Town of Clayton
Town Council Regular Meeting Minutes
Monday, July 20, 2026 at 6:00 PM
Council Chambers, Town Hall
111 E. Second Street

Pursuant to N.C. General Statute § 143-318.10(e), these minutes provide a general summary of the Town Council meeting and do not represent a verbatim transcript. A complete video recording of this meeting is available for public access on the Town of Clayton's official YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/user/TownofClaytonNC.

Council Present:
Mayor Jody McLeod
Mayor Pro Tem Andria Archer
Council Member Ruth Anderson,
Council Member Porter Casey
Council Member Amanda Underwood
Council Member Gretchen Williams

Council Absent:

Staff Present:
Rich Cappola, Town Manager
Jim Cauley, Town Attorney
Heidi Holland, Town Clerk
Meredith Mumford, Deputy Town Clerk
Dolores Gill, Deputy Town Manager
Greg Tart, Police Chief
David Ranes, Fire Chief
Robert McKie, Finance Director
Nathanael Shelton, Communication Director
Haley Downey, Assistant Planning Director
Lori Bryant, Planner I
Jonathan Ham, Engineering Director
Tucker Creech, Project Manager
Todd Melton, Budget Manager
Lydia Davis, Communication and Marketing Specialist

1. CALL TO ORDER

a. Call to Order

Mayor McLeod called the meeting to order at 6:04 p.m.

b. Pledge of Allegiance
- Boy Scout Troop 24

Boy Scout Troop 24 led the Pledge of Allegiance.

c. Invocation

Mayor McLeod led the Invocation.

2. ADJUSTMENT OF THE AGENDA

a. Adopt or Adjust the Agenda

Mr. Cappola adjusted the agenda to add topics to Closed Session to include: To Discuss a Legal Matter in Accordance with NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3) and To Discuss a Personnel Matter in Accordance with NCGS 143-318.11(a)(6).

Adoption of Agenda as Adjusted

Result:	**Passed 5-0**
Mover:	Andria Archer
Seconder:	Ruth Anderson
Yes:	Andria Archer, Ruth Anderson, Porter Casey, Amanda Underwood, Gretchen Williams
No:	None
Absent:	

3. CONSENT AGENDA

a. Minutes
June 1, 2026 - Work Session
June 1, 2026 - Regular Meeting
Presenter:
Heidi Holland, Town Clerk

b. NCDOT Fall Event Road Closures
Presenter:
Amy Shearin, Community Engagement Coordinator

c. Bulk Water and Wastewater Agreement Between Johnston County and Town of Clayton (Riverwood Golf Club Section 2)
Presenter:
Joshua Baird, Water Resources Director

d. Resolution to Accept Public Utilities into One-Year Warranty in The Town of Clayton Public Utility System for Maintenance – Country Lane Phase 1A
Presenter:
Jonathan Ham, Engineering Director

e. Comprehensive List of Fees and Charges - Amendment #1
Presenter:
Todd Melton, Budget Manager

Adoption of Consent Agenda as Presented

Result:	**Passed 5-0**
Mover:	Andria Archer
Seconder:	Gretchen Williams
Yes:	Andria Archer, Ruth Anderson, Porter Casey, Amanda Underwood, Gretchen Williams
No:	None
Absent:	

4. ADMINISTRATIVE ITEMS

a. Clayton4U
Library Reopening
Presenter:
Nathanael Shelton, Communication Director

Mr. Shelton shared two episodes, one on the history of the Town of Clayton and a breaking news edition on the reopening of the Hocutt-Ellington Memorial Library.

5. INTRODUCTIONS AND SPECIAL PRESENTATIONS

a. National Intern Day Proclamation
Presenter:
Mayor McLeod to Present to Interns

Mayor McLeod read the proclamation and presented to the Town's interns.

6. PUBLIC HEARINGS

a. 2025-041-CZM Arbors at East Village Phase II — Type III Conditional Rezoning
Presenter:
Haley Downey, Assistant Planning Director

This item has been heard at the March 16, 2026, April 20, 2026, and May 18, 2026 meetings.

