

# PROJECTS REPORT

## Town Projects/Initiatives Update

February 2024

Submitted By: Jon Barlow, Interim Town Manager

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This report is an on-going list of Town projects/Initiatives. New information received since the previous report is provided in **green**. Items will be removed after noting their completion.

- **Public Safety Building Restoration/Relocation Planning Project/ Swansboro Alternate Emergency Operations Center (Swansboro United Methodist Church-SUMC)**

Details from previous reports have been removed as I believe it's the Board's desire to further investigate options for the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) based on conversation from the September 27, 2021 meeting. Specifically, whether a regional facility or partnership with other neighboring jurisdictions that may have a structure that would provide a higher level of protection was possible. It has also been noted that conversation could be had with other local facilities in Swansboro that have buildings with a higher level of protection for space utilization.

The Town has an agreement in place with the SUMC should it be needed on preparatory measures. Public Safety staff and former Manger Seaberg visited the location at SUMC to verify the areas for town use, if needed, and to ensure communications would be available. The structure provides the structural integrity needed but communications during a storm while in the interior rooms would be difficult. Deputy EOC Coordinator/ Chief Degnan shared with me that arrangements for an antenna through Verizon or ATT would be needed. Board members met on December 9 to tour the SUMC site.

More in depth discussion with Chief Degnan, Chief Jackson, and Sonia Johnson regarding Public Safety Building Restorations will be had in the near future.

During the Board's Planning Retreat March 2, the Board agreed that the Manager would identify a committee and share that with the Board.

Ten people have been identified as the committee:

Chief Degnan	Chief Jackson	Paula Webb	Jennifer Ansell
Alex Wood, PE	Dusty Rhodes	Larry Philpott	Russ Davis
Alissa Fender	Laurent Meilleur, PLB Rep		

I hope to arrange our first meeting the last week of March.

Committee established 4/11 with the addition of Commissioner Conaway, Jr Freeman, and Roy Herrick. The Board of Commissioners held special joint meeting with the committee on 4/14 to give purpose and expectations.

## **Town of Swansboro, NC Manager's Report**

The Committee has met twice with a unanimous consensus gained immediately to proceed with building our own EOC in town, to create a safe place for employees to stand up during emergency operations. Onslow County is no longer interested in a partnership to build a substation since they purchased and are operating the Freedom Way station. Committee members will be making site visits on May 25<sup>th</sup> and then proceeding to develop an RFP for architect/engineer.

Additional EOC Committee membership changes includes; removing Russ Davis and Alex Wood; adding Brenda Pugliese, Ed McHale and Jonathan McDaniels.

Board discussion on a written action plan and timeline recommended by Mayor Pro Tem Tursi to be held June 27. The committee will re-convene its meetings once that discussion has occurred.

BOC Action Plan distributed to Committee, site discussions, and draft RFQ provided/discussed July 13, 2022.

Consultant Requests for Qualifications sent out August 9, 2022 to six different firms and was located on the website. Five proposals were received on 9/9. The EOC Committee created an interview panel at its 9/14 meeting and determined an interview schedule, draft questions etc. Once the panel decides on three proposals, interviews will be scheduled.

The interview panel consisting of Larry Philpott, Paula Webb, Chief Degnan, Dusty Rhodes, Jonathan McDaniels, and Brenda Pugliese interviewed three firms on 10/18/2022. The Interview Team will share its recommendation with the full EOC Committee on 10/26/22 and then that recommendation will be forthcoming to the BOC 11/14/22.

The Board of Commissioners selected Becker Morgan as the consulting architectural firm at its November 14, 2022 meeting.

Commissioner Philpott, Conaway and the Manager met in early December with Becker Morgan to review the Board's Action Plan for the EOC/PSB. A tour of our current facilities and potential sites were also made. The contract for the feasibility study was approved on January 9, 2023. Becker Morgan met with EOC Committee January 12<sup>th</sup> for introductions and Q&A. Representatives also made additional site visits on January 18, 2023. Staff continuing meetings with Becker Morgan until more details developed for committee review.

Staff continues to work with Becker Morgan on the feasibility study which we hope to present back to the committee in April.

Ernie Olds/Becker Morgan gave a report to include three options to the committee on April 19. Ernie will firm-up the options as discussed by the committee and share with the staff. The staff met with Becker Morgan again and BM was to firm up the report per discussions and share final deliverable with the Committee for recommendation to the Board of Commissioners.

## **Town of Swansboro, NC Manager's Report**

The final draft feasibility study was presented to the committee on June 21<sup>st</sup>. The Committee made some suggested clarification points that Becker Morgan incorporated and then the report was forwarded onto the Board of Commissioners in July 2023. The study included four options that captured the space needs in differing ways. In all options the EOC will be designed as a highly secure and hardened facility capable of resisting Category 4 hurricane conditions.

