

Town of Emerald Isle

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Emerald Tidings / Island Review – June 21, 2006 Print Edition

Town Seeks State Financial Assistance to Acquire Bogue Inlet Pier and Remove Ocean Storm Water Outfalls

The Town of Emerald Isle is actively seeking to partner with the State of North Carolina to purchase Bogue Inlet Pier for perpetual public use and remove existing storm water outfalls that discharge to the Atlantic Ocean. The Pier and surrounding properties are currently under contract to be sold to a private real estate development firm with plans to redevelop an approximately 15-acre site. The Town is seeking to purchase only the actual Pier and sufficient land to maintain a parking lot to meet visitation demands.

Bogue Inlet Pier is the last remaining ocean fishing pier in Emerald Isle, and one of only two remaining on Bogue Banks. The financial reality in today's coastal real estate market is that ocean fishing piers are likely to be lost forever unless a public entity acquires and operates these facilities. The Town of Emerald Isle recognizes this reality, and is taking proactive steps to ensure the perpetual existence of an ocean fishing pier in Emerald Isle. Similarly, the preservation of North Carolina's outstanding coastal water quality is of paramount importance, and the Town continues its efforts to be a leader in preserving coastal water quality.

The Town is pursuing multiple initiatives to acquire Bogue Inlet Pier and remove the existing storm water outfalls. First, the Town has submitted a grant application to the North Carolina Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF) to purchase Bogue Inlet Pier and remove existing storm water outfalls. The Town would utilize grant funds to acquire the property, remove outfalls that drain a vast impervious area, and construct a new environmentally-friendly parking lot to serve Pier and beach visitors. The CWMTF grant application was submitted on June 1, and the Town expects to learn the results of the grant application process later this year. The Town is also partnering with the North Carolina Aquarium to secure authorization and appropriations from the General Assembly to ensure the perpetual existence of a public fishing pier in Emerald Isle. Any direct appropriations would supplant or supplement any grant funds obtained, and/or be used to improve the durability of the pier structure. In either case, the Town would convey Bogue Inlet Pier to the North Carolina Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores to operate as a satellite facility of the Aquarium. The addition of Bogue Inlet Pier to the NC Aquarium system would assist in achieving a goal of many to maintain one public ocean fishing pier in the northern, central, and southern coastal areas of NC. A similar arrangement has resulted in the acquisition of the former Jennette's Pier in Nags Head, and a southern ocean fishing pier is also envisioned in the future.

"Ocean fishing piers are an essential part of the coastal NC experience, and we want to do whatever we can to preserve Bogue Inlet Pier for current and future generations", noted Mayor Art Schools. "For many North Carolinians, fishing piers provide the most convenient and perhaps the only access to the ocean for recreational fishing. Ocean fishing piers are also key public beach access and parking locations, and are vital to ensuring that the citizens of North Carolina can enjoy the public beach," added Mayor Schools. "We

look forward to partnering with the State to preserve Bogue Inlet Pier and improve water quality. We also welcome the opportunity to explore other viable options to achieve these goals."

The Town anticipates a productive and cooperative relationship with the potential new owners of the properties in the Bogue Inlet Pier area. The Town will be working hard to ensure that the proposed redevelopment is sensitive to the natural environment, consistent with the Town's Land Use Plan and applicable development regulations, enhances Emerald Isle's aesthetics and sense of community, and is financially viable for the developers.

The Town believes the convergence of these issues represents a unique opportunity to preserve the Pier, improve water quality, and create an exciting new development in Emerald Isle. The Town is working hard to seize this opportunity, for both Emerald Isle and North Carolina.

Website Launched to Gauge Public Support to Save Bogue Inlet Pier – www.saveourpier.com

Mayor Art Schools and local residents Dr. Bogus and Dave Johnson have launched a website, www.saveourpier.com, that includes an on-line petition where interested citizens can show their support for efforts to save Bogue Inlet Pier. The website has been up and running since May 22, and as of June 7 had more than 6,500 online signatures.

Make a Donation to the NC Aquarium Society to Help Insure the Perpetual Existence of a Public Fishing Pier in Emerald Isle

As noted above, the Town has entered into a partnership with NC Aquariums to insure the perpetual existence of a public fishing pier in Emerald Isle. Emerald Isle seeks to become the location of the State's central coast public fishing pier, either through the acquisition and donation of Bogue Inlet Pier to the NC Aquariums or through future efforts and activities.

You can help this effort by making a donation to this cause! The NC Aquarium Society is now accepting contributions earmarked specifically for a public ocean fishing pier in Emerald Isle. Please send your tax deductible contribution, in any amount, to:

North Carolina Aquarium Society
Attention – Emerald Isle Pier Project
417 N. Blount Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

Please include a notation on your check that indicates that the donation is earmarked for the "Emerald Isle Pier Project". All contributors will receive a letter acknowledging their contribution.

Phase II of NC 58 Bicycle Path Now Complete

The Town recently completed a new .6 mile segment of bicycle path along NC 58 through the center of Town, and the new path is already experiencing heavy use! The new Phase II path connects to the 1.4 mile long Phase I path completed in 2005. The result is a continuous 2-mile, 10 ft. wide asphalt bicycle path connecting Black Skimmer Drive and Coast Guard Road. The new path now makes it possible to travel on a bicycle, walk, or run from the 3000 block all the way to The Point without ever having to get on NC 58.

The new path enhances bicycling, walking, and running opportunities for our residents, property owners, and visitors, and greatly enhances the safety and aesthetics of the area. This \$175,000 project was primarily funded by a grant from the NC Department of Transportation. The Town is pleased to offer sidewalks and bicycle paths, and has plans for more in the future!



Western Ocean Regional Access Parking Improvements Complete

The Town recently completed significant improvements to the parking area at the Western Ocean Regional Access (WORA) located off of Islander Drive. The parking area has been paved, new storm water management features have been installed, and additional fencing and landscaped have been installed.

This \$200,000 project was funded primarily with a grant from the NC Division of Coastal Management. Carteret County also contributed to the project, with the balance paid for by the Town of Emerald Isle. The improvements have greatly improved aesthetics, storm water control, and the organization of parking spaces. The WORA is open daily from sunrise to sunset, and is free to the public!



Town Fireworks Display – July 4 at Bogue Inlet Pier

The Town's annual Independence Day fireworks display, co-sponsored by Bogue Inlet Pier, will be held on Tuesday, July 4 beginning at 9:30 pm. Fireworks will be set off from the end of Bogue Inlet Pier, in the 8500 block of Emerald Isle. Come on out and enjoy the fun!