

# Commissioners Take Position Against Proposed Loop Route

BY RAHN ADAMS

Brunswick County Commissioners Monday threw their weight behind the Town of Navassa's push to stop a proposed four-lane highway project that would run through that community as well as Leland.

An estimated 50 Navassa and Leland residents attended Monday night's county board meeting in Bolivia—a 3 1/2-hour session attended by all five commissioners. So many individuals were present that the board moved that portion of the meeting from the commissioners' chambers to the Public Assembly Building.

The meeting also included a one-hour, 10-minute executive session requested by County Manager John T. Smith to discuss "personnel." No action was announced from the closed-door conference.

As he had presented to the Brunswick County Planning Board last Wednesday (see related story), Planning Director John Harvey explained to the gathering Monday that the N.C. Department of Transportation is leaning toward a new route through the hearts of Navassa and Leland for a proposed Wilmington bypass. The highway will connect Interstate 40 in New Hanover County to U.S. 17 in Brunswick County.

An original proposal—one that was approved in years past by area governments in previous thoroughfare plans—would have the "Northern Outer Loop" be built through largely undeveloped areas north of Navassa and Leland before it turns south toward U.S. 17.

However, the latest proposed route, which was recommended earlier this month by a Wilmington Metropolitan Area transportation advisory board, is shorter and closer to Wilmington. It bisects the two densely-populated communities and crosses fragile wetlands on its way to linking with U.S. 17 at the U.S. 74-76 interchange.

"We've been a town for only two months, and the Department of Transportation is talking about splitting us up already," said Leland Mayor Russell Baldwin. Leland incorporated in September. He later added, "We will fight it every step of the way...One thing is for sure; if we don't stand up for ourselves, no one else will."

Navassa Town Attorney Mary Easley noted that Navassa is one of the oldest communities in Brunswick County and that its largely black population has worked hard to build the town into "one of the preeminent black communities in the state."

"To cleave the town into two pieces cannot possibly serve the common good here," Mrs. Easley said, later adding that the four-lane highway would "destroy the pride and sense of community they have, because this is going to wipe them off the face of the earth."

Navassa officials estimate that the new route would

necessitate the removal of 52 homes and directly impact two churches, a Masonic lodge, Town Hall and the town's fire and rescue facility. Mrs. Easley said an estimated 176 Navassa residents would be displaced by the road.

Although the county planning board last week took no position on the matter, commissioners Monday unanimously passed a resolution in opposition to the proposed route. The resolution will be sent to state transportation officials.

In other business Monday, the commissioners:

—Heard a report from Harvey on a countywide shoreline access plan that is being developed. Public input meetings were tentatively scheduled for Dec. 5 at Shalotte Town Hall, Dec. 12 at the Public Assembly Building, and Dec. 19 at St. Mary's Baptist Church in Winnabow. No meeting times were finalized.

—Confirmed the assessment roll for Special Assessment District 6 (Seaside area), which includes an assessment rate of \$5.22 per front foot for the \$208,271 project.

—Approved October tax releases and refunds, as recommended by Tax Administrator Boyd Williamson.

—Tabled action until Dec. 4 on a proposal from Honeywell Inc., for the county to participate in an energy management program that guarantees the county \$300,000 in energy savings over a five-year period. In its first year, the county would pay Honeywell \$87,950. Net savings over the five-year period would be approximately \$100,000.

—Amended a county ordinance to prohibit any merchant or salesman from conducting business on any property owned or leased by the county.

—Allocated \$2,010 from the Water Department's improvements fund to pay DOT for work involving the county water line along U.S. 17 as the highway is widened. County Attorney David Clegg said DOT inaccurately estimated in 1986 that the county would have to pay about \$112,000 for the work.

—Accepted a deed of dedication for the water system in Seaside North subdivision.

—Appointed Leland resident John E. Jones to fill the unexpired term of John Boney on the Brunswick County Utility Operations Board. Boney resigned last month, after being appointed to a two-year term in January.

—Recessed until Tuesday (Nov. 21) at 9:30 p.m., when the board was to hold the first of two morning work sessions on a wide range of topics facing the board, including complex expansion, the Clean County program, 911 and personnel matters. The second work session was set for Wednesday (Nov. 22) at 9:30 a.m. Both meetings were to be held at the Administration Building.

