



I hope we are all having a mild winter wherever we are. Only six weeks until pitchers and catchers report. Here are some of the things going on in Pine Knoll Shores.

Clearing of trees on south (ocean) side of Highway 58. We met with Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative (CCEC) in late November to discuss their proposal to remove all vegetation from the asphalt to the far edge of the right of way on the south side of Highway 58. Our goal was to see

if they would consider options other than simply clear cutting an area that acts as a sound buffer and privacy barrier for many. The good news is that it appears they will work with us to look at less severe ways for them to gain access to their lines across the entire length of the town.

The proposed course of action involves clearing a lane under the lines which would allow access for maintenance, and hopefully maintain a portion of the buffer between this lane and the road. While this would unquestionably cause the removal of some of the barrier for private property, it is considerably less severe than the initial proposal from CCEC.

We are going to identify approximately three-quarters of a mile for clearing such a lane this winter. This lane does not need to be contiguous. Additionally, I have asked CCEC to give the trees an extra-close cut town wide during their normal annual winter trimming. The reason for this: several long-time residents and property managers have told me that while they believe we have been very fortunate not to have experienced a major hurricane in a long time, a secondary effect is exceptional tree growth over time. Anyone familiar with the brown-out effect of hurricanes knows what this is. As one experienced resident put it, it is Mother Nature's way of trimming vegetation.

After we clear the lane described above and CCEC does some significant trimming, we will reassess next year and see what is working. We have mailed letters to all affected property owners (or property managers in the case of condominiums) and are going to do our best to ensure the effects of this are minimized.

Sidewalks on Highway 58. As we go to press, the sidewalk segment from Mimosa Drive to Arborvitae Drive is being constructed. Vegetation removal has been completed, and we are presently adjusting the elevation of the sidewalk with fill. By springtime all of us will have the ability to move from the town hall (or the aquarium, library and public safety building) to Atlantic Beach without walking on Highway 58. Additionally, we are awaiting a January announcement on the North Carolina State Transportation Improvement Program grant results. The segment that we have identified to be constructed next is from the public safety building west to the Clam Digger, on the north side of the road. We are not confident this project will be funded, but we are hopeful.

Pine Knoll Shores meetings: see them from home via webinar. Over the past few years we have strived to increase communications with our citizens through social media. Webinars, which are live audio and video streaming, are part of this effort. While town board meetings may not be the most exciting events on the social calendar, you can view a topic of interest via webinar from the comfort of home. Recently I was on I-95 traveling south from Washington, DC, and I was able to hear a discussion of a meeting between the town's Strategic Planning Committee and the Board of Commissioners. Town Planner Scott Sherrill has been tweaking the system and the audio is now very good. A picture of the meeting that I saw on my iPad while traveling by car accompanies this article. Prior to a meeting, Town Clerk Sarah Williams sends out a town-wide email containing the meeting agenda and a link to register for the webinar. If you wish to be on that email list, please ask to be added as shown at the end of this article.

Summer intern from UNC. We are considering hiring another summer intern from the graduate program at UNC-Chapel Hill. We have had very good luck with this program with our two previous hires. One resulted in the hiring of Scott Sherrill, who is now our town planner. Last year's intern helped us on several projects as well. If anyone is interested in housing a Chapel Hill graduate student next summer, please let me know.

Next dinner with the mayor for out-of-town homeowners. In February we will host our third annual dinner with the mayor in the greater Raleigh area. We started these a few years ago as an outreach tool to our second-home owners. We time this so that it takes place immediately following our



Webinar image as it appeared on an iPad screen during a recent town committee meeting. —Image provided by Brian Kramer

annual Board of Commissioners offsite planning meeting, making it a great way to be kept informed on where the town is focused in the new calendar year. We normally send out word on this event via email, so if you are not signed up on the town email list, please do so as shown below.

Canal dredging. Dredging of designated areas of the Pine Knoll Shores canal will start very soon. Both Pine Knoll Association and Bogue Pines HOAs are dredging areas which they selected to help their boaters gain access to the sound. As has been done in the past, the town will help secure grant funding for this.

Town email list. If you want to be on the email distribution list for periodic Pine Knoll Shores messages, email admin@townofpks.com with your request.

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