

Holden Beach Board Asks Attorney To Devise Plan For Hillside Drive

BY DOUG RUTTER

Holden Beach Commissioners hope their attorney can figure out how the town can legally dump truckloads of sand on a public street without closing it or restricting access to private property.

Attorney Ken Campbell was given until March 23 to come up with a plan for Hillside Drive, an oceanfront road where officials want to build a dune in an effort to slow down erosion.

Following a public hearing Monday night, commissioners decided not to pass a resolution closing the street. The board also held off on awarding a contract for dune construction.

The last oceanfront house on Hillside, the Whistling Swan, should be moved this week. Nearly all of the beachfront property on the road has eroded, and the ocean washed over part of the street during a small storm last week.

In an attempt to stop erosion and protect second-row homes on Hillside, town board members want to build a dune along the entire length of the street from the center line of the pavement toward the ocean.

"The goal of this commission is to save Hillside Drive from washing away," Mayor Wally Ausley said Monday.

Commissioners held a public hearing Monday night on a proposal to close the street. Residents and property owners opposed the idea, saying they want to keep access to their property from Hillside.

Campbell, who was asked to have a proposal for the March 23 meeting, said Monday the best

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—Wally Ausley, Mayor of Holden Beach

thing to do may be changing the right-of-way width along Hillside Drive.

Reducing the width from 50 feet to 20 feet could allow the town to leave one lane of the street open to local traffic and build the dune on the south side of the road.

Campbell said a lawyer with the N.C. Institute of Government recommended changing the right-of-way width to accomplish the town's goal. "You've got control over how that right-of-way is used," he said.

Commissioner Jim Fournier suggested the town board postpone further discussing the dune renourishment plan until the attorney figures out the best way to move ahead with the project.

"I don't see how we can do anything. We don't know enough about it. We're not lawyers...." Fournier said. "Whatever it takes, just bring it to us so we can act on it and get something done."

Several Hillside Drive property owners said

Monday they support the town's plan to build a dune on the south side of the street, but don't want the road closed.

"The residents and the property owners on Hillside Drive still need access to their property," said landowner Curt Britt. "If you can put berms on the south side and leave part of that road open it would help all of us."

Lyn Holden, who owns several pieces of property on Hillside, said the town will need to stabilize the new berm to prevent sand from blowing across the street into yards.

"If you pile too much dirt up there it's going to close it, period," he warned. "I would like to see it at least kept open for the people who have property up there."

Hillside Drive is just one area where town officials are planning dune renourishment work. The town has \$44,000 in a reserve fund that could be used to repair holes in the frontal dune.

Mayor Ausley said Monday the town may be making headway with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), which gave the town \$57,000 in dune renourishment funds following a severe storm last March.

Town officials and FEMA have not been able to agree on where the money should be spent. Commissioners say if dunes are rebuilt where FEMA recommends, the sand would quickly wash away.

Ausley said Congressman Charlie Rose's staff has been working with FEMA officials to resolve the issue. "Hopefully we'll get that finalized shortly," he said.

PRICE TAG IS \$30,000

Varnamtown Buying Land For Boaters' Parking

BY DOUG RUTTER

Varnamtown officials have decided to buy rather than lease property for a parking lot for people who use the community's new boat ramp on Lockwood Folly River.

Aldermen agreed at a special meeting last week to purchase approximately 1.5 acres on Fisherman Road from Larry and Mary Knowles of Riegelwood. The price tag is \$30,000.

Mayor Judy Galloway said she thinks buying the land instead of leasing property as originally planned is in the best interest of the town.

"We'll be better off if we buy something. If we pay rent for 10 or 15 years we'll have nothing," Galloway said last Friday. "Once the town gets this land we'll have it. It'll be ours forever."

Town officials had been negotiating a lease agreement with Nicky and Jackie Varnam for vacant property they own near the waterfront adjacent to Garland's Seafood House.

However, aldermen changed their minds about the lease when they found out the Knowles' wanted to sell their property. It is located in the curve on Fisherman Road about 800 feet from the public boat ramp.

"We didn't really think any land was available," Galloway said. "We

just found out that this man was interested in selling."

Larry Knowles is the new pastor at Brunswick Islands Baptist Church. The mayor said the purchase will be official as soon as the land can be surveyed and the legal papers are signed.

"Right now if it's an acre and a half, more or less, we're going to pay \$30,000," Galloway said.

Town officials want to establish a parking area near the boat ramp to discourage boaters from parking their vehicles and boat trailers along the shoulders of Fisherman Road.

Residents who live near the waterfront presented a petition to the town last year opposing construction of the new ramp. They said it would attract more boaters and create more parking problems.

