

## Annual Village Council Retreat Recap

The Bald Head Island Village Council conducted its annual retreat on Tuesday, February 7<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday, February 8<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The retreat was broadcast via Zoom and recorded. The video can be viewed on YouTube [HERE](#). The broadcast is broken down by topic.

Below is a recap of the items presented and discussed.

**Shoreline Management** – Erik Olsen, P.E., from the Village’s coastal engineering firm, Olsen Associates, gave a presentation on the Village’s shoreline management efforts. He spoke about the erosion trends on South Beach. He described the Village’s shore stabilization strategy as a “three-legged stool” which is comprised of beach disposal through the Wilmington Harbor Sand Management Plan, renourishment events that are initiated by the Village, and structures (like the terminal groin and the sand tube groin field. He explained the Federal government’s cycle of disposal projects and projected when the Village will need to consider doing its own beach fill project (2024/2025).

Mr. Olsen recommended that the Village consider addressing the chronic erosion near the Shoals Club and replacement of the sand-tube groin field on the west end (this work would need to be done “in the dry” which requires about a half million cubic yards of sand). He laid out the options for sand sources and said that a structure near the Shoals Club area is not an option because of current NC law.

The presentation slides can be viewed [HERE](#). Video of the presentation can be viewed [HERE](#).

**Greenburg Traurig Update** – Steven Barringer, a representative from the Village’s Government Law and Policy Practice advocacy firm, Greenburg Traurig gave a presentation about the firm’s work with the Village. The firm has worked with the Village since 2011. Mr. Barringer has assisted the Village since 2020 and worked on the Village’s comments to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management (BOEM) as it relates to wind energy.

Mr. Barringer went into detail on the background of offshore wind energy for the Wilmington area and gave an update on what is happening now with the Wilmington East wind energy area. The Environmental Impact Statement process is expected to begin in June 2028 and construction could start as early as 2031. He also discussed the Wilmington Harbor Improvement Project. He said that in 2022 \$500,000 was appropriated for the Environmental Impact Statement for this project. He anticipated that they would begin the EIS process soon. The draft EIS is typically advertised to take about 18 months to complete, it usually takes 2 years and could be a 4-to-5-year process.

Ms. Schulteis presented on the 118<sup>th</sup> Congress and gave an overview of what is going on in DC. She indicated that the Administration will be focusing on carrying forward the funding that came out of the Inflation Reduction Act and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, there is still a lot of funds from these bills that have not been distributed by the agencies. She indicated that appropriations will be very uncertain because of the prohibition of passing an omnibus

appropriation bill. The debt ceiling will throw another complicating factor into FY 2024. She discussed earmarks and finding projects that our delegation members would support.

The presentation slides can be viewed [HERE](#). Video of the presentation can be viewed [HERE](#).

**BHI Conservancy Environmental Contracts Overview** – Beth Darrow, Senior Scientist from the Bald Head Island Conservancy gave a presentation on the services that the Conservancy provides to support the Village. This included forest vegetation exclosure maintenance, Bald Head Woods aquifer monitoring, deer management, Bald Head Creek water quality monitoring and bacteria dynamics, terrapin population assessment and education, aquifer modeling, beach vitex assessment and treatment, predator population assessments, shorebird nesting protection and assessment, and comprehensive reporting. She shared some of the projects the interns have been working on. She also proposed a living shoreline project which could be located at the Marina Park. She thinks the Village could get matching funds from the Coastal Federation for this project and is getting an estimate from the company that makes the OysterCatcher material that will be used for the project.

The presentation slides can be viewed [HERE](#). Video of the presentation can be viewed [HERE](#).

**Duke Energy Update** – Pam Hardy and Danielle Peoples from Duke Energy provided the Council with information about the future of energy in North Carolina and the latest on the multi-year grid improvement project that is wrapping up on the island.

Ms. Hardy reported on NC Utilities Commission Carbon Plan that will serve as a roadmap for the State's energy goals. The plan outlines how the state will achieve 70 percent carbon reduction by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2050. The plan values an "all of the above" approach to carbon reduction, meaning it will pursue a diverse mix of resources to meet the state's reduction goals. She said Duke Energy looks forward to listening and learning from diverse stakeholders and community members in the region to make sure they are being thoughtful about all aspects of the project and are delivering it in the most economical way for their customers. Duke will provide an update in their next NCUC filing which is due by September 1, 2023.