Option A is a concept that identifies all the critical functions of each department and places them in a new secure building or in the more recent additions that do meet code. The remaining existing spaces would largely be used for less critical functions such as physical fitness, storage, and minor work areas. This option should provide the least costly alternative while improving safety and addressing the EOC component fully. This option would include certain structural and exterior envelop enhancements to the existing, original metal building frame housing fire apparatus. Such enhancements cannot bring the original building to current standards but would extend the utility of the present structure to a future date. Option A – \$4.9M in building construction, renovation and demolition costs, 13,658 usable square footage. Site improvements of \$500,000; additional/potential costs of \$374,000 and soft cost of \$540,000. Total budget range (+/- 15%) = \$5.4M to \$7.3M.

Option B is a concept to build a new facility in place of the present Public Safety Facility. This would require demolishing the existing facility and building back a new freestanding building at the same location. This building would incorporate all the needs of each department. Phasing or providing temporary quarters might have to be considered to maintain continuous operations. This option should provide the middle ground in terms of costs as existing utilities, pavements, and stormwater management features are largely in place and adequate. Option B – \$8.8M in building construction, renovation, demolition, and temporary quarters costs, 14,788 usable square footage. Site improvements of \$500,000; additional/potential costs of \$433,000 and soft cost of \$913,000. Total budget range (+/- 15%) = \$9.2M to \$12.5M.

Option C is a concept that also builds a new facility, however, investigates using another location on the town owned site. This eliminates the need to provide temporary quarters or the acquisition of new land while maintaining continuous operation at the existing facility. Once the newly constructed facility is complete, operations can be relocated from the existing building and the building can be demolished or repurposed. This option should also provide middle ground in terms of costs, but may require extension or improvements to existing utilities, and pavements. Option C – \$8.8M in building construction, renovation and demolition costs, 14,788 usable square footage. Site improvements of \$750,000; additional/potential costs of \$376,000 and soft cost of \$922,000. Total budget range (+/- 15%) = \$9.3M to \$12.6M.

Option D is a concept that provides a new free-standing building that incorporates all the needs of each department. Option D would be constructed on a 'greenfield' site, an off campus location. This option is likely the costliest. Careful consideration will need to be given to site selection regarding impacts and expenses of land acquisition, utilities,

## Town of Swansboro, NC Manager's Report

drainage, flood plain and emergency response times in addition to the concerns noted previously in the New Site section. Option D – \$8.8M in building construction and renovation costs, 14,788 usable square footage. Site improvements of \$1,500,000; additional/potential costs of \$403,000 and soft cost of \$1.02M. Total budget range (+/- 15%) = \$9.9M to \$13.4M. Note, budget summary does not include land acquisition. Page 11 Swansboro Public Safety Building Feasibility Report – June 2023

The initial expectations for full project costs are in the range of \$5 - 14 million. It will be the Town's obligation to secure funding, administer design and construction above the \$6 million identified and available. The Town may obligate taxpayers through bonds, capital improvements program, or other means. Loans from the U.S. Department of Agriculture are available for up to 40-year terms with no down payment required. Other grants may also be available through the Golden Leaf Foundation, FEMA, and other state or federal sources.

On August 14<sup>th</sup>, Chairman Philpott gave a briefing on finance options. Due to the length of the meeting, the briefing was added to the August 28<sup>th</sup> agenda. The Board was asked to provide a firm option selection so that the design schematic and site analysis can be done. Option C was selected and the staff was asked to layout the design on the ground for better visibility at a future meeting.

At the direction of the Board in July, the Manager forwarded an additional funding request to our local legislative delegation. In September, we learned that the Town was awarded an additional \$3 million dollars toward this project in the state budget adoption.

Becker Morgan provided a *preliminary* exterior design schematic for Option C and that layout was mapped out on the ground for visibility on October 23<sup>rd</sup>. Becker Morgan has also provided a professional services agreement for the next phase – Design and Construction totaling \$840,500, which is approximately 8% of the estimated building and site construction costs. Authorization for the Manager to proceed was requested October 23<sup>rd</sup>.

On January 23, 2024 the BOC appointed Keith Walsh as Chairman of the newly recreated EOC/PSB site selection Committee. Mr. Walsh was tasked with identifying potential candidates to serve on the committee to the BOC for consideration. On February 12, 2024 the BOC appointed Roy Herrick, Junior Freeman, Doug Eckendorf, and Melissa Anderson as committee appointees. The newly formed committee conducted its first meeting on February 19, 2024. The committee intends to meet every Monday at 5 pm until a new site is secured.

**NC DCM Resilient Coastal Communities Program (RCCP) Grant** – On March 17, 2021, the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality's Division of Coastal Management award their first round of RCCP Grant funding. The Town of Swansboro was competitive enough to receive one of the grants. The intent of the grant is to fund efforts in four key phases in their Coastal Communities Resiliency Program:

## Town of Swansboro, NC Manager's Report

1. Community Engagement and Risk & Vulnerability Assessment
2. Planning, Project Selection and Prioritization
3. Project Engineering and Design
4. Project Implementation

Through our efforts in the 2019 CAMA Land Use Plan update, Swansboro has effectively covered most of the parameters for phases 1 and 2. This grant will assist in finishing the remaining requirements under phases 1 & 2 so we may move forward with the final 2 phases. Applications for Phases 3 & 4 is expected to be due by the end of this calendar year.

