

## SUNSET BEACH TAXPAYERS ASSOCIATION

P. O. Box 6053  
Ocean Isle Beach, NC 28469

### NEWSLETTER

March 2019

*The mission of the SBTA is  
to foster growth within the town of Sunset Beach while preserving its unique, unspoiled non-  
commercial character; to press for responsible, efficient government; to prevent the  
extravagant wasteful expenditure of public funds; and to provide absentee, nonvoting property  
owners a voice in community affairs affecting their interests.*

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#### **EASTER WEEKEND SATURDAY MEETING**

**Note: NEW VENUE**

*The Easter weekend Saturday meeting will be at the  
Sea Trail Property Owners Association building,  
200 Station Trail, Sunset Beach, N.C. 28468  
April 20, 2019*

*Social time 9:30 Meeting starts at 10:00 and ends no later than noon*

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**Directions to Sea Trail Property Owners Association Building:** From Sunset Blvd North, turn on Station Trail. Sunset Realty-Century 21 is on one corner and the new Dollar General building, currently under construction, is on the other. The Sea Trail POA building is the last building on the right just before the stop sign.

#### **Labor Day Weekend Meeting**

##### **Opening**

The Labor Day weekend membership meeting of Sunset Beach Taxpayers Association was called to order at 10:00 am on Saturday, September 1, 2018, at the Sea Trail Convention Center, Sunset Beach.

Board members present: Ray Puknys, Brooke Triplett, Bruce Hovermale, Nina Marable, Ann Jensen, Ken Sekley and Peter Scott

Attendance: 24

##### **Presentations & Discussion**

1. Ray Puknys opened the meeting with a welcome, introduction of the board members and a welcome to new members.

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2. Ken Sekley gave an update on the Sunset Beach West issue. The state has appropriated the money for the purchase, the appraisal has been completed, and we are very optimistic that the deal will soon reach a successful outcome.
3. Bruce Hovermale gave an update on the Shoreline Management (Dredging) Project. As reported in the newsletter, the Town has decided that due to the cost and delay associated with dredging north Jinks Creek, that portion will be dropped from the scope of the project. A permit application for the remaining areas (fish street canals, feeder channel, bay and south portion of Jinks Creek will be submitted once the outstanding issues are resolved, those being disposal of the spoils. It is proposed to place the beach compatible spoil on the Sunset Beach strand/dunes between 5th and 12th Streets. A solution for dealing with the non-compatible spoil has not yet been determined. Moffatt & Nichol, the Town's project consultant will make a progress presentation at the Town Council meeting on September 4<sup>th</sup>.
4. Peter Scott gave an update on the Town's plan for installing a 5-foot wide side walk on the south side of Main Street from Canal Street to 40th Street. The project was initially forecast to cost \$500,000, but the bids recently received carried a price of over \$1,000,000. The main reason for the difference was the increase in the cost of concrete. The contract was awarded to the low bidder at the August Town Council meeting and work should start after the summer season. The acting Town Administrator confirmed that there will be enough space to allow for the bike path, parking and the sidewalk all within the right of way. The Town sent a letter to property owners on Main Street advising them to remove all obstructions, including mail boxes, within the right of way or the contractor will remove them. The Town is leaving the issue of what to do about delivery of the mail to the Post Office to sort out. The additional funding requirement can be covered by the current approved budget with no tax effect.
5. Peter Scott gave an update on the Town's plans to address stormwater issues. The Town's 10-year overall plan is on schedule to analyze and assess the existing system and plan for infrastructure repair and replacement. The Town has asked the state legislature for authority to use beach renourishment funds to assist with that project, and while the legislation did not pass during the last session, the Town expects it to pass during the next session. In the meantime, the Town has outsourced its leaf and limb pickup for an annual cost of \$107,800 in order to free up town maintenance personnel to work on problems with the existing system. The Town has acquired a new camera to scope out the stormwater pipes and a new vacuum machine to assist in clearing them, along with a new sweeper to better keep sand out of the system.
6. Peter Scott also gave an update on Town issues including the replacement of the mayor, the recruitment effort for a new town administrator, and recruitment of a new fire chief. Refer to the newsletter for details.
7. Brooke Triplett gave an update on the revised flood maps that are now in effect.

Member open discussion

8. A member raised a question of what would be required to dredge north Jinks Creek. Based on the Corps of Engineers feedback to date, an Environmental Impact Statement and the mitigation of any issues identified will be required. The conduct of such a study and the resulting mitigation will be likely be expensive and take years to complete. This was the reason the Town Council removed it from the current dredging plan. Should Jinks Creek be designated as a Primary Nursery Area as is being proposed, then dredging of the area will never be allowed.

