

Ocean Isle Wants Walks Ready When Bridge Opens

BY SUSAN USHER

By the time the new high-rise bridge to Ocean Isle Beach opens to pedestrian traffic, sidewalks should also be ready along the causeway road leading to the beach.

"Excitingly enough, it won't be long before the bridge situation is a reality," Mayor LaDane Bullington reminded town commissioners at a meeting last Wednesday afternoon. She said the town needs to install sidewalks to connect with the pedestrian walkways planned for the bridge itself. Board members agreed. Commissioner Marvin Stanley was absent.

The mayor's father, Street Commissioner Odell Williamson, also agreed. Standing from the audience, he told the board sidewalks along the causeway should take priority over all other walkways discussed for the town, including those planned for 1st and 2nd streets. He suggested it might be good to wait until sewer lines are installed before locating those walks, which are intended to provide a safer route to the oceanfront for those living on second row and back.

As planned by the state, Williamson said, the road from the bridge to the oceanfront boulevard is not planned for people to walk on. Traffic entering the boulevard will turn either right or left.

"Sidewalks are a must because people are going to want to get to the beach and the ocean," he added.

Providing walkways connecting the beach to the mainland may reduce some of the bumper to bumper traffic leading to the beach, he added. He proposed five-foot-wide walks along the commercial curbing the state is installing for better traffic control.

Planning for the sidewalks is just one of the items the

town has included in its application for a land use planning grant from the N.C. Office of Coastal Management. Under the Coastal Area Management Act the town must update its land use plan every five years.

Williamson described the effort as "a waste of money."

The mayor added, "We have to do it, so we might as well get as much out of it as we can,"—preferably in the form of plans, layouts and cost analyses for projects the town hopes to complete in the future.

"We need to know where we're going so we'll have the money when it all falls together," she said.

Some of the items the town is to plan for are required, such as hurricane evacuation, disaster management and hazard mitigation, estuarine water access, water quality, wastewater-sewer service and recreation.

Mayor Bullington said she also added studies for solid waste control, street lighting, strand patrol, and, at the request of the Ocean Isle Beach Property Owners' Association, emergency management—medical. Grant funds can be used to plan public parking, beach access and recreational projects such as bike trails.

Approved projects receive 75 percent state funding, which must be matched 25 percent by the town, in cash and/or in-kind contributions. The cost of the Ocean Isle project would be \$10,000.

Artificial Reefs

Bill English of the new South Brunswick Islands Fishing Club reported on three local fishing clubs' joint effort to obtain an artificial reef program offshore. The plan—to restore two reefs and add six more—is "very ambitious and can be very expensive or somewhat inex-

pensive depending upon the materials available," he said. Reefs are proven effective at drawing more fish "readily," and provide habitat for as many as 66 to 100 species during their lifespan.

To questions from Odell Williamson, he replied that the reefs do not pose a hazard to navigation because the state marks them with buoys and maintains the buoys and that they are included on navigational charts. They can also be found by use of Loran coordinates.

The reef project has the support of local commercial fishermen, he added, and isn't controversial in nature, a fact that pleased Mayor Bullington.

Other Business

In other business, the board:

- Set a workshop on the 1985-86 budget at 4 p.m. Tuesday, April 30. A preliminary budget must be approved by June 1 and the final budget by July 1.
- Approved budget transfers "as needed" in the current budget to place accommodations tax revenues in the line items for which they were earmarked and to allocate unanticipated revenues such as higher sales taxes.
- Heard from Odell Williamson that the bases for two tennis courts in the new town park await paving and that the entire area needs fencing. The courts could be ready by June 1, he predicted.
- Received a bill for \$500 from Lewis & Associates for plans and specifications for the connection of the town water line to the county water line. The plan was required by the state, said the mayor.
- Agreed with the mayor that Police Chief Jerry Gurganus needs to make regular reports to the board,

preferably in person, Mayor Bullington said, to allow discussion with board members. "We're going to have more and more problems as we have more and more people," noted Mayor Pro Tem Betty Williamson.

- Voted to update and later adopt former town ordinance's dating from 1974 required by the N.C. Sedimentation Control Commission for the town to monitor its own land-disturbing activities. The commission needs to hear about the town's proposed procedures within 90 days, said the mayor, in order to determine whether to put Ocean Isle on its list for a "drive-through" inspection.
- Agreed with Street Commissioner Odell Williamson to amend the lot elevation ordinance to require a minimum elevation of eight inches, as it now reads, but otherwise not to exceed the height of adjoining lots. When one property owner on Laurinburg Street filled his property about two feet above street level, the fill ran into adjoining lots, creating what Williamson called "a nuisance" and prompting complaints from his neighbors to the town.
- They didn't need to get that high to start with," Williamson said of the lot elevation. "There wasn't any water problem there."
- In his days as building inspector, Williamson said he would have denied final building approval even though the town ordinance doesn't set a maximum lot height. But Inspector T.D. Roberson, he added, follows the law to the letter, so the ordinance needs to be amended to reflect his original intent to provide greater uniformity.
- Heard from Roberson that March "was a busy month," with 33 building permits issued and \$11,560 in fees collected on property valued at \$1.06 million.

