

This is Radio Hatteras. Hello, I'm Grace with the Weekly News Summary for Sunday, April 14, 2024.

Dare's commissioners vote to send housing money back to the state

"Send the money back," said Dare County Commissioner just after noon on April 9, 2024.

At a specially called Dare County Board of Commissioners meeting, the commissioners listened to 30 citizens voice opposition to projects tied to Coastal Affordable Housing, LLC. No one spoke in support though several offered suggestions about solving the "housing issue."

The only motion of the session was to halt the project. Grant County Manager authority to unwind the project. Return the money. All commissioners voted in favor of the motion.

The "money" is the \$35 million granted by North Carolina to Dare County for affordable housing. County Manager Robert L. Outten said he would contact the North Carolina Office of Management and Budget about what to do.

Those speaking from the podium criticized the board's actions and Coastal Affordable Housing LLC, asked for transparency in government and offered suggestions about what to do about the lack of affordable housing in the county.

Applauded was the demand to cut ties with Coastal Affordable Housing LLC and send the \$35 million back to the State of North Carolina.

"Walk away from it. Send it back. It's not a good fit. Go back to square one," said Cynthia Holda, representing the board of the Manns Harbor Civic Association, the only group to offer comments.

County Manager Robert L. Outten outlined the steps the county and the commissioners have taken on a four and a half year journey.

In the budget bill, \$35 million was granted to Dare Count, but strings were attached, including that the project must be a public-private partnership. Outten said a Request for Qualifications was issued. Three entities applied.

The commissioners awarded a \$12 million project on Bowsertown Road to Woda Cooper. The company developed two projects. The Bowsertown project was twice turned down by the Town of Manteo. A second project was proposed for Nags Head, which put on a moratorium and then changed the zoning. Woda Cooper withdrew.

Outten introduced the last agenda item: Where do we go from here?

"I stand ready to follow your direction," said the county manager.

Each commissioner voiced comments.

Said Commissioner Rob Ross, "we have strived for four and half years to make housing available. We have not been successful."

Commissioner Ervin Bateman thought "we can make things happen here. It didn't work out."

Bateman said "I'm done. I want to proceed forward. I don't know what we're going to do....It's time to cut our losses and go forward.

Board Chair Robert L. Woodard said, "Unfortunately, this is not the time and place for Dare County to approve essential and workforce housing. It is clearly NIMBY [not in my backyard]."

Woodard said he would keep the Housing Task Force in place to see if they can come up with something. The Housing Task Force meets April 16, at 9 o'clock in the Dare County Administration Building in Manteo.

Suggestions for solving the housing issue were offered by speakers. Some would involve negotiating with the General Assembly to repurpose the current legislation and keep the \$35 million in Dare County. Others offered specific government actions requiring new regulations.

Early college planning underway

Dare County and interested parties are moving rapidly toward building a Dare County Early College on the new College of The Albemarle campus in Manteo.

Currently, the building will be around 28,000 square feet in two stories. At its maximum, the Early College will have 350 Dare County students.

The first meeting of the county's Capital Improvements Planning Committee to consider the design and campus placement for the early college was held April 10, 2024. A second meeting is set for this Tuesday, April 16, 2024, in Room 168, Dare County Administration Building, 954 Marshal C. Collins Dr., Manteo, at 10:30 a.m.

Participating in that initial meeting were representatives from five entities: Dare County Board of Commissioners; Dare County Schools; College of the Albemarle and Town of Manteo, where the new COA campus is located. The selected firm of Oakley Collier Architects, brought five folks to the meeting.

The established timeline calls for the first class for Dare County Early College to start in Fall 2025 in a refurbished existing building on Twiford Road and to open the new facility in Fall 2026.

Outten told the group that \$21 million of the estimated \$25 million needed for the project will come from lottery funds and the remainder from state sales tax revenue. Both sources must be used for schools.

