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County will fund studies to improve traffic hot spots

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

Georgetown County will commission studies of the business districts in Pawleys Island and Murrells Inlet to create shovel-ready projects for state highway funding that will improve pedestrian access and safety along with aesthetics.

The draft budget for the fiscal year that starts July 1 includes \$200,000 for Pawleys Island and \$100,000 for Business 17 in Mur-

rells Inlet.

"This is definitely to fill in the details that have been talked about in a general sense," Administrator Angela Christian said.

The Highway 17 corridor on Waccamaw Neck was the subject of a study in 2003 by the Grand Strand Area Transportation Study, a regional group that prioritizes projects for federal funds received by the state Department of Transportation. The most

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Pedestrian crossings will be one goal of the Downtown Pawleys Island study.

Charles Swenson/
Coastal Observer



Photos by Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

Fields of faith | Students and parents pack the Waccamaw High stadium for testimony, prayer and music, hosted by the Fellowship of Christian Athletes. Trent Daman, above, sings with the band, which drew a response from the crowd, right. Jamie Tippins, below, was called to lead the worship after the featured speaker fell ill.



PAWLEYS ISLAND

Historic home preservation made condition of variance to tear down old house

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

A house from the 1940s that the owners say is beyond repair will be replaced in exchange for an agreement to preserve one of the oldest houses on Pawleys Island.

The town Board of Zoning Appeals last week gave Brian and Staci Inskip a variance to the unified development code that limits each lot to one principal use. They own an ocean-front lot that contains Liberty Lodge, a 19th century house,

and Port Arthur, built a century later. They planned to restore both, but found that doing more than about \$50,000 worth of work to Port Arthur would trigger a provision in the flood ordinance that would require raising the structure more than 3 feet to comply with current regulations.

"It's structurally unsound," Steve Banta, a contractor on the project, told the appeals board. "It would be an overwhelming challenge to repair what's there now."

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LITCHFIELD BEACH

Judge lets 'fabulous case' over zoning move forward

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

A suit over a zoning change at Litchfield Beach will move forward so a judge can decide if the area was properly zoned in the first place.

Circuit Court Judge Diane Goodstein last week denied Georgetown County's motion to dismiss the suit brought by property owners at Inlet Point South. They claim that County Council's approval of a change to the "planned development" zoning in the gated commu-

nity was flawed because the property was never changed from a "planned unit development" district established in 1989. A change in the state law in 1994 did away with PUDs, as they were known, and replaced them with PDs that required mixed uses.

The area on the south end of Litchfield Beach was originally zoned "residential 10,000 square feet," which reflected the minimum lot size. That was later changed to PUD R-10.

Georgetown County sought

SEE "ZONING," PAGE 3

MURRELLS INLET | The Golden Oyster Award

One last oyster for Snakeman to pick

Franklyn Smalls picked countless oysters from the creek in his 79 years. He once recalled the day he harvested 47 bushels. The supply seemed limitless.

Two months after his death, Smalls was remembered for his role in helping preserve the resource that he saw dwindle during his lifetime.

The Golden Oyster Award from Murrells Inlet 2020 was presented at the annual Spring Tide cleanup in memory of "a man who truly understood the importance of taking care of the creek," said Stacy Johnson, the community group's executive director.

The image of Smalls, better known as Snakeman, looked out from the T-shirts that Spring Tide volunteers wore as they scoured the streets and waterways collecting trash.

"That creek done raised many a family on this inlet, Black and white," Smalls said in a 2011 interview.

It raised his. His father, Thomas "Marchie" Smalls, was an oysterman, making his living from the creek despite losing an arm in a car wreck. His mother, Aliene Smalls, worked at Oliver's Lodge, where she came up with the recipe for their popular corn dodgers.

Snakeman - whose given name was also spelled Franklyn, although his family thought Franklyn was correct - started working in the creek when he was 9.

"I always liked being in a boat with my daddy. I learned to flounder gig. He taught me everything I learned," Smalls said in an interview.

He remembered wearing "old brogan shoes" when he

started because he couldn't afford the oysterman's kneelength boots.

"His daddy taught him well," said Melissa Smalls, one of his sisters, after the ceremony Sunday. "You talk about pretty oysters; he could pick an oyster."

A bushel of Snakeman's oysters weighed more than others'. He only picked the large ones, leaving the small ones to grow.

"It keeps the quality up," he said. "You've got a bushel of oysters instead of little ol' shells and stuff."

Over his lifetime, he saw the resource diminish through pollution and over-harvesting.

"From the time I started picking to now, there are shoals out there you can almost walk barefoot on," Smalls said in 2011. "They've been stripped completely clean by the public.



"Everything you need to survive is here in this creek," Franklyn "Snake-man" Smalls said. He is seen here in 2005.

Deborah Silliman/Coastal Observer

He usually started picking a month into the season when the water got colder and stopped before the waters got warm in the spring. He rotated his harvests to give the beds time to recover.

And in the off season, between doing odd jobs, he would reseed the beds with old oyster shells so the "spat" would have something to attach to.

"If you don't manage your business right, it will go down to the ground," Smalls said. "If you don't manage your oyster

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The big leagues: Recreation teams join Waccamaw High varsity before final game. **SECOND FRONT**

Play-offs: Soccer teams combine for 20 goals in opening round. **SECOND FRONT**



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