**Current Issues and Items of Interest to Members**

**SBTA Website**

Just a reminder to check the SBTA website for the latest news:

<http://www.ninam25.wixsite.com/sbta>

**Sunset Beach West Development Update**

On November 21, 2017 the Town of Sunset Beach and the developers of the Sunset Beach West property, Sunset Beach West LLC, agreed to a mediated settlement to their lawsuit over the ownership of the property. The essence of this settlement agreement is that all parties currently claiming ownership of the property and those who previously claimed ownership agreed to transfer whatever interest they may have to the state and that this property would become a state conservation land (similar to Bird Island). In return the state would pay the developers for the property at the appraised value.

The lawsuit over ownership is on hold until the settlement agreement terms are met. If the agreement fails, then the lawsuit can become active again. In a separate action the issuance of the CAMA permit for the development of Sunset Beach West is being challenged by the SBTA and the NC Coastal Federation supported by the Southern Environmental Law Center as our attorneys. This action was put on hold after the settlement agreement, or should that agreement fail, until the outcome of the ownership lawsuit.

The approved 2018 state budget included \$2.5 million for funding this purchase of the land so money is available to complete the agreement. The purchase of the land is currently in the administrative procurement process by the state. No completion date is available, but attorneys for the Town and the Southern Environmental Law Center advise of no current problems.

— *Bruce Hovermale*

**Shoreline Management (Dredging) Project**

The permit to dredge Mary's Creek and Turtle Creek was approved on December 11, 2018.

However, the Town Council has decided not to proceed with the work until the permit for the remaining area (the fish street canals, the feeder channel, the bay area and a section of South Jinks Creek) is approved. That permit was submitted in December, 2018, but returned later in December for correction of several items and additional testing. The additional testing has been completed, and the revised permit application was submitted March 22<sup>nd</sup>. Due to the requirement that the dredged depth not exceed the controlling depth of one of either Tubbs Inlet or North Jinks Creek in order ensure adequate flushing of the area, a variance will likely be required before the permit can be issued. This will require submitting a separate request and a hearing before the Coastal Resources Commission.

Assuming the second permit is approved, dredging work could commence as early as October 2019 since dredging is not permitted between April through September to protect juvenile shrimp and finfish populations.

— *Bruce Hovermale*

### **Stormwater Management Plan**

The Town has a 10-year plan to study and replace infrastructure and make other improvements to address storm water issues on both the Island and the mainland. While major work is years away, current plans are underway to address some easement and maintenance issues.

An excellent summary of the program and why it is so important was recently provided by our former mayor, Greg Weiss, at [Mayor Message #2: Our Stormwater Runoff Project](#)

The Town hired a dedicated Storm Water Manager/Field Technician who presented a work plan schedule, necessary equipment needs list, and funding requirements to the Council during FY 19 budget process. The FY 19 adopted budget included the first year of the 10- Year Plan funding for the Stormwater Management/Maintenance Department. The project began in July. Unfortunately the dedicated storm water manager recently resigned to pursue another opportunity, so the position is lacking a champion until a new manager is hired. However, the work continues.

You can review the plans on the Town website at:

[https://www.sunsetbeachnc.gov/index.asp?Type=B\\_BASIC&SEC={6887126E-AA7F-423E-AA4D-652E48911070}](https://www.sunsetbeachnc.gov/index.asp?Type=B_BASIC&SEC={6887126E-AA7F-423E-AA4D-652E48911070})

— *Bruce Hovermale*

### **Other Town News**

#### **Main Street Sidewalks**

A contractor has begun the construction of sidewalks on the south side of Main Street. It is estimated that the project will be completed by the middle of May 2019, weather permitting.

Construction started at the entrance to the gazebo parking lot and moved westward (toward 40<sup>th</sup> Street) in increments of 250 feet. The process causes some inconvenience to adjacent property owners, primarily for parking, as it takes approximately seven days for the concrete to harden. Property owners have been asked to remove any landscape, fences, driveway stones or any other obstruction located within the sidewalk right of way. The sidewalk footprint is located 8.5 to 9 feet from the bicycle right of way, leaving enough room for parking visiting vehicles. The western portion of the sidewalk is completed, and work has begun on the eastern portion, i.e., from the gazebo toward Palm Cove.



