If there is support to move forward, the city and county will continue to meet quarterly to advance the project.

13. Announcements

13.1 Friday, August 7th, 6 p.m.- Spring Lake Park Concert with Parrott Party Duo. (BSL Fire Dept will be selling hot dogs and hamburgers. D&J's ice cream truck will also be there.)

13.2 Last Day of Camp- August 14

13.3 School starts August 24

13.4 Next BOC Meeting September 1.

14. Adjourn

Commissioner Ausborn made a motion to adjourn, which Commissioner Lovin seconded.
Vote 4-0; motion carried.

– 8:09 p.m.

Justin Lovin, Mayor Pro Tem

Attest; //

Tanya Shannon, City Clerk