

# PINE KNOLL SHORES COMMISSIONERS' MEETINGS

By Yvette Bannen

## Second BOC Meeting in April

On April 24, the Board of Commissioners held their second meeting of the month at 6 p.m. This meeting involved unfinished business and ran nearly three hours.

The first item addressed the distribution of the County Sales and Use Tax. A resolution was passed unanimously opposing changing the method of distribution for FY 2015-2016. Each county determines how the tax money will be distributed. Currently in Carteret County, it is calculated on an ad valorem basis—and has been since the levy was granted in 1971. There was discussion regarding whether the wording of the resolution was strong enough. If the method of distribution were changed, the communities on Bogue Banks would be forced to raise property taxes to make up for the significant budget shortfall that would result using a per capita-based allocation. This will be addressed again later in the year.

Town Manager Kramer reported on the East End Stormwater project. He said that the sod has been laid and things are looking good.

Mr. Kramer did a presentation on "smart meters" for the water system. There was a review of the 2009 water audit that recommended better tracking of leaks. In January 2013, the BOC made the decision to go with automatic (drive-by) meter readers on a four-year implementation schedule. Subsequently, in the summer of 2013, Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative (CCEC) proposed partnering on smart meters. Under the proposal, CCEC would provide the infrastructure (towers, hardware and software) and the town would purchase the smart meters and transmitters. CCEC would send one monthly bill for electricity and water usage. This system is already used by Harkers Island.

The use of smart meters would give daily leak detection, an important customer service for second-home owners, and would get Pine Knoll Shores out of the meter-reading and utility-billing business. The smart meters are magnetic (no moving parts) and programmable; can measure the amount of water used, pressure, flow rate and temperature; and have an automatic shut-off in case of a leak.

It was recommended to go ahead and apply for a State Revolving Fund zero-interest loan in order to purchase the smart meters and transmitters. The application deadline is September 30, 2014; the motion passed unanimously.

In 2010, the BOC voted to decide each year on the cell phone tower revenue and how it would be used. This year it was recommended that the FY 2014-2015 cell phone tower revenue (\$93,000) be split 50/50 between the general fund and the water enterprise fund. The vote was unanimous.

There was a review of the general fund reserves and debt restructuring. Because the USDA loans on the Public Safety building were refinanced in March 2014, the reserve of \$97,000 required by those loans is no longer necessary. There was a discussion of how to use that money. It was recommended to pay off the loan on Lot C adjacent to the Public Safety building (\$80,802), which would save \$11,300 in interest over the remaining life of the loan. This was approved unanimously.

## May Board of Commissioners' Meeting

On May 8, the first BOC meeting of the month was held; two members of the public attended.

Town Manager Kramer gave his monthly update on various projects on-going around town. The East End Stormwater project is awaiting a final engineer check-up and reporting procedures are being finalized. Sidewalk bids were scheduled to open on May 14. Quotes will be obtained for the smart meters for the water department and a loan application to the State Revolving Fund will be submitted. No

sealed bids were received for the purchase of the Knollwood lot. NCDOT will be doing trimming on the right of way on Highway 58.

Finance Officer Anderson did a presentation on yard waste costs before and after the grapple truck. Some comments were made about the amount of yard waste that is showing up on Lot C adjacent to the Public Safety building, probably dumped there by landscapers.

The FY 2014-2015 budget was discussed and one of the items that was added for discussion was a detective for the police department. Police Chief Lepore gave reasons why one was needed, but at the present the department is short one officer. It was decided that having a full complement of seven officers might free up somebody to do some investigating.

There was a presentation on Pay by Phone parking at the two public beach access lots. It is anticipated that this would save approximately \$8,000 in labor costs annually because only one person would be needed to monitor both lots. Police Chief Lepore commented that crime at the two lots virtually disappeared because of the presence of an attendant. The town manager does not recommend making a decision until the full credit card fees are known. There is a nonrefundable \$1,500 set-up fee even to do a test of the system.

The Strategic Planning Committee ordinance was approved and the following committee members were appointed: Amry Cox, George Greene, John Halada, Pete Trebbe, Bob Warren and Vince Larson, who agreed to serve as chair. Ex officio members are John Brodman and Mayor Jones.

Town Clerk Sherrill did a presentation on what is involved in order to get state funding in the future for more sidewalks. In 2013, the NC General Assembly eliminated discretionary transportation funding as well as designated funding for particular transportation modes and instead lumped all transportation funding into the Strategic Transportation Investments (STI) program that is divided into statewide, regional and divisional categories. Pedestrian projects are in the divisional category. There is also a \$100,000 threshold for funding. The reality is that our town priorities for sidewalks may not mesh with the funding system that is now in place because it will be challenging for non-urban areas like ours to secure funding for projects.

A resolution opposing the legislative proposal by the Agricultural and Forestry Study Commission eliminating municipal tree ordinance authority was unanimously approved. The town of Pine Knoll Shores is making an aggressive lobbying effort to oppose this proposal and the resolution will be sent to Representative McElraft and Senator Sanderson. The Community Appearance Commission (CAC) has already sent a letter to Representative McElraft.

The next meeting of the Board of Commissioners was scheduled for May 22 at 6 p.m., at which time the town manager will deliver the budget message. The budget will then be available for inspection at town hall and the library. There will be a public hearing on the budget at the June 12 BOC meeting.

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