

DREDGING, RENOURISHMENT FUNDS POSSIBLE

Army Corps Of Engineers To Resume Damage Assessment Study

BY DORI COSGROVE GURGANUS
New funding means the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers will resume a study begun earlier to assess damage inflicted at Ocean Isle Beach by Hurricane Hugo.

A newly-constituted board of commissioners heard the good news at their first official gathering Tuesday morning. New to the board are Commissioners Janet Sanders and Kendall Suh, who were sworn in shortly before the meeting along with returning Commissioner Debbie Fox and Mayor Betty Williamson.

Mrs. Williamson shared a letter to commissioners she received from Lawrence Saunders, chief of the Planning Division in the Corps' Wilmington District office.

In the letter, Saunders announced that the new 1992 fiscal year federal budget includes continuing authorization of funds for the study to "consider navigation improvements for Shallotte Inlet," Saunders wrote.

He added that he would contact Mayor Williamson in January 1992 "regarding the progress of the study."

After Hugo made landfall north of Charleston, S.C., Sept. 21, 1989, Ocean Isle officials were notified that they could request a study to determine the need to dredge Shallotte Inlet and repair beach erosion on the island's east end caused by the storm.

Ocean Isle Beach applied for the study and was approved. However, the study was halted with the Corps citing a lack of funds in the fiscal year 91 budget.

If the results of the study determine the need, the Corps could decide to dredge the inlet using federal funds, which would make the project considerably more affordable than it now stands.

Mayor Williamson requested that each commissioner be assigned a specific congressman or senator to contact by letter concerning the need for assistance and possible federal funding.

"We can kill two birds with one shot."

—Odell Williamson, developer
On Shallotte Inlet dredging

Island developer Odell Williamson said to the group that he was pleased that the study could be finished. He said it would benefit the community if the results of the study facilitated the dredging of Shallotte Inlet and the addition of extra sand to the east end of the island.

"We can kill two birds with one shot," Williamson said, explaining that from navigation and erosion aspects, the projects should be combined into one effort: dredging sand from the inlet and placing it on the eroding east end.

He agreed with the mayor that members of the U.S. Congress need to be made aware of the need for assistance in the project. He added that "Congress looks at creating jobs in these cases," and that lawmakers would have sympathy if seafood industry boats could not navigate the inlet.

"We've got a good case," concluded Williamson.

Fire Inspections

Town Building Inspector Druiced Roberson reported that the N.C. Building Code Council was meeting Tuesday to hear arguments that could support mandatory fire inspections by all municipalities.

That possibility is being considered in part because of a recent fire at a Hamlet food processing plant that had not been inspected. The results of the council's quarterly meeting may be the first step in mandating town fire inspections, Roberson said.

Ocean Isle has more than 120 structures that would require fire in-

spections and inclusion under town guidelines if the decision becomes law, he added. Also, an inspection schedule would be due from towns by April.

Roberson recommended that he meet as soon as possible with the Ocean Isle Beach Property Owners Association (POA) to determine an inspection schedule once the results of Tuesday's council meeting are known.

Other Business

In other business, commissioners:

■Reappointed Jim Hesser, whose last term recently expired, to another three-year term as head of the Ocean Isle Beach ABC Board.

■Heard from Commissioner Debbie Fox that the search for recyclable waste pick-up has not been successful. She said that she had asked a service in Bolivia about recycling pick-up, but that company "has not done anything."

Ms. Fox said that finding a recycling service will "take a cooperative effort" on the part of several communities and that she is also waiting to hear what the county is going to do about the matter.

■Heard Mayor Williamson recognize the service of Gladys Goldsmith to the town. Mrs. Goldsmith received a plaque at the Thanksgiving weekend meeting of the Ocean Isle POA. She has retired from the POA beautification committee, with Mrs. Sanders and Mayor Williamson assuming that responsibility.

■Heard Police Chief Pritchard report that the town's crime prevention project was underway in the community. The police department has begun engraving appliances and valuable household items for identification at no charge. The program will continue through the winter months, said the chief. Ms. Fox said the program is "being very well re-

ceived."
■Heard from Mayor Williamson that the Ocean Isle POA donated \$6,000 to the police department for the First Responders Program and for general funding of the force. Chief Pritchard said that several radios had been purchased with the

money.
■Heard a request from the mayor that Ms. Fox look into "sprucing up" or repainting the town welcome sign at the corner of N.C. 179 and the causeway.

■Called an executive session to discuss personnel matters with the new

members of the board. Mayor Williamson said that since this was the first meeting of the new membership of the board of commissioners, some questions needed to be cleared up about personnel. No action was taken. The board will meet again Jan. 14.



BRUNSWICK COUNTY MAGISTRATE Cheryl Hughes (far left) administers the oath of office to (from left) re-elected Ocean Isle Beach Commissioner Debbie Fox and newly-elected Commissioners Janet Sanders and Kendall Suh in a quiet ceremony Monday morning. A few minutes earlier, Betty Williamson was sworn in for a third full term as mayor.

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Gas Spill Cleaned Up At Ocean Isle

An oil spill rumored to have occurred at Ocean Isle Beach recently was actually a gasoline spill at a local marina.

Odell Williamson, developer and utilities commissioner for Ocean Isle Beach, said Tuesday that the spill involved a single tank and that the gasoline was cleaned out of the water in the canal behind Ocean Isle Marina.

Williamson said he had heard the rumors, too, and that residents could be sure that "we've cleaned it up."

The spill was not serious enough to warrant contacting state environmental officials, he said.

Williamson said he intends to monitor the area to make sure that all the gasoline is gone. "We want to make sure we got it all," he said.

"We haven't done anything illegal," Williamson said. "If there's one person who wants a clean Ocean Isle, it's Odell Williamson."

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