
Newsletter

HOLDEN BEACH PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION

March 2007

Our Mission: To represent the property owners of Holden Beach as a unified voice regarding issues that affect their common interests and concerns

MEETING DATES FOR 2007

April 7th – Easter Weekend Meeting
May 26th – Memorial Day Weekend Meeting
Sept 1st – Labor Day Weekend Meeting
Nov 24th – Thanksgiving Weekend Meeting

All HBPOA meetings start at **10AM** and are now held in the **Holden Beach Chapel Fellowship Hall**, due to construction in the Town Hall meeting room – please join us!

MESSAGE FROM THE HBPOA PRESIDENT

There are many pressing issues at Holden Beach. The tax assessments, insurance rates, canal dredging, town hall plans, causeway sewer, island sewer hook up deadline, and others.

We hope that all Holden Beach property owners will take advantage of the opportunity to be brought up to date on these and other issues at our 4/7/07 meeting in the Holden Beach Chapel at 10:00 AM.

Mr. Don Evans of Coastal Insurance in Shallotte will be speaking about the changes in insurance coverage and premiums for our coastal properties. Mr. Evans is a second generation insurance agent with over thirty years local experience and years of serving on various local, state, and national insurance boards and committees.

The Town of Holden Beach spokesman will have information regarding the sewer, taxes, building and grounds plan, etc.

This will be a most informative meeting as we move ahead to the first summer with the full operation of our new sewer system.



Come and enjoy the fellowship while learning the latest community news and help kick off the 2007 summer season!

Sincerely,

Alan Holden, HBPOA President

MESSAGE FROM THE TOWN MANAGER

Dear Property Owners,

Yet another winter has passed, and summer is right around the corner. We have had another busy off-season.

The dredging of the finger canals in the Heritage Harbor is under construction. The dredging will stop in mid-April as required by the North Carolina Division of Coastal Management.

The sewer system has run smoothly over the first year of operation. Odor controls have been installed on Vacuum Sewer Stations III and IV, and are currently being installed in stations I and II. Construction of the fencing around the stations has been scheduled, and should be completed in the next few weeks.

Please remember that the deadline to connect to the sewer system is May 31, 2007. If you have not already lined up a plumber, you will need to do so as soon as possible, as many have waiting lists.

We also completed storm water controls this winter on most of Ocean Boulevard West, as well as several side streets. This project has already proved to be effective solving the ponding issues that were occurring in these areas.

The Jordan Boulevard project is awaiting permits from the N.C. Division of Coastal Management and Army Corps of Engineers. The Public Area

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Improvement Committee continues to meet regularly; so that once permits are obtained we can begin construction. We are still hopeful to begin this project this spring. Primary funding for this project has been obtained thru grants from the N.C. Division of Coastal Management.

The Land Use Plan Update committee also continues to meet regularly. We are now entering our second and final year of plan updating. Members of the public met with the committee in early 2006 to discuss their ideas and views of how Holden Beach should look in the future. Look for upcoming workshops in 2007 for the public to view and comment on the proposed policies for the updated Land Use Plan. Also, all of the up to date data is available on-line at www.hbtownhall.com.

Yard waste pick-up service is the second and fourth Friday during the months of March-May. Please remember brush and limbs must be tied in bundles no more than 4' long and 70 lbs. and grass cuttings and other loose debris must be bagged and placed at the street for pick-up.

I hope everyone has a safe and happy summer! And as always, please feel free to call or e-mail me at steve.wheeler@hbtownhall if you have any questions or concerns.

Steve Wheeler
Town Manager

NEWS FROM OUR LAST MEETING

Sixty-six people (47 members, 19 non-members) attended our Thanksgiving weekend meeting on November 25, 2006. For the first time, notice of the meeting was posted on Channel 8 of the Time Warner cable system, which is the Town's information channel.

During the Directors' meeting preceding the general membership meeting, Bob Valois was appointed as a Director to fill the term of C.C. Guy.

The financial report as of November 24, 2006 was accepted showing a balance of \$24,351.90. The membership report showed 943 current members with 77 new members in 2006. Nineteen letters had been sent to new property owners.

There was significant discussion regarding costs for house and flood insurance. An example was discussed relative to a new 2,500 sq. ft. house on the beach where flood insurance cost \$6,562 for the first \$250,000 of coverage – and over \$14,000 for the next \$250,000 of coverage.

President Holden reported there is national legislation pending to allow flood insurance to increase 10-15% annually.

