

Emerald Tidings / Island Review – June 16, 2004 Print Edition

Special Saturday Board of Commissioners Workshop Meeting – Beach Driving Regulations To Be Discussed

The Board of Commissioners has scheduled a special Saturday workshop meeting to discuss the Town's beach driving regulations and receive input from interested residents, property owners, and visitors. This workshop meeting will be held on Saturday, July 17 at 10:00 am at the Emerald Isle Town Hall, and is intentionally scheduled on a Saturday to allow out-of-town property owners and visitors to attend and express their opinions to the Board.

The Town's current ordinance allows beach driving between October 1 and March 31 annually, unless Easter falls on a date earlier than March 31, in which case no beach driving is allowed after the Thursday prior to Easter. (Commercial fishermen are exempt from this restriction.) A Town permit is required to drive on the beach, and permits are \$40 for residents and property owners, and \$80 for non-residents and non-property owners. The permit fee is \$20 and \$40, respectively, for persons aged 65-70, and is free for those over age 70 and those who are handicapped.

Several residents and property owners have expressed an interest in extending the beach driving season to also include time in April and September. A request has also been made to reduce the permit fees by 50%.

FY 2004-05 Budget – Tax Rate Decrease!

The Board of Commissioners is poised to adopt the FY 04-05 budget at the regular Town meeting on June 8.

Town Manager Frank Rush presented the Recommended Budget to the Board at the May 11 regular meeting, and recommended a 16.5 cent General Fund tax rate, a 1-cent decrease from the FY 03-04 rate of 17.5 cents. The Board reviewed the Recommended Budget at two workshop meetings in May, and made several adjustments, but these adjustments did not impact the recommended General Fund tax rate of 16.5 cents. The Board is very pleased to be in a position to decrease the General Fund tax rate to 16.5 cents.

The FY 04-05 budget relies primarily on additional sales tax revenues and expenditure controls to reduce the General Fund tax rate. The FY 04-05 budget does include funding to continue current services and programs, and also includes funding (\$340,000) for the construction of the initial phase of the Coast Guard Road Flood Water Project (scheduled to begin in July). Funding is also included to match a proposed NCDOT grant to extend a bicycle path along the south side of NC 58, and also to continue sidewalk construction on the north side of NC 58.

The FY 04-05 budget does include a \$12 annual increase in the Town's solid waste fee to cover increasing waste collection costs and disposal volumes. The Town's annual fee for FY 04-05 would be \$147, or the equivalent of \$12.25 per month. This fee is still considerably lower than many other municipalities' fee and private sector fees.

For more information about the FY 04-05 budget, please visit www.emeraldisle-nc.org.

“Beach Jive After Five” Concert Series at the Western Ocean Regional Access

The Emerald Isle Parks and Recreation Department has initiated a new, free concert series at the Western Ocean Regional Access. “Beach Jive After Five” concerts will be held on the third Thursday of June, July, August, and September from 5:30 pm to 7:00 pm. Upcoming dates are June 17, July 15, August 19, and September 16.

The concerts are held at the main gazebo, and attendees are welcome to bring lawn chairs, snacks, soft drinks, etc. The first concert was held on May 26, and Kitty West performed for a crowd of approximately 60 people on a beautiful early summer evening. Come on out and enjoy the music and fun!

For more information about specific performers, visit www.emeraldisle-nc.org/eiprd as the concert date approaches.

New Public Beach Access Parking Lot – Station Street

The Town will open a new public beach access parking lot at the corner of Station Street and Coast Guard Road in late June. The land for this area was acquired with the help of a grant from the NC Division of Coastal Management, and the Town is currently working on site improvements. The new parking lot is located approximately two blocks from the Town's public beach accesses at Wyndtree Drive and Channel Drive, and is the closest parking available near The Point. The new lot will have space for 15 cars, will be nicely landscaped, and will also have a portable toilet facility.

Western Phase Beach Nourishment Easements Due ASAP

The Town is on track to construct the Bogue Inlet Channel Erosion Response Project and Western Phase Beach Nourishment Project this fall. The project entails the relocation of the main channel in Bogue Inlet approximately 3,500 linear feet west of its current location, and the use of dredge spoils to nourish approximately 4 miles of oceanfront beach.

The Town Attorney has mailed necessary easements to all oceanfront property owners between Columbus Square subdivision and The Point, and these easements need to be signed and returned as soon as possible. To date, the Town has received approximately 70% of the nearly 400 easements required, and must secure the remaining easements in the near future. Failure to return a signed easement will result in the initiation of condemnation proceedings.

The oceanfront property easements allow the Town to place new sand on the beach in front of oceanfront properties, guarantee that the public will be able to utilize the flat beach in the same manner that it now uses the flat beach, and also allow temporary construction equipment and piping to be placed on the beach during construction. These easements do not allow the public to traverse the property of oceanfront property owners to access the beach from the nearby streets.

Please return the necessary easements as soon as possible so that the Town can complete this important project in the most efficient and inexpensive manner. If you have questions, please contact the law office of Town Attorney Richard Stanley at 252-728-7200. Thank you for your cooperation!

Long-Time Town Employee Carol Angus To Retire June 30

Carol Angus, Assistant Planning Director, will retire on June 30 after 20 years of loyal service and dedication to the Town of Emerald Isle.

Carol has served the Town in many capacities, with the vast majority in the Planning and Inspections Department. Carol has worked as a receptionist, permit technician, as department director, and assistant department director, and has provided excellent service to the residents, property owners, contractors, and real estate professionals in Emerald Isle. Her contributions to the Town are numerous, and she will be greatly missed! If you get a chance, stop by to say goodbye to Carol in the Planning and Inspections office at Town Hall before she leaves!

All of us at the Town of Emerald Isle wish Carol the best!