

DREDGING IN THE WORKS?

Holden Beach To Hire Expert To Review Condition Of Canals

BY DOUG RUTTER

Holden Beach plans to hire someone to check out the island's three man-made canal systems and determine what can be done to make them easier for boaters to navigate.

Beyond that, however, town officials have made no commitment to supervise a canal dredging project that some landowners say they need desperately and would be willing to help fund.

Canal dredging was one of more than 15 items Holden Beach Commissioners considered at their regular meeting Monday night.

Officials discussed two options to get the canals dredged—paying for the work upfront and assessing landowners, and setting up special tax districts to collect money for the project.

After lengthy discussion, Commissioner Bob Buck recommended the town hire an expert to determine the scope of the dredging work that needs to be done. "Before we can do anything, somebody's got to define the problem."

Harold Steorts, who lives in the Heritage Harbor subdivision, said the mouth of the entrance canal has about two feet of water at low tide. He said it should be dredged and seawalls built so sand won't wash into the channel.

State legislation passed several years ago gave town commissioners the power to dredge the canals and assess canal lot owners to recover all of the money.

However, Holden Beach officials say the big problem with that procedure is that the town needs the money in advance to pay for the dredging. They can't assess until after the project is finished.

"Before we can do anything, somebody's got to define the problem."

—Commissioner Bob Buck

Town Attorney Kenneth Campbell said an informal petition could be used to gauge public support of a dredging project. He said the town board could then request voluntary donations from lot owners to help pay for the work.

While they consider assessments, commissioners still want State Rep. David Redwine to introduce legislation that would allow the town to set up special tax districts in the canal areas.

With tax districts, Holden Beach could tax people who own land along the canals and build up a special fund that could be used to dredge the canals as it's needed.

Mayor John Tandy said Redwine told him he would prefer the town follow the assessment process, but would introduce legislation later this year if the board still wants it.

Campbell said he thinks any tax district legislation would have to be a statewide bill. State law already allows towns to create tax districts for some municipal services, but navigation projects aren't among them.

Commissioner Gay Atkins suggested the town send resolutions to coastal towns in Brunswick, New

Hanover and Pender counties seeking support for the legislation. Her motion died when nobody seconded it.

Other Business

In other business Monday, commissioners:

■ Postponed a public hearing and adoption of the land use plan update. Haskell Rhett, community planner with the N.C. Division of Coastal Management, said some policies relating to storm hazard mitigation and post-disaster recovery need to be revised before the plan is approved. "This board has put a lot of time into this," Mayor John Tandy said. "It's time to put it to bed as soon as we can."

■ Voted to pay police officers training supplements if they successfully complete courses in ambulance attendant, use of radar, drug awareness and use of force. Officers will be paid \$5 per course hour when they pass the course.

■ Accepted a letter of retirement from Police Chief Raymond Simpson, who plans to work his last day Dec. 11. Simpson has worked for the police department for 15 years.

■ Accepted the resignation of Public Works Director Henry Thompson. In a letter to the board, Thompson said his health isn't good enough for him to continue working. Town officials had been holding the position open several months while he was on disability.

■ Voted to buy two radar units for the police department at a cost of \$2,590 and accepted an anonymous donation in the amount of \$2,000 that will be used to purchase a personal computer for the police department.

■ Agreed to advertise for bids on the construction of a new concrete block garage for the public works department. Officials are still considering a less expensive metal building.

■ Approved the 1990-91 audit contract with Brock, Padgett and Chandler of Shallotte. Commissioner Gay Atkins voted against the contract because other board members decided not to include a maximum cost for the work.

■ Held public hearings on the proposed paving of Salisbury and Shrimp streets. The town plans to assess landowners on the streets to recover 60 percent of the cost. C.D. Oliver of Shrimp Street was the only person to comment. He wants the street paved, but also wants the town to enforce the 25 mph speed limit and prohibit parking and commercial traffic on the street.

■ Set up a committee to write guidelines for the Holden Beach Turtle Patrol. Mayor Pro Tem Gloria Barrett suggested the guidelines in response to complaints she heard last year about a turtle patrol vehicle on the beach when it shouldn't have been and turtle watchers destroying dunes. Mrs. Barrett will serve on the committee with turtle watch director Rick Bryan and Sid Swarts.

■ Took no action on a request from the South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce to donate \$14,000 of accommodations tax money to a special tourism promotion fund. The chamber will ask Holden Beach, Ocean Isle Beach and Sunset Beach to contribute to the fund.

■ Heard from Mayor Tandy that he has appointed Ms. Atkins and Judy Bryan to a committee to plan a salute to the troops celebration between June 29 and July 4. "I'd like for our town to be a little outstanding," Tandy said. "The reason we've got a town is how well these guys performed."

4-1 Vote Restricts Board Appointments

BY DOUG RUTTER

Holden Beach residents who get appointed to a town board won't be allowed to stay on for more than two straight three-year terms any more without taking at least a year off.

On a 4-1 vote, town commissioners approved that policy shift Monday night, closing a controversial issue that has been debated off and on for nearly three years.

The ordinance change applies to all members of the board of adjustment and regular members of the planning and zoning board. They will not be allowed to serve more than six consecutive years.

Monday's vote on the issue was the second in the last month. The board voted 3-2 in favor of the proposal April 8. Without at least a four-fifths vote on the first reading, however, a second vote was required.

Commissioner Bob Buck has been the driving force behind the

"We are losing some valuable knowledge on both boards."

—Commissioner Gay Atkins

proposal since he first introduced it in June 1988. He suggested it, he said, to keep the boards from becoming stagnant and to ensure fresh viewpoints.

Commissioners appoint members to both boards, each of which is made up of five regular members and two alternates who vote when a regular member is absent. There previously was no limit on the number of terms someone could serve.

