

Five Towns To Participate In Sewer Authority Talks

BY LYNN CARLSON

Representatives of Shallotte, Holden Beach and Ocean Isle Beach will meet March 30 to discuss the possibility of becoming members of the South Brunswick Regional Water and Sewer Authority.

The authority currently has six members, three each representing the towns of Calabash and Sunset Beach, who are pursuing government grants and loans to construct a \$25 to \$30 million wastewater treatment system.

Consulting engineers working for Calabash and Sunset Beach have invited representatives of all five town governments to a meeting they say is to "discuss the (authority's) role as a regional wastewater management and regional environmental entity structured to serve the five communities."

The meeting will take place at 6 p.m. at the 911 Emergency Building in the Brunswick County Government Complex at Bolivia.

"There has been no commitment on anyone's part," engineer Joseph Billups of Powell Associates said in a Tuesday telephone interview. "We

had a similar meeting about a year ago with Calabash, Sunset Beach and Ocean Isle Beach, and we told them when Calabash and Sunset figured out what they wanted to do, we'd get (all five towns) together to discuss it."

He said plans are to "discuss the possibility of perhaps becoming members of the authority or to become involved in an environmental strategy for the entire area."

Listed on the engineers' agenda as areas of discussion are:

- concept of formation;
- service and planning area;
- member communities and their involvement;
- contractual role of communities;
- potential grant and loan funding;
- state and county involvement; and
- request to Gov. (Jim) Hunt for financial assistance under the Regional Planning Act and a possible state demonstration program.

After a brief introduction, the floor will be open to questions, according to the memo inviting the municipal officials to the meeting.

The engineers also said they are preparing a draft letter to the gover-

nor and other state officials asking for help and endorsement of the regional sewer program.

"This request, if endorsed by all five communities at the meeting, will be sent to the governor for immediate action," the memo concludes.

Last week, the owner of the Carolina-Blythe sewer system—which the authority would purchase under the engineers' plan—said the company will no longer deal with consultants. Coleman Burnett, speaking to the Calabash Board of Commissioners, criticized unnamed consultants as appearing "more interested in their present and long-term fees" than negotiating fairly to buy the utility. Billups responded that Powell Associates has "no fee interest whatsoever" in the negotiations.

Burnett also told the Calabash board that his \$4.5 million asking price for the utility is not negotiable.

The Blythe plant serves Carolina Shores residents and other communities near the state line. Its purchase is a cornerstone of the sewer system's first phase as planned by Powell Associates.



STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

Roofs Raised And Lowered

Part of the roof at this Holden Beach residence smashed to the ground Saturday afternoon. The homeowner is Robert R. Johnson of Bluefield, W. Va. Damage to roofs, docks, dunes and screened porches was widespread in Saturday's storm.



STAFF PHOTOS BY ERIC CARLSON

A Study In Extremes

A Holden Beach canal during (above) and after (below) the storm. Above, as Saturday's wind-driven high tide reached its peak, canals spilled over and connected, covering streets, unseating floating docks from their moorings and flooding under-home storage areas. The tide remained at flood stage for more than an hour before slowly receding against southerly winds of near hurricane force with even higher gusts. Below, Sunday dawned on an extraordinarily low tide which remained that way for several hours, exposing extensive storm damage to docks and canals heavily littered with blown-off shingles, construction debris and other storm-tossed flotsam.



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