

Ocean Isle Pushes For East End Renourishment

Ocean Isle Beach put another 3 cents of its property tax rate (down to 17 cents per \$100 after revaluation) into a beach renourishment hope chest in 1994.

Late in the year town commissioners asked the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to take a second look at proposals for beach stabilization that didn't include much help for the east end of the island. They also asked the planning board to consider a proposal for temporary "parking" of erosion-endangered homes that owners wanted to relocate elsewhere on the island.

The hope chest money, now approaching \$500,000, will help pay for a 50-year berm and dune beach renourishment project being developed with the corps.

Town leaders had been eyeing the project as a means of building up and protecting the dwindling east end of the island, but the first option the corps recommended would stop short of that goal because of a declining cost-benefit ratio. The corps raised property owners' concerns when it suggested a project running only from Winnabow to Duneside, with it paying 65 percent of the cost and the town and other parties the remaining 35 percent of the \$10.2 million estimated project.

At the town's request, the corps is re-examining options to see if more can be done to protect the east end without substantially increasing Ocean Isle's share of the cost. Mayor Betty Williamson expected to hold a public workshop on the corps' revamped proposals in early 1995.

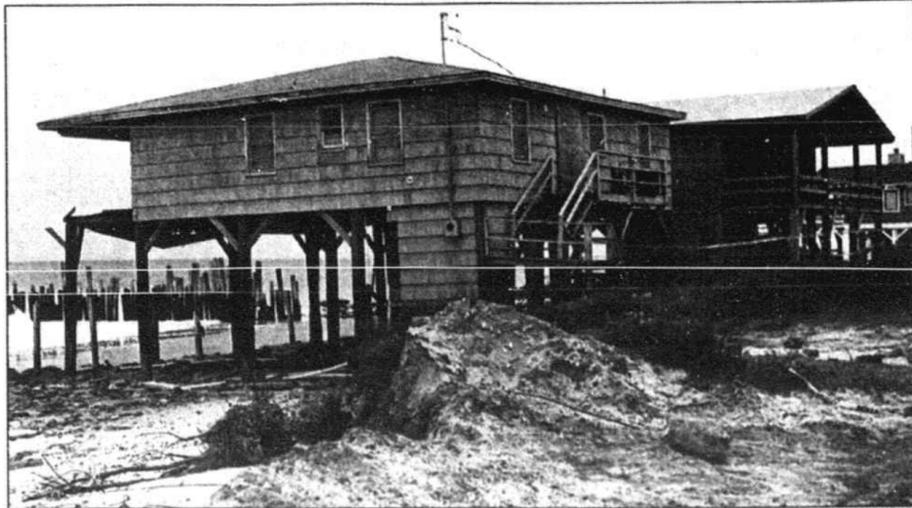
Ocean Isle marked progress on several fronts during the year, including completion of its east-end sewer project and subsequent reduction in sewer bills, 100 percent collection of 1993 taxes, its first major paving project in years and new street signs. Water rates went up to reflect the higher cost of buying water from Brunswick County,

and the town began looking at the need for a new elevated tank for more water storage to meet seasonal peak demand and firefighting needs and began planning a town hall addition to house the police department.

At the urging of Commissioner Ken Proctor, the town's board of commissioners agreed to begin holding a quarterly evening meeting to become more accessible to working residents of the town. On Labor Day the first worksession drew approximately 20 residents, a larger attendance than is usual at the board's second Tuesday morning meetings.

Fellow commissioners were less receptive to Proctor's efforts to revitalize the town's nearly inactive planning and zoning board. Proctor resigned from the planning board after election as commissioner in fall 1993 and immediately began pushing for expanded membership and better guidelines for the panel. Commissioners voted 3-2 instead to give the three town and two extraterritorial area members equal powers, and appointed the mayor's son as one of the ETA representatives. Giving ETA members the right to vote on all matters coming before the planning board, not just ETA matters, other commissioners suggested, would be an incentive to attend meetings. Any three would make a quorum.

