

PINE KNOLL SHORES COMMISSIONERS' MEETINGS

By Yvette Bannen

The regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners was held on April 10 with six members of the public in attendance. Town Clerk Scott Sherrill was recognized as the Team Member of the Quarter for his efforts at organizing the Strategic Planning documents as well as posting webinars on the town's website. The consent agenda was approved, including the appointment of Commissioners Edwards and Fulcher, Community Appearance Commission member Dominic Baccollo and Planning Board member Kathy Werle to the Rights of Way Committee.

Town Manager Kramer gave his monthly report on various ongoing projects in the town. The East-End Stormwater project was wrapped up on April 2, and it was pressure tested shortly thereafter. Restoration of the grounds at the country club was under way at the time of the meeting.

Bids were opened for Phase II of the sidewalks and they came in higher than expected. Additional funds were requested from NCDOT, but nothing is available. Discussion ensued about rebidding only the Hampton Inn segment; this was approved 4-1, with Commissioner Danehy opposed.

The discussion about the water meters and Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative (CCEC) continues. The two new commissioners on the board will be updated on the past history of the water company and the current proposal to have the meters read and billed by the electric company. A full board meeting was scheduled on April 24 to discuss the different options and costs.

Regarding the Knollwood lot, two phone calls were received for further details and Town Manager Kramer hopes to have some sealed bids shortly. Finance Officer Anderson reported that the auditor had been in to examine the books and everything went fine. A report will be forthcoming later.

Commissioner Brodman requested that the Sales and Use Tax discussion be a continuing agenda item until the issue is resolved. Mayor Jones said that the town needs to stay on top of the subject, especially because the mainland has more county commissioner representatives than the beach, which has only one though there are more housing units and taxpayers on the island than on the mainland (taking into consideration all condos and single-family homes).

Commissioner Fulcher filed a Heritage Tree application for a hickory tree on town property and it was approved.

The FY 2014-15 budget was discussed in regard to the water enterprise fund, beach funds and the police separation allowance fund. The possible purchase of a mini excavator for the Water Department was discussed. The cost, including a used trailer, would be \$28,000, and it is expected that it would last 20 years if properly maintained. No decision was made. The next budget meeting was scheduled for April 24.

There was discussion about whether the town should apply for a TIGER (Transportation Investment Generating Economic Recovery) Discretionary Grant. This grant is awarded by the federal Department of Transportation and would be used in support of the Pine Knoll Shores Pedestrian Master Plan. After considering the different options, costs and the April 28 deadline, it was decided not to apply and to continue to fund the pedestrian plan using NCDOT discretionary funds and Powell Bill funds rather than using funds from the Pine Knoll Shores General Fund sourced directly from the taxpayers.

The next regular Board of Commissioners' meeting will be May 8 at 6 p.m.



By Michelle Powers

Simple Solutions to Protect Our Coastal Environment

With 320 miles of ocean beaches and 4,200 miles of shoreline around our coastal sounds, rivers and creeks, our North Carolina coast has one of the largest, most productive and spectacular coastal areas in the United States, according to Rachel Besesi of the North Carolina Coastal Federation. Ms. Besesi, who was the guest speaker at the April meeting of the Pine Knoll Shores Garden Club, is the Coastal Education Coordinator for the federation and a specialist in linking coastal environments with public education and outreach. Her talk focused on simple, do-it-yourself solutions to reducing storm-water pollution in our local environment. Because of an expanding coastal population and the resulting increase in rooftops, driveways and other impervious surfaces, storm water drains into streets, pipes and ditches that flow directly to our coastal waters. This storm-water runoff brings with it pollutants, bacteria, chemicals and debris that endanger our health, property, quality of life and coastal resources.

While residents are part of the problem, we can also be part of the solution by adopting simple practices that help to capture the rain before it becomes polluted runoff. Some of the simplest and most effective do-it-yourself techniques include using native plantings, establishing rain gardens, rerouting downspouts and installing rain barrels—all techniques that capture the rain before it becomes a pollution issue.

The "go native" solution involves using native landscaping plants that are hardy and well suited to our coastal soils and climate. Native plants and trees attract more wildlife, are low maintenance, are noninvasive and reduce storm-water runoff by intercepting it and allowing it to evaporate. Plants particularly suited to our environment include sweetbay magnolia, wax myrtle, yaupon holly, blanket flower, sea lavender, beautyberry and Carolina laurel, among many others.

Other simple techniques include redirecting downspouts away from impervious surfaces such as driveways, sidewalks and other hardscape areas on your property. Direct water to your lawn or garden or collect it in a rain barrel, a container that collects and stores rainwater from your roof. Just one-quarter-inch of rain produces enough runoff to fill a rain barrel. By using one, you not only reduce storm-water runoff but you get a free watering source for plants and gardens.

Another very effective technique is to create a rain garden, a small, shallow, vegetated area on your property that captures rain during storms. Rain gardens can reduce storm-water runoff by 90% or more. Visit the Coastal Federation's website at www.nccoast.org for more detailed information on these simple solutions to protecting our valuable and beautiful coastal environment.

Following Ms. Besesi's informative talk, the club elected the following officers for the coming year: Donna Belanger, president; Karen Zaenker and Gini Stambaugh, first vice presidents; Lana Hathaway and Martha Edwards, second vice presidents; Jean McDanal, recording secretary; Kay Howe, treasurer; and Mary Ann Shapiro, corresponding secretary. The club looks forward to installing these officers at a luncheon on June 11 at 11:30 a.m. at the Coral Bay Club.

Our next meeting, on May 14, will feature themed tablescapes displays created by club members. Meetings are held at town hall and begin at 9:30 a.m. Guests are always welcome to attend.

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