

DeBordieu seeks permits for beach work

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

There was no sand scraping at DeBordieu following Hurricane Irma in September, but the area's community association is moving forward with permits for a beach renourishment project because it expects a lengthy challenge to its plan to build three groins to hold the sand.

The DeBordieu Colony Community Association received a state permit in 2011 to build three groins

perpendicular to the beach to trap sand that moves in the current. It was part of a renourishment project, which state law requires as a condition of groin construction. The Baruch Foundation, which owns the adjacent property at Hobcaw Barony, and conservation groups appealed the permit, saying the groins would cause erosion at Hobcaw.

Rather than defend the permit, DeBordieu agreed to drop the groins from the project. It completed a project in 2015 that pumped 795,000 cu-

bic yards of offshore sand onto 1.8 miles of beach.

"The community has a long-time goal of protecting the beach and the environment," said Blanche Brown, general manager of the community association. "We're trying to get started early so that we're not limited."

In March, DeBordieu property owners approved a change in the community association bylaws that created a "Beach Preservation Fund." An assessment over 17 years will raise

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Tanya Ackerman/Coastal Observer

The beach after the 2015 renourishment project.

PAWLEYS ISLAND

Petition seeks more input on beach renourishment

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

A group of Pawleys Island property owners is petitioning Town Council to hold a public hearing and provide more details about its plans for a beach renourishment project. Town officials say they already plan to do that, but are waiting until they know more about the project cost.

Town Council agreed last month to start engineering work on a project to pump 725,000 cubic yards of offshore sand onto 2.7 miles of beach. It is estimated to cost \$11.8 million, which the town plans to fund through its beach management fund, a state grant and a loan. But officials say they can't be sure of the cost until the design is complete and bids are received. Those are expected in late winter.

The petition being circulated asks for "a full public hearing" on the project within six weeks and emphasizes that hearing should come with "responses from the council."

"We need a full conversation," said Leda McIntyre Hall, a north end resident who made an unsuccessful bid for a seat on Town Council in this month's election. "The process ought to be something we have a well-informed public discussion about."

The petitions are "just saying to council we think this is important."

Henry Thomas, a north end property owner, served on the town Beach Committee. He voted for the project, but then recinded his vote saying the proposal was "seriously flawed."

"Waiting on bids is not an excuse to not inform Pawleys Island owners before it is too late for them to be involved in the process," Thomas said. "The owners

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TRADITIONS | The Red Kettle

Shop tries to stem ebbing tide of Christmas bell ringers

BY EMILY TOPPER
COASTAL OBSERVER

Willie and Melissa Lee model their business around Hebrews 10:24, the verse displayed in the front of their shop: "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds."

The couple has tried to do that through their gift shop, Good Deed Goods, located inside Lee's Inlet Apothecary. Two years ago, they began donating 10 percent of all monthly sales to one local, one national and one international charity.

Now, they are asking the community to join them in giving back — with a ring. From now until Dec. 23, the shop is aiming to have bell ringers for the Salvation Army in front of their storefront six days a week.

"The Salvation Army was one of our

Larry Day, above, started ringing the bell this week at Lee's Inlet Apothecary. It is one of three nonprofits supported by its gift shop.

Tanya Ackerman/Coastal Observer

three charities last year," Willie Lee said. "We thought a nice addition would be to host a bell ringer."

The shop first hosted bell ringers last year, and the Lee family realized that the Salvation Army faced a shortage of bell ringers.

"The conversation was rather shocking," Willie Lee said. "They said they were struggling to find bell ringers. I said, 'Now I know I want one.'"

Known as the Red Kettle, the Salvation Army

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OFFSHORE DRILLING | The ad hoc committee

Lawmakers drawn in different directions as hearings conclude

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

For some it's personal. For others it's political. For members of the S.C. House committee on offshore drilling it's about distilling hours of conflicting testimony into a report to Speaker Jay Lucas. But even that is a source of disagreement.

Rep. Russell Ott of St. Matthews said at the conclusion of the ad hoc committee's final hearing this week it needs to "lead on this issue" rather than summarize the findings. "This can't be the end," he said.

The committee heard this week from officials from coastal communities, all of which have adopted resolutions opposing federal proposals to open the Outer Continental Shelf to oil and gas exploration and drilling. "I don't always find myself on the side of the environmentalists," Horry County Council Chairman Mark Lazarus said. "That's how important this issue is to me."

"Our economy's thriving and we don't have to have offshore drilling," he told the committee. "I don't see that it's viable for us or the state."

Charleston Mayor John Tecklenburg and Georgetown County Council Member John Thomas delivered the same message: "We don't want to be a Port Fourchon,



S.C. House via SCETV

Rep. Russell Ott, above, and Sen. Stephen Goldfinch, right, debate the need for offshore exploration.

Louisiana," referring to the Gulf Coast oil hub.

Rich Bolen of Vets4Energy told the committee during public comment that Charleston would be the ideal oil port and should have a refinery.

Ellen Weaver, president of the Palmetto Promise Institute, a policy group founded by former U.S. Sen. Jim DeMint, told the committee in public comment that the opposition to drilling "is not a campaign that's organic to South Carolina." They are funded by "far-left environmental extremists," she said.



That drew a rebuke from Rep. Lee Hewitt of Murrells Inlet. Pointing out that every local government on the coast opposes drilling, he asked Weaver, "Did you just say that they were uneducated?"

Weaver explained that the resolutions are similar and that Oceana, an international conservation group that is aiding local opposition, "is supported by far-left donors."

State Sen. Stephen Goldfinch of Murrells Inlet testified that he has been "demonized" for supporting exploration off the coast.

"That doesn't mean drilling offshore," he said.

He asked the committee to focus its attention on testing. "It's foolish not to know what's off our coast," Goldfinch said. "We are the only people who have not done that. In fact, there is a giant hole off South Carolina" in terms of geological data.

Not only would the seismic tests that determine the likely location of oil and gas deposits help shape the debate over drilling, they would provide information about fault lines and potential

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