

Land Use Planning Meeting

By Yvette Bannen

Dale Holland, planning consultant, conducted a meeting Thursday, Nov. 11, at the Ramada. The current Land Use Plan has been in effect since 1996 and it is being rewritten to be more comprehensive and to address areas of environmental concern.

Holland emphasized that participation is important so that significant issues will go into the document. Meetings will be held at 10 a.m. on the fourth Tuesday of the month and they will be advertised and will be open to the public. The next meeting will be Nov. 23.

Even though there was only a small crowd, everyone was encouraged to voice their ideas about issues that need to be addressed. These were written on a large chart and, afterwards, everyone was invited to vote on the top ten concerns.

There was a lot of mulling over the various topics. The item that received the most votes was for maintaining strict residential zoning restrictions.

The next priority was development of an in-door recreational facility for seniors.

Then there was a four-way tie for maintenance and upkeep of the canal; solution to problems involved with the water system (purchase and/or improvements); phasing in underground utilities and a long-term (20-30 years) plan for beach renourishment.

Next was preservation of the maritime forest.

Maintaining housing standards and addressing storm-water management issues were also tied.

There also was a three-way tie for identifying strategies for use and preservation of the Roosevelt natural area; determine a proper use for the Roosevelt tract (10 acres) that will be given to the Town; and, addressing traffic problems along Highway 58.

Other issues garnered fewer votes, but with a different group of people voting, might have risen to more importance. It is a chance for townspeople to think ahead, if not for us, then for the next generation.

Turtle Time

By Peggy & Gene Sagmiller

Nest #5, the last nest of the 2004 season in Pine Knoll Shores, boiled in the pre-dawn hours of Oct. 13, 68 days after having been laid. Once again, no one witnessed the hatching event. At the 8 a.m. nest check, many small tracks were seen headed down the runway, where they vanished on the wet sand left by high tide. Unfortunately, the runway was also crisscrossed by the tracks of many ghost crabs, a loose dog, and a feral cat. Three days before the hatch, the feral cat was seen by our "sitters," hunting for ghost crabs near the nest. There is no way to tell if any hatchlings were taken.

Due to impending bad weather and the abundance of predator tracks, we decided to excavate the nest as soon as possible. The nest excavation was performed on the evening of Oct. 13 by Victor Filan and Dorothy Steenland. In the nest were found 96 empty shells and 14 unhatched eggs. The emergence success was 87 percent.

So ends this disappointing sea turtle sea-

son in Pine Knoll Shores, as well as the rest of the East Coast. Out of just five nests laid on our beaches this summer, only two resulted in a healthy hatch. Two nests were washed away by hurricanes. One was inundated close to hatching, resulting in a drowned nest with only three known survivors. One very weak survivor made it into the ocean with the aid of volunteers.

Pine Knoll Shores' 2004 contribution to the Loggerhead Sea Turtle population was just 222 hatchlings. We hope the 2005 season will be much better!

We would like to thank all of our wonderful volunteers for your patience with the wind, rain, and hurricanes this year. We wouldn't have a program without you. Although we had a meager season, your dedication and willingness to walk and sit in adverse conditions was awesome! Thank you all so very much for your time. We hope to see you next spring, when turtle season begins on our renourished beach!



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