

Holden Commissioners Approve Brunswick Avenue Paving

BY DOUG RUTTER

Brunswick Avenue West at Holden Beach should be paved before residents on the street sit down to Thanksgiving dinner in late November.

That was the word from Town Manager Gus Ulrich Monday evening shortly before the town board adopted a resolution approving the paving project and voted to advertise for bids.

The town will finance the project upfront and hopes to recoup 60 percent of the cost through property owner assessments. The assessments will be based on front footage along the street.

The cost of the project will not be known until the paving is complete. Ulrich said it will depend in part on the drainage and grading work required before the paving begins.

Mayor John Tandy said during Monday's town meeting that this will be the biggest paving project ever handled by the town. Holden Beach budgeted approximately \$85,000 this year for the project.

Prior to approving the project, commissioners held a brief public hearing on the proposal.

In response to a question from Brunswick Avenue resident Don Pollard, town officials said some assessments will be held in abeyance for property that cannot presently be developed. Owners cannot build on some lots because they aren't considered suitable for septic tanks.

There is at least one lot on the south side of the street and a stretch of land on the north side with an estimated 500 feet fronting the road that will not be assessed at the present time. If the land becomes devel-

opable over the next 15 years, the assessments will come due.

The condition of those lots will not affect the amount of the assessments paid by other property owners.

As part of the project, town officials hope to pave three other streets connecting Brunswick Avenue West and Ocean Boulevard West. Those are sections of Roger Street, Boyd Street and all of Neptune Street.

Commissioner Bob Buck said the town would save money in the long run if those streets are paved at the same time as Brunswick Avenue. "Somehow or another we've got to find a way to pave those three short sections to tie it all together," he said.

But as of this week, the town was still waiting for petitions from property owners on those streets requesting the paving and agreeing to pay their share.

This week's meeting lasted nearly three hours and had been postponed one week because of the Labor Day holiday. The full town board and about 35 residents attended the session.

Sidewalks Are Coming

After years of talking about it, town commissioners this week took their first big step toward sidewalk construction along Ocean Boulevard.

The board authorized the town manager to obtain design plans for a sidewalk between Jordan Boulevard and Sand Dollar Drive—the area on the island considered most congested.

Town officials have proposed building a five-foot-wide concrete sidewalk, but have not decided on which side of the street it will be built. The town budgeted

\$40,000 this year for sidewalks, with most of the allocation coming from occupancy tax revenue.

For years, town officials have been talking about the need for sidewalks for the safety of residents and visitors who walk, jog and rides bikes along Ocean Boulevard.

Town Receives Grant

Holden Beach has been awarded a \$9,600 state grant that will be used to update its land use plan. The town manager said the town will have to match the state grant with \$1,200 cash and \$1,200 in kind services. He said he will recommend next month that the town hire a consulting firm to develop the plan.

The town planning board will work with the consultant on the planning document. The five-year land use plan update will have to be adopted before the end of the fiscal year, said Ulrich.

Ordinance Needs Work

Following a public hearing Monday night, town commissioners agreed that a proposed ordinance governing the use of outside lights needs work.

A draft recommended by the planning and zoning board restricts outside lights so they don't shine onto a neighbor's property. Also, lights on poles would be limited to 10 feet in height. Security lights presently attached to utility poles are about 20 feet off the ground.

Commissioners seemed to agree with many points in the proposal. But several several said they thought the ordinance should be more specific in the types of lighting designs permitted.

The new ordinance could be adopted as early as

October. The police chief enforces the existing ordinance, but the town manager would enforce the one proposed by the planning board.

You Dirty Rat

In response to a number of complaints, the town manager will make a recommendation at the next town meeting on what the town should do regarding overgrown lots and the resulting problem with rats.

During a brief discussion Monday, town officials said the rat problem is worst on the overgrown vacant canal lots. They agreed, however, that removing all vegetation from the lots would cause erosion.

"Obviously, we've got some work to do on these lots," said Mayor Tandy. "We can do a better job with the rats."

Other Business

In other business, commissioners:

—Agreed to allow property owner Ralph Welker to construct a retaining wall or bulkhead at the end of Seaview Drive. The road is dedicated to the town but it is not maintained by the town. Plans will have to be approved by the building inspector.

—Asked the planning and zoning board to make a recommendation on whether the town should pay any or all of the cost for repairing driveways damaged due to the underground wiring project.

—Authorized the town manager to oversee the use of town employees and equipment for The Big Sweep on Saturday, Sept. 23. Volunteers will clean litter from the beach for four hours that day.

—Agreed to sell six surplus VHF radios to the Tri-Beach Volunteer Fire Department at a cost of \$1,200.



Gabrielle Leaves Her Mark

STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

The east end of Holden Beach was the only area in the South Brunswick Islands that eroded last week due to high tides caused by Hurricane Gabrielle. Although it passed far offshore, the storm claimed about 25 feet of beach near the end of Ocean Boulevard East, according to Holden Beach Building Inspector Dwight Carroll. He said high waters fueled by northeasterly winds uncovered sand bags and concrete pilings that were covered up earlier this year when a dredge boat working in Lockwood Folly Inlet pumped sand onto the beach. Officials at Ocean Isle Beach and Sunset Beach said the unusually high tides did not cause any erosion there.

Tugboat Sinks In Waterway; Cause Of Mishap Not Known

An unmanned tugboat that was being towed up the Atlantic Intra-coastal Waterway sank last Thursday night at Lockwood Folly Inlet, according to U.S. Coast Guard spokesmen.

Chief Petty Officer Frank Hawthorne of the Wilmington office of the U.S. Coast Guard indicated Monday that the cause of the accident is still under investigation.

The sinking was reported last Thursday at 5:05 p.m., said Senior Chief Petty Officer Joseph Nelson of the Oak Island Coast Guard Station. Hawthorne identified the owner of the tugboat as South Atlantic Dredging Company of Charleston, S.C.

According to Hawthorne and Brunswick County Emergency Management Coordinator Cecil Logan, the 38-foot tugboat *Jerry* and dredging equipment were being

towed by the tugboat *Mitchell* from Jacksonville, Fla., to Norfolk, Va., when the mishap occurred.

Logan said he was called to the scene last Thursday around 8:30 p.m., following a report that the accident had resulted in a diesel fuel spill. When he arrived, all but the stern of the vessel was submerged in approximately nine feet of water.

Both Logan and Hawthorne said only about 25 gallons of fuel escaped from the sunken tug. Environmental damage also was minimal because the spill happened on an outgoing tide, they said.

The Coast Guard issued a "notice to mariners" concerning the disabled tugboat's location in the waterway, and the *Mitchell* stood by until the *Jerry* was salvaged by the dredging company on Friday, said Hawthorne.

Boating Class To Be Offered

Flotilla 10-08 of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary is accepting applications for a safe-boating seminar to be held on Mondays and Thursdays beginning Oct. 2 at the Shalotte Senior Center on Main Street, Shalotte. Classes will be held at 7 p.m.

Taught by flotilla members, the six-week course will cover the basics of boat handling, water safety, navigation, seamanship, radio communications and other facets of boating safety. Diplomas will be awarded upon completion of the course.

For more information, contact Bill Utter at 579-2387.

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