Ms. Peoples updated the Council on the grid improvement project. She reported that they expect to have the project completed by the end of March. As part of this project, they looked at the entire underground system on Bald Head Island and worked with a vendor to install some customized equipment to ensure that they had automatic switching capabilities back in the control center so if something happens, they can re-route power automatically. These were also done to spec to be submersible for a period of time in the case of flooding.

Video of the presentation can be viewed [HERE](#).

**BHI Comprehensive Long-Range Planning** – Mayor Quinn discussed the status of the Commercial Area Master Plan. He said that the committee will be presenting the proposed plan. He wanted to emphasize that the intent of the plan is to formulate a set of guidelines to get the Village where it wants to go while also protecting the community. He said that build-out will have

an effect on everything on the island such as infrastructure, parking, vegetation, and planning for it is critical. There was discussion about what still needs to be considered in the plan and that the design guidelines are being worked through.

Kevin Arata joined the meeting and gave a synopsis on what the Commercial Area Master Plan committee has accomplished so far. He expects there may be some changes for the planning team to make, but not many and that the committee will discuss the survey which had many similarities with the Vision 2025 document that was created in 2017. There was discussion about accepting public input. The public will be able to provide input on the draft Commercial Area Master Plan and view the recording of the presentation of the draft plan online.

**Island Managers Forum – BHI Conservancy, Bald Head Association, BHI Club/Shoals Club, Old Baldy Foundation, BHI Limited** – Managers from the BHI Conservancy (Beth Darrow for Chris Shank), Bald Head Association (Carrie Moffett), BHI Club/Shoals Club (David Sawyer), and Old Baldy Foundation (Chris Webb), had a forum to discuss how they can improve communications moving forward and work on projects together for the betterment of the island as a whole (Chad Paul of BHI Limited had another commitment). Ms. Webb indicated that there used to be monthly meetings with the presidents/elected officials and the mayor and also meetings with managers. There was interest in re-establishing in-person meetings again. Ms. Moffett said she would initiate the manager meetings. Mayor Quinn will initiate the presidents/elected officials' group.

Audio of the discussion can be found [HERE](#).

### **Village Department Head Presentations**

**Public Services:** J.P. McCann, Public Services Director, gave an overview of the Public Services staff and who to contact. He highlighted the work order system that islanders can use to send in service requests. The requests to go each of the superintendents in Public Services.

He discussed the 80/90 rule and the wastewater treatment capacity numbers that indicate when the Village must increase capacity per the State permit. He said that the Village is being proactive in meeting the State's requirements. He said the Village is nowhere near having any demand issues and is working toward being shovel ready in 2024. Grants and no interest loans are being explored and the Village is taking measures to improve its application points by developing a Capital Improvement Plan and putting other administrative processes in place.

Mr. McCann shared data to support some capital purchases (such as a roll off truck) and showed what the 10-year Capital Improvement Plan that he is developing would look like. He gave an update on the Contractor Services campus improvements and indicated that two infiltration ponds still need to go in, the site will need graded, the fencing completed, and the new gas pumps installed. He went over the figures for the beach access repairs and the options for next year's budget, one which would bring the Village up to date on all repairs so that it could transition into a preventative maintenance posture with the accesses.

The presentation slides can be viewed [HERE](#). Video of the presentation can be viewed [HERE](#).

**Finance:** Zachary Hewett, Finance Director gave a presentation with a proposed budget calendar, an update on the tax revaluation, potential items that could affect the FY24 budget, and the initiatives that the Finance Department is working on to include launching the new occupancy tax software, an option for investing in the NC Investment Pool (which was approved at the regular Village Council meeting), the hiring of the financial analyst/deputy finance director, and the financial positioning plan.

The presentation slides can be viewed [HERE](#). Video of the presentation can be viewed [HERE](#).