Landing Aid Among Improvements Under Way At Ocean Isle Strip

BY SUSAN USHER

Landings—especially those made at night—should get a little easier at both Brunswick County airports later this year with the addition of VASI systems.

News of the VASI installation was just one of several changes at the Ocean Isle Beach Airport reported by Odell Williamson to the Ocean Isle Beach Board of Commissioners last Wednesday afternoon. Others include paid parking and plans to convert to a fixed-base operation in approximately one year.

VASI is the acronym for "visual approach slope indicator," according to Bruce Matthews, manager of airport development for the N.C. Department of Transportation. A

VAZI system consists of a pair of light projection boxes located near one or both ends of a runway that shine into the approach area. A proper combination of lights on the boxes gives the pilot the proper glide slope to make his approach.

A VASI system, he said, is most useful at night when the pilot can't see the usual reference points. The VASI lights tell him whether he's on the proper glide or above or below it.

As Mayor LaDane Bullington explained to town commissioners at a meeting Wednesday afternoon, "Red on red, you're dead; red on white, you're alright."

Ocean Isle Beach Airport and Brunswick County Airport on Long Beach Road are among 15 airports in

the state that will receive 75 percent matching funds from the state to install the systems as part of a safety program pushed by the N.C. Aeronautics Council, the state's policy-making for aviation. Each airport's cost for the system should run about \$7,500, a substantial savings, according to Matthews, because of state incentives.

VASI is primarily a safety device, Matthews said, and one DOT would like to see in use on all paved and lighted runways in the state. About 20 fields were eligible; the two Brunswick County airports were among 15 that agreed to participate.

By engineering all 15 systems at once and letting a single construction contract, the state hopes to cut the cost of the installations by as much as one-third. As an added incentive, the state is putting up 75 percent of the cost rather than its usual 50 percent match, Matthews said.

VASI is just one of several changes or improvements at the Ocean Isle Beach Airport, where paving will begin soon to extend the runway to

4,000 feet. The taxiway will also be lengthened.

However, advertising of the paving job was delayed slightly when a state inspection about four weeks ago showed that the runway's glide-slope ratio was short and did not provide proper clearance for take-offs and landings.

Through the cooperation of the Cox and Sloane families who own the property along the flight path for the No. 6 runway, Williamson said, the problem was resolved.

"They have agreed to cut some trees across the road," said Williamson, which means the paving should be completed by the July 1 deadline for expending the state grant used to help finance the improvements.

"I certainly appreciate the cooperation of the Cox and Sloane families," he repeated.

Glide-slope ratio is an imaginary plane of elevation from the end of the runway that increases one foot vertically for every 20 feet horizontally, Matthews said. Standards require that there be no obstructions such as trees or power lines along that plane.

"It's like a shoulder on the road," said Matthews. "It gives the pilot room if he goes below the flight path."

Williamson said he had also spent about \$10,000 of his own money developing a pay parking lot for airport traffic, specifically for pilots who park vehicles there for use when visiting the island. He said the

number of vehicles parked around the airport had become a problem and that through the pay lot, "we're going to offer a solution."

Fixed-Base?

He also said he expects the airport to become a fixed-base operation "probably by next spring," but that he can't build a park and a fixed-base operation at the same time. He's presently building a park for lease to the town.

The term fixed-base operation or "f.b.o.," explained Matthews, generally refers to the availability of services to a visiting pilot such as a telephone, radio contact, gas and oil sales, a building for shelter and assistance with such items as parking and tying down airplanes.

"At an airport with a fixed-base operator," he said, "the pilot knows from his directory what services will be available and when."

Not having an operator can be a little more burdensome for pilots, Matthews said, like driving to Charlotte without knowing if gas would be available might be for a motorist.

"Basically gas is available at Ocean Isle, but only through Mr. Williamson. You'd have to know that and have made arrangements," he said. "It makes it a little less attractive place to land, especially for the pilot who doesn't know all the procedures."

The Brunswick County Airport on Long Beach Road is a fixed-base operation and recently completed

improvements similar to the nearly \$1 million in improvements nearing completion at Ocean Isle.

"We have to continuously stay up with the Jones," commented Williamson, who also noted that he considers the airport one of the area's finest assets and a good investment for county funds.