Dewberry, Beth Smyre hosted the first RCCP Committee meeting November 17, 2021 at Town Hall. The committee identified several areas that better planning (resilience) was needed but narrowed the list to the top priorities being stormwater mapping and generator power for schools/nursing homes. The complete list included:

- Disaster Recovery (generators for nursing homes, and schools)
- Stormwater Management/Mapping
- Climate Change
- Hurricane Response/Evacuation
- King Tide Levels

A community engagement meeting was held on Wednesday, February 23, 2022 from 4-6pm at Town Hall. A community input survey is available from the Town website, at Town Hall and the Swansboro Branch Library through March 9, 2022. The Committee met again on Monday 3/21. Beth shared that 89-online surveys were received and 6 hard copies. Flooding was the number one concern. The committee revisited the original spreadsheet and still identified stormwater mapping as the top priority for the portfolio. Other items still identified but categorized with stormwater mapping were, Halls Creek and Hawkins Creek Restoration, development of a wetland restoration plan, and a public education campaign. Development of the portfolio readies the Town for phase 3 – applying for engineer funding, and phase 4 implementation.

On April 4, NCDCCM released the Request for Applications for Phase 3 of the Resilient Coastal Communities Program - applications are due June 3.

Our consultant Beth Smyre shares that NCDCCM clarified that the focus of the Phase 3 program is on projects with a natural or nature-based component; this can include projects such as green infrastructure improvements, wetland or stream restoration, or living shorelines. Infrastructure mapping, such as Project #1 of our project portfolio, would not be eligible for funding under Phase 3. Therefore, she recommended that we focus your Phase 3 application on either the Halls Creek or Hawkins Creek stream restoration efforts. As Mayor Pro Tem Tursi graciously explained to her, a stream restoration project would be far more complicated scientifically and more expensive. It is doubtful, with all the other projects we have in the works on top of budget preparation, staff would have time to put

## Town of Swansboro, NC Manager's Report

together a viable application. I did share with her that we do have the Water Street Project (with engineered drawings in hand). She reviewed the plans and is checking with NCDCM to see if this project would qualify.

Beth Smyrna/Dewberry is scheduled to provide an update to the Board May 23, 2022 for Phase 2. We had originally hoped that stormwater mapping would qualify for the next phase, but we are told it does not. Phase 3 includes engineering/design – application deadline early June. Planner Jennifer Ansell and Public Works Director Tank Bates participated in a teleconference this week to seek other opportunities for stormwater mapping. The Town does have engineered plans for the Water Street Rehabilitation and could submit this project for Phase 4 funding. It is noted that the Water Street Rehabilitation project was estimated to cost \$215,000 in 2018. Phase 4 anticipated average funding level: \$45,000 per project, so contribution on the Town's part would be required.

**RCCP Project Portfolio**

Project No.	Title	NNBS?
1	Stormwater Mapping	
2	Halls Creek Stream Restoration	Yes
3	Hawkins Creek Stream Restoration	Yes
4	Water Street Rehabilitation	Yes
5	Townwide Wetland Restoration Plan	Yes
6	Public Engagement and Education Campaign	
7	Resize NC 24 Culvert	

6 Swansboro Board of Commissioners Meeting May 23, 2022 Dewberry

As directed during the May 23 regular meeting, and with assistance from Withers and Ravenel, Staff was able to meet the June 3 Phase 3 application deadline for Engineering/Design. If awarded, we could receive up to \$45,000 to design/engineer bio retention areas along Broad Street prior to entering Water Street.

RCCP Phase 3 - \$45,000 was awarded to the Town on July 13, 2022 for the design/engineering of the bioretention swells along Broad Street that will assist in the rehabilitation for Water Street. We expect the design by March 2023. Following two meetings with the Board of Commissioners and the Public in May, the final deliverables were submitted on May 31, 2023 to NCDENR meeting the grant phase deadline.

RCCP Phase 4 – Construction Applications due April 28<sup>th</sup>. We were disappointed to learn there was only \$1,000,000 to award. Withers and Ravenel reviewing the application and our project criteria. The grant application was submitted to NCDENR on April 28, 2023. Total grant amount \$441,200 (Grant amount requested \$238,220, Local Match \$203,000)

## Town of Swansboro, NC Manager's Report

The Town received notification on July 26, 2023 that we were not selected for funding for this phase. We knew at application that the construction phase was under-funded. In conversation with Withers and Ravenel, who assisted with the grant preparation, there are other funding sources we can look for. Steve Marks shared, "...the state has training opportunities the next couple weeks for grants this fall. Same program as the LASII planning grant, but construction projects are potentially eligible. The funding source is unclear at this moment, but DWI is proceeding as though they'll have money for the program. DWI offers low/no interest loans with possible principal forgiveness for green infrastructure projects. It's likely with the addition of the bioretention cells that this would qualify. Also, Golden LEAF could potentially be interested in the project too. Right now, their funding cap is \$250k so that would essentially cover what we were hoping RCCP P4 would fund." We will work with Withers and Ravenel for future funding opportunities.