Ms. Haley Downey presented a request for a Type 3 Conditional Rezoning of approximately four acres located north of East Front Street and south of the existing Arbors apartment complex. The property is currently zoned Planned Development Residential (PDR) and the applicant requested rezoning to Conditional Zoning Residential (CZR). The site was originally included in the East Village Master Plan in 2012 and was rezoned in 2015 with approval for 72 multifamily apartment units. The current proposal reduces the density and instead proposes 45 multifamily units designed to resemble townhomes.

Ms. Downey reviewed the concept plan, noting two access points from Bent Branch Loop, private internal streets, resident parking in garages and driveways, guest parking spaces, streetscape buffers along East Front Street and Bent Branch Loop, and a pedestrian connection to the Front Street greenway. She stated the proposal is consistent with the Downtown Support future land use designation and would provide approximately 12 units per acre, which is below the maximum density envisioned by the Comprehensive Growth Plan.

She summarized the proposed rezoning conditions, including provisions related to parking, garage usage, gathering space amenities, cross-access agreements with the existing Arbors development, EV charging stations, enhanced landscaping, Energy Star appliances, smart-home features, upgraded architectural standards, and a sign easement for the Town of Clayton. The Planning Board recommended approval with conditions and staff also recommended approval, finding the project consistent with the 2045 Comprehensive Growth Plan.

Mr. Thomas Taft, speaking on behalf of the applicant, stated the development team had worked extensively with staff and council members to address concerns raised during previous reviews. He described the project as a reduction in density from the previously approved plan and emphasized the applicant's willingness to accept additional conditions related to architecture, landscaping, and other enhancements. He stated the proposal would provide a "missing middle" housing option and expressed support for all recommended conditions.

Mayor McLeod stated this has been noted as a public hearing and asked if anyone from the public wished to speak.

David Stamp, expressed concern about a condition requiring garages to be used exclusively for vehicle parking. He stated homeowners often rely on garages for storage and argued that limiting garage use could create additional expenses for residents who would need to rent storage units.

With no one else wishing to speak, Mayor McLeod closed the public hearing and turned it over to Council for their deliberation.

Council members commented the applicant had been responsive to prior concerns and had made meaningful revisions to the project. They also cited the reduced density, improved aesthetics, and additional design enhancements as factors supporting the application. Several members thanked the applicant for returning with revisions and working collaboratively with staff and council.

Adoption of Ordinance #2026-04-01 with Motion #1 in the Consistency Statement

Result:	**Passed 5-0**
Mover:	Andria Archer
Seconder:	Ruth Anderson
Yes:	Andria Archer, Ruth Anderson, Porter Casey, Amanda Underwood, Gretchen Williams
No:	None
Absent:	

b. 2026-017-ANX Stotan Crossings — Contiguous Annexation Petition
Presenter:
Haley Downey, Assistant Planning Director

Ms. Haley Downey stated this item and the next item on the agenda, Stotan Crossings Annexation Petition, would be presented together but have two separate motions. She presented a request for the contiguous annexation and conditional rezoning of approximately 44 acres located along Guy Road south of Golden Nugget Road. The property is currently zoned Residential-30 in Wake County and the applicant requested annexation into the Town of Clayton with Conditional Zoning Industrial (CZI) designation. Ms. Downey explained that the two parcels are located outside the town limits and ETJ and are currently vacant and undeveloped. Public hearing notices were posted, published, and mailed to adjacent property owners.

Ms. Downey reviewed the annexation request, noting the parcels qualify as contiguous annexations under state law. She explained that while the request is technically inconsistent with the Town's Future Land Use Map because the property is outside the Town's jurisdiction and therefore undesignated, staff believed the proposal is compatible with the surrounding development pattern along Guy Road and the anticipated impacts of the future I-540 corridor. She stated an Employment Center designation would be appropriate if the rezoning were approved.

