



Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

As the inlet migrated, 10 beachfront houses at Prince George became creekfront houses.

Town votes \$150K to settle Prince George erosion suit

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

A settlement between the town of Pawleys Island and property owners at Prince George will end a lawsuit over the town's 2020 beach renourishment project and allow planning to move forward on a proposal to move Pawleys Inlet closer to where it was five years ago.

Town Council approved the terms of the settlement this week, agreeing to pay \$150,000 toward the cost of the project. The town did not release the settlement agreement. Administrator Dan Newquist said that was on the advice of the attor-

ney representing the town in suits brought by Prince George property owners.

Mayor Brian Henry said work on the terms has taken more than a year.

"There was compromise on both sides," he said.

Bud Watts, who owns two oceanfront lots and 1,065 acres on the west side of Pawleys Creek at Prince George, said he was pleased with the agreement.

"We think it's a win-win for both Pawleys Island and Prince George. Frankly, we're just ready to focus on a solution and be good neighbors with our friends at Pawleys Island," Watts said. "It's been a long

time coming."

In 2020, the town completed a project that placed 1.1 million cubic yards of offshore sand on the beach from the south end parking lot to just beyond Second Street on the island's north end.

Pawleys Inlet, which separates the island from Prince George, began to migrate south. Watts and his wife, Melesa, filed suit in May 2022 after the inlet had reached their two oceanfront lots on the north end of Prince George.

Other property owners and the Prince George Community Association also filed suits as the inlet continued to move to

SEE "SUIT," PAGE 4

SCHOOLS | The safety committee report

Backpacks and tailgating under review

BY MADISON SHARROCK
COASTAL OBSERVER

The Georgetown County School Board's safety committee found six areas it thinks need improvement. Two were on track before the committee delivered its report to the full board this week.

"There were much more strength and no weaknesses. The weaknesses to me are just things we can improve on," Board Member Robert Cox said. He chaired the committee that was formed in April.

One area was training on scanners and doors. The district conducted door safety training with administrators last week and has training scheduled next week on its Open Gate system, which scans people who enter the schools each day.

The committee asked Superintendent Bethany Giles and her staff to create a timetable for addressing the other issues, which include after-school events, specifically tailgating on school grounds.

Tailgating guidelines drew pushback from members of the Georgetown High School Alumni Association at this week's school board meeting.

"What's troubling is that this conversation has moved forward without any communication or input from the alumni association," said Jessie Walker, an association member.



Madison Sharrock/Coastal Observer

A seat at the table | Jarrod Ownbey won't be sworn in until August, but he joined the school board at its annual planning retreat last week. Story, Page 3.

"This isn't about nostalgia. It's about community empowerment," said Shiquanna Knowland, a 2004 Georgetown High graduate.

Giles presented guidelines to improve safety measures for homecoming activities including tailgates and parades, which one member from the alumni association called "evasive." The rules are in addition to existing school district policies, including a volume limit on music. Giles said she received feedback that the limit conflicted with students performing and competing.

Cox said he was all for tailgating as long as it's done "in a

civil manner."

"We never, at any time, ever said we were going to get rid of tailgating," Cox said. "As you saw tonight, our staff is already writing and has improved the tailgating procedures and policies."

A violation of the guidelines can result in criminal charges, removal from the property and future bans to schools in the district.

As part of the safety initiative, the district is also evaluating vendors to replace over 700 radios.

"Without communication in the time of a crisis, you can find yourself in big trouble,"

Cox said.

The use of electronic cigarettes among students has been a concern for the board and Giles, who presented a vape-free initiative to combat the issue.

In addition, the committee also wanted to see action creating a uniform policy for monitoring bathrooms because that's where bullying and vaping occurs.

The board is considering a district-wide policy requiring clear book bags and drinking bottles. Carvers Bay High School made a clear bag optional last year with the goal of making it mandatory in the future. Waccamaw Middle School has a similar policy for water bottles.

"It's to be able to see what our children are bringing into our schools," Cox said. "I'm looking for weapons, that's one. We're looking for things like vapes and other things."

With students returning on Aug. 1, it's too late to create a district-wide policy this year, so Giles suggested easing into it after she gathers more input.

"This would not be a goal to implement in the next two weeks," she said. "We know that parents have already started purchasing supplies."

"This is not the end. This is just the beginning of making our schools more safe for our children," Cox said.

BEACHES

Proposed limits on surf fishing dead in the water

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

A change to the beach regulations that would limit surf fishing won't come up for a vote when Georgetown County Council meets next week, according to the council chairman.

Clint Elliott said he and other council members have been meeting with fishing groups and state officials about their goal of preventing commercial operations that catch large sharks beyond the surf and land them on the beach.

"We agreed a 6-foot shark rolling up on the beach was not a good idea," Elliott said.

The council last month gave the second of three readings to an amended beach ordinance that would have banned shark fishing and limited surf fishing to 7 p.m. to 7:30 a.m. from May through September.

That drew a backlash from anglers and others who said the limit on surf fishing wasn't needed and would put a traditional pastime at risk.

SEE "COUNCIL," PAGE 4



Clint Elliott

HIGHWAY 17 | Maintaining the medians

Beautification group sees early benefits from safety equipment

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

Along with the crepe myrtle blooms, the landscaped Highway 17 median through Litchfield has another splash of color this summer: safety orange.

It flashes from a message board, shouts from banners and sprouts from 300 safety cones along the 3.4 miles maintained by the nonprofit Litchfield Beautification Foundation. And it seems to be working.

"I think my crew feels safer," said Chad O'Brien, co-owner of Waccamaw Landscaping, which works under contract for the foundation. "They do see the traffic slowing down."



Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

A message board was part of the package of safety equipment.

The maintenance work is paid for by private donations and annual grants funded by Georgetown County's accommodations tax revenue. The county approved \$76,722 last year to purchase safety equipment, which also includes flashing lights for the landscapers' trucks and mowers.

The request from the foundation followed an incident where a car crashed through a patch of landscaping near Litchfield Drive, missing a landscape crew by about 10 feet.

There have been other incidents over the years, said Ken Dewell, president of the foundation, but that was the

SEE "MEDIAN," PAGE 4

INSIDE THIS ISSUE



Winyah: Band keeps focus on local roots as it charts success.
SECOND FRONT



Theater: In Southern musical, the music takes center stage.
PAGE 7



Pickleball: A/C issues in gym don't slow pace of growing sport.
PAGE 12

| | |
|---------------------|----|
| Obituaries | 2 |
| Crime..... | 5 |
| Opinion | 6 |
| Crossword | 10 |
| Classifieds | 11 |
| Sports | 12 |
| Online | |
| coastalobserver.com | |