The planning board took on a new look in 1994, as planning Board Chairman DeCarol Williamson, no longer a permanent town resident, and members Bill Bullington and Judy McHenry resigned. Later in the year, architect Joe Johnson stepped down after establishing permanent residency at Sunset Beach. Community members rallied in support of their volunteer fire department after Chief David Harrell and others asked for more money and manpower to support fire, emergency



STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER

BEACH EROSION CONTINUES to threaten homes on Ocean Isle's east end. Some, like the cottage above, have survived a series of storms, while others are newly endangered.

first responder and water rescue services. Attendance at the annual meeting of the OIB Fire Protection Association reached an all-time high, the department sealed an agreement with Shallotte Volunteer Rescue Squad expected to result in stationing of an ambulance at Ocean Isle full-time in the future, and the town agreed to enroll firefighters in a state retirement fund as a means of helping attract more members. The department was working to achieve a better rating, which would result in lower fire insurance premiums.

Fire department members were on the scene of a Nov. 16 electrical accident at 155 East Second Street in minutes. Vinyl siding installer James "Frank" Braswell Jr., 58, of Conway, S.C., died of cardiac arrest from electrical shock after an extension ladder fell against an overhead power transmission line. Co-worker Bobby

Sweat, also of Conway, S.C., was transported by air to the Jaycees Burn Center, UNC Hospitals, Chapel Hill, where his condition was reported in late December as "fair".

A popular visitors' attraction, the Museum of Coastal Carolina found itself not entirely welcome in its predominantly residential neighborhood.

Early in the year the town agreed to block through traffic on East Third Street, the unpaved connector between the causeway and Laurinburg Street, in response to complaints about museum-related traffic and dust. In December, a proposal to expand the museum by adding a 150-seat auditorium met with neighbors' opposition and the town Board of Adjustment's rejection, mainly because of parking, stormwater and traffic related problems.

WILL HIRE TOWN MANAGER

Sewer Service Was Major Issue For Calabash Board Of Commissioners

BY ERIC CARLSON

The question of sewer service dominated discussion by the Calabash Board of Commissioners in 1994, with Carolina Shores residents encouraging the town to purchase the existing sewage treatment system that serves their development.

Meanwhile, the town's hired engineers moved ahead with design work on a regional sewerage system to be jointly administered by representatives from Calabash, Sunset Beach and the county on the South Brunswick Water and Sewer Authority.

In early January 1994 the town agreed to pursue an alternate plan for funding a downtown sewerage collection system after the Farmers Home Administration rejected Calabash's application for \$10 million in grants and loans. The board voted to allocate \$100,000 for engineering planning and \$50,000 for preliminary work on a sewage treatment plant "while additional funding is secured and the project scope defined."

The following month, the Lower Cape Fear Water and Sewer Authority discussed the idea of "getting into the sewer business" by purchasing the Carolina Blythe Utility

Co. that serves Carolina Shores and some other areas of the town. The LCFWSA, which provides Brunswick County with its raw water, later decided against buying Carolina Blythe.

At the commissioners' March meeting, petitions purportedly signed by 652 Calabash residents were presented in opposition to the town's ongoing plans to join Sunset Beach in building the regional sewer system. Residents of Carolina Shores, where the petitions were circulated by its property owners association, urged the board to "explore thoroughly" the feasibility of purchasing Carolina Blythe Utility Co.

Later that month, the commissioners agreed to notify CBU owner Billy Burnett that the town "intends" to purchase his company for his asking price of \$4.5 million. Burnett had refused to give the town information it wanted to consider the proposed purchase unless Calabash gave him a letter of intent. Town Attorney Michael Ramos advised the commissioners that the letter as drafted would not be legally binding.

In May, commissioners who want the town to buy Carolina Blythe took advantage of an absence on the board to approve spending \$4.5 million for the company. Commissioner Edward Schaack, a supporter of the regional sewerage system effort, was in Texas when a special meeting was called to consider the purchase.

Upon his return, Schaack said he was "highly upset" with the board's handling of such an important decision, which commissioner Keith Hardee labelled "dirty politics."

Taking time off from sewage considerations, the commissioners in June unveiled a proposed budget that would have increased Calabash property taxes by nearly 35 percent. A crowd of about 250 residents packed a public hearing at which the spending package was loudly criticized. Voters asked the commissioners to dip into the town's savings to lessen the need for higher taxes. The commissioners eventually adopted a budget that reduced the tax rate by a penny.