A recommendation was made to have a speaker from the insurance industry at our next meeting.

President Holden reported house rentals were down for 2006. Large rentals (i.e., "mega houses") booked well, but rentals of smaller houses were down.

Real estate sales were also down, especially when compared to last year. Prices have responded accordingly.

Community Service donations for the year were approved as follows:

GHBMA	\$ 500
Animal League	250
Turtle Patrol	250
Coastline Rescue	250
Holden Beach Chapel	1,000
Town Snowflake	400
Total	\$2,650

These donations are the same amounts that were given to these organizations in 2005. However, last year \$1,000 donations were also given to the Red Cross for Hurricane Katrina victims and to the Holden Beach Renourishment Association (HBRA). This year, HBRA requested that no donations be made.

Town Manager Steve Wheeler reported that 1/4th of the island dwellings have connected to the sewer system. Three hundred property owners had not yet paid their sewer share fee, which pays for the capital costs the Town incurred to construct the collection system on the island.

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A sewer component on the Town's tax bill will cover the capital costs the county incurred to construct their part of the system on the mainland – which the county then charges to the Town. These charges will continue for the next 25 years, but the Town's share should decrease as other communities join the system.

The town is working on complaints received about odor problems with the sewer system. An odor consultant will be engaged to address the issues.

Harbor dredging progress was also discussed. The Town will meet with another dredging company to address the dredging problems.

Steve reported that it will be an uphill battle to put sand on the beach this year.

A Town ordinance was passed related to impervious surfaces. This ordinance prohibits concrete in setback areas.

Police Chief Wally Layne reported there were no current crime waves. He is grateful for the lull in the action.

Commissioner Heimlich passed out drawings of the proposed pavilion area for the Jordan Boulevard project. The plans include a covered performance stage, a pier, a picnic area and a playground.

Bill Spiers asked that the HBPOA donate money to the Second Helping to provide magnets for rental houses informing renters about the program. The motion to donate up to \$500 passed unanimously.

A report was read from Alice Polo, president of the Holden Beach Beautification Club, describing the monthly meetings for the year and urging all interested property owners to attend.

The meeting adjourned at 11:50 AM.

REZONING ISSUE UPDATE

The rezoning of property on OBW between Greensboro and Scotch Bonnet continues to be a hot topic. In December, the Town Board voted to remove four lots from the conservation zone,

changing them to residential. Sandy Miller was the only commissioner to vote against the rezoning.

This action paves the way for additional houses to be built along the rim of the marsh. At the December meeting, the commissioners agreed to investigate ways the Town could buy the property.

The property owner responded in January with a proposed selling price of \$2 million, but would give \$600,000 of the amount to the town – making the cost \$1.4 million. This issue was deferred to the February meeting, where the commissioners unanimously voted against purchasing the property.

PROPERTY TAXES

Your tax bill is in the mail - if you haven't already received the news. The 2007 property tax revaluation have been completed and notices have been sent to all Brunswick County property owners.

The revaluation saw the gross value of the county's total property more than double to \$30.4 billion from its previous value of \$13.6 billion. Combined with the 20.6% increase in 2003, valuations have increased almost five times their previous value.

Total property value in the county increased 127%, but the value of land increased 214%, shifting the more of the tax burden from homeowners to landowners.

Holden Beach and Oak Island both experienced an increase in total value of more than 200% – the largest of the 19 municipalities in the county. The value of land on both Holden Beach and Oak Island increased 357% - proving that paradise has a cost.

Ocean Isle Beach experienced a 200% increase in land value and a 139% increase in total value. Bald Head Island had an increase of 181% in land value and 113% in total value. Sunset Beach experienced a 178% land increase and 112% increase in total value.

In order for the county's revenue not to increase, the tax rate would have to drop from 54 cents to 25.9

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cents per \$100 of valuation (i.e., the revenue neutral tax rate, as if there had not been a revaluation).

Even at this lower tax rate (which the commissioners are not required to adopt) Holden Beach will end up with a larger share of the total county tax burden due to having the highest increase in value

Achieving a revenue neutral tax rate emerged as the top priority of Town commissioners during a discussion of town issues at a January workshop.

HOLIDAY BREAK-INS

A rash of 50 to 60 break-ins occurred on Holden Beach between mid-December and early January. Most of the break-ins involved unoccupied residences and the theft of electronic appliances such as flat-screen televisions.

