

## **Emerald Tidings / Island Review – November 17, 2004 Print Edition**

### **NC Coastal Resources Commission Certifies Town's Land Use Plan**

At its October 28 meeting, the NC Coastal Resources Commission (CRC) certified the Town's 2004 CAMA Land Use Plan. Several members of the CRC praised the Town's plan, recognizing the hard work of all involved in the development of the plan, the outstanding level of public participation, and the Town's efforts to insure that the Town continues to develop in a responsible manner.

The central theme throughout the 2004 CAMA Land Use Plan process was the retention of Emerald Isle's "small town atmosphere". Everyone involved in the planning process recognizes what a great place Emerald Isle already is, and everyone expressed a strong desire to maintain and enhance our "small town atmosphere". All of the formal policies included in the 2004 CAMA Land Use Plan are consistent with the continuation of Emerald Isle's "small-town atmosphere".

A complete copy of the 2004 CAMA Land Use Plan is available at [www.emeraldisle-nc.org](http://www.emeraldisle-nc.org) (click on "Planning Board" on the left side of the page) or at the Town's Planning and Inspections Department. Here's a brief summary of some of the facts and policies included in the plan:

#### FACTS

- According to the 2000 census, approximately 68% of Emerald Isle's housing units are single family or duplex units. When you add in mobile homes, this percentage increases to 86%.
- Between 2000 and 2002, 237 of the 273 total new housing units constructed were either single-family homes or duplexes. In that 3-year period, only a total of 6 multi-family residential buildings were constructed.
- The Town's current population estimate is approximately 3,700 full time residents, and 35,900 seasonal residents, for a total of 39,600 in the peak summer population. These figures are projected to increase to 5,300 full-time residents and 42,400 seasonal residents in the year 2023, which yields a peak summer population of 48,000 projected for 2023.
- Commercial and institutional zoned areas represent only 6.6 % of the total acreage zoned in Emerald Isle. The remaining 93.4% is either zoned for residential purposes, or is in right of ways, protected areas, or under public ownership.
- There is less than a total of 660 vacant acres left in Emerald Isle, and only 60 of these acres are located in commercial zoning districts.
- There are only 7 tracts of vacant land in Emerald Isle that are greater than 5 acres in size.

#### POLICIES

- The 2004 CAMA Land Use Plan maintains all existing building height limits (35-50 feet depending on the type of use and type of roof).
- The Plan supports beach nourishment and the Bogue Inlet channel relocation project as the preferred method of addressing coastal erosion in Emerald Isle.
- The Plan calls for enhanced public access and parking to the ocean and sound.
- The Plan calls for the establishment of a wide system of bicycle paths and sidewalks.
- The Plan does not support the widening of NC 58, and it supports the construction of a 3<sup>rd</sup> bridge to Bogue Banks near the center of the island.
- The Plan calls for the rezoning of most RMH zoned properties (RMH allows multi-family residential land uses) to the R-2 zoning classification (R-2 allows only single-family and duplex).
- The Plan calls for the development of an "identifiable" commercial core that serves a "town center" or "true

downtown" area.

- The Plan calls for the addition of street trees on public right of ways and additional landscaping for private parking areas.
- The Plan supports the formal establishment and preservation of the "Gateway" area near the Emerald Isle bridge.
- The Plan opposes the construction of a large scale hotel complex (greater than 100 rooms), but supports the development and/or redevelopment of smaller scale hotels and motels.
- The Plan includes several strategies to maintain and enhance water quality in the ocean and Bogue Sound, including the application of storm water management ordinances, low density development patterns, and efforts to reduce runoff to the ocean and sound.
- The Plan calls for continued preservation of valuable natural areas.

These facts and policies illustrate that Emerald Isle has already developed in a manner that reflects a "small-town atmosphere", and also illustrates that the Town's definitive plan is to continue to develop and enhance its "small-town atmosphere".

The 2004 CAMA Land Use Plan is a valuable tool that will be used by developers, Town staff, advisory boards, and elected officials over the next 5 years to guide decisions on development patterns, new ordinance amendments, and the Town's capital investment. By working together, we can all move forward to achieve the vision laid out in this plan, and insure the continuation of Emerald Isle's excellent quality of life!