*Pervious sidewalk surface*

### Town Personnel Changes

**Mayor:** Mayor Greg Weiss submitted his resignation to be effective on February 5, 2019, stating “sometimes in working together, people see things differently, one or more of those people may feel that a process has worked in a way that makes them so uncomfortable that they feel the need to take action, I’m taking this opportunity to announce that I am resigning as mayor.” Mayor Pro Tem Mark Benton assumed the Mayor’s responsibilities until a permanent replacement is approved by the Council or elected in November 2019. The position is open and advertised. Applications by interested parties must be submitted to the municipality by March 25, 2019.

**Town Administrator:** Hiram J. Marziano was appointed as Town Administrator. He has been with the Town of Sunset Beach for two years, first serving as Planning Director. He received a BA in Political Science from North Carolina State University with a concentration in public policy and a Master of Public Administration from Appalachian State University with focus on Town/City/County Management. He has worked in municipal government executive level management since 2007. He has previously served as Assistant Town Manager in Troy, NC,

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Town Administrator in Calabash, NC, and as Planning Director in Whiteville, NC.

**Fire Department Chief:** Paul Hasenmeier is the new Sunset Beach Fire Chief. He possesses a bachelor's degree in Fire Science from Columbia Southern University as well as a Masters Degree in Public Administration from Capella University. He is a graduate of the National Fire Academy's Executive Fire Officer Program. Additionally he is trained as a Firefighter, Paramedic, Instructor, Fire Inspector and in all of NFPA 1670's technical rescue disciplines. In addition to his current duties and responsibilities as Fire Chief he is a faculty member at Columbia Southern University where he teaches on-line courses in their fire administration program. He is also an adjunct instructor for Bowling Green State University and teaches their annual state fire school. He has presented fire service topics across the United States and Canada. He has also presented and facilitated school bus emergency planning to jurisdictions across the State of Ohio, in conjunction with the School Transportation News network.

**Planning Director:** Open and advertised.

**Stormwater Manager:** Open and advertised.

### Other Items of Interest

**New Dollar General Store:** A permit for the construction of a new Dollar General store was granted by municipal authorities last fall. Construction began earlier this year at a location on Sunset Boulevard North (Hwy 179) between Station Trail and Coastal Outfitters. Construction, site plan, landscaping, parking and signs conform to municipal zoning and construction standards. It is noted that the building has a sloped roof as contrasted with the usual shoe-box style of the typical Dollar General building. There will be two non-electric signs located at the entrance of the parking lot and on the building.



*New Dollar General Store*



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Hurricane Re-entry Passes. The hurricane re-entry pass program has been revised for the 2019 hurricane season. The new passes will be mailed annually to island property owners of record. Re-entry passes will be mailed in late March or early April to the address listed on the Brunswick County/Sunset Beach Tax Scroll. Please review your tax statement to ensure your address is current. Mainland property owners will no longer receive passes for re-entry. New island property owners can receive re-entry passes at Town Hall by presenting proof of property transfer.

Planning Board: Planning Board Chairman, Tom Vincenz, states that there is nothing before the Board of any significance to the island.

Development of Sunset Boulevard: Four new buildings are currently under construction on the east side of Sunset Boulevard. These are residential single family residences which will be offered for sale or rental.



*Four houses under construction on Sunset Blvd*

Cabana Regulations: The Town Council amended the Cabana Regulations in August 2018. The major change was to prohibit commercial installation and removal of cabanas on the beach. Commercial operators must deliver the cabana to the user's residence. Installation and compliance with the ordinance shall be the user's responsibility. The fine for violating the ordinance is increased from \$75 to \$250. Infant pop-up tents and single center pole umbrellas are not subject to this ordinance. If you intend to use cabanas please familiarize yourself with the ordinance by going to the Sunset Beach web-site and click on Cabana Regulations Amendment.

— Raymond J. Puknys

## Emerging Issues

### Parking

I wish I could report the parking problem on the island has been solved and no one will ever have to worry about finding a parking space during the summer season. The parking problem has been discussed for years, and there have been several citizen committees to study the situation and try to come up with a solution. Parking meters have been used in other coastal communities with success and have been investigated here as the possible answer, but the bottom line is they would be profitable for the meter company but not the Town. Also, there is only a limited amount of space on the island where meters would be allowed as they would not be permitted on Main Street since it is a State road and therefore subject to Department of Transportation rules and regulations. If Sunset Beach took over the care and control of Main Street from the State, it would be a huge liability for the Town in the event of a major storm.



*Parking with new sidewalk.  
Note: Do not park in the bike lane or on the sidewalk--this will be strictly enforced this year.*

Councilman Mark Benton, as a fact finding effort did ask the State if the Town would be allowed to ban parking on Main Street, and the answer was yes. This caused controversy with some people believing this was something that was going to take place. Council has stated that this is not the case. There have also been discussions pertaining to purchasing available property for a parking lot for Town residents. This appears to be a great idea, but given the price of real estate and the limited amount of cars a lot would accommodate, not a practical solution. The parking situation this season will remain the same as last year but a professional parking study has been proposed for the next budget year (2019-2020) which hopefully, will offer up solutions for the future.

