

Holden Beach POA Charged Up About Underground Power Lines

BY DOUG RUTTER
Holden Beach property owners want to keep pressuring Brunswick Electric Membership Corp. (BEMC) now that the local utility seems to be making progress on a long-awaited underground wiring project.

The Holden Beach Property Owners Association (HBPOA) voted Saturday to ask BEMC for a progress report every time the organization holds a meeting, which is four times per year.

Approximately 50 people attended the Labor Day weekend meeting Saturday morning at town hall. The HBPOA represents 826 landowners, and all or most of them are members of the electric co-op.

Holden Beach officials and homeowners have been upset about the lack of progress BEMC has made since it started burying all power lines on the island in 1988.

However, town officials say Brunswick Electric has done a lot of work this summer and plans to continue working steadily until the project is done.

"Brunswick Electric does it at their own pace, right or wrong," Mayor Wally Ausley told the group. "We have a good rapport with them now, good communication. I think they're doing the best they can for us now."

Gus Ulrich, executive secretary of the HBPOA and interim town manager, said BEMC has made steady progress since Ausley and HBPOA President Bob Lineberger met with company officials in June.

"They've had somebody here working constantly and will have somebody here constantly," Ulrich said.

BEMC can only assign one crew

"They have been working pretty steady. You just don't see too many results of it."

—Gus Ulrich, Interim Town Manager

to the island because of similar projects at other local beach towns.

"They have a lot of projects going on in other communities," Ulrich said. "Once everybody saw how well it was going in Holden Beach they wanted it too."

Ulrich said BEMC crews are currently burying conduit in the Holden Beach Harbor subdivision and along Ocean Boulevard West. Work in Holden Beach Harbor should be completed by the end of the year.

Ulrich said Brunswick Electric has installed 9,500 feet of conduit this summer. "They have been working pretty steady. You just don't see too many results of it."

Holden Beach officials are eager for BEMC to install conduit along all of Ocean Boulevard so the town can continue building sidewalks.

After extending the concrete walkway from Rothschild Street east to Blockade Runner, officials aren't sure which section of Ocean Boulevard West they will do next.

"We've probably had more good comments about sidewalks than anything else we've ever done at Holden Beach," Mayor Ausley said.

Ausley said BEMC has not told the town when the project will be finished. "They will not give you a date, folks. They will not tell you when it's going to be done. I don't

think they know themselves."

Some HBPOA directors said Saturday they don't think getting an occasional report from Brunswick Electric is enough.

"All these letters are great but they don't amount to a hill of beans," Andy Watson said. "Don't believe the words, believe the deeds. We're not going to get the deeds without fussing."

Director Crawford Hart suggested the HBPOA complain to the N.C. Public Utilities Commission. He said any report from BEMC "is not going to be worth the paper it's written on."

In the only other business Saturday, a motion to prohibit dogs from the strand year-round was defeated by a show of hands. Several homeowners voiced concern about dog droppings on the beach.

Mayor Ausley reported Saturday that the town board is in the process of hiring a new town manager. "I suspect before the month is over we'll be able to announce the hiring of a manager," he said.

Asked about the town's role in repairing oceanfront dunes, Ausley said the board is trying to set up a meeting with federal officials to discuss how to spend the \$56,000 the town received following the damaging March 13 storm.

Commissioners disagree with the Federal Emergency Management Agency's recommendations on where the money should be spent to rebuild dunes.

"We have a list of lots that we feel need to be protected in the event of a storm," Ausley said. Holden Beach has an additional \$44,000 in this year's budget for dune repairs.

HBPOA directors voted Saturday to discontinue the maintenance contract for the organization's computer system.

The contract costs \$317 per year, and Ulrich said the computer is only worth about \$700. "I think that money would be better spent saving for a new computer," he said.

The board of directors decided not to sponsor a "Meet The Candidates" forum prior to the November municipal election.



WORKERS HARVEST tobacco off Stone Chimney Road, Supply, at the end of a hot, dry summer which damaged other crops, especially corn. Brunswick is among 89 counties in which farmers are eligible for emergency natural disaster loans to cover damages and losses caused by drought. Late-season rains salvaged much of the local tobacco crop, which had been in jeopardy earlier in the summer.

STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC CARLSON

HEAVY CORN LOSSES PREDICTED

Disaster Loans Available For Crops

The local Farmers Home Administration office is accepting applications for emergency loans to cover crop losses following one of the hottest, driest summers on record.

Heaviest losses are expected in corn, which on area farms "either made a crop or made a disaster," according to Ted Rivenbark of the federal Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) office in Shallotte.

"Our emergency committee has met, and is expecting a very high percentage of loss in the corn crop," Rivenbark said Tuesday. "A good bit of it was not worth harvesting. We don't believe tobacco is going to be as bad as we had once feared, and soybeans should have a

fairly good year."
Crop damage varies throughout the county's agricultural areas, because rain showers were isolated, Rivenbark said.

Local farmers have until April 11 to apply for the low-interest loans, following a U.S. Department of Agriculture drought declaration issued Aug. 10. The program will cover losses which occurred from June 1 to the present and continuing.

The local Farmers Home Administration office is at 143 W. Holden Beach Road in the Promenade Office Park, Shallotte. Farmers with questions should call 754-4880.

