

PLAN TO SPEND OVER \$50,000

Holden Beach Awaits Approval Of Dune Project

BY DOUG RUTTER

Holden Beach Commissioners should know within the next few weeks whether their plan for spending over \$50,000 in federal money to rebuild oceanfront sand dunes is accepted.

Town board members last week reviewed the report that Town Manager Gus Ulrich has sent to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) explaining the spending proposal.

Ulrich said the town has selected approximately 33 lots that need dune renourishment worse than others. They are scattered from the east end of the island to the 900 block of Ocean Boulevard West.

The town also hopes FEMA will approve using some of the money to rebuild the dune along Hillside Drive, an oceanfront street that is seriously threatened by erosion.

FEMA awarded \$57,150 for dune restoration to Holden Beach following a hurricane-like winter storm last March. The storm eroded dunes, flooded homes and caused an estimated \$8 million on the island.

Mayor Wally Ausley said at last Wednesday's town meeting that officials had a hard time deciding where the town should spend the federal money because a lot of areas could use dune improvements.

The town will notify property owners if renourishment is planned adjacent to their lots. Holden Beach will need each landowner's permission before proceeding with the work.

Although the town will not pay for dune renourishment along the entire beachfront, Ausley said it will act as a "broker" for homeowners interested in protecting their property. He said the town will try to find

contractors who can do the work at the lowest price.

Ulrich said the town will need about 12,000 cubic yards of sand to complete the work it has planned. The proposed project also includes planting beach grass and using sand fence to help stabilize the dunes.

In addition to the federal money, the town may spend all or most of its own \$44,000 erosion control fund. Ulrich said the total cost will be about \$102,000.

Work on the strand cannot begin until the sea turtle nesting and hatching season ends in December. Ulrich said the town will have until the end of March to complete the project.

Street Opening

Town commissioners will consider opening Delaney Street from Brunswick Avenue to Ocean Boulevard West to improve access for homeowners in Yacht Watch subdi-



HILLSIDE DRIVE is one of the areas where Holden Beach officials hope to use federal money to rebuild oceanfront dunes. STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

vision.

The street was platted years ago but it was never opened. It is mainly used as a path to the beach from Yacht Watch, a neighborhood on the north side of Brunswick Avenue.

Resident Lyde Blanton said 53 of the 55 property owners in the area who responded to a recent poll indicated they are in favor of improving the unopened portion of Delaney.

Blanton said a road would provide quicker access to Ocean Boulevard and the bridge and easier access to the beach.

"I think an asphalt street would be the most desirable," he said. "I think any type of improvement would be better than it is."

Commissioners asked Ulrich and Town Attorney Ken Campbell to get more information on the street and present it to the board at a future meeting.

Other Business

In other business last week, commissioners:

■ Allocated \$5,320 to the newly-formed Holden Beach Beautification Club. The club, which replaces the

beautification committee, must get town approval before spending more than \$1,000 on any single project.

■ Adopted an ordinance that makes it illegal for town refuse containers such as trash cans at beach accessways and public parking areas to be used for disposal of garbage that is generated outside the town.

■ Voted 4-1 to ask the planning and zoning board to study changing the right of way width along sections of Ocean Boulevard East from 100 feet to 60 feet. Gay Atkins voted against the motion.

Holden Permit Activity Booms As Builders Rush To Beat Fees

BY DOUG RUTTER

Holden Beach's building inspections department was busier than ever last week as contractors and property owners rushed to apply for building permits and avoid paying hefty impact fees that took effect Monday.

Inspector Jim McSwain said 28 building permit applications were submitted between last Monday and Friday, which was the last day people could apply without being charged sewer/stormwater impact fees.

The fees, intended to raise money to help pay for sewer and stormwater runoff systems in the future, include a minimum charge of \$1,000 for each new home and \$2,000 for each new business.

Under the fee schedule town commissioners approved in September, anyone who

applies for a building permit starting this week will be charged 50 cents per heated square foot for residences and \$1 per square foot for businesses.

Residential fees also apply to additions on existing homes and homes that are moved to Holden Beach from outside the town limits. The town is charging 50 cents per square foot for paved driveways and parking lots.

Holden Beach Commissioners adopted the impact fee ordinance Sept. 22 and gave 30 days' notice to property owners and builders. McSwain said most waited until the final week to seek permits.

"We really had the big rush from last Monday on," he said. "We had a few before then but most people waited until the very end."

Although building activity is typically greater in the spring and fall, McSwain said the building inspections office usually sees about one permit per week for new houses.

With the 28 permit applications received last week, McSwain said the town will probably end up with 65 to 70 permitted homes for the year.

In the long run, McSwain said he doesn't expect the fees to affect the average of 50 new homes per year at Holden Beach. "I don't think that's going to change. I just think we got a whole lot of permits ahead of time."

In addition to the flood of building permits, McSwain said he received five driveway permit applications on Friday and about 20 last week.

After the building permits are issued,

McSwain said construction must start within six months. There is no time limit on completion, but there must be steady progress.