# State May Reimburse Beachfront Lot Owners

BY DOUG RUTTER

Coastal landowners who paid to have sand dunes bulldozed as an emergency protective measure following Hurricane Hugo may be eligible for reimbursement from the state.

As many as 500 oceanfront homeowners in Brunswick County may qualify for reimbursement checks, according to Berry Williams, state individual assistance officer. However, local officials estimate the number will be much lower.

Following the Sept. 21 hurricane, officials with the N.C. Division of Emergency Management joined local officials in a survey of area beaches to determine the extent of erosion damage.

As a result, emergency berm projects were authorized at Ocean Isle Beach, Holden Beach, Long Beach, Yaupon Beach, Caswell Beach and Bald Head Island. The state pledged \$269,220 to build 29,990 feet of berm in the six beach communities. Earlier, the federal government had authorized construction of 4,100 feet of berm at Ocean Isle Beach, Holden Beach and Long Beach.

However, since many property owners contracted to have sand pushed in front of their homes before the emergency berm projects were authorized, the state has decided to offer reimbursements.

To qualify, properties must fall within the area of "imminent threat" outlined in the Upton-Jones section of the National Flood Insurance Program. In most areas, homes would have to be within 20 feet of the first line of vegetation to be eligible.

However, since the state-funded berm was also based on the "imminent threat" standard, local building officials speculated last week that there would be very few lot owners who qualify for reimbursement.

The only landowners who would be eligible would be the ones who qualified for the state berm at their property but paid to have sand pushed before that berm was constructed.

Although several hundred beachfront lot owners at Holden Beach paid to have sand pushed to protect their homes, Building Inspector Dwight Carroll speculated that only about 15 would qualify for reimbursement.

Ocean Isle Building Inspector

Druid Roberson said even fewer would qualify there. "The ones who would have been eligible were part of the state berm project anyway," he said.

Whatever the number of landowners who qualify, Williams said the state assistance should come as a blessing. "This is something nobody expected so they should be very pleased," he said Monday.

Williams said it's unlikely that the reimbursement checks will be mailed in time for Christmas. Eligible property owners will probably receive their money in January 1990. Most lot owners who hired a contractor to rebuild their dune paid about \$300 per 50-foot-wide lot.

The dollars for the reimbursement program, he said, will be taken out of a \$500,000 state fund for emergency dune construction in the county which still totals more than \$200,000.

Renee Hoffman, spokesperson with the N.C. Department of Crime Control and Public Safety, said state funds for the berms became available following the federal disaster declaration in late September.

"It was an emergency situation and under an emergency situation the state can go in and rebuild the

berms," said Ms. Hoffman. "The berms were needed to prevent further erosion and property damage."

Requests for reimbursement must include the original bill for pushing sand as well as the name, address and telephone number of the contractor. They should also include the address of the property which was threatened, the linear footage of the beachfront where the sand was placed and a statement from the owner saying the work was necessary due to erosion caused by Hugo.

The property owner should indicate the address to which the reimbursement check should be mailed and provide a daytime phone number where he or she can be reached. Once a request for reimbursement is received, an inspection team will verify whether the property qualifies.

Landowners have until Dec. 15 to apply for reimbursement. Claims should be mailed to the N.C. Division of Emergency Management, 116 W. Jones St., Raleigh, N.C., 27603, Attn: Tonia Young (berm).

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# Man Injured In Traffic Mishap

A pedestrian suffered moderate injuries in a traffic accident late Saturday in Calabash, according to Highway Patrol spokesperson Ruby Oakley.

The mishap occurred Saturday at 11:45 p.m., on N.C. 179 inside the Calabash town limits. Driver of the vehicle was William Frank McLean,

18, of Calabash.

Ms. Oakley said the accident followed an argument involving several individuals in a business parking area. Jerry Lynn Nelson, 29, also of Calabash, was hurt when he ran to McLean's 1987 Dodge pickup truck and opened the passenger-side door as the vehicle took off north on

N.C. 179.

Nelson suffered non-incapacitating injuries but did not request emergency medical treatment. Trooper T.W. Caulder reported that he could not determine whether Nelson was struck by the vehicle or was hurt in the fall to the pavement.

No citations were issued in connection with the accident.



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**'We Survived Hugo' Luncheon**

Tuesday, Nov. 28  
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