The policy shift will have an immediate effect on planning board member Sid Swarts, whose terms expire in July. Swarts can't be reappointed until he remains off the board for a year.

Alan Holden, who has been on

the planning and zoning board since 1980, and three-term board of adjustment member Martin Feldt won't be eligible for reappointment when their terms expire next July.

Commissioner Gay Atkins cast the only opposing vote Monday, saying the town will lose years of experience on the boards by making the amendment retroactive. She suggested making the ordinance effective in July.

Kenner Amos, who had voted against the policy change last month, voted in favor of it this week. He said later that voting against it would have been a "lost cause."

"Apparently everybody felt different about it so I thought I might have been wrong," Amos said Tuesday. "I changed my vote and went along with them."

Ms. Atkins said Monday that commissioners need to consider the welfare of the town before they vote. "We are losing some valuable knowledge on both boards."

As an example, she used Swarts, who has served on the planning board since 1985 and is currently its acting chairman.

Ms. Atkins also said Monday she wants the town to adopt a policy that people could not be appointed as a regular member of either board unless they have first served as an alternate.

She said previous town commissions followed that unwritten policy, but the present board has gotten

away from it. Ms. Atkins said most alternates have more knowledge about issues and how the board operates than newcomers.

Vacancies Filled

In a related matter Monday, commissioners filled two vacant seats on the board of adjustment and one on the planning board.

Town officials accepted the resignations of board of adjustment members Graham King and Rose Cole Monday. King was a regular member, and Mrs. Cole was an alternate.

Mayor John Tandy said the two members have been moving around a lot and having a hard time attending board meetings. "Both of these people in the past have done a lot for the Town of Holden Beach."

Charles Pahl, who was an alternate on the board of adjustment, was appointed to serve the remainder of King's term, which expires in July 1992.

Commissioners appointed Dan Harmon to the alternate seat vacated by Mrs. Cole. Harmon's term also expires next summer.

Crawford Hart was appointed to serve the remainder of Pahl's term as a board of adjustment alternate. The term runs out in July.

On the planning board, alternate Jim Shafor was appointed as a regular member through July 1992. He takes the seat that had been occupied by Charlotte Nolte, who resigned recently for health-related reasons.

Commissioners appointed Harold Steorts to take Shafor's place as an alternate on the planning board. His term expires in July.

100 People Apply For Holden Beach Town Manager's Post

Approximately 100 people have applied for the town manager's position at Holden Beach, Mayor Pro Tem Gloria Barrett said Monday.

Commissioners are scheduled to review applications at a special meeting Tuesday, May 14, at 9 a.m. in town hall.

Mrs. Barrett, who serves on the personnel committee with Commissioner Kenner Amos, said the committee plans to narrow the field to about 10. The full town board can then choose several applicants to interview.

Diane Clark has been serving as interim town manager since Jan. 14, after former manager Blake Proctor resigned under pressure from the town board.

Local Towns To Be Recognized

Holden Beach, Sunset Beach, Long Beach and Southport are among two dozen coastal communities in the state that will be recognized next week at the annual conference of the N.C. Association of Floodplain Managers.

The towns will be honored for their participation in the National Flood Insurance Program's Community Rating System, which is expected to save homeowners on flood insurance premiums starting Oct. 1.

Floodplain managers will meet May 13 and 14 at the Blockade Runner Conference Center at Wrightsville Beach.

Jon Kusler of the Association of Wetlands Managers will be the conference keynote speaker Tuesday, May 14, at noon.

Write Us

The Beacon welcomes letters to the editor. All letters must be signed and include the writer's address. Under no circumstances will unsigned letters be printed. Letters should be legible. The Beacon reserves the right to edit libelous comments. Address letters to The Brunswick Beacon, P. O. Box 2558, Shallotte, N. C. 28459.

April Hottest Since WWII

Southeastern North Carolina residents enjoyed the warmest April since World War II, according to the monthly climatological report from the National Weather Service in Wilmington.

Average temperature for the month was 66.5 degrees—3.4 degrees above normal—making April 1991 the second warmest since the weather service started keeping records in 1871.

The warmest April on record was in 1945, when the average temperature was 66.8 degrees.

Average high temperature last month was 77 degrees, while the

average low was 56 degrees. The highest daily temperature was 89 degrees April 29, and the lowest reading was 40 degrees April 1.

The weather service recorded measurable rainfall seven days and a total of 3.35 inches during the month, which was .37 inches above normal.

The greatest amount of rain in a 24-hour period was 2.22 inches April 19 and 20. Thunderstorms occurred three days in April.

There were only six clear days in April, 11 partly cloudy days and 13 cloudy days. The area received 68 percent of the possible sunshine for the month.

Heating degree day units during the month totaled 63, which was 31 below normal. The seasonal total of 1,856 units was 603 below normal. Cooling degree day units totaled 118 in April, which was 81 above normal.

Average wind speed for the month was 8.5 mph. The weather service recorded a peak wind gust of 31 mph from the east April 12.

Extension Agency Changes Its Name

The name of the 77-year-old North Carolina Agricultural Extension Service has been changed to the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service.

The name change reflects the organization's expanding programs and conforms to the identification of similar agencies in all but one other state, according to Brunswick County Extension Director Milton Coleman.

R.C. Wells, director of the state agency, said in a news release that the new name was recommended in the development of a strategic plan for extension.

He said the new name "provides a contemporary description of who we are and what we do."

Cooperative Extension programs include those affecting agriculture, economic development, families through home economics and youth through 4-H.

"Our programs are designed to meet the needs of an expanding clientele while continuing extension's strong commitment to agriculture and the rural communities," Wells said.

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