

Holden Beach Commissioners Approve Sewer Line Easement

BY DOUG RUTTER

Holden Beach Commissioners Monday granted an easement along Sand Dune Lane that will allow a property owner to install a private sewer line.

The action came after lengthy discussion and examination of the proposal at two previous town meetings.

The 15-foot-wide easement along the north side of the street is the subject of a legal agreement between the town and property owner Dan Kassick of Sanford, who plans to build his retirement home on one lot in the Sea Oats subdivision and to run a low-pressure sewer line to a nearby lot that will be used for sewage disposal.

Following a review of the document with the town attorney during a special meeting Monday, the town board authorized the mayor to execute the agreement subject to review by property owners affected by the easement.

The binding agreement relieves the town and property owners along the easement route of any liability relating to the sewer line and prohibits Kassick or any future owner of the lot to be used for wastewater treatment from building there unless the town gains access to a sewer system.

Kassick plans to build a home at 320 Sand Dune Lane. He intends to run a two-inch sewer line to 313 Sand Dune Lane, a vacant lot that already has a four-bedroom septic system in place. The other lot, which overlooks the intracoastal waterway, has been deemed unsuitable for a septic tank.

The agreement further requires the owner to have the line installed according to engineering drawings, to obtain any necessary permits and to provide for annual inspections of the pipeline. Also, Kassick must provide a \$2,500 bond prior to the start of construction and maintain that bond for one year following construction.

Mayor John Tandy stressed this week that the board's action does not set a precedent. He said each request for an easement will have to be taken on a case-by-case basis.

When the proposal was introduced by the property owner last month, Tandy said he expected similar requests in the future due to the increasing cost of land on the island and regulations concerning the use of septic tanks in marshy areas.

Expense Approved
Also this week, commissioners voted 4-1 to allocate \$6,000 of the occupancy tax revenue for use by the South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce Accommodations Tax Committee.

Along with \$10,000 from the Town of Sunset Beach, the money will be used to promote the two island communities at travel shows, in a visitors' guide and with the use of directional road signs.

Commissioner Georgia Langley was the only one to oppose the motion. She said she would rather see occupancy tax monies used to improve services in the town and not to promote the area in the hopes of attracting more tourists. "We don't know that we're going to get anything back from this money," she said.

However, other board members argued that the \$6,000 is an investment that will bring more visitors to the island and increase occupancy

tax revenues in the years to come.

Commissioner Bob Buck, who served on the chamber of commerce committee on behalf of the town, recommended that the board approve the contribution. "That's spending money to make money," he said, adding that it won't interfere with plans to construct sidewalks this fiscal year with other occupancy tax revenues.

The occupancy tax, which is paid by tourists as part of their rental fees, must be used for tourist-related items. Town officials discussed the donation to the chamber at length during budget deliberations earlier this year.

Prior to this week's vote, Don Pollard—a candidate for commissioner in the fall election—challenged Commissioner William Williamson on his personal interest in the issue. Williamson manages a campground on the island, and Pollard said his business activity represents a conflict of interest.

However, Williamson defended his position. He noted that two other board members also are involved in business and that the commission could not act on the issue if three of its members had to abstain from voting.

Pollard further said that he feels occupancy tax revenues should be used to improve police, fire and rescue services, to protect the dunes and on other tourist activities. The town held a public hearing earlier this year on how the money should be spent and also held a public hearing before adopting the budget.

Off To Asheville

After a lengthy discussion last week's regular meeting and further debate Monday evening, commissioners voted unanimously to send board of elections chairman Elizabeth Dameron to the state board of elections seminar next week in Asheville.

The trip will cost the town about \$200, which includes mileage to and from the seminar. Mrs. Dameron said she hopes to learn election law and other items that will provide for smoother elections at Holden Beach.

Although she went along with the vote, Commissioner Langley requested that the town consider contracting its elections out to the Brunswick County Board of Elections like most other municipalities do. She said it would cost about the same amount to let the county run

town elections as it does for the town to hold its own elections.

The county charges between \$400 and \$500 per election, she said. Board members agreed that letting the county handle elections is worth investigating, but noted that it is too late for this year's municipal election.

Policy Discussed

In other business Monday, commissioners discussed setting a policy regarding the repair of paved driveways that are damaged during the ongoing underground utilities project, but took no action.

Town Manager Gus Ulrich, in a memorandum to the board, said the contractors working on the project will not repave any driveways they have to cut in the street right-of-way. He further said that he expects more driveways to be damaged as work progresses.

