

COASTAL OBSERVER

Vol. XLI No. 32

Pawleys Island, South Carolina ~ January 19, 2023

\$1.00

Proposed rules for meetings include ban for disrupters

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

People who disrupt the “peace and decorum” of county government meetings can be removed, and those who are removed face a 12-month ban from attending further meetings under an ordinance up for final approval by Georgetown County Council next week.

The measure passed the

second of three readings last week without discussion. That isn’t likely to happen at third reading.

“What happened to the First Amendment?” Council Member Bob Anderson said this week.

He admitted that he hadn’t read the proposed ordinance before last week’s meeting. A draft wasn’t included in the packet of information sent out



The rules would ban signs from county meetings.

Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

the week before the meeting. The county attorney, Jay Watson, was working on the ordinance until the day before the meeting.

The ordinance, which applies to all county boards and commissions, requires the au-

dience and speakers to “conduct themselves in a decent, orderly, respectful and lawful manner.” Those who do not “shall be subject to removal.”

No signs are allowed in public meetings unless they are part of a presentation.

The ordinance also adopts wording that the council chairman currently reads before the public comment period that

SEE “RULES,” PAGE 2



Photos by Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

A splash of winter color

The Christmas freeze didn’t do camellia growers any favors, but they still managed to put on a display at the Grand Strand Camellia Society show at Inlet Square Mall. An award-winning Elegans Splendor, below left, from Mack and Ann McKinnon of Murrells Inlet, was one of 13 blue ribbon blooms that earned Mack McKinnon a sweepstakes award. At right, Randy Lampley hauls a load of plants from the society’s sale past a display of blooms from Hobcaw Barony.



BEST BLOOM



SCHOOLS

Board considers options for restoring its pay raises

BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI
COASTAL OBSERVER

While the Georgetown County School Board considers the pay first increase in 20 years, some members are worried about the public reaction.

“I would hope the public could understand that this has been frozen for 20 years,” said Board Member Scott DuBose, who represents District 2. “I think if we give them a decent explanation of what we’re trying to do, I think they can understand it.”

“Whatever we do, we do need to look at the temperature around us, and we do need to

look at our employees and we need to be very conscious,” said Board Member Patti Hammel, who represents District 1.

District policy states that board members receive 25 percent of the starting teacher salary – or base salary – as compensation. The chairman receives 35 percent more.

During an ongoing budget crisis in 2003, the board voted to freeze its pay. It has remained at \$6,719 a year, which was 25 percent of the starting teacher’s salary in 2002-2003.

Based on the current salary, board members should be receiving \$9,460, according to

SEE “SCHOOLS,” PAGE 4

PAWLEYS ISLAND

Town halts golf cart permits as council reviews \$10 fee

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

The town of Pawleys Island has put a freeze on golf cart permits while Town Council considers whether to raise the annual permit fee, currently \$10.

“There’s a lot of work involved,” Council Member Sarah Zimmerman said. “I think it needs to be considerably more.”

Pawleys Island once banned golf carts from the island’s streets, but a change in state law in 2012 put an end to local restrictions on the vehicles. The law allows them to be operated on streets where the speed limit is 35 mph or lower and up to four miles from the place where they are registered. Local governments can lower the range to two miles, which Pawleys Island did.

In 2017, the town also required that golf carts be registered. That ensures that people who operate them are complying with the state law on registration, insurance and operation of the vehicles. It also allows police to write parking tickets for golf carts without waiting for the operator to return. The state Department of Motor Vehicles doesn’t provide officers with registration information for golf carts the way it does for other vehicles.

On some days last summer, Pawleys Island police issued more tickets to golf carts than other vehicles, Chief Mike Fanning said.

The town issued about 700 golf cart permits last year. Most of those are for people off the island, including companies that

SEE “CARTS,” PAGE 2

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN | The resilience element

Flood of data raises questions for consultants

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

The folks who live in the corner of Murrells Inlet bordered by Bypass 17, Wachesaw Road and the Waccamaw River are slightly older and have 40 percent higher household incomes than the Georgetown County average. They also have the lowest resilience to natural hazards, to which they have a high risk of exposure.

The people who live farther south along the river, south of Waverly Road and west of



A dog watches the flooding at Salt Marsh Cove during Hurricane Ian.

Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

Highway 17, are also older still and have higher household incomes. They rank at the top of the scale for resilience.

The difference is based on a Composite Community Resilience Index created by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. It uses census and other data to assess 53 variables.

But is it accurate?

“Our goal here is for you to shoot holes in our methodology,” said Joe Boyes, the director of business development and partnerships for the St. Bernard Project, a nonprofit that is helping Georgetown County prepare the resiliency element of its comprehensive plan.

The state mandated that local governments add the element to those plans in 2020, the same year it created the Office of Resilience.

“There’s not a whole lot of language in state law about the element,” said Holly Richard-

son, the county planning director. “Not a whole lot of cities and counties in the state have done theirs yet.”

The consultants from the St. Bernard Project, known as SBP, presented their initial findings at a public meeting last week that drew a few dozen people. They were prepared to talk about flooding, a major issue in a county where 97 percent of the property doesn’t exceed 50 feet in elevation. They weren’t prepared for the flood of data.

Becky Ryon, the north coast

SEE “PLAN,” PAGE 3

INSIDE THIS ISSUE



Level playing field: Waverly Park is last capital project from 2008.
SECOND FRONT

Voting: Election board considers new office.
PAGE 4

Education: Jennifer Vereen’s work doesn’t end with the bell.
PAGE 8



WHS sports: Basketball teams now 2-1 in region play.
PAGE 12-13

Obituaries	2
Crime.....	5
Opinion.....	6
Crossword	10
Classifieds.....	11
Sports	12

Online
coastalobserver.com