"You can't imagine what good that airport is for this end of the county. And what's good for this end of the county is good for the entire county," he added.

County commissioners were criticized by some parties last year when a majority on the board voted to provide part of the match for a state grant to finance improvements at the airport, although a similar grant had been made earlier to the Long Beach Road facility.

Matthews agrees with Williamson that the airports are assets.

"Brunswick County is one of the few places we have two good airports in the same area," he said. "There's some competition between them, but I think it's healthy."

"Having the airports is a good selling point with real estate developers," he added.

At one time, before the county airport on Long Beach Road was paved, he said, there were 10 to 12 airplanes based at the two airports. "There's now about 35 airplanes between them."

Five Resolutions Adopted

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Looking out at the convention floor, Redwine said he saw quality, but not quantity and that both are needed for the party to succeed.

While allowing the GOP to claim some of the groups that traditionally clustered under the broad umbrella of the Democratic Party, he said, the "party of Jefferson" is "still the party of the people—the party going in the direction this country needs to go in."

Officials

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Republican transportation chairman by Dozier; and Dozier.

Dozier said the delegation will also meet with John Harvey, county planning director; Ed Gore, county planning board chairman; and Commissioner Frankie Rabon to discuss the county's long-range thoroughfare plan. The county rejected an earlier plan prepared by the state, saying it did not reflect county needs.

As examples, he cited the sweeping claims that Democrats are unpatriotic and are spendthrifts.

Not so, he said. "There's not a person in this room who isn't patriotic. No one here would advocate spending more money than we taken in. We believe in spending wisely, not foolishly."

Delegates adopted five of six resolutions presented. They called for 1) greater loyalty to the party and its candidates; 2) support for farmers nationwide from the state and national executive committees; 3) a balanced national budget; and 4) a higher priority for the four-laning of U.S. 17 through Brunswick County and a bypass around Shallotte. A fifth resolution paid tribute in memoriam to late party members Francis Stanley and George Frink.

In a roll call vote, delegates defeated, on a 28½ against to 26½ for vote, a resolution from Oak Island Precinct that if adopted by the U.S. Congress would have given voters the right to vote on future salary increases for congressmen. Those increases would have been based on daily attendance and participation when Congress is in session.

"As voters and employers," argued delegate Eileen Kellagher in defense of the resolution, citizens should have more of a say on salary increases, especially when cutting the federal budget is of such great interest.

But Odell Williamson, attending his first county convention in several years, argued that congressmen are elected every two years.

"If they vote the way people think they should not, the people can put them out of office anyway," he said. "I think it's a bad resolution. Besides, it could be interpreted as a slap at our own congressman."

The resolutions adopted will be presented to the district Democratic convention.

Seniors Want Their Own Bus

Brunswick County's senior citizens say they need more than vans to meet their transportation needs.

They want a 42-passenger or larger bus.

Ouida Hewett, coordinator of the Volunteer and Information Center, presented a petition signed by 100 seniors to the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners Monday night asking it to acquire "ample transportation" for seniors such as a bus. She said the petition had just begun to circulate.

A bus would be used for trips within the county and within the state, she said, and would also be available for use by the Brunswick County Parks and Recreation Department.

"Personally, I'm in favor of it if at budget time we find the money available," said Commissioner Frankie Rabon, who was questioned about his support for such a bus at a recent meeting of Town Creek senior citizens.

At his request, the board asked County Manager Billy Carter to investigate the cost. The request will be considered at budget time.

The county's elderly population is expected to reach 8,381 by 1990, a 51½ percent increase in 11 years, according to county planning department statistics.

Fires

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of the blazes had not been brought under control in time.

Gov. Martin declared the state a disaster area after fires destroyed more than 119,000 acres in the state, causing more than \$51 million in damage. If the federal government concurs, landowners in the 34 counties would also be eligible for federal grants, low-interest loans and other benefits.

"The forest service has pretty well exhausted their funding," Logan said. "It's expensive when you put one of those bombers in the air to drop chemicals on a fire."

Damage to timber alone was estimated at \$47 million in the state.

Typical Spring Weather In Offing

Typical springtime weather's in the forecast for the South Brunswick Islands, with average temperatures ranging from the mid-50s at night to the mid-70s during the day, Shallotte Point meteorologist Jackson Canady said Tuesday.

The area should also receive about

one-half inch of rainfall, he said.

Canady recorded .53 inch of rain on his backyard gauge during the period of April 9-15, the first significant rainfall in several weeks.

He also recorded a maximum high of 86 degrees on the 12th and a chilly minimum low of 24 degrees on the

10th.

An average daily high of 74 degrees combined with an average nightly low of 43 degrees for an average daily temperature of 58 degrees.

Cold nights pulled the temperature average down to about five degrees below normal, he said.

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