

Board of Commissioners Expedites Portion of Coast Guard Road Flood Water Project

Moffatt & Nichol, the Town's consulting engineers, presented a comprehensive update on the status of the Coast Guard Road Flood Water Project at the January 8 special meeting of the Board of Commissioners. After discussion, the Board directed Moffatt & Nichol and the Town Manager to expedite a portion of the project in order to provide earlier flood relief to the most impacted neighborhoods and also to provide a real-world test of the effectiveness of the Town's planned solution.

The original overall plan for the Coast Guard Road Flood Water Project involved the construction of eight pumps at various locations along the Coast Guard Road corridor that would pump ground water and surface storm water runoff to the Emerald Isle Woods tract located across from Sea Dunes Subdivision. Planned pump locations include Island Circle, two locations in Land's End, two locations in Spinnaker's Reach, Conch Court, Sea Dunes Drive, and Deer Horn Drive. The overall plan was for the project to be constructed all at once, with construction expected to begin in Fall 2004 and continue until June 2005.

At the January 8 meeting, Moffatt & Nichol recommended that the Town adjust the project scope to include the pumping of groundwater-only from the planned pump locations, for two main reasons. First, permitting agencies have recently indicated that the Town may be required to mitigate wetland impacts at Emerald Isle Woods if surface storm water runoff pumped to the site does not meet certain water quality standards. Recently collected samples indicate that the groundwater is essentially pure water that will have less impact on the receiving wetlands at Emerald Isle Woods than surface storm water runoff, and the groundwater-only approach will ease the permitting process and allow the Town to avoid potential mitigation requirements. Second, the use of groundwater-only pumps will allow the Town to be more proactive in its pumping efforts; i.e., drawing down the groundwater in these areas in advance would provide more capacity for storm water to infiltrate quickly into the ground.

The Board concurred with the groundwater-only approach, but indicated its interest in a real-world test of the effectiveness of this approach prior to abandoning the idea of pumping surface storm water runoff from the planned pump locations. Moffatt & Nichol indicated their support for a phased-in approach, and recent ongoing flooding problems in the Deer Horn Dunes Drive and Conch Court areas make these locations ideal for a first phase of construction. Additionally, there is sufficient upland area on the Emerald Isle Woods site to discharge waters from these two pumps, thus no federal and state permits are necessary to proceed with this work immediately. Appropriate federal and state agency personnel have been notified as a courtesy, and have indicated that the Town can proceed with this approach. Minimal site modifications to the Emerald Isle Woods site are necessary for this first phase. Detailed design work on the Deer Horn Dunes Drive and Conch Court pumps is currently underway, and the bid process will occur later this spring. We are hopeful that construction of these two pumps and associated piping will begin in early summer.

The Board of Commissioners also directed Moffatt & Nichol and the Town Manager to proceed with permitting for the overall project, with two additional considerations. First, the Town may add a ninth pump to the overall project scope. The Fawn Drive area will be considered either as a supplemental or replacement pump location. Second, Moffatt & Nichol has determined that it appears feasible to utilize the Cook property (a 3.2 acre tract on the inside of the "bend" at the end of Coast Guard Road) to receive waters pumped from the Island Circle area, thus reducing the distance that these waters would need to be pumped and reducing the cost of associated piping. Overall permitting will be delayed somewhat in order to assess the results of the Deer Horn Drive and Conch Court pumps, but these results will provide important guidance to the Town about the effectiveness of the groundwater-only approach, whether or not to include surface storm water runoff in the permit application, and the overall receiving capacity of the Emerald Isle Woods site – including the need for emergency discharge to Bogue Sound and the need for

potentially costly sheet piling installation. This phased-in approach can be accomplished with no additional impact on the Town's budget, and may ultimately reduce or eliminate the issuance of debt for this project.

The Town continues to seek an effective solution to the flooding problems along the Coast Guard Road corridor, and is making significant progress. The construction and implementation of the two pumps on Deer Horn Drive and Conch Court will provide much needed relief to these areas in a shorter time frame, and will also be helpful to complete the final design of the overall project in the most cost-effective manner.

The Board of Commissioners has designated Commissioners John Wootten and Bob Isenhour to be the lead Commissioners for the Coast Guard Road Flood Water Project, and interested citizens are encouraged to discuss this issue with them and/or Town Manager Frank Rush.

Next Phase of NC 58 Sidewalk Construction Set to Begin

Construction of the next segment of sidewalk along NC 58 will begin in late February / early March and should be complete no later than Easter weekend. New 6 ft. wide sidewalks will be constructed along the north side of NC 58 from Live Oak Street to the Town Hall complex, and along the north side of NC 58 from Eagles to Bogue Inlet Drive. This project is being funded primarily by NCDOT (80%), with a 20% local match supplied by the Town. The completion of this work will result in a continuous sidewalk from Eagles to the Town Hall complex on the north side of NC 58. Future sidewalks will be constructed on the south side of NC 58 as funds become available.

Board of Commissioners and Planning Board Change Regular Meeting Times

The Emerald Isle Board of Commissioners holds its regular monthly meetings on the second Tuesday of each month in Town Hall. Effective February 10, 2004, the regular monthly meetings will begin at **6:00 pm**.

The Emerald Isle Planning Board holds its regular monthly meetings on the fourth Monday of each month, also in Town Hall. Effective February 23, 2004, the regular monthly Planning Board meetings will also begin at **6:00 pm**.

Planning and Inspections Department Moves to Old Library Location

Effective February 2, the Planning and Inspections Department has moved to the old Emerald Isle Library location on the west side of the Town Hall building. The 4-person department moved from cramped quarters in two offices in the center section of the Town Hall building to a new 1,000+ sq. ft. space with individual offices, a small conference room, plan review room, and a more efficient counter-area and customer waiting area. This new location will enable us to better serve our customers and provides a better work environment for our staff.

Sign-Up for Our E-Mail Newsletter!

The Town of Emerald Isle is pleased to offer our residents, property owners, and visitors an e-mail newsletter that is published at least once monthly, and on an as-needed basis other times throughout the year. The Town strives to keep everyone informed about Town activities, services, and projects, and the e-mail newsletter is one more way to stay in touch with what's going on in our beautiful town. The newsletter was an especially helpful tool for the Town to inform out-of-town property owners about Hurricane Isabel as it approached, while it passed by, and in the aftermath. To date, over 750 people have signed up for this service. To sign-up, visit www.emeraldisle-nc.org and click on the link in the top left-hand corner to sign up.