

Holden Board Votes To Begin Dune And Street Repairs

BY ETTA SMITH

Holden Beach Commissioners moved to repair two streets and rebuild five dunes damaged by the Jan. 1 storm during the continuance of a Jan. 5 meeting last Thursday.

Commissioners voted to hire a contractor to bulldoze sand from the beach to the dunes that were breached during the storm—and to act as a broker for oceanfront homeowners wanting the service at a reduced rate.

The board also voted to delay reading of the town's water meters until Water and Maintenance Supervisor Henry Thompson can repair damaged roads on the island.

The vote followed a report from a committee established Jan. 5 to recommend streets and dune areas that need immediate repair.

Commissioner Graham King, who serves as chairman of the newly-appointed committee, presented the recommendations to repair the damaged dunes on the 500, 600 and 700 blocks of Ocean Boulevard West, and two on the east end of the island. The committee also recommended immediate repairs to Marlin and Sand Dollar streets.

King said he wasn't sure of the exact locations of

dunes needing repair on the island's east end.

Alternatives the committee discussed for getting the dunes repaired included voluntary compliance on the part of the homeowners, where the town would contact persons and ask them to repair the dunes in front of their property; and to start procedures to assess the homeowners for repairs while the town does the work on the five emergency-identified areas.

During last Thursday's meeting, Commissioner Gay Atkins suggested homeowners might be motivated to begin repair work on the dunes if the board could offer some sort of tax credit on town taxes later.

"If we do that," said Commissioner Hal Stanley, "it's still coming out of our pockets later—only a year later."

King said that since the dune repairs are needed immediately, the town would initiate the repairs and encourage oceanfront homeowners to repair others that could affect their property should another storm hit.

By acting as a broker, and having all the damaged dunes repaired at once the price could be considerably less, according to James Russ, a Shallotte contractor. He said the amount would be determined by how many cubic yards from the low water mark to the dunes the

sand would have to be pushed.

Russ said he had performed the same kind of work at Ocean Isle Beach following the last storm in December, at a cost of \$400 to \$600 for every 50-foot area.

King said it would take a minimum of two months if the board decided to assess property owners, and that the work needed to be done before the turtle season begins.

Loggerhead turtles, an endangered species, leave the sea to lay their eggs along the beaches from around May 15 until Oct. 15, according to Building Inspector Dwight Carroll.

King also told the board that most of the oceanfront homeowners on the beach live out of town and would have to be contacted by mail—which could take weeks. And he stressed that due to the winter storms in February and the turtle season, the repairs needed to be done now.

The street repairs, according to Atkins, who is also the board's street commissioner, will require about 44 loads of marl and 30 loads of clay. She said all streets in the town would eventually have potholes filled and any other damage repaired, but the immediate concern is with the regrading of Marlin Street.

Policy Established

During the five-hour meeting the board approved a policy recommended by the committee that allows only oceanfront property owners or their agents, such as a contractor working for them, on the beach during the first weekend following a storm.

Stanley suggested to the board that more frequent police patrolling of the beach could be used to cut down on scavengers who take the treated lumber left on the beach off in truck loads after such a storm.

"We've got to step up law enforcement," said King. "If it's not his (the owner's) property, then it's pure and simple larceny."

Committee Appointed

Following a 45-minute executive session to discuss personnel, the commissioners unanimously approved the establishment of a Public Safety Committee. Police Chief Raymond Simpson will be reporting directly to the committee, which is chaired by Graham King. Town Manager Bob Buck and Commissioner Lyn Holden will also serve.

Discussion of Simpson's overtime pay at the board's Jan. 5 meeting was continued in last Thursday's executive session.

Ocean Isle Assesses Damage From Tides

BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN

Damage signs have been placed on 18 waterfront homes at Ocean Isle Beach and all 12 beach accesses are marked unsafe, according to Building Inspector Druid Roberson's report to the town board Tuesday.

This was an indication of the mark left on the island by New Year's Day high tides and an accompanying storm.

"I recommend we not do any repairs now, but wait and see if we can get help with this," he told the board.

In answer to a query from beach resident Lowell McLeary, Roberson said he would give property owners 30 days to repair damaged homes before sending notices, holding hearings, and possibly taking people to court. "I can't make them do anything about their property, but the court can," he said.

Street and Water Commissioner Gedeil Williamson said residents could not expect assistance from the town in repairing damage to private property. "We should point out to people that they should look for another place to move their houses," he said.

"The town is going to have to take a good, hard look at the streets that were damaged, though," he said. "I doubt if the town could be held responsible for accesses threatened by the elements beyond its control."

Williamson recommended the steps be replaced on accessways and the ends repaired, because "there's the liability factor, and if you wait a month or two, chances are the shelf will raise a foot or more, making it humanly impossible to get a post hole down." He predicted most of the sand blown away would be back by March or April.

