

AT HOLDEN BEACH

State Promises Relief Along Bumpy Boulevard

BY DOUG RUTTER

The bumpy drive along Ocean Boulevard at Holden Beach should change to smooth sailing before the end of the year.

State transportation officials told town commissioners last week the state plans to repair and resurface at least half of the boulevard this fall and the remainder during the following fiscal year.

Doug Bowers and Jim Cook, division and district engineers with the N.C. Department of Transportation (DOT), met with town officials last Wednesday to discuss improvements along the state road which runs parallel to the shoreline at Holden Beach.

Bowers said the DOT plans to patch the existing pavement, level the road where necessary and top it off with about 1 1/2 inches of asphalt. Due to lack of funds, however, the project will be completed over a period of two fiscal years.

Before hearing the good news last week, town officials grumbled about the condition of the road, which is the major traffic route on the island. They said it has deteriorated over the years under the weight of heavy construction equipment.

Commissioner Kenner Amos said the boulevard hasn't been improved in six or seven years and hasn't been capped in about 10 years. "It's received a lot of abuse since then," he said. "It's getting rough, it's caving in on the sides."

Mayor John Tandy compared the drive along one of the most heavily-used sections of the street to a ride at an amusement park. "Right around the pier you think you're on a roller coaster..." he said. "We just need to do something."

Since resurfacing funds are limited, Bowers said the DOT cannot af-



THIS STRETCH of Ocean Boulevard West at Holden Beach may be part of a three-mile section of the road scheduled to be repaired and resurfaced this fall.

STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

ford to repair the entire six-mile stretch of Ocean Boulevard in one year. Whatever is not completed next fiscal year will be finished in fiscal year 1991-92.

He said the town board will be permitted to suggest which section of the boulevard it would like to see

completed first. Commissioners indicated last week that a top priority will probably be the well-traveled stretch between the bridge and Holden Beach Fishing Pier.

The DOT hopes to accept bids and award a contract for the improvements shortly after funds be-

come available July 1 so work can begin this fall. Bowers said a similar resurfacing project is planned for Beach Drive at Long Beach.

Cook estimated it will cost \$50,000 per mile to repair and resurface Ocean Boulevard. The money will come out of the state's urban resurfacing fund.

While resurfacing of the boulevard is assured, DOT officials were less optimistic about the chances of widening the street to accommodate bicycles, joggers and pedestrians.

Commissioner Amos, who had suggested the widening and the meeting with DOT officials at the town board's last regular session, said adding one or two feet on each side of the street would help. "We're getting a lot more traffic than we were getting in the old days."

Though the state officials promised to look into widening the street, Bowers said the project would be very expensive. All concrete driveways that extend to the edge of the existing road would have to be cut and later repaired if the boulevard was widened.

While he admitted there is little money available, Bowers suggested the town seek funds for a bike path or walkway through the DOT's bicycle program. Holden Beach applied for bike path money several years ago, but didn't receive any.

In other business relating to transportation last week, Cook said the DOT plans to correct drainage problems along the boulevard at Neptune Drive and Blockade Runner.

Also, the town manager reported that a flashing yellow and red traffic signal will be installed on the island at the foot of the bridge as soon as a suitable location is found for a pole.

Cash, Checks Taken From Shallotte Point Business

CRIME REPORT

Cash and checks worth approximately \$1,900 were stolen Sunday from a Shallotte Point store, according to reports on file at the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department.

LeGwin Williams of Village Mart on Village Point Road near Bay Road told sheriff's deputies that the larceny occurred Sunday between 11:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

Williams said a United Carolina Bank bag containing cash, checks, a Master Card slip and two bank books apparently was removed from under the store counter when he was briefly called away from the front of the business by a customer.

Break-Ins Reported

The sheriff's department Monday was investigating several break-ins reported over the weekend.

Ingemar Johansson Hankins of Route 2, Bolivia, told authorities that his mobile home on Randolphville Road just off U.S. 17 was entered between 7 p.m. Friday and 8:15 a.m. Saturday. The intruder pried open a back door.

Stolen were a Colortyme console videocassette recorder, Pioneer stereo, Sanyo compact disc player, Whirlpool microwave oven, Zenith 19-inch color television, Fender amplifier, two Fisher stereo speakers, AT&T cordless telephone, two 30.06-caliber rifles, .38-caliber revolver and a South Brunswick High School class ring. The property was worth \$5,130.

In another break-in, Johnny Matthews of Fairmont reported that someone entered his mobile home in Styron's Landing subdivision off

Seashore Road by prying open a front door. The break-in happened between Jan. 6 and 1:30 p.m. Sunday.

Missing items included a General Electric 19-inch color television and Hotpoint microwave oven. Theft loss was listed at \$740. Also, damages were estimated at \$190.