Programming space estimates call for 17 classrooms, three spaces for a media center, a commons and kitchen, nine offices, storage, conference room, four spaces for guidance, three spaces for staff support, three spaces for fitness center, general storage and custodian.

Dare County Schools and College of The Albemarle need to consult on what spaces can be shared.

No paving on Flowers Ridge Road

On Friday afternoon, the Cape Hatteras National Seashore released a decision on paving the entrance to Flowers Ridge Road in Buxton.

“As a result of feedback received from the public during a two-week-long comment period, including residents who live on Flowers Ridge Road in Buxton, decision makers of the Cape Hatteras National Seashore have decided not to pave the 400-foot-long section of the road that leads into the private neighborhood.

The Seashore requested funding for the road paving project years ago as a result of resident concerns related to maintaining the gravel driving surface on Flowers Ridge Road. While the proposed project would reduce routine maintenance and provide for smoother transportation, residents in the area shared thoughtful concerns related to public safety, an increased likelihood of speeding, and potential confusion if Seashore visitors see the paved surface and think that it leads to Seashore facilities or visitor areas.

The media release states that the Seashore will continue to communicate with adjacent landowners and periodically grade the gravel entrance of Flower's Ridge Road.

Insurance companies ask for more to insure mobile homes

Insurance commissioner Mike Causey announced that the North Carolina Rate Bureau has asked for another rate increase.

This one is the increase mobile home insurance premiums 82.9% for fire coverage over three years and 49.9 % increase on home casualty insurance.

There are about 148,000 mobile home insurance policyholders in North Carolina.

State law specifies how requests for increased premiums are to be handled.

North Carolina's process is different from other states. In other states, insurance companies file for rate changes individually. In our state, the Rate Bureau files rate requests on behalf of all the insurance companies writing property and casualty insurance in the state.

Now that the Rate Bureau has made its request, a public comment period starts. To comment on the proposal, email 2024MH@ncdoi.gov, or write to Kimberly Pearce, 1201 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, N C 27699-1201.

The deadline for comments is April 30, 2024.

Causey has 50 days to say yes or no. If the rate increase is rejected, then Causey must set a hearing date. After the hearing, Causey has 45 days to issue a ruling. The Rate Bureau must decide to accept the ruling or appeal to the North Carolina Court of Appeals.

It's always possible that a settlement could be reached at any step along the way.

Business fire in Buxton

Uncle Eddy's Frozen Custard and Mini-Golf in Buxton was significantly damaged by fire just after midnight Thursday, reported the Island Free Press.

The Buxton Volunteer Fire Department was dispatched at 12:13 Friday morning, along with Hatteras and Frisco Volunteer firefighters. Also at the scene were deputies from the Dare County Sheriff's Office and Dare County Emergency Medical Services staffers

The fire was brought under control in about 45 minutes, according to Deputy Chief Jeffrey Del Monte of the Buxton department.

As of Friday, the cause of the fire was unknown.

Go to Island Free Press for more information and photographs of the fire.

Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum reopens May 20

North Carolina Maritime Museum on Hatteras, commonly referred to as the Graveyard of the Atlantic Museum, will reopen to the public at 10 on the morning of Monday, May 20.

The museum has recently undergone a major transformation, with a completely redesigned lobby and a new gallery space with state-of-the-art features and interactive elements that bring our coastal history to life.

The public reopening will include a ribbon cutting as visitors are welcomed back to the museum, which has been closed since late 2022 for the renovation. Special programs and activities are scheduled that opening week.

Coming up this week

Dare County's Board of Education meets in regular session at 5 o'clock Monday afternoon, April 15 at 5 o'clock. Items on the agenda include adoption of next year's capital improvement plan and reports on Kindergarten through 5th grade math adoption, a computer science course, student advisors and mental health first aide.

Wild about Kindergarten

On Tuesday evening, April 16, from 5 to 6:30, Cape Hatteras Elementary will host a Kindergarten Kick-off for students and parents of children who will be five years old by August 31, 2024.