A number of driveways have already been cut, including a few on Ferry Road that have sustained several hundred dollars worth of damage.

Town officials this week briefly discussed paying for the repairs to concrete driveways cut during the project, but plan to study the issue in more detail before making a decision.

Ulrich said it would cost the town a maximum of \$7,500 to repave any driveways that are cut on Ocean Boulevard west of High Point Street. He was asked to get an estimate for repairing driveways on the canal lots and other areas where work has not yet been completed.

Commissioner Buck said the town may have a "moral obligation" to cover the cost of repairing cut driveways because property owners were not made aware of the potential cost before the underground wiring project was started.

However, other board members noted that anything left in the street right-of-way, including driveways, is subject to damage during the project.

New Employee

Dianne Clark started working Monday in town hall, filling the new secretary/deputy town clerk position.

She moved to Holden Beach from Joppa, Md., where she had worked for the last two-and-a-half years as a claims supervisor for Blue Cross/Blue Shield. She also has experience in real estate and accounting.

Langley Seeks Time With Family

BY DOUG RUTTER

Georgia Langley hopes to be cuddling her first grandchild in March. She said a plan to spend more time with her family is the main reason she is not seeking re-election to the Holden Beach Board of Commissioners this fall. "I would love to continue on the board, but I need to spend more time with my family," she said in an interview Monday. "Some things are just more important than others."



LANGLEY

Elected to a first term in 1987, she said her proudest accomplishment as commissioner was seeing the state legislature pass a law this summer limiting the height of buildings on the island to 35 feet. On a personal note, she said she has enjoyed meeting and getting to know many of the residents and property owners of Holden Beach.

Mrs. Langley said she has accomplished most of the things she set out to do as a town official and has lived up to all of the promises she made during the 1987 campaign. Those included passage of the height limit law, paying the building inspector a salary instead of a commission and moving toward a town manager form of government.

"I feel like I met my commitments to the public," she said. "I've always tried to listen to the people and that's something I really feel good about."

Mrs. Langley said her time as a commissioner has been "exhausting" and much more time-consuming than she had expected. "I worked in government for 15 years, but nothing has compared to the time involved in holding an office," she said. "It's been an experience."

She admits that it has been "especially difficult" at times because she has been alone or in the minority on a number of controversial issues since taking office.

Following what she believes were the wishes of the public, Mrs. Langley was in the minority in opposing annexation of the town's first mainland territory earlier this year. She said she believes the island's voters will let everyone know in November how they feel about the annexation proposal, which can still be rejected.

As an indication of how her work has been accepted by the public, she said she received a number of telephone calls from residents who were disappointed that she did not file for re-election.

She is the only one of the five present commissioners who is not seeking another two years on the board. The mayor is also seeking re-election in November.

Although she says she will not seek another elected position or accept a spot on one of the town's three appointed boards, Mrs. Langley fully intends to stay active in town affairs and local politics. She is vice chairman of her Republican precinct.

As a commissioner, Mrs. Langley has pushed hard for new state regulations that would allow development of canal lots that are now deemed unsuitable for septic tanks because of soil conditions. She said she plans to continue fighting until she has done all she can to help property owners who presently cannot build retirement or vacation homes.

She believes the island can continue to develop safely if septic tank rules are revised to allow more building in areas built up with fill dirt. "I feel like there are solutions other than a sewer system."

Also, she said she has agreed to help some of the 11 persons who have filed for commissioner, although she wouldn't say who she's supporting.

"I feel like Holden Beach has a lot of good people who are going to be in the November election, and I encourage people to find out what they all stand for," she said. "I know I'm going to."

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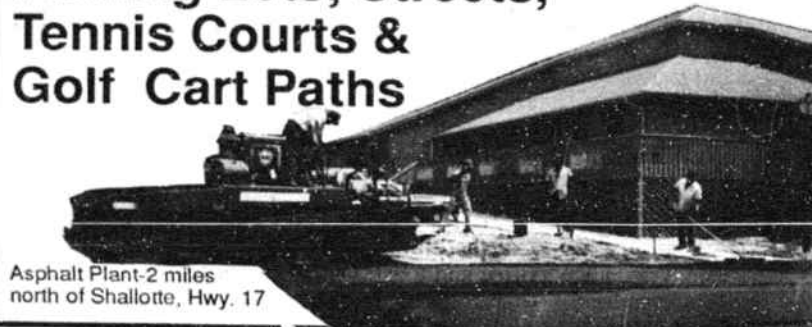
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