- **August 2020 - NC State Historic Preservation Office Florence and Michael ESHPF Hurricane Disaster Relief Grant – Emmerton School:** The Town submitted an Emergency Supplemental Historic Preservation Fund (ESHPF) Hurricane Disaster Relief application for Emmerton School (AKA Old Town Hall) located at 502 Church Street for remaining Hurricane Florence damage repairs and resiliency measures for future events. The grant request is in the amount of **\$424,000** and is established as a 100% reimbursable grant.

We will use the funds for the following projects:

1. Tuck Pointing of the interior and exterior bricks to help stop the water penetration that occurs. This would also include the application of a sealant to the exterior brick.
2. Repair the extensive damage of the crumbling brick work above the south front door and other interior walls.
3. Historic Ceiling repair and repainting – Even though there is a new roof on the facility, some moisture did seep in sometime after the temporary fixes were installed.
4. The installation of a Centralized Dehumidification System
5. Window and Door repairs/replacing/storm proofing – there are a total of 81 windows and doors that are included in this request.
6. Electrical wiring repairs
7. Soffit repairs from Hurricane Florence damages
8. Sealing the crawl space
9. Attic Insulation

We were notified on January 14, 2021 that our application for Emmerton School was awarded for 100% funding (\$424,000). Please note that grant activities may not take place until the Grant Contract has been signed. We expect to receive the proposed grant contract in November 2021 and hope to have a quick turnaround on it. Once executed, we can move forward on the 9 action items listed above. **The listed deadline for completion for this project is September 30, 2023**, but are hoping, due to granting agency delays, that extensions may be available if needed.

## **Town of Swansboro, NC Manager's Report**

On 12/1/21, received notification that NCDCCR is drafting a subgrant agreement. The National Park Service has given clearance to begin the project. A budget amendment accepting the \$424K was approved on January 10, 2022. The final agreement has now been executed. The project startup meeting has occurred, and the Manager and Planner will begin working with NCDCCR to identify contractors qualified for the work.

Staff is preparing a draft RFP, which will then have to be reviewed by the Historic Preservation office before being sent out.

A Request for Qualifications for the Emmerton School Project was approved by the state and submitted on Wednesday afternoon. The deadline for submittals is July 22, 2022.

Four RFQ's were received for construction and are under review by the state. Staff reviewed and provided its comments to the state and a joint interview will be held once the state is ready.

State Historic representatives and staff will hold interviews with three architectural firms on September 27<sup>th</sup>.

Following interviews, David Gall Architectural Firm out of Winston Salem was selected. Mr. Gall has already made a couple site visits and is already working on remediation plans.

The Town, the State Historic Preservation Office and Mr. Gall are still working on contract details. Mr. Gall also had emergency knee surgery during the holidays.

In follow-up with the State last week, the legal team is putting final edits together on the contract with Mr. Gall.

Due to a family medical issue, Mr. Gall contacted the Town on 3/20/23 to decline the contract. I have emailed the State Historic Preservation Office regarding this setback and will share the plan to move forward once we have a chance to discuss it as a group.

Stature Engineering was interviewed on April 10<sup>th</sup> and selected to complete the work. SHPO working on contract language with Stature Engineering. The contract was executed mid-June, and the engineer has begun his work. Mid-October 2023, Stature Engineering has completed 45% of the Schematic Design documents and 100% of the Brick and Mortar Sampling and Testing.

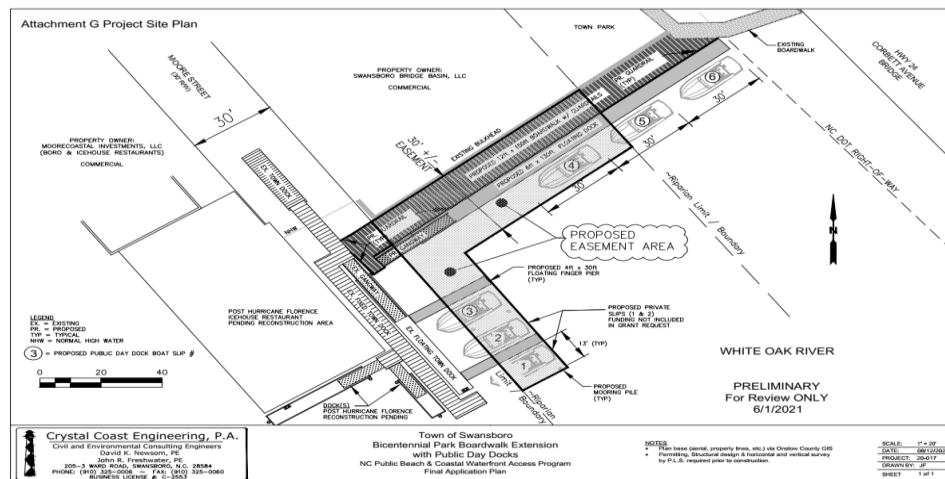
On November 1, 2023, Stature Engineering, Staff, and the State Historic Preservation Office met to hold a bid review meeting and Watertight Systems, Inc. was selected to perform the masonry repairs. The contract was executed early December. The required Quarterly Report for the grant was submitted early January. Stature Engineering is currently in the process of submitting drawings for window, door, soffit, and interior repair to SHPO for approval.



