

COASTAL OBSERVER

Vol. XXXVIII No. 49

Pawleys Island, South Carolina ~ May 21, 2020

50 cents

Town moves to condemn easements for future beach work

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

As the first storm of the hurricane season passed offshore, the Pawleys Island Town Council agreed this week to condemn the last four easements needed to ensure that the Army Corps of Engineers will have a role in maintaining the \$14.3 million beach renourishment project the town completed this spring.

"The condemnation process is our only resort at this point," Town Attorney David DuRant said.

Last year, the town withdrew from a partnership with the Corps that would have provided federal funds to renourish the island's south end. Town Council was concerned that a cost-benefit analysis by the agency would delay the project another year.

Instead, the town used a beach fund accumulated over 20 years and state funds for the project, which placed 1.1 million cubic yards of offshore sand on about 3 miles of beach.

But after the town started work, the Corps proposed a "memorandum of understanding" that would allow the project area on the narrow south end of the island to become a federal project. That means the Corps would replace any sand lost to storms and would share half the cost of future renourishment, estimated at every nine years, for the next 45 years. The Corps would also give the town credit for the work it did initially when it calculates its match for the next renourishment.

"It is an insurance policy that to me is priceless," Town

SEE "BEACH," PAGE 4



Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

Easements will allow the Corps of Engineers to repair and maintain the south end beach.

EDUCATION

Board ready to name new superintendent

BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI
COASTAL OBSERVER

The Georgetown County School Board is expected to name its new superintendent on Friday.

Board members wrapped up the hiring process this week by hosting second interviews with the three finalists: Keith Price, William Wright and Valarie Williams.

"We had three excellent interviews," Chairman Jim Dumm said. "It's a tough, tough, tough decision."

Under an extension current Superintendent Randy Dozier signed, the district may keep him as a consultant after his contract expires on June 30.

Price has been with the Richland 2 School District for 24 years, the last six as assistant superintendent. Before that he was a principal and assistant principal in Blythewood and Columbia.

He said his 24 years with Richland 2 have been happy, but he's being "called to lead."

"I feel like I have that desire and internal hunger right now to contribute more," Price by phone this week after his interview.

He hasn't applied for a lot of jobs outside of his district, but he was impressed with the quality of Georgetown County School District and the excellent reputation of its school board.

Price also likes Georgetown's diversity.

"To me that's fascinating. It's almost a compact representation of our entire state," Price said. "I like that and I like what a diverse district brings. It makes everybody stronger and it makes

SEE "DISTRICT," PAGE 3



Bob Anderson, left, levels criticism at the council in January. He is challenging Ron Charlton, right. Highway 17, seen below before a raised median was installed, is an issue in the race.



Photos by Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer



ELECTION 2020 | County Council District 2

Candidates have records to defend

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

Bob Anderson spent Monday morning making phone calls, 110 of them, looking for votes in County Council District 2.

Ron Charlton spent the morning responding to emails, 65 of them, from people who wanted

to know how they could help him keep the District 2 seat he has held since 1996.

Neither candidate in next month's Republican Party primary has been campaigning in person since restrictions were imposed to help slow the coronavirus outbreak.

"I like to be there face-to-

face," Charlton said. "It's been kind of awkward."

Anderson served a term on County Council in District 6. After he lost a bid for re-election in 2014, he moved to a new home in Heritage Plantation, which put him in District 2. His challenge to Charlton is one of the rare

SEE "COUNCIL," PAGE 2

ENVIRONMENT | Litchfield Beach

Upland sand added to nourishment options after protests

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

Property owners at the southern tip of Litchfield Beach are planning to bring in sand by truck to build up the beach rather than dredging it from offshore.

The change comes as scores of property owners at Inlet Point filed objections to a beach nourishment project that is estimated to cost \$12 million. They told state and federal agencies that the project will benefit a handful of homeowners on a fragile barrier island at the expense of their neighbors.

"The funding for this project, from beginning to end, is the responsibility of all owners who are being required to pay hundreds of thousands of dollars in assessments for a project that many owners do not support and which many owners consider to be a poor investment," Mary Shahid, an attorney who represents the owners of 39 properties at Inlet Point, said in a letter to the agencies.

Trucking in upland sand would be a better, less expensive option, she said.

The Peninsula Property Owners Association applied last month for permits from the Army Corps of Engineers and the state Department of Health and Environmental Control to place up to 700,000 cubic yards of sand along 5,000 yards of beach, starting about 800 feet south of the 33 lots that make up the community within Inlet Point. The work would extend half a mile north of

the Peninsula, ending just above the entrance to the gated Inlet Point development.

Many of the letters sent to the agencies pointed out that the Peninsula lots are in an area covered by the federal Coastal Barrier Resources Act, where the spending of federal funds is prohibited as a way to discourage development.

"We were told by Litchfield

Company that nothing would be built on the barrier island (which is now the Peninsula)," Mary Bivens, an Inlet Point property owner, wrote. "We were present on a Sunday night at 11 p.m. when trucks came in and plowed the flat spit of land. We thought it was a bird sanctuary."

The proposed nourishment project would raise the level of

SEE "SAND," PAGE 2



Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

Mayor Brian Henry said most parade floats and spectators are in family groups.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE



Their championship season: Memories still fresh for WHS teams that won two state championships in one day in 2010. **SECOND FRONT**

Education: State task force continues work to define the new normal. **PAGE 7**

Note to our readers: The Coastal Observer office will be closed for Memorial Day on May 25.



Crime.....	5
Opinion.....	6
Crossword.....	10
Classifieds.....	13
Sports.....	14

Online
coastalobserver.com