Ms. Downey described the conditional zoning concept plan, which proposed two industrial buildings totaling approximately 374,000 square feet with two access points from Guy Road, including one primary entrance and one emergency access point. The project included NCDOT-required turn lanes, landscape buffers, stormwater ponds, utility extensions, and preservation of an existing natural gas easement. Following Planning Board review, the applicant increased the landscape buffer adjacent to residential properties from 40 feet to 80 feet. Other revisions included removing a request for exemption from mass-grading standards, prohibiting data centers, requiring the applicant to construct sewer infrastructure, and eliminating several previously proposed industrial uses. Additional conditions addressed EV charging stations, roadway improvements, buffer requirements, and compliance with current UDO standards.

Ms. Downey stated the Planning Board had recommended denial of the project by a 5-3 vote. However, staff recommended approval of both the annexation and rezoning applications, citing changing development patterns along the Highway 70 corridor and future growth associated with Interstate 540.

Council members asked questions regarding mass-grading regulations, lighting standards, storage uses, and future roadway improvements. Ms. Downey confirmed the project would be subject to the Town's more stringent current grading and lighting standards. During discussion regarding permitted uses, it was clarified that indoor storage could include self-storage facilities. In response, the applicant agreed to remove indoor storage as a permitted use and expressed willingness to limit outdoor storage as a secondary use.

Ben Harris of Stotan Industrial presented the applicant's proposal and discussed the company's experience developing industrial properties across the country. He stated the project had undergone significant revisions in response to comments from neighboring residents, staff, and the Planning Board. Mr. Harris highlighted the increase of residential buffers from 40 to 80 feet, preservation of existing vegetation where feasible, and proposed roadway improvements, including dedicated turn lanes along Guy Road.

Mr. Harris addressed concerns regarding well water and environmental impacts, explaining that the project would utilize public water and sewer rather than wells or septic systems. He stated the applicant would construct approximately 1.6 miles of sewer infrastructure and additional water-line improvements at an estimated cost of $3 million, which would later be dedicated to the Town. He also described proposed stormwater management systems designed to treat and control runoff before discharge.

Mr. Harris emphasized the economic benefits of the project, stating it was intended to attract institutional and Fortune 500 employers rather than data centers. He estimated the development would generate more than 300 jobs, produce between $13 million and $18 million annually in wages, diversify the Town's tax base, and generate an estimated $1.3 million in local tax revenue over a ten-year period. He noted interest from advanced manufacturing, biotechnology, logistics, and building supply companies and stated that the project would support future growth by extending utility infrastructure into the area.

Mayor McLeod stated this has been noted as a public hearing and asked if anyone from the public wished to speak.

Several citizens from the public spoke during this period, all in opposition to the annexation and rezoning request. Those names included: Joyce Brafford – Main Street, Kevin Faulkner, Lee Odom – Forty Niners Road, Jeff Ames –Forty Niners Road, Jessica Ames - Forty Niners Road, Gay West - Forty Niners Road, Rob Parent – Golden Nugget Drive, Syliva Craig - Golden Nugget Drive, Nick Falcone - Golden Nugget Drive, Andrew – Forty Niners Road, Robert Laferbury – Forty Niners Road, Sandy Rudd – Forty Niners Road, Carrie Falcone – Forty Niners Road, John Scarpa – Neuse Ridge Drive.

Speakers expressed concerns about traffic congestion and safety on Guy Road, compatibility of industrial development adjacent to established residential neighborhoods, potential declines in property values, impacts on wells and water quality, loss of wildlife habitat and rural character, stormwater runoff, lighting and noise impacts, truck traffic, and uncertainty surrounding future tenants. Several residents argued that industrial uses should be located farther from residential neighborhoods and questioned the applicant's economic projections. Others emphasized the community's long history, quality of life, and concerns that the project would fundamentally alter the character of the area.

One resident from Clayton urged the council to consider the interests of affected Wake County residents and argued that projected economic benefits should be carefully scrutinized before any decision was made.

With no one else wishing to speak, Mayor McLeod closed the public hearing and turned over to Council for their deliberation.

