

# PROJECTS REPORT

## Town Projects/Initiatives Update

January 2023

Submitted By: Paula Webb, Town Manager

---

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.

- **Swansboro Causeway Living Shoreline Project:**

NCDOT and NC Coastal Federation have partnered on a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Grant to install a proposed living shoreline at strategic locations on NC Hwy 24 that are exposed to the White Oak River.

The following information is from their project narrative:

*Project Site 2: Swansboro Yacht Club*

“Project Site 2 is located northeast of the Swansboro Yacht Club, a local community dining establishment, located within Onslow County, at the border of Carteret County. Living shoreline work will be completed on an island that is located between the two N.C. 24 bridges. The causeway along the northeast side of N.C. 24 has experienced past erosion due to storm events (in 2005 and 2011), including erosional undercutting as a result of Hurricane Florence (2018). The abutment along the northwest end of the island and the abutment at the southeast end of the island are also showing continued signs of erosion...”

Design and permitting of the proposed project is in the works with an intended construction to take place over the winter of 2022/2023. Proposed project designs will be forthcoming when available.

Project Engineer, Brian Lipscomb confirmed a project construction timeline of late Fall/Winter of 2022/2023. A notice to proceed has been issued for a traffic impact analysis for the project. RK&K has completed the traffic counts. In short, the report acknowledges am restrictions from 6-9am and afternoon restrictions from 3-6pm.

Design work should be completed in the next couple months and expect to have permits in hand the end of Spring. Advertise and award (LET) the project in the summer 2022. Actual construction availability will be in mid-September 2022, assuming no moratorium that delays into October or November to start. Construction will continue through the Fall 2022, into Winter 2023, and conclude with the marsh planting between April 15, 2023 – May 15, 2023.

All permits were received on July 22<sup>nd</sup> and the Division was able to advertise the project on July 27<sup>th</sup> for an August 18<sup>th</sup> LET. Three 3 bids were received, with the low bidder being TA Loving Company in the amount of \$1,697,687.00 (0.1% (\$2,128.20) below the final

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

estimate). The contract was awarded to TA Loving Co, and they have presented the bonds and certificate of insurance to the Division.

NCDOT hosted its first monthly construction meeting this morning on this project. Roughly 20 attended to include the contractor TA Loving, NCDOT, NC Coastal Federation, Coastal Community College, and Town Staff. Hereafter, monthly meetings will be held on the fourth Thursday of the month. TA Loving is scheduled to begin mobilizing on October 10<sup>th</sup>.

Received word on 10/7/22 that the project start date would be delayed due to permit requirement discussion that resulted from the construction meeting on 9/26/22. NCDOT held an Environmental Pre-con onsite 10/7 and the agencies are now in agreement with our method of construction. However, a formal modification to the permit may be required. This could take 30 days +/- . Mobilization now expected mid to late November.

Received word November 16<sup>th</sup> that the project start date is now the week of November 28<sup>th</sup>. During initial construction of this project, the center turn lane will be removed and the west bound traffic will be shifted over to accommodate the rock sill construction. In addition, monthly construction meetings will be held at Town Hall on the fourth Thursday of each month.

- **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 Manager 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.

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

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.

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

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

EOC Committee January 12<sup>th</sup> for introductions and Q&A. Representatives also made additional site visits on January 18, 2023.

- **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:

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, NCDCM released the Request for Applications for Phase 3 of the Resilient Coastal Communities Program - applications are due June 3.

## Town of Swansboro, NC Manager's Report

Our consultant Beth Smyre shares that NCDCM 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 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.

## Town of Swansboro, NC Manager's Report

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.

- **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.

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.

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

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.

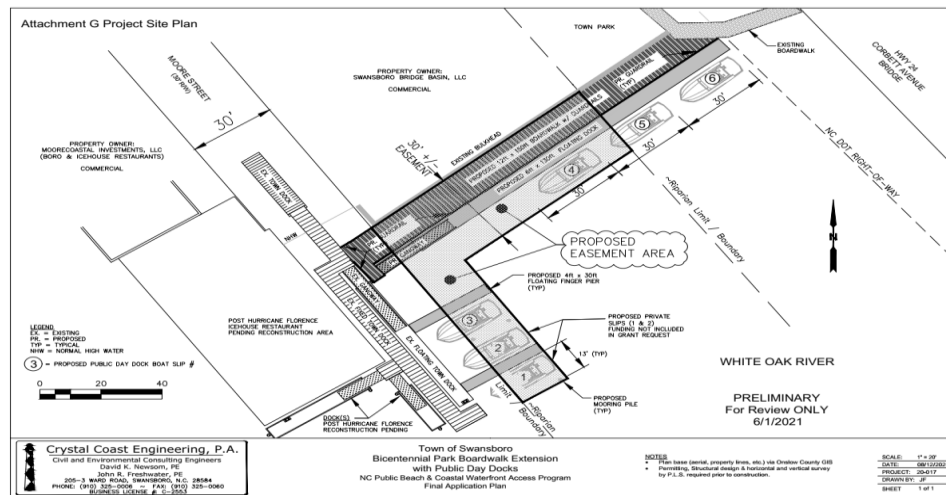
State Historic representatives and staff will hold interviews with three architectural firms on September 27<sup>th</sup>.