## Town of Swansboro, NC Manager's Report

- **2020 NC Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Grant Project** – The Town received notification on November 3, 2020 that the Bicentennial Park Boardwalk Extension with Public Day Docks Grant Project has been approved and granted the full amount requested of \$142,350. The Total project cost is \$158,350 with the grant. \$7,000 of the required \$16,000 town match will be non-cash/in-kind. The project will include the following:

  1. A 150 feet by 12 feet wide wooden boardwalk to be located waterward of an existing concrete bulkhead along the shoreline of the southern section of the park and the Mattocks House property. The boardwalk will connect on the western end of the existing Town Dock located in the Moore Street right-of-way.
  2. A floating dock measuring 6 feet by 130 feet will be located immediately waterward of the Boardwalk and will connect to the existing Moore Street Dock by means of 4 feet by 30 feet aluminum gangway on the western end.
  3. There will be four boat slips to accommodate day visitors in small boats



The Lease and Dock Rental Agreements have been executed with Randy Swanson. Kathy Vinson and Crystal Coast Engineering have been re-engaged to continue work on the project.

A redesign of the dock (below) was necessary to remove the kayak launch which once existed when Pogies was located on site. Removal of the kayak launch offered space for one additional boat slip. John Freshwater and Kathy Vinson are preparing the final notes on the plan, which will be submitted to CAMA for permit modification. Once the permit modification is in hand, we can send out an RFP on construction.



## Town of Swansboro, NC Manager's Report

construction of the dockwalk, I had to arrange a site visit to assure we did not have any oyster clusters that may need to be relocated. The Coastal Federation graciously made a site visit on Wednesday, February 8<sup>th</sup> and did not identify that needed to be relocated, so that box has been checked. In addition, I am waiting on a quote for dredging. As previously mentioned, Arendell Engineering is currently working on the construction drawings for bidding out the project.

Kathy Vinson and I have been working toward getting the dredge work done before the dredge moratorium goes into effect (April - September). We received two quotes - both exceeded the \$5000 amount I was given some time ago. Only one company can commit to equipment on site and work started by April 1 (Coastal Marine). A budget amendment may be required for FY 22/23 or if the project gets delayed, we will add the amount into the FY 23/24 budget.

Budget amendment approved 3/27/23. Dredge work was completed April 8. Kathy Vinson is working on the required stormwater permit, we hoped we would not have to do. The stormwater permit was submitted the second week of June.

On Friday, August 11<sup>th</sup>, 2023, property owner, Randy Swanson notified the Town that the ground was cracking at the shoreline/bulkhead. On Monday, August 14<sup>th</sup> we met with Crystal Coast Marine/Justin Cleve, who shared that he could drive pilings to secure the bulkhead as an immediate solution. The proposal was sent to CAMA for consideration. On Tuesday, August 15<sup>th</sup> I received approval from CAMA for maintenance/repair to drive the pilings, which were then driven on Wednesday, August 16<sup>th</sup>. The land side of the bulkhead continues to deteriorate due to the tide washing in/out around the bulkhead. Required bulkhead replacement costs \$101,450 – BOC approved October 5, 2023. A modification of current CAMA Permit 112-05 was required and received through fast-track review on September 15, 2023 along with approval from the US Army Corp of Engineers. The Stormwater Permit for the Boardwalk and the Bulkhead Replacement were received on September 13, 2023. *Crystal Coast Marine finished the Bulkhead repair project the week of February 12, 2024*

Subsurface Exploration and Geotechnical Engineering is scheduled to be done on Monday, October 23<sup>rd</sup> to evaluate the soil conditions for the proposed development. Project Engineer John Wood, Arendell Engineers, continues to develop final plans not only for the new bulkhead but the boardwalk as well. *Final construction plans and accompanying bid documents are expected to be completed early March 2024. Once plans and bid documents are received from Wood, the Town will seek bids from contractors to perform the project. According to project coordinator Kathy Vinson, there should be ample time to get the project completed before the latest time extension expires in October 2024.*

## Town of Swansboro, NC Manager's Report

The Swansboro Tourism Development Authority awarded the Town \$12,500 towards the bulkhead replacement costs on October 5<sup>th</sup>. A request has also been sent to Onslow County seeking tourism assistance for the bulkhead replacement as well.

- **Sidewalk Projects** - At their December 5, 2019 meeting, the NC Board of Transportation approved a funding request from NCDOT Division 3 in the amount of \$366,668.00. Per amended Swansboro Resolution 2019-R9, the Town contributed \$116,634 for a total project funding of \$483,302. The project was split into 3 phases/priorities to focus the limited funding to the portions that ranked higher in need.

Construction of this project commenced Thursday, April 8, 2021. NCDOT has estimated project funding shortfall in the amount of \$97,000 due to limitations caused by ditching and utilities. The cost breakdown for each phase/priority is as follows (estimates as of April 16, 2021).

- **Priority 1** - Sidewalk installation along NC-24 (Corbett Ave) from SR 1511 (Hammocks Beach Rd) to SR 1514 (Phillips Loop Rd); \$120,000 - **Completed**
  
- **Priority 2** - Old Hammocks Beach Rd from SR 1513 (Deer island Rd) to existing sidewalk near Fredericks Ln; \$335,000 – Expected to begin in late October 2021 – Groundwork/drainage underway. Project delayed due to two additional easements needed just beyond Deer Island Road. Water line depth too shallow in right-of-way. Easements requests were mailed out November 23, 2021.