Council members thanked residents for their participation and acknowledged the significance of the concerns raised. Mayor Pro Tem Archer stated both she and Council Member Williams had visited the area and reviewed development patterns along the Highway 70 corridor. She stated that while the loss of agricultural land and the proximity of the proposed development to residential neighborhoods were legitimate concerns, the area was already experiencing a transition toward commercial and industrial uses due to regional growth and the future Interstate 540 corridor. She also stated that buffering, lighting standards, traffic controls, and other development regulations are intended to mitigate impacts on adjacent residential properties. Based on surrounding industrial development and anticipated future growth trends, she expressed support for the rezoning request as an appropriate light industrial use.

During deliberations, council also clarified that no residential development proposal was currently under consideration for the property.

Adoption of Ordinance #2026-07-02

Result:	**Passed 5-0**
Mover:	Andria Archer
Seconder:	Ruth Anderson
Yes:	Andria Archer, Ruth Anderson, Porter Casey, Amanda Underwood, Gretchen Williams
No:	None
Absent:	

c. 2026-016-CZM Stotan Crossings — Type III Conditional Rezoning
Presenter:
Haley Downey, Assistant Planning Director

This item was presented with the Stotan Crossings Contiguous Annexation Petition. A motion was made to approve this item with amending the conditions to strike indoor storage as a use and modify outdoor storage as a secondary use only; with Motion 2 in the consistency statement. The applicant verbally agreed to this modification.

Adoption of Ordinance #2026-07-01 with Motion #2 in the Consistency Statement with Amended Conditions

Result:	**Passed 5-0**
Mover:	Andria Archer
Seconder:	Ruth Anderson
Yes:	Andria Archer, Ruth Anderson, Porter Casey, Amanda Underwood, Gretchen Williams
No:	None
Absent:	

Mayor McLeod called for a ten minute break.

d. 2026-081-RZ Town PUB Conventional Rezonings
Presenter:
Lori Bryant, Planner I

Ms. Bryant presented rezoning request 2026-081 RZ involving three town-owned properties totaling approximately 143 acres. The request proposed rezoning the properties from Residential Large Lot and County Agricultural Residential classifications to Public Facilities. Parcels 1 and 2 are located north of Jack Road and consist of approximately 108 and 33 acres respectively. Parcel 3, located at 151 Johnson Road, contains approximately 0.88 acres. Ms. Bryant noted that all three properties are currently wooded and/or vacant.

The rezoning request was properly advertised through posted signs, mailed notices to property owners within 300 feet, publication on the Town's website, and legal advertisements. She reviewed the existing and proposed zoning designations and explained that Parcel 3 is intended to be incorporated into the future Southwest Public Safety Center. She emphasized that no active development plans currently exist for Parcels 1 and 2 and that any future development would require additional site plan and construction drawing reviews.

Ms. Bryant stated the proposed Public Facilities zoning for Parcels 1 and 2 is not fully consistent with the Future Land Use Map because those properties are designated as Agricultural and Rural Residential or currently lack a future land use designation. However, staff determined the request supports the Comprehensive Growth Plan by allowing for the expansion of municipal services. She stated staff does recommend amending the Future Land Use Map for Parcels 1 and 2 to Agricultural and Rural Residential with a Neighborhood Center Overlay. Parcel 3 was found to be consistent with the Future Land Use Map because its Medium Density Residential and Neighborhood Center Overlay designations allow for institutional and governmental uses.

Ms. Bryant noted the Planning Board had recommended approval of the request and concluded by presenting the recommended motions for council consideration.

During council discussion, questions were raised regarding the absence of a neighborhood meeting prior to the rezoning request. Mayor Pro Tem Archer expressed concern that the Town should follow the same public engagement expectations applied to private rezoning requests and questioned whether the application should be delayed to allow a neighborhood meeting. Ms. Downey stated the Unified Development Ordinance did not clearly define “townwide” rezonings, and the Planning Director had interpreted the ordinance to exempt the application from neighborhood meeting requirements. Ms. Downey acknowledged that the language could be clarified through a future text amendment and confirmed that council had the authority to continue the matter and require a neighborhood meeting before taking action.