A 17-year-old Supply resident has been charged with 18 counts of second-degree burglary in connection these break-ins. The island burglaries were also believed to be connected to a series of break-ins in Supply.

Police said they believe the suspect used a raft or boat to travel to and from the island and to transport the stolen items. Police Chief Layne urges residents to be aware of their surroundings and their neighbors and to call police when they suspect trouble.

SALTWATER FISHING LICENSES

Anyone 16 years and older wanting to fish at the coast now needs to sign up for the new saltwater fishing license. The Coastal Recreational Fishing License (CRFL) went into effect on January 1st, and is required for anglers who harvest finfish in the state's coastal fishing waters, including sounds, coastal rivers and their tributaries – out to three miles into the ocean.

Recreational anglers who catch fish from three miles to 200 miles offshore also are required to have the license in order to transport fish back to the shore.

Anyone fishing recreationally in joint waters – areas managed by the N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission and the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC) – will need either a CRFL or an inland fishing license.

Prices for the CRFL vary depending on residency, age, duration and type of license purchased. For N.C. residents, the annual cost for a CRFL is \$15. A 10-day license is \$5. For nonresidents, the annual cost is \$30, and a 10-day license is \$10.

A license to fish in North Carolina's public, inland waters remains at \$15 annually for residents.

To view a complete list of license options, visit the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries website at www.ncfisheries.net or the WRC online at www.ncwildlife.org.

WATERFRONT ACCESS STUDY

Last year, the N.C. General Assembly established a committee of 21 members, including staff from North Carolina Sea Grant and the N.C. Coastal Resources Law, Planning and Policy Center, to develop a report regarding coastal waterfront access. The report is due on April 15th.

At the committee's second meeting, held in November, members heard presentations on the loss of traditional fish houses along the coast, as well as tools and incentives to maintain and increase the diversity of waterfront uses.

The committee plans to examine three categories of tools. The first will be incentive-base tools that provide waterfront property owners and businesses continued access to public waters. The second involves techniques such as planning and zoning, for use in enhancing shoreline diversity. The third category encompasses techniques that could be used to generate or direct funding to purchase waterfront access.

Information from the meetings is available online at www.ncseagrant.org/waterfronts. The site includes a list of the committee members, as well as background materials submitted by the committee and the public.

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SEWER HOOKUP PENALTIES

At the February Board meeting, the commissioners approved an ordinance detailing the penalty for not hooking up to the sewer system by May 31, 2007.

Property owners not connected to the sewer system by the deadline of May 31st will be charged the sewer rate based on their monthly water usage at the sewer rate schedule, plus an escalating monthly fee starting at \$25 and increasing every month at additional \$25 increments (i.e., \$75 after the third month, \$300 after 12 months, etc.) This will result in almost \$2,000 in fees after one year and \$7,500 in fees after two years.

BEACH CLUB UPDATE

In November, the Town commissioners approved a definition of beach clubs in an attempt to prevent situations such as the RiverSea house, which had its certificate of occupancy withheld. Town officials have been working to better clarify ordinances so it is clear that such clubs are not allowed in residential areas.

Commissioners amended an ordinance pertaining to clubs. According to the new ordinance, clubhouses include but are not limited to beach clubs, cabana clubs, property owner association facilities and similar type uses. A clubhouse is defined as "A building or facility owned or operated by an incorporated, unincorporated, chartered association or an individual or individuals nominated by such entities for the purpose of engaging in social, civic, educational, recreational, cultural or similar activities, but not primarily for profit or to render a service that is customarily carried on as a business, for the benefits of its members."

The new ordinance also stipulates that clubhouses shall provide certain items, including beach regulations, a rest room and shower, a first aid kit and a phone for 911 use. In addition, new parking requirements were added for clubhouses in the central commercial district.

If you are not already a member, we invite you to join the Holden Beach Property Owners Association. Our mission is to represent the property owners of Holden Beach as a unified voice regarding issues that affect their common interests and concerns.

HBPOA Membership Application (2007)

Detach and return to:

**Sandy Miller, HBPOA Executive Secretary – 988 Ocean Blvd West –
Holden Beach, NC 28462.
Check year on address label to see if your membership is current.**

HBPOA Membership Application (2007)

DUES (circle): One Year: \$15 Two Years: \$30 Three Years: \$45

Name: _____

Spouse's Name: _____

Home Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____

Zip: _____

Beach Address: _____

Home Phone: _____

Beach Phone: _____

Email: _____