Senate Bill 105 approved November 18, 2021 included the \$100K for sidewalk extensions in Swansboro. An email notifying the Town of the \$100,000 award was received from the Office of State Budget and Management to acknowledge the appropriations of \$100,000 for sidewalk improvements from the State Capital and Infrastructure Fund Directed Grant. Once received, these funds could be appropriated for the second section of Priority 2.

Some stormwater drain work has been completed by NCDOT on Priority 2 along Old Hammocks Road. This priority area includes two sections. The first section from Deer Island Road to Fredricka Lane and the second section from Fredricka Lane to the Catholic Church connection. All easements are secured for section one. One easement is still pending for this section (involves heirs and deed preparation on their part). NCDOT does have some additional drainage work to do along the flag lots at Buena Vista Del Mar (adjacent to Williams Road).

Section 1 of Priority 2

# Town of Swansboro, NC Manager's Report



## Section 2 of Priority 2



One easement still pending, but communication suggests we should have the easement in the near future. NCDOT still has some site work to complete prior to constructing the sidewalks.

**Priority 2 Completed. Ribbon Cutting held on June 24th.**

- Priority 3 - SR 1511 (Hammocks Beach Rd) from Moore's BBQ sidewalk to Park Place Dr \$125,000 - *NOTE: we have not prepared survey/design on this section yet, so costs may vary more related to this priority*

Priority 3 will connect the sidewalks at Park Place to Moore BBQ. This area has not been surveyed/ designed and could likely (according to notes in 2019) cost more than \$200,000 due to right-of-way and stream crossing, utility issues. Five easements required for this section.

## Priority 3



## Town of Swansboro, NC Manager's Report



Staff is working with NCDOT on an updated maintenance agreement which also includes the breakdown of expenditures of the \$100K SCIF Funding (Town contribution). This information is necessary for reports we are required to provide back to the Office of State Budget and Management.

Although requests for Priority 3 easements were sent out back in October 2021, none were received. We will resubmit those requests. Second letters sent July 2022.

During the April 4 Budget Workshop, a future Priority 4 was identified. We are waiting to hear back from NCDOT on funding estimates. NCDOT indicated on 10/10/22 that the on call contractor hoped to start this sidewalk section the last part of October. **Priority 4 completed.**

According to NCDOT revised cost estimate, Priority 3 & 4 combined will be \$99,994.80. We are still waiting on the Sidewalk Agreement to be updated to include the last portion of Priority 2 and Priorities 3 & 4.

Sidewalk easement received from Justin Weiss/1130 Hammocks Beach Rd. Still need three others from Rawls. NCDOT has been notified. As a reminder – the funding from Priority 3 was moved to Priority 5 & 6 by NCDOT due to it taking so long to obtain the easements. Storm ditch crossing engineering cost will have to be funded by the Town and sidewalk construction will be dependent on future NCDOT funding or the Town can also provide funding.

Priority 4 - **Completed**

## Town of Swansboro, NC Manager's Report



Future Priority Areas – as previously noted (Manager's Weekly Brief) interest by a handicap resident has been shown to extend the sidewalk along the west side of Old Hammock Road where there is a void from the Cottages to the side entrance to the Piggly Wiggly. NCDOT shared on 10/10/22 that funds were available to complete that portion ending north of Pelican Circle to the Piggly Wiggly driveway. The Town will work to obtain the required easement. I did inquire whether the partial south of Pelican Circle/adjacent Pineland Drive could be included but have not heard back from NCDOT to date. A second letter was sent to the Perry family on November 17 regarding needed easement for sidewalk extension. The first letter was sent on October 24<sup>th</sup>. A third letter was hand delivered to Mr. Perry on December 5 and Mr. Perry indicated he was having issues getting all owners to agree. Owners include members of the Perry family, heirs to Irene Pinkston.

Future priority areas were discussed with the BOC July 25, 2022, but no decisions made until more development made on Priority 3. The easement for Priority 4 was secured the last week of July and shared with NCDOT so that this section could be moved forward ahead of Priority 3. Thus far, no easements have been secured for Priority 3.

On September 26, the Board identified the following Priority Areas: (Note: *priority numbers reassigned by NCDOT*)

### Priority 5

Extension of the sidewalk north from the Cottages to Piggly Wiggly side entrance street  
Obtained list/addresses for all eight property owners of parcel 056535 on January 5, 2023.  
Finalized the easement document and mailed all property owners a separate easement to sign.  
Once all received back, I will notify NCDOT to schedule the sidewalk construction. As of 2/23/2023, one of eight easements received.

3/10/23 – I made some progress on obtaining easement signatures for Priority 5. I received all signatures needed from the Perry family. However, none of the signatures from the Pinkston family have been received despite numerous letters and Perry family attempts.

## Town of Swansboro, NC Manager's Report

3/28/23 – all required easements received from Perry and Pinkston family and forwarded onto NCDOT. Ditch piping has been installed at the entrance to the Piggly Wiggly. NCDOT indicated that this section would be completed in a 6-8 week timeframe.