### Climate Change Mitigation Program

Living in a coastal community, we are very aware of the impacts from the environment. Two years ago last fall, we dealt with category one hurricane Matthew that caused water to rise over the causeway. This past fall category one hurricane Florence that could have been horrific for our island if it had remained a category four as it approached the mainland and made landfall further south. Sunset Beach is working on a multi-phase plan to deal with environmental effects due to impacts from severe storms, tidal extremes, and rising sea levels. Councilman John Corbett worked on this program, and it has been approved by Town Council. Phase 1 includes the Stormwater Program which was started in 2018. Many projects have been targeted and completed and many more are in the works. In some instances, pipes have been removed and replaced with weather resistant piping. In some areas, swales have been created to help carry run-off. There are many organizations including CAMA that are involved in this project. The Living Shoreline Project in Sunset Beach Town Park is a prime example of efforts to combat erosion due to storms and boat traffic. The new sidewalk on Main Street with pervious



concrete is another example of projects that are environmentally friendly. Starting in 2020, a five year plan will go into effect and begin to address the following topics:

- Mandatory recycling on the mainland
- Recycling on the beach
- LED efficient lighting
- Codes for new construction
- Discussion with DOT to raise low lying road beds (over a period of decades)
- Rain gutter and downspout promotion plan
- Explore program to raise bulkhead levels
- Monitor need for dune protection

The re-activation of the Environmental Resource Committee is also part of the plan and has advertised for applicants in the *Brunswick Beacon*.



*Installation of LED street lights*



*Swales to carry run-off*

— Ann Jensen

### **Sunset Beach's Living Shoreline**

Erosion control is an important subject for folks living along the coast, even if you don't live right on the water. Bulkheads or rock revetments can damage or fail to protect the shoreline they're designed to protect. "Living Shorelines" offer a way to control erosion without bulkheads or rocks. In fact, living shorelines are very effective in controlling erosion during storms. The following two pictures show serious bulkhead damage after a storm while the living shoreline immediately adjacent to it is in great shape.



*North Carolina Coastal Federation (NCCF) photos*

<https://www.nccoast.org/2018/10/living-shorelines-recommended-for-effective-and-lasting-shoreline-management-as-storm-repairs-continue/>

With the help of a grant from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Association (NOAA), the North Carolina Coastal Federation (NCCF) has embarked on an [ambitious program](#) to promote living shorelines all along the NC coast. Living shorelines take different forms, including hand-built oyster-shell reefs, oyster domes, and marsh grass plantings, sometimes behind the reefs and domes. These installations create new habitats for oysters, fish, crabs, and other aquatic creatures. As a result, living shorelines not only help prevent erosion, they improve water quality as the oysters filter water.

Sunset Beach is fortunate to have a new and still-evolving living shoreline designed to protect the Town's park from erosion. The Town is partnering with NCCF on this project and received a \$34,950 grant from Duke Energy's Water Resources Fund to help fund the project. Last April 25<sup>th</sup> and again on June 27<sup>th</sup>, volunteers met at the Town Fire Station 1 to bag rock and oyster shells for the project. The Star-News published [many pictures](#) of these events. The picture below shows bags of oyster shells and rocks stacked between the two posts in a demonstration of how the reef will be constructed. Big stacks of bags of oyster shells are in the background.



*Photo by Bonnie Williams, Coastal Outreach Specialist NCCF*

On January 17<sup>th</sup>, volunteers met again to install the rock and oyster shell bags near the entrance to Mary's Creek at the Town Park. A drone picture shows the placement of rock bags to form the base of the new reef. Oyster shells bags are beginning to be placed at the right end of the

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construction. Later, oyster domes were placed adjacent to the oyster reef with a little mechanical help. The Brunswick Beacon had [excellent coverage](#) of this event.



*Photos by Mark Evans, Eye in the Sky Drone Photography*

Here's what our living shoreline looks like today (3/15/19) and what it looks like even when you can't see it at high tide. Note the waves coming in from the wake of a relatively small boat.



*Photos by Nina Marable, webmistress SBTA*

Later in the spring, marsh grass will be planted between the shore and the shell bags and domes. Get ready to volunteer again.

Our living shoreline is part of NCCF's [50 Million Oyster Initiative](#). Sunset Beach should be proud to be a part of that initiative.

— *Nina Marable*