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.

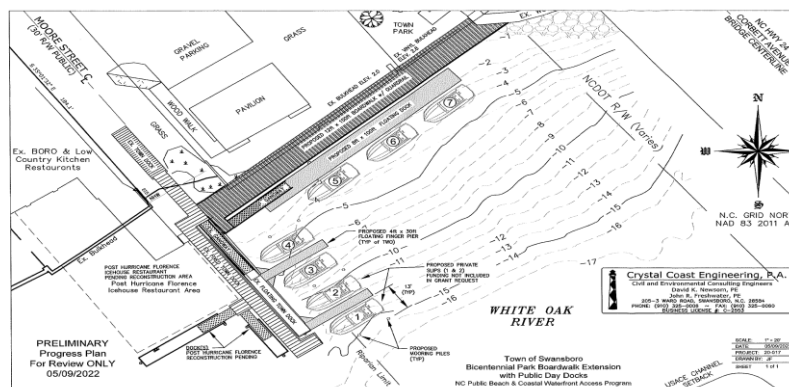
- **2020 NC Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Grant Project** – The Town received notification on November 3, 2020 that the Bicentennial Park Boardwalk Extension with Public Day Docks Grant Project has been approved and granted the full amount requested of \$142,350. The Total project cost is \$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

# Town of Swansboro, NC Manager's Report



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.



Kathy Vinson continues to work with CAMA on our permit modification. NCDOT met on site this week to review and provide comments on the project as requested by CAMA.

As reported in the weekly brief June 24<sup>th</sup>, NCDOT met on site June 23 to review the project for comment and the reported deterioration to the bulkhead at the bridge identified by John Freshwater while conducting site/surveying work on our project. Instead of granting a waiver for our project they have asked to piggyback on our CAMA



## Town of Swansboro, NC Manager's Report

Permit for the work they will need to do to repair the bulkhead. In addition, that portion of bulkhead connecting to our walkway will have to be removed and replaced. The Town will be responsible to replace its portion that connects. We will attempt to coordinate this with NCDOT so it's all done at one time. We are still working with NCDOT on the required encroachment agreement and Kathy Vinson has contacted CAMA who is agreeable to allow NCDOT piggybacking on our permit and submittal of the CAMA application with an email from NCDOT with assurances that they are working on the encroachment agreement. Due to the delays with this project, we have been advised to go ahead and ask for a grant extension now because the review time is so backed up.

Permit modification has been submitted to CAMA. A request for a grant extension has also been submitted.

We received an acknowledgement letter from CAMA on Tuesday 9/20 for our permit modification request dated August 16, 2022. We have posted the property as required. CAMA indicated that the projected deadline for a decision is October 20, 2022, but an additional 75-day review is permitted by law. As a reminder, we have also sent a request for grant extension.

The grant extension (Amendment 1) was received October 12, 2022. The Permit Modification was received on November 30, 2022. The NCDOT Encroachment Agreement was received January 9, 2023. Arendell Engineer, John Wade has been engaged to begin preparing the construction drawings.

- **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

## Town of Swansboro, NC Manager's Report

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



### Section 2 of Priority 2



## Town of Swansboro, NC Manager's Report

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



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.**



## Town of Swansboro, NC Manager's Report

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.

### Priority 4



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.

## Town of Swansboro, NC Manager's Report

### 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.”

### Priority 7

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

### Priority 8

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

### Priority 9

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

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.

- **Traffic Light Synchronization Project** - Town Staff has been working with Nisarg Shah of NCDOT to get a better synchronization of the stoplights on NC Hwy 24/W. Corbett Avenue. He made some adjustments on Wednesday, February 3, 2021 but I image it may take a couple of adjustments to correct the issues.

NCDOT reports that the synchronizations seem to be working properly. The timing on the Queens Creek Road intersection may be adjusted to allow more time on the side road entries. What they did discover was that motorists are not adhering to the 35-mph speed limit. Most were still traveling 40-45mph. Unless the Town is interested in reverting the speed limit back to 45 mph, better enforcement of the 35-mph speed limit is recommended.

## Town of Swansboro, NC Manager's Report

- **Swansboro ADA Plan** – Assessments of Town facilities have been completed. We anticipate a Public Hearing early in 2021 in hopes to officially adopt this plan once complete. Stewart has had some turnover in staff and asked that I submit notes from our last meeting. A final draft was received 1/18/2022 –additional changes to be made yet, mainly name of coordinator to Alissa Fender and implementation to Paula Webb. Final editing has been forwarded onto Stewart.

On 12/2/2023 Stewart Engineering indicated by email that they hoped the plan would be ready by the end of January 2023.

- **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 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

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

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.



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**



## Town of Swansboro, NC Manager's Report

- 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 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-



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

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.

- **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 announced in February 2023.