### Priority 5 completed in September 2023



### Priority 6

Pineland Drive parcel south of Pelican Circle to connect to the existing sidewalk at Cottages

NCDOT shared on 11/17/22 “we have reached out to the Environmental Unit to determine if we could extend the existing crossline to extend the sidewalk, or if permitting would be required. We have not yet estimated this work, since we are uncertain what may be involved. If we are able to pursue this section, then we will need an easement from the property owner (but do not reach out to them until we have determined that we can move forward), and we would want to remove the short section of sidewalk that turns out towards Old Hammocks Rd. This is not acceptable practice as it is leading to a roadway where there is not a Stop condition, nor is there a permitted mid-block crossing.”

On February 2, 2023, NCDOT gave the okay to seek the required easement for this priority. That request was mailed February 3, 2023.

Two easement letters have been sent to the property owner with no response. The last letter gave a deadline of March 15<sup>th</sup>. Easement obtained late March and provided to NCDOT. The Town obtained an engineered pedestrian crossing for this priority. Waiting to hear from NCDOT on utility conflict/pipe extension.

### Priority 7

Main Street Extension from the Recreation Center to Old Hammock to Highway 24 – awaiting cost estimate from NCDOT. Subject to future funding.

### Priority 8



## Town of Swansboro, NC Manager's Report

Gaps without sidewalks on Highway 24 from Old Hammock Road to downtown – awaiting cost estimate from NCDOT. Subject to future funding.

### Priority 9

South side of Highway 24 from Walmart to Queens Creek – awaiting cost estimate from NCDOT. Subject to future funding.

Following a TRC Meeting at Town Hall on December 13, I met with our NCDOT District Engineer to discuss the priority areas described above further. She noted a change to our priority areas as noted above in red and that she would be reviewing the funding left in this cycle once priority 4 was paid out. She felt confident there should be funding left to complete Priority 5&6 as re-numbered above. As a side note, the Town still has the \$100k provided by the SCIF Funding if NCDOT's estimates are more than what is left with NCDOT. Pedestrian crossing for Priority 6 estimate \$5000.

On February 6<sup>th</sup>, I had additional conversation with property owners of Priority 3. They seem interested to work with the Town now. I reached back out to NCDOT to schedule a meeting with the property owners. On 2/22/23, our Division Engineer indicated that they will create a detailed aerial of where the sidewalk/easement will be. A reminder that Priority 3 was taken off the NCDOT work list and those funds were shifted to Priority 4, 5, and 6. If the Priority 3 property owners were agreeable to provide an easement, a new estimate would have to be obtained, and the Town would be responsible to have engineer/design and pay for the stormwater crossing. NCDOT has made it clear they will not pay for that.

Priorities 7-9 have been sent to NCDOT. However, they are subject to future funding NCDOT may get, unless the Town wants to fund them.

- **Visitor's Center Improvement Update** – Andrew Wilson of Crystal Coast Engineering has prepared a draft building layout for the Visitor's Center based on several suggestions he received. You may recall that the Town had reached out to John Wood, Restoration Specialist with the NC State Historic Preservation Office to determine if the structure had retained its contributing historic status when moved to its present location, which would have allowed an exemption under the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance. On January 6, 2022 Mr. Wood provided that due to the structure being moved from its original location, handicap ramp addition, and elevation; the structure was no longer a contributing historic structure. It should be noted that the elevation was required because the structure was in the flood zone, and the handicap ramp had to be added for ADA compliance. What this ultimately means is that we will have to follow a phased plan for improvements because the building is valued at \$57,000. If the renovation cost exceeds 50% of that value, a Substantial Improvement, the entire structure must be brought into compliance with the current ordinance and Building Code requirements. A second phase could not be started until one year after the final inspection on phase one.

Another alternative would be to raise the building to the current flood elevation (approximately 5 more feet) to bring it into compliance with the current regulations, including breakaway wall

## **Town of Swansboro, NC Manager's Report**

construction for the foundation due to the Coastal A flood zone designation. This would require HPC approval. This item will be added to the Planning Retreat for discussion/guidance. As a reminder the Town was awarded \$20,000 through the Onslow County TDA and must be used by June 30 or requested again in the next grant cycle.

Staff met with John Wood on Tuesday, March 1. As reported at the March 2 Planning Retreat, John Wood indicated that if we moved the side entrance steps back to the front of the building as they originally were when the building sat further down Water Street and clearly identify those as new construction using certain materials and raised flower beds to camouflage, the buildings historic status could be returned. Planner Ansell has sought engineered drawings and elevation certificate. Additional reviews by the Historic Preservation Commission and Flood Appeals Board will still be required. Once the contributing status is re-instated, the building would qualify for an exemption under the definition of Substantial Improvement and allow the Town to apply for a variance from the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance requirements through the Flood Appeals Board.

