

Village Council Annual Retreat Recap

Each year the Council holds an open retreat to meet with consultants, outside specialists, department heads, and other Island entities. The intent is to reorient, update data, and strategize areas of focus for the upcoming year including potential budget implications.

This year's retreat took place on Monday, February 3, and Tuesday, February 4, 2025. Video of each retreat topic has been uploaded and organized into a YouTube playlist found [HERE](#). Below is a recap of what was presented and discussed.

Day one of the Village Council Annual Retreat consisted of the following:

- A shoreline management update presentation from the Village's coastal engineer. The presentation covered several topics including the Frying Pan Shoals borrow site permitting effort, an update on the Wilmington Harbor Sand Management Plan and the US Army Corps desire to revisit the current plan, the Village's long-term Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) effort for additional sand placement on South Beach, South Beach groin field conversion (tubes to rocks), South Beach erosion mitigation/monitoring, West Beach monitoring, and future sand needs, the marina channel entrance maintenance program, and the proposed beach management sustainability study.

View the video of the presentation [HERE](#) and the slides [HERE](#).

- A presentation from the Bald Head Island Conservancy on the Conservancy's environmental services contract with the Village. Dr. Beth Darrow shared information about the white-tailed deer population assessment and management, forest health, creek health, aquifer health, dune health (beach vitex), wildlife health (coyotes, terrapins, shorebirds), and the living shoreline project.

The Village Council will need to determine which measures to take to control the deer population, which has increased 53% since 2020.

The living shoreline installation at Marina Park is scheduled for February 24, 2025, from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Volunteers are welcome.

View the video of the presentation [HERE](#) and the slides [HERE](#).

- A presentation from the Village's governmental affairs consultants on the various advocacy efforts they have been working on for the Village. This included an update on the Village's additional work agreement with the US Army Corps of Engineers (MOA), Wilmington Harbor Deepening Project, Army Corps Feasibility Study, Frying Pan Shoals Borrow Area, Offshore Wind Plan & Leases, and the Wastewater Treatment Plan expansion.

View the video of the presentation [HERE](#) and the slides [HERE](#).

- An update on the Village's wastewater treatment plant expansion project from Tony Boahn, P.E., from McKim & Creed. Mr. Boahn reviewed the facility capacity, preliminary design, cost estimates, and the project schedule.

The final design of the plant expansion is scheduled to be completed in December 2025. The bid phase is expected to begin in March 2026, and construction is estimated to begin in October 2028. View the video of the presentation [HERE](#) and the slides [HERE](#).

- A presentation from Jim Cornette from Applied Resource Management on BHI's hydrologic cycle.

The big takeaways from the presentation include:

1. Large rainfall events are necessary to keep the natural aquifer filled.
2. Wastewater application uphill from West Beach helps keep saltwater intrusion at bay.
3. Mother nature helps drain the island faster than any pumping system. Be a little patient.
4. Use pumps for critical needs for protecting infrastructure and private property.

View the video of the presentation [HERE](#) and the slides [HERE](#).

- A presentation from WithersRavenel on the Village's asset inventory assessment (AIA) program and related water and sewer project updates.

Deliverables for the project include, GIS map books of the water and sewer system, condition assessment of the sewer system, water looping and valve replacements, risk analysis and 10-year capital improvement plan (CIP), lifecycle model, rate study, and a draft asset management plan. WithersRavenel is expected to present the final Asset Management Plan to the board after September 2025.

View the video of the presentation [HERE](#) and the slides [HERE](#).

- A presentation from the Development Services Director, Stephen Boyett, on Floodplain Management. He discussed several definitions related to development in flood zones, the main cause of flooding events on BHI, what to expect during significant rainfall events, and frequently asked questions from the public.

View the video of the presentation [HERE](#), the slides [HERE](#), and the sample elevation certificate he discussed [HERE](#).

- A discussion on the Village's commitment to conservation. Mayor Quinn reported that he has started conversations with the Smith Island Land Trust and the Conservation Trust for North Carolina. He is collecting opinions and suggestions from folks on how the Village should proceed. The Village has developed several maps showing vacant properties. He said he wants the donation of property to become a community effort and thinks that the Village needs to be proactive in managing the rate of growth on the island.

There was additional discussion on the Village's parks and the future maintenance and usage of these properties.

There was further discussion on the Village's medians and how they should be maintained in the future. This included how the Village should enforce the damage to the medians when contractors are using them for parking and equipment.

View the video of the discussion [HERE](#) and the maps that were discussed [HERE](#), [HERE](#), and [HERE](#).

Day two of the Village Council Annual Retreat consisted of the following:

- A discussion on island collaboration. This included topics such as working together on communication, floodwater mitigation (which would help with the Community Rating System for the National Flood Insurance Program), design guidelines, and working with the Club as it is renovating to improve stormwater and lagoon connectivity.

Mayor Quinn suggested getting together with other entities about the usage of the parks and being a part of the discussion as the Village develops plans for future use.

There was also a suggestion to list areas in which the Village overlaps with other entities so they can proactively communicate on items before decisions are made.

View the video of the discussion [HERE](#).

- A presentation from the Village's Public Safety Chief, Josh Gibson. He discussed potential ordinance changes regarding ICE vehicles (documents [HERE](#) & [HERE](#)) and trailers (document [HERE](#)). He presented FY26 capital/operational/equipment needs which include vehicle replacement, additional personnel, purchase of software, drone equipment upgrade (to meet new requirements), and building maintenance/repairs.

Staff have organized a Town Hall for all Island stakeholders who use ICE vehicles and trailers so that the Village can receive input on their usage as the Village considers changes to the Village ordinances. The goal is to promote public safety, encourage the use of electric options, and provide realistic options based on what is available on the market. The Town Hall is scheduled for Tuesday, February 25, 2025, at 11:00 a.m. in the Department of Public Safety multi-purpose room. Flyer [HERE](#).

View the video of the presentation [HERE](#) and the slides [HERE](#).

- A presentation from the Village's Public Services Director, JP McCann.

This included an update on the current staffing of the Public Services, an overview of the wastewater treatment plant capacity rule and flow data. There was information shared on public works impacts, contractor services site improvements, beach access repairs, motor fleet management, hazardous materials drop-off (paint, pesticides, batteries, etc.), Village Hall fence and site improvements, road paving, overhead cutting/site-line tree work, ongoing maintenance for right-of-way, districting the water system, and ongoing maintenance of Timber Bridge and other capital needs.

View the video of the presentation [HERE](#) and the slides [HERE](#).

- A presentation from the Village's Finance Director. He discussed the budget calendar, preliminary revenue estimates, potential budget impacts, and the option for the Village to create a capital reserve fund.

View the video of the presentation [HERE](#) and the slides [HERE](#). You can also follow the progress of the FY26 budget preparations on the Village's website [HERE](#).