Registration for Kindergarten is online only and not accessible by cell phone.

On Tuesday, five or six computers will be available at the school and help will be available from Children and Youth Partnership staffers. One document requires a notary public signature and seal. A notary public will be available on April 16.

Bring to the event on April 16, child's birth certificate, immunization record and proof of residency such as a driver's license or a utility bill. A health assessment transmittal form is online and requires a health care professional's examination and signature.

Public computers are available at all Dare County libraries.

The Little Mermaid comes to Cape Hatteras Secondary

The most ambitious theater production yet comes to the Cape Hatteras Secondary auditorium next weekend. The production of "The Little Mermaid" has a crew of 100 students and volunteers, making costumes and sets, and practicing music and magic.

The show is brought to Hatteras Island by the Cape Hatteras Drama Club, led by co-director Blake Taft.

Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 for children, and are for sale at the front office of Cape Hatteras Secondary School, the United Bank in Buxton, and at The Froggy Dog Restaurant in Avon. Proceeds support the school's drama club.

"The Little Mermaid" will be performed Friday evening, April 19 at 7 o'clock, Saturday, April 20 at 2 and 7, and Sunday, April 21 at 2 p.m. at the Cape Hatteras Secondary Auditorium on NC 12 in Buxton.

Earth Day celebration, Saturday 10 to 1 in Rodanthe

Hatteras Island's second annual Earth Day celebration is happening Saturday, April 20 from 10 in the morning to 1 in the afternoon.

Amazing raffles offer a chance to support the Rodanthe-Waves-Salvo Civic Association Scholarship Fund.

Earth Day celebration will happen at the Rodanthe-Waves-Salvo Community Building, 23646 NC 12, Rodanthe, across from Chicamacomico Life-Saving Station.

Chicamacomico Banks Volunteer Fire and Rescue Department volunteers will be grilling.

Free plants and trees are offered to all who come.

Children's activities are on the schedule. A plant swap is set.

And, several organizations are coming including National Park Service, the Dare County Library, Surfriders Foundation, and Harbor House Seafood up from Hatteras with samples. And Don Babin, our local bee expert, will attend.

Boating Safety Class next Saturday

A Boating Safety Class will be held Saturday, April 20, 2024.

The class runs from 8 in the morning to 4 in the afternoon at the Cape Hatteras Anglers Club, 47231 Lightplant Road, Buxton.

In North Carolina, any person operating a boat powered by 10 horsepower or more who was born after January 1, 1988, must have successfully completed an approved Boating Safety Course.

Call 304-281-5355 for more information or simply show up at the class. Bring your own lunch. Water and snacks provided. The course is offered by The U. S. Coast Guard Auxiliary Cape Hatteras Flotilla 16-04.

Remember: Safe Boating Class, Saturday, April 20. Call 304-281-5355 for more info.

Wild game feast set for Saturday

A wild game feast with speaker Larry Moyer is also set for Saturday evening, April 20 at 5:30.

The feast will happen at the Cape Hatteras Secondary School Cafeteria on NC 12 in Buxton.

Many door prizes available with a grand prize shotgun from Frisco Rod and Gun. Call 475-4970 for tickets. That's 475-4970 for tickets.

Benefit dinner coming up

A benefit dinner will be held April 22 from 5 to 7 o'clock at the Hatteras Village Civic Center.

The fundraiser is for Ms. Lesley Hickman. It features herb roasted Chicken with potatoes, roasted vegetable medley and bread. The cost is \$13 per plate. Drinks and desserts are available.

Seems like the storm just kept coming the last part of this week.

Highest gust in Rodanthe was 51 miles per hour on April 11.

In Frisco, the highest gust was 46 miles per hour.

Rain in both locations was about a half inch.

And, hail fell in Frisco Friday night.

Be safe out there. Thanks for listening. This is Radio Hatteras.