

Board of Commissioners

By Paige Gillespie

The regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners was held on May 12. Commissioner Durham was not present.

The Consent Agenda, including past meeting minutes, closed session minutes, special meeting minutes and tax discoveries and releases, was approved unanimously. One comment was heard during the public comment session. Town Manager Brian Kramer reported on these items:

- Phase 2 Stormwater Project: The last step, electrical connections of the pumps, was to occur by mid-May.
- Pedestrian Planning Group IV: The group met via conference call with representatives from the NC Division of Parks and Recreation and Fort Macon. There was no opposition to a nature trail to connect the public safety building and the Inn at Pine Knoll Shores, but it was requested that the town look into what NCDOT's response is to this plan. It is unclear whether NCDOT will approve the widening of Highway 58 should a sidewalk be considered. Grant money is available, but grant proposals need to be submitted by July.
- NCDOT drain lines to the canal: The drain lines on Arborvitae Drive and Cedar Road are failing, and bids were to go out following the meeting for an on-demand one-year contract commitment. Funding for this project is still not determined. In addition, there will be no easements, and Rights of Entry from affected residents and a memorandum of agreement from the town will be pursued.
- Bogue Pines request: The community requested that the town take over Bogue Pines Circle. Because of the street condition, parcel configuration, septic and precedent issues, Mr. Kramer recommended the request be denied, and the board agreed.
- Quick updates: Mr. Kramer checked with the NC Department of Public Safety regarding the FEMA excess funds expenditure list and was told it has been sent to FEMA but no word on any action had been received. Coastal Transplants owner Steve Mercer has been contacted regarding some hot spots in the beach vegetation that have been identified. Mr. Kramer is moving forward with the single solid road striping on Mimosa Boulevard and Oakleaf Drive.

Assistant Town Manager and Finance Director Julie Anderson addressed a question that arose from the April 28 meeting regarding paying down the water bond. Refinancing is not an option due to long-term refinancing done in 2013. She compared building permit fees across the area, and they seem to be all over the board, with no general consensus based on her interpretation. She presented information on the American Rescue Plan, Interim Final Rule, which deals with COVID relief funds. The first distribution of \$195,000 to the town will be received by June 30, and the second distribution of \$195,000 will be received 12 months later. There are allowable uses for the funds that would apply to Pine Knoll Shores. These funds must be obligated by December 31, 2024, and the period of performance deadline is December 31, 2026, with annual reporting throughout the time frame.

Fire Chief Jason Baker reminded everyone that water rescue season is getting underway. He would like everyone to always know their location on the beach and be able to convey it to a 911 dispatcher in the event of an emergency. He also

advised that beach-goers should always take a flotation device to the beach and should never attempt to rescue anyone without a flotation device for themselves. Anyone caught in a rip current should remember to relax, float and not panic. He also pointed out that hurricane season is also beginning, and now is the time to begin preparations and form a plan.

Police Chief Ryan Thompson reported that the town has significantly increased beach patrols. He spoke to NCDOT regarding the speed limit change on Highway 58 and reported it was still on track to happen before the Memorial Day weekend.

Public Services Director Sonny Cunningham reported that his department was to fertilize the beach grasses by mid-May. He also reported that Tyler Felch had passed the Mosquito Control exam and that Well #2 is fully operational after the pump shorted out in April.

Town Planner Kevin Reed reported that three single-family landscape permits (SFLP) for new homes had been issued and staff is reviewing six more SFLP applications. He believes there may be 18-20 new homes built in Pine Knoll Shores this year. Staff has received the preliminary subdivision plat for the Trinity Center subdivision and the Planning Board will review it at their next meeting. They will also need to revise the 10-foot pedestrian beach access easement to 15 feet.

The building inspector's report noted that 54 permits were issued at a value of \$2,891,418. Fees generated by these permits totaled \$27,641. There were 96 inspections performed, and 86 tree removal permits were issued. Town Clerk Charlie Rocci reported that 400 feet of oyster shells have been laid and 4,000 plantings have been installed along the living shoreline project. They presented the project to NC AmeriCorps representatives on May 7. The Coastal Federation receives grants from NC AmeriCorps and wanted to show them this completed project. Survey work on Acorn Court was to be finished by May 22, followed by moving forward with design and bidding with an August construction date in mind. Paid beach parking was to begin on May 21.

A public hearing was called for regarding the amendments to Chapter 74 (that update language to meet state regulations) in the town code. Following a discussion, the board voted unanimously to approve the amendments.

Under New Business:

- Wellhead Protection Plan (WHP): Every five years, the NC Rural Water Association assists the town with preparing/updating the town's WHP. The plan is useful to the town as a reference document on things such as a listing of contaminant sources, required standoff distances from our well and a listing of state and federal agencies to contact in case of a true water supply emergency. The board unanimously adopted this plan.
- Emergency Contract Bid: Chief Baker presented information regarding the Phase I and Phase II Standby Emergency contracts and requested that the board award the contracts to DRC Emergency Services, the same company used to remove debris after Hurricane Florence. The board approved his request unanimously. The emergency pumping contract will be put out to bid again as only one bid was received.
- American Rescue Plan Act: Assistant Town Manager and Finance Director Julie Anderson requested a resolution to establish a Special Revenue Fund for the American Rescue Plan Act for the purpose of tracking and reporting eligible revenues and expenditures under the act. The board unanimously adopted the American Rescue Plan Act Special Revenue Fund Budget Ordinance.

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