Town Attorney Cauley advised that council could continue the public hearing to a later date, which would not require readvertisement, and that a neighborhood meeting could be conducted in the interim. Mr. Cappola indicated that delaying the request would not adversely affect any current municipal projects. Ms. Downey recommended continuing the hearing until the second council meeting in August to allow adequate time for public notification.

Council members agreed with the recommendation and elected to open the public hearing before considering a continuance so that residents in attendance could provide comments.

Mayor McLeod stated this has been noted as a public hearing and asked if anyone from the public wished to speak.

Richard Boyard, a nearby property owner and former owner of some of the land involved in the request, spoke in support of the rezoning. He stated his family had longstanding roots in the area and expressed full support for the Town’s plans for the properties.

Jeremy Tyndall, Corbett Road, spoke in favor of preserving the natural features of Parcel 1 and encouraged the Town to consider developing the property as a park with nature trails and passive recreation opportunities. He described the property as containing streams, wildlife, and unique natural resources and suggested that preserving the land would provide significant community value.

David Williams, S. Two Does Lane, requested clarification regarding notification procedures for the proposed neighborhood meeting. He expressed concern that only adjacent property owners would receive notice and suggested expanding outreach to include the broader neighborhood. Mr. Cappola stated notification requirements are established by ordinance and state law but noted that all interested residents would be welcome to attend any neighborhood meeting regardless of notice requirements.

Rachel Nickell, Essex Lane, also expressed support for preserving the property as a park and highlighted the area's wildlife and natural beauty. In response, Mayor McLeod stated the Town’s vision for the property remained focused on park and open space uses and that preserving the natural landscape had been the intent when the property was acquired.

Mr. Cappola referenced an earlier Parks and Recreation Master Plan presentation in which consultants had identified the property as a potential location for trails, passive recreation, and natural open space preservation. He stated these concepts remained part of the Town’s long-term planning discussions.

Floyd Nickell, Essex Lane, asked questions about potential future roadway connections through the property, specifically regarding connections between Corbett Road and Jack Road. Mr. Cappola stated one objective of acquiring Parcel 2 was to preserve the opportunity for future connectivity and emergency access, although any such plans were only conceptual at this stage.

Jason Meadows, Corbett Road, thanked council for considering a neighborhood meeting and stated that nearby residents deserved the same level of participation afforded to private rezoning cases. He encouraged the Town to place conditions on the rezoning that would clearly limit future uses and preserve the property as parkland, noting that the Public Facilities zoning district could allow a broader range of governmental uses.

Michelle Ryal, 1099 Meadowlark, expressed concerns about potential future traffic impacts and roadway connections that could create cut-through traffic in nearby neighborhoods. She supported the idea of preserving the property as a park and requested broader notification for future meetings, noting that the 300-foot notification requirement captures few residents in the large-lot rural area. She also requested that residents be kept informed as future plans for the property evolve.

Mr. Boyard returned to the podium and commended the Town Council and staff for their long-term planning efforts. He expressed appreciation for the acquisition of the property and its potential future use as parkland, emphasizing the importance of preserving quality of life and public recreational opportunities.

Mr. Cappola confirmed that expanded notification could be provided for the neighborhood meeting beyond the minimum legal requirements. Council agreed that broader outreach would be beneficial.

A motion was made by Council Member Anderson to continue the public hearing until August 17, 2026, to allow time for a neighborhood meeting and additional public input.

Motion To Continue Public Hearing Until the August 17, 2026 Meeting

Result:	**Passed 5-0**
Mover:	Ruth Anderson
Seconder:	Andria Archer
Yes:	Andria Archer, Ruth Anderson, Porter Casey, Amanda Underwood, Gretchen Williams
No:	None
Absent:	

7. QUASI-JUDICIAL HEARINGS

8. OLD BUSINESS

9. NEW BUSINESS

a. Agreement with NCDOT for Locally Administered Project Program Funding for East Clayton Connector Greenway Project EB-6016
Presenter:
Tucker Creech, Project Manager

Mr. Creech stated he would like to combine the presentation for this item and 9b. while taking separate motions on each item.

