

Town of Oak Island
Business Advisory Board Mini-Retreat
Wednesday, September 27, 2023 -- 9 am-Noon
Police Department Training Room

I. Welcome & Introductions

In Attendance: Jackie DelPrete, Chasey Bynum, Ronnie Russell, Zach Fisher, Lisa Fitzgerald, Joe Yeager, Alma Rittenberry, Ken Guhse, Hugh Fosbury, Dixon Wright, Hallie Willis, Lisa Stites

Absent: Annette Rogers (excused)

Attendees introduced themselves, the name of their business, their residence, how long they have lived in Oak Island, why they were interested in joining the Business Advisory Board, and if they have any children or pets.

II. Committee Handbook

Town Clerk, Lisa Stites took the committee through the official Town Committee Handbook. She covered Open Meeting Law, Public Records Law, with special note on email and electronic communications being included. Cautioned the board to make sure they don't discuss board business outside of official meetings if they have a quorum present. Advised board that they must give sufficient notice before the meeting schedule changes.

III. Purpose & Goals

Economic Development Coordinator Hallie Willis reviewed the Business Advisory Board charge adopted by Town Council with the group. The purpose of the board is to advise Town Council on business interests, provide a forum to raise issues, discuss ways to make OKI more business-friendly.

Willis emphasized that she would like the board to help strengthen the Economic Development office connection with business owners, understanding their needs and concerns, being aware of any major business successes or milestones, any commercial vacancies, and assisting with warm handoffs.

There was also a discussion on what this Board is not allowed to do. It does not enact ordinances or regulations. Not making any binding decisions. Not operating independently from Town Council. Not to allocate any funds.

IV. Economic Development Introduction

Economic Development Coordinator Willis gave presentation on what Economic Development means and what work an economic developer does. Answered questions from board members on past experience.

V. Oak Island Quiz & Market Guide

Willis led a short quiz on basic facts and history of Oak Island.

Shared the Market Guide with the group and went through that data. The group discussed trends in Oak Island demographics, future growth, and how those trends may impact business.

VI. Building Our Agenda

Willis led an activity to decide on the order of the regular meeting agendas. The group decided on: Call to Order, Approval of the Agenda, Approval of Minutes, Public Comment, Presentations, Old Business, New Business, Staff Reports, Board Member Reports, Adjournment.

VII. Elect Leadership

The group had one volunteer for each position and the consensus was for the following appointments: Chairman Joe Yeager, Vice Chairman Lisa Fitzgerald, and Secretary Chasey Bynum.

VIII. Set Meeting Time/Day

Committee decided to meet on 4th Tuesdays of the Month at 9 am. They prefer to meet in the Police Training room. Willis advised that Police have first use of the room, so some months we may have to move locations and the group was ok with this.

IX. Workplan Discussion

Open discussion on topics of interest to the board to see what they might have interest in working on first.

- Desire to make opening a business in the Town easier. Mentioned the difficulty of permitting, understanding rules and regulations, ease of finding information and requirements online. Suggested a checklist for business owners to follow and help them know where to go and who to talk to. Suggestion for a meeting request process when a new business first comes to the town.
- Parking issues in the commercial areas. Many members mentioned parking problems at their businesses, how they deal with them, and other areas they see parking concerns for commercial activity.
- Lack of retail and restaurant space available and in good condition.
- Vacancies. Mentioned major vacancies as eye sores and property owners that have no interest in improving or selling their commercial property.

X. Adjournment: With no additional business to discuss, the Board adjourned the meeting at noon.

Chairman Joe Yeager