

A LOT WAS ACCOMPLISHED THIS YEAR ...AND PLANNING AHEAD FOR 2019



FROM TOWN HALL

RON CIANCIO

I would like to review some of the highlights of what was a very active 2018 for the Town of Seabrook Island, and take a glimpse into what we can anticipate next year.

The most visible of this year's undertakings was the overdue work on the drainage system on the Town's portion of Seabrook Island Road. The project was delayed while we obtained required easements from affected property owners and permits from SCDHEC-OCRM (SC Department of Health and Environmental Control – Ocean and Coastal Mgmt). The initial work involved the cleaning of drainage easements across adjacent properties, replacement of a number of reinforced concrete pipes, installation of check valves to prevent the backflow of storm water and the installation cure in place lining for existing drainage pipes. This work will continue into the early part of next year when we will install additional check valves and replace damaged drainage boxes on either side of the entrance to Bohicket Marina.

Other aspects of this project will continue well into next year. We have retained a professional engineering, planning and landscape architecture firm to prepare a master entry plan for Seabrook Island Road from the circle to the gate. As part of this effort, and in anticipation of the future development of the properties on both sides of Seabrook Island Road, the consultant will review and provide recommendations on alternative street sections, widths, capacities and locations of future access points; streetscape elements including landscape, and pedestrian access. The consultant will also

develop an engineered plan proposing the placement of pipes, swales and other drainage devices to address the ponding problem on Seabrook Island Road which we experience after each heavy rain. Seabrook Island Road is the gateway to our community and provides visitors with their first impression of Seabrook. That impression should be a positive one.

We made some changes to Town Hall as well, including repainting the interior, moving the conference room to a larger space, purchasing new conference room table and chairs and upgrading the recording system in council chambers and our telephone and computer systems. We intend to add additional storage space in council chambers and replace the furniture in our waiting room. Next year we will paint the exterior of town hall, replace the front door and purchase outdoor deck furniture. We will also restripe the parking lot and construct a garage adjacent to town hall for the two new vehicles we intend to purchase next year and to provide additional storage.

We were also active on the beach. We worked with our legislative representatives to correct the unintended consequences of SCDEHC's decision to extend the comment period on its Beachfront Jurisdictional Line proposal to April 6, 2018. The extension adversely affected a number of property owners where SCDHEC's proposal moved the baseline seaward of its original location. The legislation supported by the town corrected that situation. We added additional hours and additional personnel for the beach patrol during our peak tourist season. We amended our beach ordinance to exclude electronic shock collars from the definition of "on lead" and to authorize members of the beach patrol to address fishing on the beach where that activity presents a threat to other users of the beach. Lastly, we entered into a collaborative agreement with the Low Country Marine Mammal Net-

work which monitored our beach during peak times to observe and record dolphin strand feeding and educate beach goers on this unique behavior. LCMMN together with 12 Seabrook Island volunteers spent 320 hours on our beach and spoke with 1,252 people through September. Next year, among other things, the town will be placing trash receptacles on the beach to promote a cleaner beach.

We were active on off-shore drilling issues. In response to the Bureau of Ocean Energy Management's request for comments on its 2019-2024 draft Proposed Outer Continental Shelf Oil and Gas Leasing program, the town submitted extensive comments in opposition to the proposed opening of the Outer Continental Shelf, particularly along the Mid and South Atlantic coastline, to oil and gas exploration. The Town agreed to participate as a party plaintiff in litigation proposed to be filed by the South Carolina Environmental Law Project against the National Marine Fisheries Services with respect to its proposal to issue geophysical and geological permits authorizing seismic testing off of South Carolina's shores.

The Town hosted an open house to give Seabrook Island residents a chance to ask representatives of Charleston County questions regarding how the new FEMA flood maps would affect their individual properties. The town also hosted a forum to provide residents with an opportunity to ask questions of the Berkeley Electric CEO Dwayne Cartwright regarding the power outage resulting from Hurricane Irma. Finally the town co-sponsored a well-attended forum where residents were given an opportunity to hear from each of the county council Republican candidates for the District 9 seat from which Jenny Honeycutt was elected to the council.

With the assistance of the Charleston County Planning Department we began work on updating the Town's

Comprehensive Plan. To aid in preparation of the plan we sent out a community survey and held a number of "stakeholder" meetings to gain input from town residents, business owners and organizations on the plan's nine elements. As required by statute, the revised comprehensive plan must be adopted by council by July of 2019. Next year we will also begin work on the five-year update of our Beach Management Plan. Next year we also plan to retain a consultant to undertake a complete review and revision of the Town's Development Standards Ordinance which currently contains a number of inconsistencies and less than precise definitions.

The most controversial issue of the last half year has been the application of Atlantic Partners II for a permit to construct an entrance on Seabrook Island Road for a 200 unit senior living complex. On October 3rd, the Town's Planning Commission approved the application for a permit subject to a number of conditions. Atlantic Partners II has filed a Notice of Appeal with the Charleston County Court of Common Pleas. The initial step in the process will be a mandatory mediation where the parties attempt to reach a settlement on the issues. If we are unable to reach a settlement, litigation on the issue will extend into 2019 and possibly beyond.

What would October be without the threat of yet another hurricane? Council worked closely with the Charleston County's Emergency Management Department to implement Governor McMaster's mandatory evacuation order and the Town filed a request for Public Assistance for expenses related to Hurricane Florence.

It has been an active year, and I believe we have accomplished a great deal. I want to express my appreciation to our Town Administrator, our administrative staff and the members of council for their hard work and effort. We look forward to another productive year in 2019. ▲