He stated tonight's request was for authorization for the Town Manager to execute the agreements and for Council to adopt the accompanying resolutions authorizing their execution.

He stated the projects were originally submitted through the CAMPO strategic prioritization process in 2017 and were subsequently selected for funding through NCDOT's Strategic Transportation Investments Program. The projects were expected to construct approximately 1.6 miles of 10-foot-wide shared-use paths along the south side of NC 42, improving pedestrian and bicycle safety and expanding connectivity within the Town's Greenway network.

He shared the project limits, noting the East Clayton Connector Greenway would extend from East Front Street to Glen Laurel Road, while the Mountains-to-Sea Trail project would continue from Fox Ridge Road to the Neuse River Bridge, connecting with an existing section of Greenway between Glen Laurel Road and Fox Ridge Road. Together, the projects would create a continuous corridor along NC 42 and provide an opportunity to extend the Town's Greenway network to the Mountains-to-Sea Trail at Sam's Branch.

He stated the locally administered project agreements were standard agreements required by NCDOT for federally funded transportation projects. The agreements designated the Town as the local public agency responsible for project administration and allowed the Town to receive reimbursement for eligible project costs. The agreements would apply to all phases of the projects, including design, environmental documentation, right-of-way acquisition, utility coordination, and construction.

He stated approval of the agreements did not authorize construction or commit additional project expenditures beyond those already approved by Council but established the administrative framework necessary to proceed with engineering and design activities and maintain eligibility for federal reimbursement.

He stated the total program funding for both projects was approximately $9.67 million, consisting of about $7.74 million in federal funding and a required Town match of approximately $1.93 million.

Mayor Pro Tem Archer made a Motion to Authorize Town Manager to execute approval of the agreement for project EB-6016 (Approval of Resolution #2026-47 and approval of the contract/agreement).

Motion to Authorize Town Manager to Execute Approval of the Agreement for Project EB-6016 (Approval of Resolution #2026-47 and Approval of the Contract/Agreement)

Result:	**Passed 5-0**
Mover:	Andria Archer
Seconder:	Gretchen Williams

Yes:	Andria Archer, Ruth Anderson, Porter Casey, Amanda Underwood, Gretchen Williams
No:	None
Absent:	

b. Agreement with NCDOT for Locally Administered Project Program Funding for Mountain to Sea Trail Project EB-6017
Presenter:
Tucker Creech, Project Manager

Mr. Creech stated he would like to combine the presentation for this item and 9a. while taking separate motions on each item.

Mayor Pro Tem Archer made a Motion to Authorize Town Manager to execute approval of the agreement for project EB-6017 (Approval of Resolution #2026-48 and approval of the contract/agreement).

Motion to Authorize Town Manager to Execute Approval of the Agreement for Project EB-6017 (Approval of Resolution #2026-48 and Approval of the Contract/Agreement)

Result:	**Passed 5-0**
Mover:	Andria Archer
Seconder:	Ruth Anderson
Yes:	Andria Archer, Ruth Anderson, Porter Casey, Amanda Underwood, Gretchen Williams
No:	None
Absent:	

10. PUBLIC COMMENTS

John Scarpa asked for clarification on the locations of the two NCDOT projects discussed earlier in the meeting. Mr. Cappola displayed maps from the two project exhibits included on the agenda.

Mike Patterson, 215 Vinson Ridge Lane, spoke regarding the use of FLOCK cameras. He expressed concerns about reported instances of misuse and the failure rate of the cameras in other states.

Dean Alic, Sir Barton Trace in Carolina Overlook, presented photographs and video showing stormwater runoff issues in her neighborhood. She reported that storm drains are frequently filled with silt, water cascades over a 25-foot retaining wall during rain events, and approximately four inches of mud accumulates on her driveway and sidewalk after rainfall. Ms. Alic stated the runoff appears to be coming from above the retaining wall and suggested that Pulte be required to meet with an environmental specialist. She stated she had not observed any dead wildlife, such as turtles, and complimented the Town's environmental staff for their assistance.

