

Island Review / Emerald Tidings
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FEMA Revises Town Flood Insurance Rate Maps Effective July 2003

The Town of Emerald Isle recently received revised Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRM). These revised maps are scheduled to take effect in July 2003 and have important ramifications for some property owners in Emerald Isle.

For the most part, the new maps are very similar to the current maps. There are, however, two main areas of Town that are affected by the July 2003 map revisions. First, all oceanfront properties will now be included in a V-zone, which commands the highest flood insurance rates and mandates specific building standards, including a requirement that all building plans be engineered. The area primarily along Ocean View Drive is currently in an X zone (which does not require flood insurance or mandate flood damage prevention standards), but the July 2003 revisions place the oceanfront properties in this area in a V-zone. With this change, all of the town's oceanfront properties, some of the second row, and in some areas as far north as Emerald Drive (Hwy 58) will be included in a V-zone.

The second area affected by the July 2003 map revisions is the Coast Guard Road corridor. FEMA has assigned considerably more of the properties north and south of Coast Guard Road to an AE zone. These properties are currently in an X zone (which does not require flood insurance or mandate flood damage prevention standards). The AE zone requires that any new construction be 2' above base flood elevation (BFE) for habitable space. The AE zone also requires any construction of new space at or below the BFE to utilize flow-through venting equal to one square inch for each square foot of floor space. Flood insurance will also be required on structures located in an AE zone.

If you own property in one of the areas slated for inclusion in a flood zone in July 2003, and do not currently have flood insurance, it is highly recommended that you obtain insurance as soon as possible. If you purchase flood insurance now, and are not in a flood zone (i.e., you're currently in an X zone), you will be able to take advantage of the lower X zone rate. You will then be able to continue paying this lower, X zone rate after the new maps are effective in July 2003. If you do not buy insurance before the revised flood maps go into effect on July 16, 2003, your premiums will be considerably higher.

At present, the Town has attained a Class 8 under the FEMA guidelines, and this rating entitles our property owners to a 10% discount on their insurance premiums as long as the FEMA guidelines are followed. If the Town fails to implement these guidelines, it will no longer be able to participate in the program; therefore, it is imperative that everyone cooperates to keep the rates lower and everyone's property much safer.

Please contact the Town of Emerald Isle Planning and Inspections Department at 252.354.3338 or at ciangus@emeraldisle-nc.org or jtaylor@emeraldisle-nc.org for more information about the new flood insurance rate maps and how the latest revisions affect your property.

Town Applies for Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Grant

At its January 14 meeting, the Board of Commissioners approved a Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) grant application to develop a public park at the Coast Guard Road storm water site. The total estimated cost of the park project is \$500,000, of which \$250,000 would be funded by the PARTF grant, with the remaining \$250,000 funded by the Town.

Grant awards will be announced in May and July 2003, and if the Town is awarded a grant, we will begin design work on several park amenities, including

- Gravel road construction of Amberjack Drive for full park access
- Construction of 1.1 miles of 8 foot wide nature trails throughout the site
- A public parking area
- A gazebo with picnic amenities near the north end of the park
- A small maintenance / restroom facility
- A natural canoe / kayak launch area to Bogue Sound
- An 8 foot wide wooden walkway over the marsh for sound access
- Other park amenities, including picnic tables along trails, trashcans, etc.

If the grant is awarded, the local match will be included in the planned financing agreement for the construction of the Coast Guard Road Storm Water Project. We project that the Town can service both the debt for the Storm Water Project and the park grant match with funds currently earmarked in the Town's budget.

As noted above, grant awards will not be announced until later this year, and if the Town is successful it will take several months to design and build the park amenities. In an effort to make the Coast Guard Road storm water site open for public use in the near future, inmate labor recently cleared small areas to widen the planned access road and cleared the trails. An opening celebration is being scheduled for later this spring, and the park will be opened for limited public use soon after.

NC 58 Sidewalk Project Out for Bid; Construction Expected to Begin in March

Bids for the NC 58 Sidewalk project are currently being solicited, and the Board of Commissioners will consider awarding a construction contract in late February or early March. The base bid for the project involves the construction of new sidewalks along the east side of Bogue Inlet Drive near Jordan's Seafood and the north side of NC 58 east to Live Oak Street. Alternates for which bids are also being requested include extension of the sidewalk east to the Community Center and west to the Eagles store. If sufficient funds are available, the Board will consider these alternatives at the time of contract award.

Construction is expected to begin in early / mid March, with a goal of completing the project prior to the Easter holiday weekend. This project represents the first phase of a long-term goal to install sidewalks throughout the commercial district. The project is being funded with State Powell Bill funds distributed to the Town and a \$30,000 grant from the NC Department of Transportation.

Town Adopts New Ordinance Regarding Horses on the Beach

After considerable discussion, and meaningful public input, the Board of Commissioners approved a new ordinance regulating horses on the beach at its January 14 meeting.

The new ordinance allows horses on the beach only between October 1 and March 31 (or the Thursday before Easter weekend, whichever comes first), as is the case with motor vehicles. Horse riders are also now required to remove horse feces from the beach strand, as is the case with dogs on the beach.

Horse riders can access the beach at three locations only – the "dog-leg" vehicle access on Ocean Drive near mile marker 15, the vehicle access at the terminus of Black Skimmer Drive, and the emergency vehicle access near Doe Drive. Horse riders are permitted to on town streets only to travel from a public parking area or a private residence to the nearest authorized access. Otherwise, horses are not permitted on town streets.

Cooperation with the new ordinance is appreciated. Violators are subject to a \$50 civil fine for each violation.