Roberson suggested the debris left on the strand by the storm be treated in two different ways.

"Some dangerous stuff is there, with nails in it," he said, "but the bushy stuff laid against the dunes would be good sand-trapping material."

The board voted to have dangerous debris removed as soon as possible, with Police Chief Jerry Gurganus in charge of finding a work crew from offenders assigned to perform community service. They approved using the remainder of the litter as a sand trap.

The board also voted to repair a one-lane road on East First Street, as well as damaged walkways, "to the

best of our ability."

A proposal from the Chambers trash service was discussed at length. A letter from the company suggested weekly pickup during the off-season from Nov. 1 through March. In exchange, the company would return carts to their houses on a year-round basis, at no additional cost.

The company had previously quoted a price of \$10,000 for cart return service, a figure unacceptable to the town.

Mayor LaDane Bullington said the letter also indicated Chambers would do some litter pickup as part of the bargain, and she protested, "They don't seem to be clear about our original contract. They were already supposed to clean roadways, as well as the strand, and the cart emptying. Now, they're trying to back out of the road cleanup."

The board authorized Town Attorney Elva Jess to write to Chambers, clarifying the responsibilities they had already agreed to, and asking for a meeting with company representative Steve McCarthy.

Bullington read a letter from Henry Von Oesen & Associates, the engineering firm that designed the town's sewer system. Von Oesen said Crowder Construction Co., which will build the town's sewage treatment plant, is scheduled to start work Feb. 15 and complete the project in early March, unless bad weather delays construction.

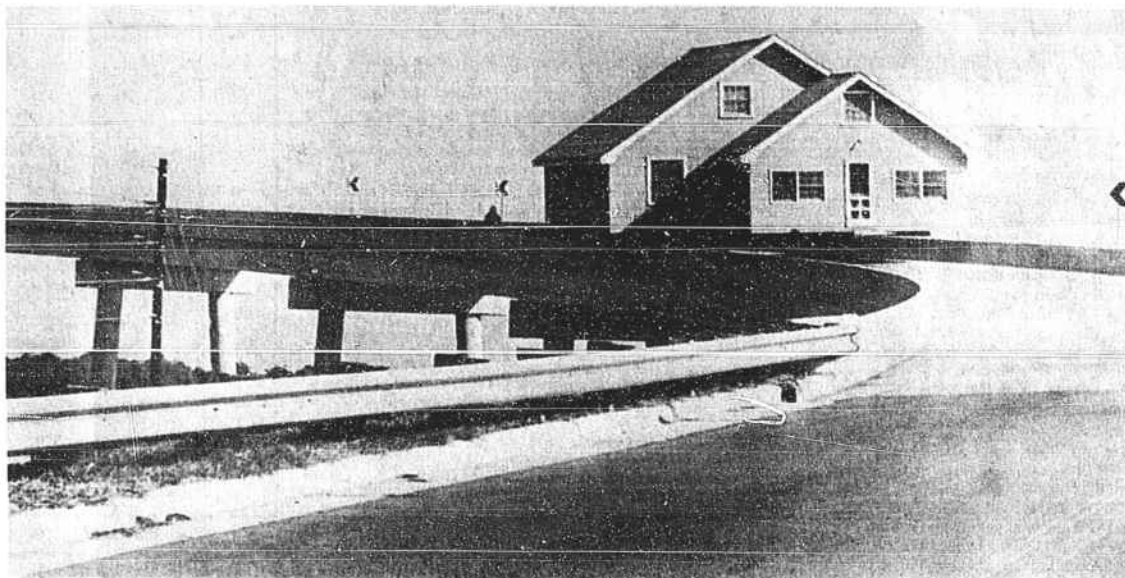
Gurganus reported six arrests, all connected with break-ins, during December. He said two of his officers will attend the Justice Academy in Salem, and announced his department has two new police cars.

Roberson reported ten building permits issued last month, and collection of \$525 in fees for construction valued at \$101,300.

He also noted that the 1986 construction total was \$2,015,500, the lowest since the town began keeping records.

"I think the reason is people waiting for the sewer system to crank up," he explained, "and a number of people buying condos instead of building houses."

The board concluded with an executive session to discuss legal matters, at Jess's request, after which no action was taken.



STAFF PHOTO BY ETTA SMITH

House Relocated

On its way to a new home in Supply last Thursday morning, this house appeared to be abandoned on top of the Holden Beach Bridge. It's actually being pulled by a truck belonging to Henry Milligan, who sold the house to

Lloyd and Sandra Jackson. The house was moved across the bridge in about 20 minutes, after workers from Brunswick Electric Membership Corporation removed power lines along Ocean Boulevard East to allow its passage.



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