

STEWARDSHIP REPORT

REVIEW OF 2017

Today I would like to share with you a report that looks back on 2017. This is what I call my “Stewardship Report” to the people of Dare County.

This is something that I take very seriously as the Chairman of the Dare County Board of Commissioners. I believe it is important that everyone understands what county government is doing throughout the year to preserve and protect the excellent way of life that we have here in Dare County.

That is why each year I consider it my duty to come before you as Chairman and share from my heart a Stewardship Report for the people of Dare County.



During 2017, we had a change in the composition of the Board of Commissioners. We welcomed Rob Ross who filled the seat held by Beverly Boswell when she was elected to the North Carolina Legislature.

One of the cornerstones of our tourism economy is preservation of our beaches. During 2017 a lot was done to safeguard the beaches that attract our many visitors. We saw a \$40 million dollar beach nourishment construction project in Duck, Kitty Hawk, and Kill Devil Hills. And, this Board approved a request from the Town of Southern Shores to join in on the project.

I am also grateful for the progress that was made this past year on the County's \$25 million dollar beach nourishment project in Buxton. All of us wished that the contractor could have moved more quickly. But, we stayed on them week after week pushing them to complete the project as quickly as possible in spite of the adverse environmental conditions that they had to deal with. And, I promise you, we will continue to stay on them until this project is final and complete.

One of the things that this Board was passionate about was the need to keep our residents and visitors well informed about all the beach nourishment activity that was underway this past year throughout Dare County. We wanted to minimize, as much as possible, any inconvenience to our residents and visitors while the contractors were doing their work.

I appreciate the “More Beach to Love” campaign that was developed by the Dare County Public Relations Office. Our Public Relations Director Dorothy Hester and her assistant Sara Small kept everyone informed on a day to day basis. It was done hand-in-hand with the Towns and it was recently recognized for a Public Awareness award.

During 2017, the County engaged in talks with the National Park Service Superintendent Dave Hallac regarding the need for beach nourishment in the Village of Avon. And, the Board looks forward to working with the people of Avon to bring about relief for the beach nourishment issues in that community.



At its annual retreat in 2017, the Board resolved to continue its efforts to safeguard both Oregon Inlet and Hatteras Inlet. This commitment was reaffirmed throughout the year as funds were appropriated for the dredging of both inlets. Additionally, a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was prepared and signed for Hatteras Inlet.

The Board also continued its staunch support of Dare County's watermen during 2017. We opposed the petition to designate Special Secondary Nursery Areas and took a strong stand against legislation that would have had a devastating impact on our local fishing industry. On behalf of the Board, Commissioner House traveled to New Bern to attend an important fisheries meeting and voice our support for Dare County's watermen. This Board will never let down its guard when it comes to protecting our fishermen.



At the Board's annual retreat, the Commissioners were unanimous in reaffirming our commitment to Dare County Schools. We have worked closely with Bea Basnight and the Board of Education to continue the school funding formula, which everyone agrees is an effective way to provide the resources that are needed for Dare County Schools.

I look forward to working closely with John Farrelly, the new School Superintendent, and the Board of Education to prepare and equip our children for the future.

Another educational item that I am very excited about is what the Board approved in 2017 for the COA Dare County Campus.

A complete renovation of the campus is now part of our Capital Improvements Plan at over \$7 million dollars, and Commissioner Couch is chairing a special Task Force to gain community input about the educational and curriculum needs as we build for the future.

This Board is adamant that Dare County students should be able to have affordable educational opportunities here and not have to leave Dare County.

Another benefit of expanding educational opportunities here in Dare County is that it will help everyone in our community by providing workforce and trade skills that we desperately need for economic development.

Economic development is something that Commissioner Shea has championed for a long time and this Board has fully supported. That is why the Board approved \$25,000 in 2017 for the Outer Banks Chamber of Commerce to implement the first phase of the economic development program that was developed for us by consultants from NC State.



During 2017, the Board of Commissioners listened to the voice of the people and responded to a series of community requests, including -

- Hatteras Village Civic Assoc. to use funds for multi-use paths in the Village
- A resolution for League of Women Voters supporting equal rights for everyone
- A walkway was named in honor of Marshall & Gussie Collins.
- Approved a merger of the Chicamacomico Banks & Salvo Fire Departments
- Supported Southern Shores Civic Assoc with resolution on water sampling
- Supported a grant opportunity for work to be done on the Salvo cemetery
- Approved Restaurant Assoc. request to sell alcohol before noon on Sundays
- Authorized a Dog Park in Manteo & approved up to \$25,000 for construction

The Board also supported Vice Chairman Overman in the tireless work he has done with the Saving Lives Task Force. They did a series of Town Hall Meetings during 2017 that were very successful in addressing the issue of substance abuse in our community.

