COASTAL OBSERVER

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$4M legal settlement will relocate Pawleys Inlet

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

A settlement in lawsuits over Pawleys Island's 2020 beach renourishment project will provide $4 million to relocate Pawleys Inlet and restore the eroded beachfront across the inlet at Prince George. A 13-page agreement is designed to let the town and Prince George property owners keep the inlet from migrating in the future.

The settlement signed last month by all the parties to the litigation came six years after the town of Pawleys Island began a project to pump 1.1 million cubic yards of offshore sand onto its beach. The work was completed in 2020. The first of three lawsuits was filed in 2022 after Pawleys Inlet had migrated 300 feet south toward Prince George.

The inlet has continued to move south, eroding the dunes in front of beachfront houses. It is now about 3,200 feet south of the public parking lot on the south end of the island. The settlement agreement calls for the inlet to be relocated within 800 feet of the parking lot, which is owned by Georgetown County.

"I am very happy that we've come to terms on a mutually agreeable solution," said Bud

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Migrating white pelicans occupy the shoals in Pawleys Inlet in front of sandbagged dunes on Prince George.

Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

WACCAMAW HIGH | Junior ROTC

School's first cadet class ready to suit up

BY MADISON SHARROCK
COASTAL OBSERVER

Nearly 20 students at Waccamaw High School will be the first in the school's history to sport Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps uniforms.

The Army JROTC program will kick off this spring semester at Waccamaw High since principal David Hammel made an initial pitch to the district office almost two decades ago.

"I'm excited to get to be a part of it and to see it start now after something that was really just a dream of our community and our stakeholders and our students," Hammel said. "I'm looking forward to what it can be and to see it actually come into place, to see those students in uniform for the first time this spring."

He said he has high hopes that more students will jump on the JROTC bandwagon as they may adjust their schedules when they returned to school yesterday morning.

Waccamaw became the final high school in Georgetown County School District to introduce JROTC, launching the district's only Army JROTC program.

Georgetown and Andrews High offer Navy JROTC programs. Carvers Bay High offers Marine Corps JROTC. The Air Force JROTC is the only military branch Georgetown County schools do not have, and the Coast Guard does not have a JROTC program.

Ernest Lambert, a 1999 Georgetown High graduate and retired Army sergeant first class, was hired as the program's military instructor last month. He was a cadet in Georgetown's program under Petty Officer Charles Clark.

"He gave me so many skills, and I fell in love with JROTC back then," he said. "I'm actually very excited to hopefully get to see him for the first time since I graduated."

Lambert joined the Army in 2002 and served in three combat tours, totaling 42 months of deployment. He received his bachelor's degree in secondary education at the University of Kentucky, where he was an adjunct professor of military science and Army ROTC from 2017 to 2021. Lambert retired from the Army in 2022 and shifted to teach JROTC in Irvine, Ky. He currently resides in Andrews.

James Stephenson, a retired colonel who served 30 years in the Army in various roles, is due to join in early February as the senior Army instructor once he receives clearance from the military to teach. He said he wanted to get involved with the community after moving to Pawleys Island in 2022.

Stephenson is currently volunteering at the school to start developing connections with

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Ernest Lambert set up his classroom this week as the school's first JROTC instructor.

Madison Sharrock/ Coastal Observer

LAND USE

Neighbors line up to oppose 'high end' gas station

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

A proposed zoning change that would allow development of a convenience store and gas station at the entrance to North Litchfield is drawing opposition from area residents.

The 6.7 acres at the corner of Highway 17 and Boyle Drive is currently zoned "neighborhood commercial." The owner, Edward Floyd, is seeking a change to "general commercial."

The Litchfield Beaches Property Owners Association was told last year that the change was for construction of "a high-end convenience store," said Kevin Corrigan, the association president.

"Of course LBPOA's going to fight that," he said.

Georgetown County has already received several letters opposing the change, which is scheduled for a hearing before the Planning Commission on Jan. 15, said Holly Richardson, the county planning director.

Since the request is for a

SEE "ZONING," PAGE 3

GEORGETOWN | Change at the top

City's third-party mayor takes office with focus on economy

BY MADISON SHARROCK
COASTAL OBSERVER

Georgetown Mayor Jay Doyle, who took the oath of office last weekend at Joseph Rainey Park, has been careful about making promises to his constituents especially with a left hand on the Bible.

Doyle said it was an honor and a pleasure to be elected.

"I know it's a lot of responsibility. I don't want to make a lot of promises," he said during his inaugural address.

Instead he shared a New Year's resolution with the crowd at Rainey Park.

"I would like to work to bring this city back to the economic vitality we had when we had a working seaport and two working mills," he said.

Alongside driving the economy of the city, Doyle has also listed utility costs as a "huge issue" for the citizens of Georgetown. He said that would be a challenge to change. He said he plans to serve one term and do the best he can in four years.

"A lot of the money is already committed, so I couldn't promise that I would do it," Doyle said. "But we're definitely going to look at anything we could do to help people with their standard of living."

However Doyle did make one promise that the first City Council meeting on Jan. 15 will be eventful.

"We will be making news. I promise you that," he said.

City Council member Tamika Williams-Obeng said she had a meeting this week with Doyle to discuss what she would like to see in place for the city. She declined to disclose her ideas, but said she is excited.

"It's going to be good. It's going to be for the betterment of all of my constituents," Williams-Obeng said.

Doyle was elected last month after running as a candidate of the Forward Party. He is the first third-party nominee to win a partisan election in South Carolina since 1894, according to the party's research. He is also the first Forward Party candidate to win an election outright rather than as a party affiliate, said Clint Eisenhauer, who chairs the state party.

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Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

Jay Doyle takes the oath of office from state Sen. Robbie Sabb, right, as his wife, Suzanne, looks on and former Mayor Brendon Barber records the occasion.

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