Steven Anderson, Carolina Overlook, referenced a photograph presented by Ms. Alic and noted that a garbage can was floating in the runoff water. He stated he has requested site plans showing the retaining walls and expressed concerns about additional silt runoff from the Carolina Overlook North development across the street. He also raised concerns regarding potential liability issues.

11. STAFF REPORTS

a. Town Manager

Mr. Cappola provided updates on several Town projects and initiatives. He stated the two NCDOT projects on the agenda include the Greenway along the NC 42 corridor and improvements associated with the River Mews development. He explained that the River Mews project was approved several years ago and that the Town has been working with the property owner and Caterpillar on its implementation. Both projects were originally submitted in 2017 and are now moving forward.

Mr. Cappola stated the Town's July 3rd fireworks event was a success and staff received positive feedback from attendees. He thanked Town staff for their efforts in organizing and supporting the event.

He also announced that Legend Park Trailhead is now open to the public.

The Town's Clariti online permitting system launched on June 6 and that permits can now be submitted online.

Finally, he stated recent heavy storms have created challenges at a number of construction sites throughout Town. Staff are working with developers and contractors to address storm-related impacts and ensure affected sites are properly cleaned up and stabilized.

b. Town Attorney

c. Town Clerk

d. Other Staff

1) Quarterly Budget Office Update
Presenter:
Todd Melton, Budget Manager

Mr. Melton presented the Budget Office quarterly update covering the final three months of Fiscal Year 2026, from April through June. The primary focus during the quarter had been budget development and adoption, along with continued engagement with the Community Education Partners program and updates to departmental performance data.

Mr. Melton highlighted improvements to the Town's budget engagement webpage, noting the site now included a budget development timeline with expandable milestones that allowed users to access documents and materials associated with each stage of the budget process, including the Manager's Recommended Budget and other budget-related reports, pay scales, and supporting information.

Mr. Melton reviewed recent Community Education Partners activities, including a capital improvement planning session in which participants evaluated and ranked capital projects through a simplified scoring exercise. He stated a utility-focused panel discussion was held with

Town staff, including representatives from water resources, electric services, and utility analysis, allowing participants to ask questions and engage in extensive discussion. The program concluded with a session reviewing the adopted budget.

Mr. Melton also provided an update on the Town's performance data initiative. He stated performance measures were currently available for several departments and that efforts were underway to expand the program to include additional operational areas such as water, sewer, electric, meter reading, utility locating, cemeteries, and solid waste. He stated that work would subsequently continue with planning, engineering, inspections, and other community development departments. Staff, with assistance from a summer intern, were continuing to develop new performance measures and reporting tools to provide broader departmental representation on the Town's performance dashboard.

Mr. Melton stated staff were developing surveys to gather feedback and identify opportunities to improve the budget process. He stated several policy and process improvements were being considered, including updates to the budget development calendar and expanded budget work session opportunities that would allow for more in-depth discussion of topics identified by Council.

Mr. Melton stated staff were preparing the annual budget book and anticipated completing it by mid-September. With additional support in the Budget Office, future budget books would ideally be completed closer to the time of budget adoption. He stated staff would continue implementing process improvements and expanding the performance data initiative throughout the organization.

2) Community Education Partners Monthly Update
Presenter:
Lydia Davis, Communication and Marketing Specialist

Ms. Davis presented a mid-year update on the Community Education Partners (CEP) program. She stated the program's mission was to deepen public understanding of Town government, including the budget process, services, and emerging issues, so that residents could engage confidently and help share accurate information throughout the community. She stated approximately 15 members had participated in monthly meetings since February.

Ms. Davis reviewed the group's activities during its first six months. In February, participants completed a budget knowledge pre-assessment, received an introduction to the budget process and budget calendar, and provided feedback on messaging related to the Town's budget survey. In March, the group participated in discussions regarding the Capital Improvement Program and Strategic Plan, reviewed departmental requests, and completed a budget-balancing exercise. During April, members received a budget summary, explored the Capital Improvement Program in greater detail, and reviewed the Town's fee structure. In May, the group reviewed the Manager's Recommended Budget and participated in a panel discussion focused on utility rates and enterprise funds. In June, members reviewed the adopted budget and completed a post-assessment designed to measure knowledge gained throughout the program.