"I'm fully assured that all of these homes will be started and finished within a year," McSwain said. "Ninety percent of the permits are for builders, and they don't get paid until they finish."

McSwain said he doesn't expect the town to issue many more building permits this year.

"It's been very quiet," he said Monday. "I expect it to be quiet. I don't expect there will be much at all before the first of the year."

Holden Beach officials established the fees so the property owners who help create the need for sewer and stormwater systems will help foot the bill.

Commissioners say the island will need the systems in the future because rapid growth has resulted in increased septic system waste and runoff, which can pollute waterways.

All impact fees collected will be placed in a special fund, and they will be refunded if the town hasn't committed to building a sewer or stormwater system by the year 2003.

Town Manager Gus Ulrich said Tuesday he is searching for a replacement for McSwain, who announced his intentions to resign earlier this month.

Ulrich received 18 job applications and planned to schedule interviews over the next two weeks.

"I would hope there would be a decision by the second week of November," he said. "That may be optimistic."

Retired Teacher's Book Remembers Holden Beach Before Hazel

BY LYNN CARLSON

A retired Richmond, Va., school-teacher with a lifelong love for Holden Beach has self-published a book lovingly detailing the community's history until 1954—the year Hurricane Hazel struck.

Franda Dobson Pedlow's *Sand and Sea Fever* culminates the author's eight-year quest to gather information about the early days of Holden Beach and to capture the look and feel of the beach when she

first came there in the 1940's.

Pedlow, whose family has owned a cottage on Holden Beach since 1946, has fond memories of earlier days there—even the interminable wait in line to board the old two-car ferry prior to construction of the first bridge.

"I got really interested in hearing stories about peoples' experiences on the beach before (Hurricane) Hazel," she said in a telephone interview from her Richmond home.

"They were fun stories, interesting things I wish my children had been able to experience.

"I decided they should be written down, so I got my tape recorder and started calling on people, asking what they remember. Some have died since I started, so I'm glad I kept going. It was so much fun."

Despite Pedlow's long history of visiting Holden Beach, her book acquainted her with people she had somehow never met over the years. "I was young when I first came here, and we weren't in a section where a lot of people were—plus there was just not the transportation around and off the island."

Pedlow doesn't pretend to attempt a definitive history. She lets the people she interviews tell the tale, aware, as she says in her introduction, that different people remember things differently and that tales change with generations of telling.

"Accuracy will be important but not perfect," she writes. "The flavor, the essence and the enjoyment are the top priorities."

In the book's first chapter, native Norman Bellamy tells about the two-room school at Boone's Neck which took children through the fifth grade until a consolidated

school was built in 1927. He and Christine Hewett were the only two sixth-graders in their class that year, many others having left school after fifth grade to work at home in the fields. He remembers this:

"The state was improving Route 17. There were teams of mules and men with hand scoops trying to fill in the soggy places so that it could be traveled. There weren't no equipment. The road was so bad that the teams of mules were used to pull the school bus through the worst places! This was Route 17, the major road, and it was clay. After 15 days of this, they stopped our efforts and we went back to have another year in the fifth grade. I finally got to the Shallotte school in 1928 and finished the tenth grade there. Then I got married and that was the end of my schooling."

Longtime residents of Brunswick County will know before they read it that Norman Bellamy became chairman of the Brunswick County school board and guided the system through desegregation without major incident.

Newcomers who have known no other access to Holden Beach except the current high-rise bridge will be fascinated by Winston McDonald's remembrance of working on the old ferry from 1946-49:

"We used to run that old ferry,

and I used to set them across there especially on a holiday and on a Sunday evening. They'd be lined up way back up the hill on both sides. One time in an eight-hour shift I carried 98 cars.

"I would drive the ferry into the chute until the apron was up the ramp enough to drive across. There was a chain across the ferry in front of the first car to keep it from rolling off. I would drop that chain, then wrap a smaller chain around a piling to hold the ferry, walk up the ramp to raise the flag, let two cars off and two cars on, drop the flag, walk back down the ramp, unhook the chain, put the other chain up behind the second car where it couldn't go backwards, and go across."

Pedlow goes on to tell about early cottage owners, the beach in World War II, and even interesting details of daily life in the beach community's budding days—like where and how folks got their groceries and who picked up the garbage, and the early signs of traditional tourism development.

Her book is chock full of names—of Holden Beach area natives as well as longtime property owners—a fact she hopes won't seem tedious to newcomers. "I just think it's important for those things to be recorded," she said.

Her first foray into publishing,

Sand and Sea Fever will probably be her last, Pedlow said. "I had the urge to do this because I could handle it, but it was hard. I thought when you wrote a book, you just wrote a book."

Then she learned about deadlines and publishers and printers and word processors and a thousand other unforeseen details.

She's not sorry, though. "I just felt it ought to be kept."

Sand and Sea Fever will be available at several Holden Beach locations during the Festival by the Sea and afterward, Pedlow said. The book sells for \$10.

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