However, opposition died down after the town board agreed to provide a parking area as part of the boat ramp project.

Last year, town officials announced that the Varnams had agreed to lease property near their fish house for 15 years at an initial cost of \$2,190 per year. Aldermen went as far as approving a 20-space parking plan for the tract.

But the town board and Varnams never signed a lease contract. Aldermen met with the landowners

behind closed doors for more than an hour on Feb. 14 to discuss the arrangement.

In open session, the board voted to postpone signing the lease until several issues could be resolved. Galloway said at the time there were "a couple of things that need to be cleared up."

The mayor said last week that she appreciates the Varnams' willingness to lease the parking area to the town, but she's glad the board of aldermen found property to buy.

"I just feel good about it, and I think Jackie and Nicky do too," Galloway said. "They really didn't want to tie up their land. They were just doing this for the town so the people would have a place to park."

Renting the Varnam property for 15 years would have cost the town \$32,850 if the annual cost never in-

creased. By purchasing land, Galloway said the town will come out ahead.

Work on the new boat ramp is basically finished, Galloway said, with just a few minor things left to be done.

"I don't know much about boat ramps but it looks nice," Galloway said. "We're very proud of it and I think the town will be too."

Varnam's Docks and Bulkheads built the concrete ramp, which is 16 feet wide and 72 feet long. A 3-foot-wide pier between the ramp and Garland's Seafood House was part of the project.

The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission has given the town \$25,000 to build the ramp, which is expected to cost \$19,500. Town officials plan to use the rest of the money to improve the parking area.

Local Rabies Clinics Planned March 26

Brunswick County Animal Control and local veterinarians will hold low-cost rabies clinics throughout the county on Saturday, March 26. Rabies vaccinations will cost \$5. Parvo and distemper shots will also be available.

The following sites and times are scheduled:

- Seaside Animal Clinic, Calabash, 9 a.m. until noon.
- Seaside Plaza, N.C. 179 and 904, 12:15-12:45 p.m.
- Ocean Isle Airport, 1-1:30 p.m.
- Shallotte Lions Park, 1:34-2:15 p.m.
- Ash Post Office, 2:30-3 p.m.
- Bennett's Esso Station, Exum, Big Neck/Makotoka, 3:15-3:45 p.m.
- Brunswick Animal Hospital, Supply 9 a.m. until noon.
- Sunset Grocery, Sunset Harbor, 12:30-1 p.m.
- Bolivia Post Office, 1:30-2 p.m.
- Boiling Spring Lakes Town Hall, 2:15-3:30 p.m.
- Towncreek Park, N.C. 17, 4-4:30 p.m.
- Midway Trading Post, N.C. 211 at Midway Road, 12:30-1 p.m.
- Long Beach Town Hall, 1:30-2 p.m.
- Yaupon Beach Town Hall, 2:15-2:45 p.m.
- Southport Town Hall, 3-3:30 p.m.
- Companion Animal Hospital, Shallotte, noon until 12:30 p.m.
- Smith's Grocery, Civietown, 12:45-1:15 p.m.
- Bill's Quick Stop, Boones Neck Road, 1:30-2 p.m.
- Pat's Beach Shop, Holden Beach Causeway, 2:15-2:30 p.m.
- Varnamtown Town Hall, 2:45-3:15 p.m.
- Leland Veterinarian Hospital, Clairmont Plaza, 8 a.m. until 1:30 p.m.
- Holly Bucks, Lanvale Road, Leland, 1:45-2:15 p.m.
- Phoenix Country Store, Mount Misery Road, Cedar Hill, 2:30-3 p.m.
- Maco Truck Stop, 3:15-3:45 p.m.

For more information, call Brunswick County Animal Control at 754-8204, or the Brunswick County Health Department, 253-4381.

BSL Flea Market Spaces Available

Two volunteer emergency service organizations in Boiling Spring Lakes are joining efforts to sponsor a "Rent-A-Table" flea market Saturday, March 19, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The event is being sponsored by the Boiling Spring Lakes Volunteer Fire Department Ladies Auxiliary and the Boiling Spring Lakes Volunteer Rescue Squad. Proceeds

will be divided between the fire department and rescue squad.

Spaces or tables are available for \$10 each, with no restrictions on the type of items to be sold, said Jeanine Glasscock. "Anything is okay. It's going to be their table or space."

For more information or to reserve a table or space, contact either Joan DeBruhl, 845-2690, or Jeanine Glasscock, 845-8915.

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Fri. Ladies' Night - \$2.50 House Drinks
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