

PINE KNOLL SHORES COMMISSIONERS MEETING

By Paige Gillespie

The regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners was held on September 9, 2020. All commissioners were present.

Charles W. Rocci was sworn in as the new town clerk.

Mayor John Brodman announced that the Pine Knoll Shores Fishing Tournament will be held on October 17.

The new Carteret County School Superintendent, Dr. Rob Jackson, gave a short presentation introducing himself to the area and answered questions from the board. He noted that there are 81 children from Pine Knoll Shores attending Carteret County schools and that due to COVID-19, approximately 70 percent are attending in person and 30 percent are virtual. The county requested that families commit to either in-person or online attendance for nine weeks for elementary and middle school children and one semester for high school students. He advised that all high school sports will be played this year (but seasons may be shifted) and that meals are continuing to be distributed as needed. Students will check in daily with their teachers to ensure all are well and safe.

There were no comments during the public comment session.

The Consent Agenda, including past meeting minutes and tax discoveries and releases, was approved unanimously.

Town Manager Brian Kramer reported on these items:

- Phase 2 Stormwater Project: FEMA funding will be used for the town's share of the cost, and all easements are progressing except one—and work is continuing on that one. He met with staff from the country club to discuss the line connecting the two ponds, and Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative (CCEC) is reviewing the project.
- Environmental Enhancement Grant (EEG): This is a \$100,000 grant from the hog waste settlement, administered by North Carolina Coastal Federation (NCCF). He met with NCCF to begin the design process. Funds will be used for three projects—Pine Knoll Boulevard, Acorn Court, and the living shoreline at the Veterans Park point.
- CCEC Tree Trimming: Work planned for October will involve trimming six feet below the lowest power line and 10 feet out laterally from the widest line. Mr. Kramer is discussing with them the possibility of replacing some trees instead of leaving badly misshapen ones. The Community Appearance Committee chair will meet with CCEC.
- Hurricane Isaias: FEMA was in town for a preliminary damage assessment from the hurricane. The town will submit requests for FEMA funding for debris removal and equipment and labor used during Isaias.
- Water Enterprise Fund: For some reason, production is up but revenue is down. The town is looking into several possibilities, including leaks, illegal tapping, and compound meters not reading exceptionally high usage. The occupancy tax was up 41% for July. Single-family home water usage was up 13%, but compound meters were down 5%.
- Public Safety Building Repairs: After meeting with the contractor, the windows are being redesigned to allow for proper ingress/egress as well as maintaining their hurricane rating.
- Quick Updates: The Maritime Woods contractor has begun construction

on the Pine Knoll Boulevard sidewalk. Two of the three outstanding civil penalties for illegal tree removal have been paid.

Assistant Town Manager and Finance Director Julie Anderson reported that the Finance Committee met and compiled a list of projects for the use of the \$3 million in excess FEMA funds from the beach renourishment project. Some of the items on the list include a ladder truck, pumps with hoses, radios, generator, etc. She also reported that sales and use tax was down for March, April and May but up for June.

Fire Chief Jason Baker reported that the two new beach wheelchairs have been purchased and have already been put to use. He reminded everyone to test their fire/smoke alarms and fire extinguishers on a more regular basis.

Police Chief Ryan Thompson reported that the department logged 424 miles of beach patrols in July and that new security cameras have been installed at the public safety building as well as at town hall.

Public Services Director Sonny Cunningham reported that the town has purchased a tool to assist the Water and Fire departments in the annual hydrant and water valve exercises. These exercises are needed to prevent water line ruptures. The NC Rural Water Association (NCRWA) is in the process of leak detecting the entire 29 miles of the town's water system. This service outsourced would cost \$10,000, but NCRWA is completing the service without cost. The department hauled 1,640 cubic yards of yard waste from Hurricane Isaias. By not outsourcing the debris removal, the town saved \$19,520. He thanked the Fire Department for letting the Public Services Department use four two-way radios.

Assistant Town Manager Anderson reported that the town cannot regulate sign content for non-commercial signs but that the town does have regulations on size and quantity. Regulations for temporary signs were changed in 2016 to comply with the U.S Supreme Court ruling on sign content and protection of free speech. The town does not regulate or enforce regulations for signs in the state's right-of-way. HOA covenants regarding signs are completely separate and are enforced by the individual HOAs. (See "PKA Temporary and Political Sign Regulations" in this issue for full details.)

The building inspector's report noted that 35 permits were issued at a value of \$274,810. Fees generated by these permits totaled \$3,640. There were 111 inspections performed, and 35 tree removal permits were issued.

Town Clerk Charlie Rocci reported that town hall will be the voting site on November 3 for Pine Knoll Shores as well as Indian Beach and Salter Path. He also advised that there was a software issue with the town's online document library. He was working to resolve the issue but the files were not at risk of being lost because all government documents are also saved on a secure server.

Under new business:

- Finance Director Julie Anderson explained that the budget amendment was necessary to properly account for funds carrying over from capital projects from last year, which were not completed, as well as projects completed using CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act funding. The amendment passed unanimously after a motion was made by Commissioner Corsello and seconded by Commissioner Edwards.
- Town Clerk Rocci gave an update on the COVID Phase 2.5 reopening guidelines. A discussion was held regarding allowing a limited number of people to attend the board meeting in person. A motion was made to allow this, but was defeated.
- Commissioner Knecht asked for a review of the setback ordinance which

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