Hart Elected POA President

Holden Beach resident Crawford Hart was elected president of the Holden Beach Property Owners Association (HBPOA) at the group's Labor Day weekend meeting Saturday.

Hart, an active environmentalist who is running for a seat on the town board of commissioners this fall, replaces Bob Lineberger of Lincolnton. Lineberger served three years as president and six years as vice president.

Lineberger was one of four HBPOA directors whose terms on the board expired Saturday. Others were Ted Rivenbark, Marlene Dalton and Richard Elms.

Elected to replace them on the board were Mel Amos, Bob Buck, Anne Campbell and Melba Von Sprecken. Amos, Buck and Campbell live at Holden Beach, and Von Sprecken resides in Charlotte.

The new board of directors appointed Hart as president, and Campbell was named vice president. Gus Ulrich will remain executive secretary, receiving a salary of \$200 per month.



HART

Driver Hit Patch Of Water, Lost Control

A 19-year-old driver was seriously injured Sunday morning in a single-car accident on Stone Chimney Road north of Holden Beach, the N.C. Highway Patrol Office in Wilmington reported Tuesday.

Jamey Lee Cross of Supply was driving north on Stone Chimney Road at about 4 a.m. during a heavy rainstorm when his 1986 Chevrolet hit standing water on the roadway, reported Trooper D.A. Lewis. He lost control of the truck, which ran off the highway and overturned.

Cross was transported to The Brunswick Hospital in Supply with serious, non-incapacitating injuries.

Damage to the vehicle was estimated at \$2,500.

No charges were filed.

Also, Sunday, at approximately 10:20 a.m., two persons were injured in a collision at the intersection of N.C. 211 and N.C. 87 west of Southport.

Horace Lee Pigott, 39, of Southport, was traveling southeast on N.C. 211 in a 1993 Chevrolet when Herman McCracken, 58, also of Southport, began making a left turn onto N.C. 87 in the path of Pigott's car.

McCracken was driving a 1982 Chevrolet, which received an estimated \$3,000 in damages, according to the report filed by Trooper B.C. Jones. Damage to Pigott's vehicle was estimated at \$5,000.

Both drivers were taken to Doshier Memorial Hospital in Southport, Pigott with minor injuries and McCracken with serious, but nonincapacitating injuries.

McCracken was charged with driving while under the influence.

At least four persons were injured when a collision in a convenience store parking lot on Village Point Road (S.R. 1145) had a ripple effect last Wednesday, Sept. 1.

At approximately 5:15 p.m. Renee Boone Gore, 24, of Shallotte, was attempting a left turn into the Village Mart parking lot 1.9 miles southeast of Shallotte when her 1986 Dodge collided head-on with a 1992 Buick operated by Jean Milligan, 52, also of Shallotte.

The Milligan vehicle "careened off" into the parking lot, striking a parked 1984 Ford owned by Dina Gause of Shallotte. The collision pushed the Ford into Teresa Faye

WRECK REPORT

Tindall, 33, of Shallotte, who was standing nearby in the parking lot.

Gore, Milligan, Tindall and at least one other person, 10-year-old Rodney Gause, a passenger in the parked Gause vehicle, were seriously injured.

Some of the injured were transported to The Brunswick Hospital, the balance to Grand Strand General Hospital in Myrtle Beach, S.C.

Damage estimates to the vehicles were \$1,500, Gore; \$4,000, Milligan; and \$1,000, Gause.

Trooper D.A. Lewis charged Gore with a safe movement violation.

Earlier Wednesday, Sept. 1, at 8:10 a.m., four persons were injured in an accident at the intersection of the U.S. 17 bypass and Old Shallotte Road (S.R. 1316).

Crystal Lewis Floyd, 30, of Ocean Isle Beach, attempted to cross U.S. 17 from Old Shallotte Road in a 1986 Cadillac.

The car pulled out into the path of a 1986 Buick operated by Albert Alexander Papenberg, Shallotte, 63. Papenberg was headed north on U.S. 17.

Floyd, Papenberg and one passenger in Papenberg's car, Clifford Thomas, 72, of Calabash, received minor injuries. A second passenger in his car, George Jacobsen, 79, of Ocean Isle Beach, was seriously injured.

All four were taken to The Brunswick Hospital.

Damage to Papenberg's car was an estimated \$4,000, and to Floyd's car, an estimated \$2,500.

Floyd was charged with failure to yield by Trooper W.H. Thompson.

Two drivers were injured in a

similar type of accident that also occurred last Wednesday, at 3:45 p.m. at the intersection of the U.S. 17 bypass and Tucker Road (S.R. 1401) west of Bolivia.

Ralph Curtis Coleman, 52, of Shallotte, was northbound on U.S. 17 in a 1987 Chevrolet pickup when Richard Randolph, 74, driving a 1988 Oldsmobile, started to cross U.S. 17 and pulled into Coleman's path. After the collision the vehicles skidded into the median.

The two men were taken to The Brunswick Hospital with serious, but nonincapacitating injuries.

Damages to the pickup was estimated at \$5,000 and to the Oldsmobile, \$500.

Trooper R.L. Murray charged Randolph with failure to yield.

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