

# The Tides

December 1, 2016

Mayor William L. Otis, Jr.  
mayor@townofpi.com



## Town of Pawleys Island SOUTH CAROLINA

This is another special issue of the Pawleys Tides. It is the way that the Town Council of Pawleys keeps all property owners and residents informed about what is happening at Pawleys. We have made 4 hurricane posts on the town website, a “re-entry update” on October 8th, and Post Hurricane Updates on October 17th, October 20<sup>th</sup>, and October 28<sup>th</sup> (which was also mailed as a “Tides” to our property owners). In this TIDES, which will also be posted on our website, we will try to bring you up to date, without repeating what was said in those updates, or in town Facebook or Twitter posts.

### **TOWN HALL LOSS AND REPLACEMENT PLAN**

On October 8, 2016 Hurricane Matthew drove over 3 feet of water into the Town of Pawleys Island’s historic Town Hall. The result of the destruction caused by this salt water intrusion was that the structure is unusable without the town granting itself an exemption from its own ordinances. This has been discussed by Council which has decided that this is not an appropriate path to take, considering that there are other property owners in the town who currently face, or could face, the same problem in the future. In addition, the structure would not be insurable for Federal Flood Insurance in the future.

The Council has looked at options for the relocation of Town hall generally under the following parameters:

1. The Town Hall should be within the Town Limits
2. Potentially utilize existing property owned at the corner of the North Causeway and Myrtle Avenue which is currently landscaped as part of the Pawleys Park
3. Spend funds very carefully for any new property. Determine if there are low cost alternatives.
4. Have direct access to and visibility from a major street.
5. Keep governance around near its current location and maintain its relationship to the park, as the “center” of Pawleys Island
6. Maintain or improve the “sense of arrival” on Pawleys Island’s North Causeway
7. Be considerate to existing residential property owners when evaluating new locations
8. Consider if improved beach access should be integrated into a Town Hall location, given the other parameters

There have been several properties considered for acquisition, or for use as a temporary Town Hall. The cost to the Town to purchase these sites has been in excess of \$400,000 without a building on them, greater if useable structures exist. Not all had access and visibility from a major street, all would separate the Town Hall from the north causeway area, and all could cause existing neighboring property owners consternation. The property owned by the town on the South west corner of Myrtle and the North Causeway met most of the parameters, but there has been some concern from the Pawleys Island Beautification Foundation and others regarding the loss of that property from the park, and the fact that most of the cost of its beautification and integration into the park was donated by Island families.

A long time property owner, Glen Cox, brought an “out of the box” solution to Council, which has been considered by Council to be an excellent alternative. That is, to ask the SCDOT to turn over the 66 foot wide right of way of Pavilion Avenue to the town. The town would then design and construct a new Town Hall on the right of way of Pavilion Road at the intersection facing Myrtle Avenue, with Town Hall parking on the current Pavilion Avenue paving at the Myrtle Avenue intersection.

The street would be a dead end from the North Causeway, but left open for park traffic and parking, as well as retaining the “staging area” for trash pickups and temporary equipment uses such as for the underground wire construction. The creek access area would remain open and accessible, and there could be additional areas in the east side of the Pavilion Road right of way made available for additional landscaping, as the paving only takes up less than 30 of the 66 foot right of way. An example might be where the Pawleys Park signage is now located, improving the “sense of arrival” on Pawleys.

The town would request that a right turn lane be added at the intersection of Myrtle and the North Causeway so traffic turning right won’t be backed up by traffic turning left at the intersection.

The town has discussed this with the President and immediate past president of the Pawleys Island Pavilion Company, which owns both sides of Pavilion Road including the Park, and they believe their Board would be supportive of the idea.

SCDOT is willing to turn over Pavilion Road to the town subject to approval in Columbia. Our Town Attorney has discussed the proposal with the SCDOT and sees no issues with it.

The only acquisition costs would be some legal costs involved with a plat and filling out several pages of documentation.

All other Parameters discussed so far would be met by the proposal, with the exception of improved beach access; however, creek access at the park would be maintained, and could be improved if Council wished.

**The Town Council passed a motion at its meeting on November 14, 2016 directing the Mayor and the Administrator to start the process of acquiring the street and right of way for Pavilion Road from the South Carolina Highway Department!**

## **CHALLENGES FACED BY THE TOWN TODAY**

The entire 31 year history of the town has been based on the premise included in the Mission Statement adopted by the Town Council in 2003:

*“Deliver basic service levels in law enforcement including the protection of lives and property, building and zoning including basic public works, and the efficient, courteous and simple administration of Town Government”*

Through 2016 the Town of Pawleys Island has not levied a property tax on its property owners. This contrasts with the 9 other ocean front municipalities in South Carolina and the 21 ocean front municipalities in North Carolina, all of which levy property taxes. The town does have an accommodations tax paid by renters, which helps finance some of the towns tourism related expenses, and which has built up a \$5,000,000 fund for beach protection and maintenance. This accommodations tax was passed by your Council in 1999 after discovering that the County was in process of passing the tax, which would have foreclosed the Town from that source of funds for our beaches. In my 19 years as Mayor and 21 years on Council, the Council has never considered any property tax, depending on the voluntary support of the great majority of Property Owners.

We are now challenged by:

- The loss of our historic Town Hall and the need to replace it, taking it size into consideration for long range planning and staffing needs, while continuing to true to the above Mission Statement.
- The damages sustained to our beach from hurricanes Joaquin and Matthew and decisions on repair and renourishment, and the financing of the results of those decisions
- The ability of the town to continue and improve the FEMA CRS rating, which saved 420 Pawleys property owners with federal flood insurance \$388,000, an average of \$923 last year alone.