Carolina Blythe Utilities Co. owner Billy Burnett gave the town an ultimatum in July, saying he

would begin looking for other buyers for his company if the town did not commit to the purchase within 60 days. The commissioners agreed to inform Burnett that the town could not meet his demand without first obtaining the necessary regulatory approvals for the purchase, a process that was sure to extend far beyond his deadline.

The board voted unanimously in August to begin the search for a town administrator. The cut-off for applications passed Dec. 15 and the board is expected to begin interviewing potential candidates for the job in January.

Before deciding if they should push ahead with the purchase of Carolina Blythe Utility Co., the Calabash commissioners last month agreed to hold a non-binding referendum on whether to buy up all stock in the sewerage treatment

company. Ballots were mailed to registered voters along with a letter advising that the fledgling South Brunswick Water and Sewer Authority would be "the likely purchaser" of CBU if the town failed to buy it. In response to questions

about the claim, the authority board voted unanimously to re-state its position that it has no intention of acquiring Carolina Blythe. Of the 954 ballots cast in the straw vote, 749 registered support for the purchase by Calabash.

Forecasting Gets Boost From New Radar System

Local weather forecasting capabilities received a boost in the fall when a powerful new NEXRAD (Next Generation Radar) antenna went into operation, its geodesic dome visible off N.C. 130 west of Shallotte.

Sensitive enough to detect sea breezes or wisps of smoke from wildfire, the antenna

feeds information continuously to the National Weather Service office at New Hanover International Airport in Wilmington. The new system marks an expansion of the Wilmington office and its role in forecasting coastal weather for portions of North Carolina and South Carolina.



Offered Through BCC, Two Advanced Life Support Classes Start In January

An intermediate course for emergency medical technicians with basic certification is one of several advanced life support classes offered in early 1995 through the Brunswick Community College Continuing Education Department.

Two class in EMT-Defibrillation also are planned, one in January and one in February.

The EMT-Intermediate course will be offered starting Tuesday, Jan. 3, at the Brunswick County Emergency Services Center at Bolivia. Participants will learn advanced emergency care procedures such as assessment and management of

emergencies under the direction of a physician. The program includes clinical, lecture, practice instruction and field internship. Students pay a \$15 fee for supplies, registration fees and must purchase a textbook.

The first EMT-Defibrillation class begins Jan. 4 and ends Jan. 30, meeting Monday and Wednesday evenings at the Calabash Volunteer Emergency Medical Services Headquarters. The 21 hours of instruction will cover general patient assessment and initial patient management, including biad and epinephrine administration.

The second EMT-Defibrillation

class begins Feb. 1 and ends Feb. 27 and will meet Mondays and Wednesdays at the Leland Volunteer Rescue Squad Building. One Friday night class is scheduled.

Both EMT-Defibrillation classes will use the textbook "Early Defibrillation" by Robert J. Huszar, available at the Brunswick Community College bookstore after Jan. 1.

Registration for all classes will take place at the first class meeting. For details on fees, insurance and other information contact Brunswick County Assistant Emergency Medical Services Director Eddie Brown, 910-253-5383.

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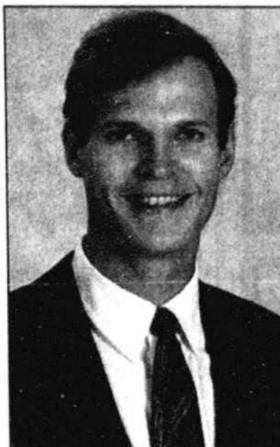
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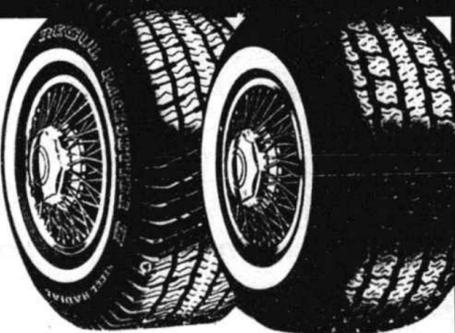
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