

Holden Beach Commissioners Plan For New Frontal Dune

BY DOUG RUTTER

Holden Beach officials have spent eight hours huddled at the conference table in town hall over the past week preparing for what Mayor John Tandy says is the biggest project in town history.

Hurricane Hugo's storm surge wiped out about 90 percent of the dunes on the island last month. But since last Friday, town officials have developed a plan to build a seven-mile-long dune using about 230,000 cubic yards of sand that would be pushed up from the water's edge.

The approved dune design, worked out during a four-hour board meeting last Friday, calls for the dune to be built to a height of six feet above the high water mark and 10 feet flat across the top.

After meeting another four hours Monday, commissioners approved the bid specifications. Board members planned to meet again Wednesday at 4 p.m. to open bids and possibly award a contract for the project.

Commissioners agreed to divide the island into three sections for the bidding process, and contractors were invited to bid on any or all of the sections. They run from the east end to the fishing pier, the pier to

Swordfish Drive and from Swordfish to the west end.

Contractors were also given the option of bidding on the whole project. However, when the board met with seven local contractors Monday morning, only one indicated that his firm could handle the entire project.

Most said they didn't have enough equipment to handle it, especially since they will only be able to work a few hours a day on low tide. They also said it will take longer to complete the project than the town is allowing, even though bulldozers will be permitted to work around the clock.

The town will require that work begin no more than seven days after the contract is awarded. The board also set a 60-day completion deadline on the project.

Mayor Tandy told contractors that the town wants the dune finished before the winter storm season arrives. "That's the reason for the quickness and the urgency," he said. "It is an emergency."

Though specifications call for a dune with at least a 40-foot base, the size of the dune will vary. In some areas, particularly on the east end where there are bulkheads, there is not enough room to accom-

"Mother Nature takes a long time to completely restore the beach following one of these events."

—Tom Jarrett
Corps of Engineers

moderate a large dune.

Sand for the new dune would be scooped up between the low water line and a natural berm that has started to form in some areas of the beach since the hurricane.

Wherever possible, the dune would be constructed so it doesn't interfere with sand piles property owners have had pushed up to protect their own lots. Also, the new dune would run in a straight line down the beach as much as possible.

Holden Beach plans to hire a surveyor to do topographical work before and after the dune is built to determine the amount of sand that is pushed. Town officials estimated that work will cost about \$10,000.

Town board members didn't expect to have an estimated cost of the dune project until bids were opened Wednesday afternoon. But they started talking about possible funding sources last week.

officials said more than 200 property owners have hired contractors to push sand with bulldozers. The going rate is about \$350 per lot.

The town's dune design was based on a suggestion from Tom Jarrett, chief of coastal engineering with the Army Corps of Engineers in Wilmington.

At the start of last Friday's meeting, Jarrett spoke with officials about conditions on the beach following the hurricane and what the town can do to rebuild a frontal dune.

At the outset, Jarrett said the town can continue to push some sand from the beach to form dunes. But he explained that the ideal way to rebuild the dune is to add new material, even though it's more expensive.

He recommended the town use truck loads of sand to rebuild a sizable dune and agreed with board members that the town does not need to hire an engineer to design a new dune.

Jarrett said much of the sand from the dunes that existed before Hugo had washed into the ocean as a result of the storm. The sand will slowly return to the beach and the dune will rebuild itself over a long period of time if there are no major

storms, he said.

"Mother Nature takes a long time to completely restore the beach following one of these events," said Jarrett. "It takes years for the natural recovery to occur."

As far as a long-term beach renourishment project is concerned, Jarrett said Holden Beach could be included in an ongoing Corps of Engineers study on Oak Island. But he said it would be approximately four years before the study would yield any results, and that any projects would be very costly.

"The thing about a beach renourishment project is you have to keep doing it. It's not a one-time thing," he said. "It's an expensive proposition."

Jarrett estimated it would cost a few million dollars per mile to start a renourishment project on Holden Beach and up to a half million dollars per mile each year to maintain the beach.

With talk of building a new dune on the island, officials agreed last week the town needs an ordinance prohibiting people from walking over dunes. The planning board submitted a proposal earlier this year addressing those matters, but it was never acted upon by commissioners.



STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER

Local Artists Boost Literacy

Artists from Winnabow to Calabash to Southport are contributing prints, original works of art, photographs and handcrafted items for the Brunswick County Literacy Council's first Art For Literacy project. Standing, from the left, are Barbara Stanley, Shallotte, and Gerri Piazza, Seaside; and kneeling, Janice Taylor and Bryan Varnam, Holden Beach, and Eugene Tomlinson, Southport. Winners of the donated artwork will be announced at the Oct. 28 N.C. Festival By The Sea Street Dance. Information regarding the project is available from BCLC volunteers and from the council office, 754-7323. The council trains and places volunteer reading tutors who work primarily with adults. The art project is being coordinated by a council VISTA volunteer, Shelia Ward.

Holden Beach POA Promises Revised Candidates' Night

The Holden Beach Property Owners Association promises a revised format this year at its biennial "Meet The Candidates" night.

Each candidate for town office will respond to a different set of questions, and for the first time, members of the audience will participate in the candidates forum. Coordinator Daphne Fournier said the meeting will be held Tuesday, Oct. 24, at 7 p.m. in town hall.

Nine candidates, including four incumbents, are seeking five seats up for election this year on the town board of commissioners. They are William Williamson, Gay Atkins, Bob Buck and Gil Bass, all incumbents, and Odie Aleck Alexiou, George Bradshaw, Carole Rogers, Don Pollard, Kenner Amos, Gloria Barrett and Judy Bryan.

Following brief introductions, Mrs. Fournier said all nine commission candidates will be given three questions and six minutes to respond to all three. The three questions for each candidate will be chosen at random from a list of six questions, she said.

The order of response will also be decided at random by choosing slips of paper out of a box, said Mrs. Fournier. "We're totally changing the format this time."

In past years, she said all candidates have answered the same questions and certain candidates have been at an advantage or disadvantage depending on where they sat at the head table.

Mrs. Fournier said some candidates have been able to get by in the past without knowing the issues by "parroting" what other candidates had said. "I believe if they are running for office they need to do their homework and know what the residents of this island care about," she said.

Incumbent Mayor John Tandy faces no opposition in his bid for reelection this fall. Mrs. Fournier said he will be given three minutes at the start of the meeting to introduce himself and talk about the issues he views as important.

Once all of the candidates have responded to the prepared questions, she said members of the audi-

ence will be permitted to ask questions. Each person in the audience will be limited to one question, she said, and it must be directed to a specific candidate.

Mrs. Fournier said last week all 10 candidates have been notified of the meeting in writing. "We have invited them all, and if they're smart they'll be there," she said.

All candidates have attended in past years, she said, and there is always a good turnout of resident voters.

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