Tidewater has been engaged to provide the elevation certification and existing conditions survey. Larion Engineering has been engaged to provide engineered re-design to remove the side entry and re-instate the entry to the front of the building and flood analysis. All will aid in the return of the contributing status to the building which will in turn relieve the Town from the flood requirement to raise the structure. The design will be scheduled for review by the Historic Preservation Commission for the demolition of the steps/deck and construction of the new steps as soon as the plans are received from Larion thereafter, a variance will be sought from the Flood Appeals Board from the elevation requirement. Public Works will demolish the side entry however, based on workload we will most likely utilize a contractor to install the front entry.

On May 17, the HPC reviewed the side entrance demo and re-location of the front entrance as recommended by Restoration Specialist John Wood. HPC member Kim Kingrey volunteered to search for photos from years back to see if the hand railings were wooden or if any were ever present. Once final minor work approval is granted, the work performed and contributing status re-instated, we would then qualify for an exemption under the definition of Substantial Improvement which would allow the Town to apply for a variance from the Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance requirements through the Flood Appeals Board.

As previously reported (Manager's Brief June 16), demo of the stairs at the Visitors Center is complete. Visitors are still able to use the handicap ramp access at the rear to gain access to the restrooms. The railing has also been re-constructed by Public Works on the front porch. Once the wood dries out, it will be painted white.

## Town of Swansboro, NC Manager's Report



At the BOC's request, a progress update was given July 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

### **What's Been Done To Date**

- Working to re-establish Historic Contributing Status
- Awarded FY 21/22 Onslow County TDA Funding \$20,000 – paid for side steps demo identified as reason historic contributing status rescinded, required engineering of front steps re-construction due to flood zone location, some interior fixtures purchased for future renovations
- RFP awarded to Rufus Murray for side steps demo May 2022 - *completed*

### **What's Remaining to do on the Exterior**

- RFP to reconstruct front entry steps due August 1, 2022 (breakaway design)
- Once the front entry steps are constructed, the final V-Zone Certificate can be prepared. The next step is to obtain the variance from the Flood Appeals Board and obtain letter from the State Historic Preservation Office that the Contributing Status has been re-instated.

**Interior Renovations** - The estimated costs provided by former Public Works Director in 2021 was \$60,870. Of that amount, he indicated that the Public Works Crew could perform about \$15,000 of that work (walls, sheetrock, painting, flooring). Swansboro TDA has agreed to fund a portion of the interior renovations. Once we have settled on an interior design, we will be able to determine whether any water/sewer improvements will be needed, or whether just a certified engineered letter will be required that the current infrastructure can handle the improvements.

Eight vendors were notified of the RFP to re-construct the stairs at the Visitors Center and it was posted on the website. RFP's were due by August 1 and only one was received (Rufus Murray) for \$23,300. We plan to proceed utilizing the allocated ARP funding so we can keep this project moving forward.

Rufus Murray was awarded the contract to re-construct the exterior stairs etc. On hold until after the Mullet Festival so we don't have a construction site during the festival. A pre-construction

## Town of Swansboro, NC Manager's Report

meeting was held on Monday, October 17 and the contractor plans to get started immediately. The Visitor's Center will remain open during the exterior construction.

As reported in the Manager's Weekly Brief on December 1- exterior renovations are complete. We will prepare a letter to National Parks System to have contributing status re-considered.



In an email from John Wood on December 13, he indicated he would forward our exterior improvement work to the National Parks Service and request the re-instatement for us. Followed up January 10 as we would like to make application for tourism funding (application due by March 1, 2023) for the interior and need to apply for the Flood Ordinance exemption. John felt confident that our contributing status would be restored before that date and encouraged us to proceed with the final elements.

The Flood Board heard and approved the variance request from the definition "Substantial Improvement" on February 21<sup>st</sup>. I will be making application to Onslow County for tourism dollars for interior renovations by March 1<sup>st</sup>.

Application was submitted to Onslow County on 2/28/23 for \$30,000 to assist with future interior renovations. \$30,000 will be included in the Swansboro TDA budget for FY 23/24 as they had already made commitment. As previously shared, Onslow County did not fund our request this year. Swansboro TDA awarded the Town \$30,000 in July.

Mid-October, met with electrical and mechanical contractors, and still waiting to hear from plumber. It would be our hope to begin the interior renovations late November unless the contractors are ready before.

- **LSAII/Stormwater Mapping Grant** – Following adoption of a support resolution on September 12, 2022 the Town entered into contract with Withers Ravenel (\$5000), who will prepare the grant application for Local Assistance for Stormwater Infrastructure Investments through the NC Division of Water Infrastructure in hopes of receiving up to \$400,000 to assist with stormwater mapping in the Town. The application deadline is September 30, 2022, with grant awards to be

## **Town of Swansboro, NC Manager's Report**

announced in February 2023. On February 9<sup>th</sup> Withers Ravenel shared that our application had been recommended for approval. We should receive final award by the end of February. Grant award received April 5, 2023. Staff held a scoping meeting with Withers Ravenel on October 18<sup>th</sup> to review the draft agreement for services.

Two rounds of RFQs were sent out, with final submittals in August. WithersRavenel was selected to complete the project in October of 2023 and the contract was executed early December. At a December 18, 2023, kickoff meeting with staff and WithersRavenel, a public outreach meeting included a survey was scheduled for mid-March. Data collection portion of the project is projected to start early June.