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Pawleys Island wants hearing on Litchfield sand project

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

The town of Pawleys Island will ask the state to hold a public hearing on a proposal to dredge sand from Midway Inlet to renourish a portion of Litchfield Beach.

The Peninsula Property Owners Association is seeking federal and state permits to dig sand from the inlet to repair erosion damage along 3,600 feet of beach in front of the gated community. A project in 2022 placed 400,000 cubic yards of offshore sand along that area on the southern end of

Taking sand from the shoal could reduce pressure on the north end of Pawleys Island, where a jetty was covered by waves in a 2023 storm.

Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

Litchfield Beach.

The permits under review by the Army Corps of Engineers and the state Department of Environmental Services would allow 75,000 cubic yards of sand to be dug from the north side of the inlet if the volume of sand in the original renourishment



project falls below 200,000 cubic yards.

The Peninsula would be able to conduct two such projects at least 20 months apart within a five year period, if the permits are approved.

The project could also be triggered if "there is evidence that sand from the nourishment may be impacting Pawleys Island," according to the application.

Town officials and property owners met over Zoom with state officials and Steven Traynum, president of Coastal Science and Engineering, which

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Photos by Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

Family time | Lilly Vedder, 7, gets a lift from her dad, Russell, at the Pawleys Island Community Church's first Daddy Daughter Dance last week. Below, Birdie Moran, 3, holds her dad Wes' hand as she watches the entertainment. At right, a balloon drop closed the evening. It drew 200 couples.



PROPERTY TAXES

Reassessment math: As property values soar, county will reduce tax rate

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

Even people who have not bought or sold property in the last five years have a pretty good idea how real estate prices have increased on the Waccamaw Neck. This year, that will be confirmed when Georgetown County completes the property reassessment process required by state law.

The county is preparing for what one official said isn't just sticker shock, but "sticker stroke."

"All of this stuff seems a little scary for the taxpayer," Walt

Ackerman, the county director of Administrative Services, told County Council members during their annual planning retreat last week.

In past reassessments, some property rose in value. Some stayed the same or declined. This time will be different due to the spike in sales that came with the coronavirus pandemic in 2020.

"I don't think we're going to see properties going down unless they're in disrepair," Ackerman said.

But the rise in property values does not mean that there

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Five takeaways from council retreat

Georgetown County Council held its annual retreat last week, spending a day at Hobcaw Barony to build teamwork, get updates on initiatives and set priorities. Here are five takeaways from the session.

1 A local option sales tax will be on the ballot in the 2026 general election. The measure failed by 54 votes last year.

Revenue from the 1-cent sales tax would give owners of real estate, business property and personal property such as vehicles and boats a tax credit. It would also provide additional revenue for county operations.



Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

Selecting priorities.

Six of the seven council members included another sales tax referendum among

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WACCAMAW LIBRARY AT 10

Move to larger space turned facility into 'a real community center'

BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI
COASTAL OBSERVER

Ten years ago this week the new Waccamaw Neck Branch Library opened off Willbrook Boulevard in Litchfield.

"It's almost, in a way, a blink of an eye," said Dwight McInvaill, director of the Georgetown County library system. "I can barely believe that 10 years have passed."

The \$3.5 million facility replaced a smaller library on the corner of Library Lane and Commerce Drive in Pawleys Island. At 17,000 square feet, the new library is more than double the size of the old one and has nearly double the amount of shelving for books.



Michael Walker, the architect who designed the building, added some homey touches like cypress boards on walls, interior columns and large win-

dows on the back of the building that overlook a retention pond and wetlands.

When the library opened, the space around the pond was

More than 110,000 items were checked out of the Waccamaw Library last year.

Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

barren. The Friends of the Waccamaw Library came up with an idea for a "Big Backyard" and added gazebos, seating areas and a memorial grove of trees.

The main auditorium can seat 200 people. There are also two smaller meeting rooms that each seat 20 people.

At the old library there was one meeting room that 70 people could squeeze into.

There was also not enough space at the old facility for a

teen tech room but the new one has one thanks to the success of a program that gave teens access to computers and video games at the Carvers Bay branch. The Carvers Bay program required kids to earn screen time by reading.

After 10 years, McInvaill said the enthusiasm for the library remains, as does its energy and vitality.

"The enthusiasm with which the Friends and the other volunteers go about making it first-class is so wonderful," he added. "That's what I appreciate most about it. It's turned into a real community center for the Waccamaw Neck. It is the place where

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