The apparent desire of some property owners to increase the service levels of the town

## **THANKS TO OUR TOWN STAFF AND POLICE DEPARTMENT**

Once again I want to give a lot of credit and thanks to our Administrator Ryan Fabbri, Town Clerk Diane Allen, and Chief Mike Fanning who are the entire staff of the town. Thanks also to each of our full-time and part-time police officers, who went on 12 hour shifts on Friday before the storm, and continued these shifts until the 17<sup>th</sup> of October. There are no other departments in the Town; the Staff, the Police Department and Town Council are it. All of these folks put in many extra hours under difficult circumstances, and in cramped temporary office space without plumbing or direct phone or internet service for most of the time, all to pull your town back together. The town has come a long way since October 8<sup>th</sup>. The town is in business, police protection has been maintained, Springs Street has been cleared of sand and debris and opened, the beach has been cleaned of storm debris, 17,000 lineal feet of dune protection was scraped and pushed up by November 4<sup>th</sup>, protecting our houses and infrastructure, and our road right of way cleanup “first pass” has progressed from Springs Avenue toward the north end of the island. A temporary office Trailer arrived last Thursday to house the Town staff, and police department, for up to two years while a new Town Hall is being planned and constructed. We members of Town Council fully appreciate the progress that has been made with the hard work and the dedication of our staff and officers to our Town, and their committed efforts on behalf of Pawleys Island and our property owners.

## BEACHFRONT BOARDWALKS & STAIRS

Many property owners have inquired about rebuilding their oceanfront boardwalks and/or stairs. You're certainly welcome to rebuild these structures whenever you see fit but please keep in mind the new pushed up dunes will look much different in a few months. Property owners might want to consider waiting a few months before deciding to rebuild their damaged or destroyed boardwalks.

All construction, repair or alteration of beach boardwalks/stairs require a building permit from the Georgetown County Building Department. Please contact Town Hall at (843) 237-1698 if you have questions or unsure if your proposed work will require a permit.

### Building Requirements for Oceanfront Boardwalks & Stairs

- 1) All components must be constructed of wood;
- 2) Have a maximum width of four (4') feet;
- 3) a six (6') foot long section landward of the OCRM baseline may be expanded with benches not to exceed six (6') feet wide.
- 4) Conform with the contour of the dunes with a 2-foot vertical clearance between the surface of the dune and top of the walkway;
- 5) Displace no sand in a critical area;
- 6) Be constructed with as little environmental damage as possible;
- 7) Not be located within fifty feet of another walkway on the same parcel of property;
- 8) Be limited to no more than one of these structures per lot unless a limit of one would cause an unnecessary hardship as determined by the Department.
- 9) Be shore perpendicular, except as necessary for handicapped access.

## TOWN COMMUNICATIONS

As explained in the Tides last March, property owners have been directed to the town website and social media outlets for information about Pawleys. The addresses are:

[www.townofpawleysisland.com](http://www.townofpawleysisland.com)

[www.facebook.com/TownofPawleysIsland](https://www.facebook.com/TownofPawleysIsland)

<https://twitter.com/PawleysIslandPD>

From October 6 to last week there were over 125 town posts on the Town Web Site, The town Facebook site, and the town Police Department Twitter site with information on Hurricane Matthew. During this period there have been a number of interactions with property owners and others, particularly on Twitter, and there are photos and videos of the storm and the aftermath. We hope you have been using these sources for accurate information.

As always, if anyone wants to contact your Town Council, the Email addresses for the Mayor and each council member are located on the Town Web Site. For owners only, as detailed in the March 25, 2016 issue, and in each general mailing of the Pawleys Tides, for years property owners are given each Council member's

telephone number. Mayor Bill Otis, home office 237-8005 home 237-2053. The other current council members are Mayor Pro Tem Mike Adams (843) 237-0394, Rocky Holliday (843) 237-0377, Ashley Carter (843) 237-4257 and Sarah Zimmerman (843) 237-7774.

In August the town hired an individual to help the administrator select an appropriate owner data base program, to program the selected data base, and to input all existing property owner information. Part of this process was, and is, to establish an email blast system so that the town can provide up to date information to owners, particularly in emergency situations. The data base has been completed as of Friday the 11<sup>th</sup> of November, and is cloud based. It will need to be proofed before it can be used to be sure it works correctly. When everything is proofed and ready to go, we will send a test message to our email list as it stands, in order to identify out of date or bad addresses.

The need for email addresses has been explained to owners multiple times a year over multiple years in the Pawleys Tides, and in statements to the Civic Association's Labor Day meetings. To date the Town has only about 50% of the email addresses of our owners, due to property owners not responding to these multiple requests. After Joaquin and the repairs to the beach last March, we again asked for email addresses, pointing out the inability to contact owners with information after a storm creates a communications handicap. We ask again, please send an email to [dallen@townofpi.com](mailto:dallen@townofpi.com) with your name, phone number, and your Pawleys Island address, so we can add it to our data base.

A lot has been done in 6 weeks for our island. Not everything is going to please everybody, but your Council realized that there was a very small permit window for beach work, and that our island property owners needed to be protected. The Council also understood that roadside cleanup was a priority, and that we needed a temporary Town Hall, as well as a permanent site, and it all had to be done carefully but quickly.

The Town Council will host another "Town Hall" for our residents and property owners (only) to comment on what has been addressed in this Issue of the Tides. The date of that Town Hall will be Friday January 20, 2017 at 4PM and it will be held in the Waccamaw Library, which is located on the right off of Willbrook Blvd. behind the Hampton Inn on Highway 17 in Litchfield. We hope you can make it!

From all of us, THANKS FOR YOUR PATIENCE!

Bill Otis  
Mayor