

Belhaven Town Council Meeting
Special Called Meeting – Thursday, February 8, 2007
Minutes

The Belhaven Town Council met in a Special Called Meeting on Thursday, February 8, 2007 at 3:00 P.M. in the Council Chambers at Town Hall. Mayor Adam W. O'Neal called the meeting to order with the following Council members present: Albert Baker, Dr. Charles O. Boyette, Steve W. Carawan and George R. Ebron, Jr., Mayor Pro-Tem. Councilwoman Heath was not present due to illness. Town Manager Tim M. Johnson and Town Clerk Marie J. Adams were also present. The purpose of the Special Call Meeting was to discuss the Belhaven Breakwater Feasibility Study with the US Army Corps of Engineers. Mayor O'Neal introduced the following: Mr. Mitch Hall, from the Project Management Branch of the US Army Corps of Engineers; Mr. Jeff Richter, Engineer; Mr. Richard Lewis, Lead Planner and Mr. John Sutherland with North Carolina Department of Environment and Natural Resources (NCDENR), Chief Water Projects Section. Mr. Hall stated that Mr. Bill Dennis with the Corps could not attend the meeting due to personal conflicts. There were several members of the general public in attendance.

Mayor O'Neal stated that the meeting would continue into a closed session, so as not to disclose figures for breakwater repair. There was much discussion between Town Manager Johnson and Mayor O'Neal. Town Manager Johnson tried to explain that a Closed Session was not permissible according to the General Statutes unless it was one of the permitted purposes as in GS 143-318.11 (Permitted purposes) for Closed Session.

Mr. Mitch Hall with the US Army Corps of Engineers stated that the Belhaven Breakwater Project had been reviewed and was in great need, as the breakwater was built in 1938 and was in bad condition due to past storms. Mr. Hall explained that \$100,000 had been approved toward the costs for a feasibility study.

Mr. Topper Bateman, resident of East Street, stated that the shoreline further east of the breakwater would be lost as there is no break in the force of direct storms. Mr. Bateman stated that he felt it was prudent to include Tooley's Marsh in the breakwater coverage, to slow the process of land loss. Following some discussion, Mr. Hall stated that he could appreciate Mr. Bateman's concerns but that this project was dealing with the existing breakwater and the feasibility study of the replacement of the existing breakwater.

Mr. Hall further explained that there were funding limits. Councilman Boyette questioned if concrete slabs were proposed as the underside of the breakwater for reefs that would promote fish as was in the previous plan for the breakwater. Mr. Hall stated that the concrete slabs were an option or a rubble mount and possibly repairing the existing breakwater. Councilman Boyette stated that it would not be feasible to repair the existing breakwater due to the breakwater falling apart, everyday.

Mayor O'Neal stated that the Council should now go into Closed Session. Councilman Carawan made the motion for the Council to go into closed session. Town Manager Johnson stated that according to GS 143-318.11 (Closed Session) a permitted purpose needed to be stated. Town Clerk Adams proceeded to take the "Open Meetings" hand book to the Mayor, for his review, when she was told that she was out of order.

Belhaven Town Council Meeting
Special Called Meeting – Thursday, February 8, 2007
Minutes

Mayor O’Neal stated that the meeting would take a fifteen (15) minutes recess. The meeting recessed at 3:30 P.M. The members of the public left the meeting at this time except for the Beaufort-Hyde News, Editor, Miss Angela Harne. Mayor O’Neal called the meeting back to order at 3:45 P.M.

Mr. Hall proceeded to explain that the Belhaven Breakwater Project would be in three phases: Feasibility Study, Design and Implementation. Mr. Hall explained that \$100,000 of the needed \$300,000 had been appropriated to begin the feasibility study. Mr. Hall explained that the remaining \$200,000 would be on a 50/50 cost share with \$100,000 from the federal government and \$100,000 being split with the Town and State. Mr. Hall further explained that after the feasibility phase, the remaining cost, if approved by the Army Corps of Engineers, would be 75% federal monies with 25% being non-federal with the state possibly being responsible for 2/3 of that 25% and the town the balance (1/3). Mr. Hall explained that the Army Corps was under a moratorium of no “match agreements” so that \$100,000 to begin the feasibility study was all that was available at this time. Town Manager Johnson stated that basically the funds were at a stalemate until the moratorium is lifted. Mr. Hall stated, yes, they were in a “holding phase” at this time.

Mayor O’Neal asked that Mr. Hall give the Town a list of things that could be done to insure that this project would be funded and the moratorium lifted on the Cost Share Agreement monies. Mr. Hall stated he would forward that information to Mayor O’Neal. Town Manager Johnson stated that the \$100,000 for the feasibility study could be used in hopes that the moratorium will be lifted. Councilman Carawan stated that he hoped that the breakwater would not be repaired, but replaced, due to the dilapidated condition of the existing breakwater.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Mayor O’Neal declared the meeting adjourned at 4:11 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie J. Adams, CMC
Town Clerk