Ms. Davis stated the post-assessment results demonstrated significant improvement in participants' understanding of the budget process. While most participants scored below 60 percent on the initial assessment, the majority scored 70 percent or higher on the post-assessment, with three participants achieving scores in the 90 percent range.

Ms. Davis stated participants had provided overwhelmingly positive feedback regarding the program and had expressed appreciation for the opportunity to learn more about Town operations. The group would take a break during July and August and would reconvene in September. Moving forward, the program would expand beyond the budget cycle and focus on broader community education and public engagement efforts.

Ms. Davis stated future discussions would include major Town initiatives, communication strategies, advisory board presentations, Town events and amenities, and opportunities for residents to gain additional clarity on issues affecting the community. The program would continue to serve as a network of informed community ambassadors who could share accurate information, provide meaningful feedback, and support productive public engagement throughout the year.

12. OTHER BUSINESS

a. Mayor and Council Comments

Council Member Casey raised concerns related to stormwater issues discussed during the Carolina Overlook public comments and asked whether the Town should evaluate its stormwater policies for new construction. Mr. Cappola stated the Town currently follows the State's stormwater program and model ordinance requirements, but staff could review potential enhancements and present recommendations to the Council as an initial step.

Mayor Pro Tem mentioned that municipalities previously relied on listservs to share information and expressed interest in learning what other communities have successfully implemented when addressing similar stormwater concerns. Engineering Director Jonathan Ham stated he would contact directors in other municipalities to gather information and best practices for Council's consideration.

Mayor McLeod stated that he cares deeply about residents and their investments, noting that for some homeowners, their property is their most significant investment. He emphasized the importance of ensuring public safety and protecting residents who may be affected by stormwater issues. He also recognized the Town's first Downtown Restaurant Week and thanked those involved in its success.

Mayor McLeod concluded by reflecting on the difficult decisions faced by elected officials and stated that he was proud of the Council for working together throughout the evening. He stated residents frequently ask the Town to require more from developers and observed that, in this case, the developer committed to funding roadway improvements as well as investing millions of dollars to extend water and sewer infrastructure to the site. The Mayor further stated that Clayton's tax base remains approximately 80 percent residential and 20 percent commercial and industrial, and that the actions taken during the meeting represented a step toward creating a more balanced tax base for the community.

13. CLOSED SESSION

a. To Discuss Economic Development in Accordance with NCGS 143-318.11(a)(4) and To Discuss Purchase of Real Property in Accordance with NCGS 143-318.11(a)(5)

The agenda was adjusted to add: To Discuss a Legal Matter in Accordance with NCGS 143-

318.11(a)(3) and To Discuss a Personnel Matter in Accordance with NCGS 143-318.11(a)(6).

Motion To Go Into Closed Session

Result:	**Passed 5-0**
Mover:	Andria Archer
Seconder:	Porter Casey
Yes:	Andria Archer, Ruth Anderson, Porter Casey, Amanda Underwood, Gretchen Williams
No:	None
Absent:	

Motion To Return To Open Session

Result:	**Passed 5-0**
Mover:	Andria Archer
Seconder:	Gretchen Williams
Yes:	Andria Archer, Ruth Anderson, Porter Casey, Amanda Underwood, Gretchen Williams
No:	None
Absent:	

14. ADJOURNMENT

a. Adjourn

With nothing further, the meeting was adjourned at 10:22 p.m.

Motion To Adjourn

Result:	**Passed 5-0**
Mover:	Andria Archer
Seconder:	Ruth Anderson
Yes:	Andria Archer, Ruth Anderson, Porter Casey, Amanda Underwood, Gretchen Williams
No:	None
Absent:	

Duly Adopted by the Town Council on Monday, August 3, 2026 while in regular session.

Andria Archer

Andria Archer
Mayor Pro Tem

ATTEST:

Heidi L. Holland

Heidi L. Holland, MMC, MCCMC
Town Clerk