Jack Aubry Tucker of Raeford told officers that the storage shed of his vacation home in Seaside Hideaway Estates was broken into between Nov. 19, 1989, and noon Sunday. A lock was pried off the shed door. Fishing equipment worth \$355 was taken.

Jimmy Helms of Asheboro reported a break-in at his summer house in the Brown's Landing area near Holden Beach. The break-in, which was discovered Friday evening, happened within the previous two weeks.

An intruder pried open the back door of the house and removed an Agfa camera and a sword; the items were worth \$150. Approximately \$100 in damage also was done to an antique desk.

Car Stolen

The sheriff's department Monday also was on the lookout for a car that was stolen Saturday from a Leland area residence.

Connie Sue Owens of Route 1, Leland, said her 1984 Chevrolet Cavalier was taken from where it was parked in her yard between 10 p.m. Friday and 8:30 a.m. Saturday. The car was worth \$4,000.

'SOS' Group To Discuss Sludge

A.R. Rubin, a bio- and agri-engineering specialist at N.C. State University, will be the guest speaker at the February meeting of the "Save Our Shellfish" organization. The meeting is set for Friday at 7:30 p.m. at the Lockwood Folly Community Building.

caused, in general, by stormwater runoff and septic tank effluent.

For more information on Friday's meeting, contact SOS President Annie Smigiel at 842-6758.

Holden Board Denies Bathhouse Variance

BY DOUG RUTTER

A Holden Beach campground manager said he will set up restroom facilities in an existing building after being denied a variance Monday that would have allowed construction of a new bathhouse in violation of flood elevation code.

The Holden Beach Zoning Board of Adjustment voted 3-2 Monday to grant a variance requested by the manager of Holden Beach Family Campground. He wanted to rebuild the bathhouse destroyed in Hurricane Hugo without meeting elevation requirements. However, since a four-fifths majority is needed to grant a variance, the request was denied.

The fear that Holden Beach's participation in the National Flood Insurance Program could be jeopardized by granting the variance proved to be the main reason for denial.

Campground manager Gil Bass had asked for the variance from local flood elevation rules, which are identical to federal regulations. The code would have required that the bathhouse be raised about nine feet off the ground on pilings. Bass wanted to build the structure two or three feet above ground level to provide easier access for elderly and handicapped campers.

Board of adjustment members Allan Dameron, Graham King and Martin Feldt voted in favor of granting the variance, while Georgia Langley and Alfred Bell opposed it.

Immediately after the vote, Bass announced that he intended to build bathhouse facilities—commodes, sinks and showers—inside an existing, ground-level building next to the campground on Ocean Boulevard West. The facilities will be set up inside the Holden Beach Fishing

"If something happened in the flood insurance program, I do not want to be held responsible."

—Georgia Langley, member Holden Beach Board of Adjustment

Pier building, which Bass also manages, or a smaller structure east of the pier shop.

About 20 Holden Beach residents, including three town commissioners, turned out for Monday's 45-minute variance hearing at town hall.

The hearing had been postponed two weeks earlier when it was discovered that granting a variance might affect the status of the federal flood insurance program at Holden Beach.

Bass had requested the delay due to conflicting statements from federal flood insurance officials regarding what effect the variance could have at Holden Beach. He pointed out Monday, "Dealing with the federal government, you still don't have an exact answer."

Throughout this week's meeting, however, board members referred to a five-page document from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) on guidelines for local variances.

After a lengthy discussion and a few minutes of silence Monday, Dameron made the motion to grant the variance, which would have allowed Bass to build a bathhouse four feet above the ground.

Dameron based his position on a Jan. 19 letter from C. Richard Mayson, chief of the natural hazards branch with FEMA. The letter stated in part that "patterns of variances and communities that issue a large

number of variances could be subject to enforcement action..."

Building Inspector Dwight Carroll testified at the hearing that he is aware of only two variances the town has granted in recent years and that FEMA officials never objected to them.

Said Dameron, "If the only thing we're going to do is quote (the rules) verbatim, there's no need for this board."

King supported Dameron's position, stating that the purpose of the board of adjustment is to provide relief to property owners in cases of hardship. He pointed out that the town had received no firm response from FEMA whether the variance in question would affect the flood insurance program at Holden Beach.

Also basing her opinion on the contents of the FEMA letter, Mrs. Langley was the most vocal opponent of granting the variance.

She argued that the town had received nothing in writing stating that the flood insurance program on the island would not be affected by a variance. "If something happened in the flood insurance program, I do not want to be held responsible,"

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LOST! Gray Cockatiel

with yellow cheeks flew the coop Saturday from Varnamtown. He was last seen in Maple Creek area Monday. He can say a few words and does several whistles. He also calls the cat. If you see or hear him, please call **Tammie, 754-6890 or 842-9231.**

Thanks and keep your eye in the sky!