We also adopted a Resolution asking the State of North Carolina to provide adequate funding for the important health resources that are offered by Trillium.

And, after seeking community input during 2017, the Board approved a proposed zoning amendment regarding the minimum lot size requirements in Wanchese.



One of the Board's statutory responsibilities is to adopt a balanced budget each fiscal year.

This past year as we began the process of preparing the budget, I felt it was important for us to engage the community in a series of budget workshops so that every expenditure could be scrutinized and examined in a public and transparent way.

That is why we held a series of 4 public meetings where every budget line item was thoroughly reviewed and considered.

During the budget process important issues were identified that involved public safety. This included the need to meet the increased demand that exists for emergency medical services.

The Board also took a strong stand against the bill that was introduced in the North Carolina General Assembly to repeal the plastic bag ban. When the legislature repealed the ban, the Board directed the County Attorney to conduct research on options that the County may have available to handle this important issue for our coastal area.

Protecting our environment is something that is important to the Board of Commissioners whether it is standing up for the plastic bag ban or holding the line against offshore drilling.



During 2017, the Board also took action on behalf of animals in Dare County. At the request of Commissioner Ross, the Board adopted a Dog Tethering Ordinance to assure the humane treatment of animals.

The Board also voted in 2017 to update the Dangerous Dog Ordinance to give more flexibility and remedies for dealing with potentially dangerous dogs.

And, as I mentioned previously, the Board also funded a \$25,000 dollar community request for a dog park in Manteo, which is now under construction.



Something happened during 2017 that was a long time in the making. We dedicated a new facility to house a Regional 911 Call Center which will better serve the people of Dare, Hyde, and Tyrrell counties and provide a safe and efficient Emergency Operations Center for handling hurricanes and other disasters.

Fortunately we didn't have a major hurricane during 2017, but the County did respond to a crisis on Hatteras Island when a construction accident at the site of the new Bonner Bridge resulted in a power outage for all of the Island.

The Dare County Control Group issued a mandatory evacuation, which was then lifted when sufficient power was restored and adequate services could be sustained.

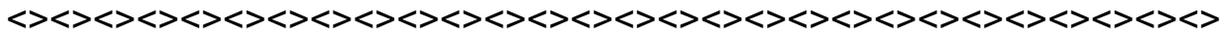


Looking ahead to 2018, one of the things I am excited about is the ceremony that will soon be taking place to name the new Pea Island Bridge in honor of Captain Richard Etheridge.

The Board of Commissioners submitted a request last year to NCDOT asking them to dedicate this bridge as a lasting tribute to an amazing Dare County African-American.

We also look forward to the day when work will be complete on the new Bonner Bridge that is being constructed over Oregon Inlet.

Transportation is an important part of life on the Outer Banks and we will continue to work closely with NCDOT and our Representative on the Transportation Board, Allen Moran, to provide the transportation infrastructure that we need for our bridges, roads, and inlets.



As we look to 2018 I am excited about the opportunities that await us. The plans we have made and the actions we have taken are preparing us for a year that I believe will be a good one for the people of Dare County.

As Chairman of the Board of Commissioners I want to renew my commitment to the citizens of Dare County that we will continue to provide outstanding service to our residents and visitors in a cost effective way.

This could not be done without the dedicated service of my fellow Commissioners. I want to thank each of them from the bottom of my heart – Vice Chairman Overman, Commissioner Shea, Commissioner House, Commissioner Ross, Commissioner Tobin, and Commissioner Couch. It is an honor to work with each of you in serving the people of Dare County.

I also want to thank every Dare County employee. Throughout the year, you are on the front lines of providing the services that benefit our residents and visitors.

Especially during times like last week's snowstorm, we are reminded of the many ways that County employees protect and serve our citizens.

In closing, I would like to thank the people of Dare County for the opportunity to serve you.

And, I would like to encourage you to be part of our meetings and participate in the many opportunities we provide for public comments and public hearings.

We need your input and participation and value the ideas and feedback that we receive from every Dare County citizen.

It is my hope and prayer that 2018 will be a healthy, safe, and prosperous year for everyone in Dare County. God bless you.