### **New NC 58 Bicycle Path Finally Set for Construction!**

The Board of Commissioners approved a construction contract for the first phase of the NC 58 bicycle path at its October meeting. David N. Johnson Construction Company has been awarded the \$161,000 contract to construct a 1.4 mile, 10 ft-wide asphalt bicycle path along the southern right-of-way along NC 58 between Coast Guard Road and Merchants Park.

This project was originally scheduled for construction in the spring of 2004, however, the Town encountered several delays related to permitting and NCDOT's review processes. All permits are now in hand, and the Town expects final NCDOT approval of the construction contract in November. Construction will begin soon after NCDOT signs off on the construction contract, and the new bicycle path should be completed well in advance of the 2005 tourism season. The project is funded by a \$104,000 grant from NCDOT, and \$57,000 of Town funds. Town personnel will also assist with some of the amenities and site work for this project.

This project, along with ongoing sidewalk construction on the north side of NC 58, represents an important accomplishment in the Town's long-term goal to provide a network of pedestrian and bicycle amenities in Town.

### **Town Awarded Another Grant for New Bicycle Path!**

The Town was recently notified by the NC Department of Transportation that it has been awarded another bicycle path grant. The Town will receive \$140,000 (and will provide a \$35,000 local match) to extend the soon-to-be-constructed first phase bicycle path from Merchants Park (where the first phase will terminate) to Black Skimmer Drive along the southern right-of-way of NC 58. This second phase will also include a 10 ft-wide asphalt path, and will be approximately .6 miles in length.

Construction of the second phase will occur sometime in 2005, and the exact schedule will be dependent upon permitting

issues, NCDOT review times, and the tourism season. The second phase will snake through the Town's central business district, and will also involve the modification of certain drainage features and landscaped areas. The project will be carefully coordinated with local business owners to insure that construction does not disrupt business during the prime tourism season.

### **Sidewalk Construction Continues Along NC 58 / Inmate Labor Crews Doing Great Work!**

Labor crews from Newport Corrections Center are continuing to work on new sidewalk segments along the north side of NC 58. Inmate crews from Newport have already completed work from the Eagles store west to the CVS pharmacy, and these crews will continue to build new sidewalk segments from CVS west to Coast Guard Road over the next year. The inmate crews have done an excellent job thus far, and we look forward to more good work over the next year. The inmate labor is nearly free, and the Town's main expense is for the purchase of the concrete.

By Department of Correction regulations, the inmate crews are only authorized to work in Emerald Isle (or any other community) for a two-week period at a time. The Town of Emerald Isle has requested their services over and over again, and we have been fortunate to have them working for the Town on three separate occasions (for two weeks each) over the past five months. We will continue to request their assistance as often as possible, at least until the sidewalk has been extended all the way to Coast Guard Road.

### **Employee Spotlight – Steve Schneider, Public Works**

Steve Schneider has been an employee with the Town of Emerald Isle for five years. Currently serving as the Assistant Supervisor of the Public Works Department, Steve is one of our "unsung heroes" who along with his co-workers works hard every day picking up yard waste, mowing, and keeping trash off of the beach, helping to keep Emerald Isle such a beautiful, pristine place for residents and visitors.

Steve was born and raised in Swansboro. Prior to his employment here Steve worked for more than 18 years with Stanadyne Automotive Corporation in Jacksonville, NC. Having grown up in this area, it only seems natural that fishing would be one of Steve's favorite pastimes. He also enjoys traveling in his spare time, recalling a trip to South America in 1996 as one of his most memorable.

Steve enjoys his work here in Emerald Isle, and attributes his satisfaction with his job to the teamwork of his fellow co-workers. Many of our residents are aware of the service that the town's new brush truck provides, picking up yard waste every Monday for those who have scheduled a pickup. Steve is very thankful to the residents here in Emerald Isle who look out for the safety of our town employees by taking that extra step to place their yard waste a safe distance away from electric lines, water meters, and trees.

Please join us in extending a special "thank you" to Steve and the entire Public Works staff for the great job they do throughout the year!