**Public Safety:** – Public Safety Director, Alan May reviewed the departmental goals from FY23 and provided an overview of the strategic goals of the department for FY24.

**Goal #1: Community Safety and Engagement** – This coming year the department wants to expand the use of the department website and social media to inform and engage the community. Reduce risk to our community through mitigation, education, and response and increase visibility and community contacts (PWT – park, walk, talk).

**Goal #2: Identify, develop, and enhance our internal resources, facilities, and personnel** – This coming year the department aims to identify equipment and system requirements and seek appropriate resources, review, revise, and revisit agency standard operating guidelines (SOGs), and make some enhancements to the plant and premises (work on the appearance of the building and additional storage in the back of the building).

**Goal #3: Continue to invest and develop personnel** – This coming year the department aims to maintain federal, state, local, and all applicable certifications for all personnel, encourage and promote higher educational achievement by utilizing available benefits (like the tuition assistance program), and invest in programs targeted to enhance employee resiliency, health, and professionalism.

**Goal #4: Uphold department-wide accountability** – This coming year the department aims to enhance internal controls, transparency, and adhere to best practices, modernize department business processes, and data utilization, and improve accountability and clarity for various areas of the agency through the creation and addition of Procedure and Operation Manuals.

The presentation slides can be viewed [HERE](#). Video of the presentation can be viewed [HERE](#).

**Human Resources:** Judy Schofield, Human Resources Director gave an overview of the MAPS study, the Classification and Pay Study that the Village initiated earlier in the year. She provided a list of the goals for the department which included, training and development, COVID-19, and educational assistance. She highlighted the Village's implementation of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion in the workplace. Lastly, she provided the Village Council with a few recommendations for FY24, which included a 2% cost of living adjustment, merit pay of up to 5%, the approval of class and pay recommendations from the MAPS study in order to recruit and retain highly qualified staff, continued support for the flexible work arrangement policy, and funding for a 401k match above the current 5 percent.

The presentation slides can be viewed [HERE](#). Video of the presentation can be viewed [HERE](#).

**Public Information:** Carin Faulkner, Public Information Officer, gave an overview of the initiatives she is working on. This included working with Public Services to add beach access signage with QR Codes for current beach forecast as part of the “Know Before You Go” education program, completing the ADA Transition Plan draft document for the future public comment period, Arbor Day celebration for this year (Appreciation Tree in the IPC/PO), golf cart safety month, rental/welcome packets, and internal communications projects – videos for HR orientation and Public Safety recruitment.

The presentation slides can be viewed [HERE](#). Video of the presentation can be viewed [HERE](#).

**Information Technology:** David Cox, Information Technology Director, gave an overview of the initiatives he will be working on over the next fiscal year. He gauged interest in an improvement project for the Island Package Center and Post Office to expand receiving and delivery availability without adding additional staff, enabling self-service capabilities for island residents to be notified of parcel delivery and enhanced parcel reporting and delivery accounting management, and adding outdoor lockers for parcel pick-up. Mr. Cox also proposed purchasing Citizen Relationship Management software to improve the Village’s capabilities in serving citizens by sharing data between departments for efficient and effective service.

The presentation slides can be viewed [HERE](#). Video of the presentation can be viewed [HERE](#).

**Development Services:** Stephen Boyett, Development Services Director, presented on the importance of residential sprinklers. He said that there are some folks who have voluntarily installed sprinklers where they are not required, he said he think that they may be required by code in the future. He reviewed the current housing stock numbers as of January 31, 2023, there are a total of 1,309 structures on the island and that includes single family residential, multi-family/cluster development, commercial, and Village-owned structures. He said the Village is at about 60 percent build-out. He reviewed the permit activity from 2019-2022, which continues to trend upward.

The presentation slides can be viewed [HERE](#). Video of the presentation can be viewed [HERE](#).

**Council FY 24 Prioritization Discussion** - The Village Council reviewed many of the items that were discussed and gave guidance to the Village Manager and staff on the priorities that the Council has as the FY24 budget is prepared. The Council agreed to have a list of the priorities prepared for Greenburg Traurig as they look at federal funding opportunities.

Audio of the discussion can be found [HERE](#).