



COUNTY OF DARE, NORTH CAROLINA

District 1: Roanoke Island & Mainland; District 2: Nags Head, Colington, Kill Devil Hills; District 3: Kitty Hawk, Southern Shores, Duck; District 4: Chicamacomico, Avon, Buxton, Frisco, Hatteras; District 5: At Large

MINUTES

DARE COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

SPECIAL MEETING – TOWN HALL

To conduct a Town Hall Meeting
to hear from the public about issues of concern
and to obtain suggested solutions for the challenges facing Dare County

Fessenden Center, Buxton, NC

6:30 p.m., February 4, 2016

Commissioners present: Chairman Robert Woodard
Vice-Chairman Wally Overman
Warren Judge, Jack Shea,
Allen Burrus, Beverly Boswell

Commissioners absent: Margarett Umphlett

Others present: Finance Director, David Clawson
Public Information Officer, Dorothy Hester
Clerk to the Board, Gary Gross

Chairman Woodard called the Town Hall meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. He outlined the format of the meeting and said there would be no time limit on citizen comments. County Department Heads and Park Service Superintendent David Hallac were introduced. It was reported that Commissioner Umphlett was unable to attend because her husband is in the hospital. The community was asked to keep the Umphlett family in their prayers.

Before a standing room only audience of 250 people, 28 individuals spoke, including –
Judy Banks, Joe Farrow, Asa Gray, Pat Weston, Linda Sue Boehmer, Buddy McDaniel, Mary Tutzawer, Raymond Austin, Elaine Hooper, Rick Anzolut, Frank Folb, Bob Davis, Rosa Mayo, Carol Dillon, Grace Hallenbeck, Tanya L. Cling, Wayne Coddling, Wayne Mathis, Rick Albaugh, Lee Setkowsky, James Hartshorne, Donnie Bowers, James Gray, Jeff Oden, Mike Fahey, Brandon Fallett, Beth Midgett, Rom Whitaker.

Following is a synopsis of the issues, concerns, and suggestions that were expressed. Some items, such as opposition to a special tax district, were raised by multiple speakers. Many people also thanked the Board for conducting the Town Hall meeting. The list is organized by topic as a checklist summary of the statements that were made - - -

Statements related to > Beach Nourishment, Protecting Hwy 12, How To Pay For It –

- A tax Service District for beach nourishment would impose an unfair burden.
- It is hard enough living with the current taxes without creating an additional one.
- Imposing a new tax will deprive my family of food, shelter, and other essentials.
- With dropped property values and a lack of jobs, nobody can afford more taxes.
- A new tax will push people like me, a widow with a disabled son, out of our homes.
- One person advocated that people should not pay the nourishment tax if it is levied.
- A new tax will hurt people. Please remember, it's not always about the dollar.
- Some said that while they don't want a tax, they recognize it may be needed.
- Any tax that is levied should be fairly assessed to those who benefit the most.
- People are frustrated with money taken off Hatteras with very little of it coming back.
- Tax money raised should be kept on Hatteras and not go into the General Fund.

- Provide details about how occupancy taxes are used before levying a new tax.
- People of Hatteras do not get the occupancy tax money that is raised by our hotels.
- County has gone to the well too often on real estate taxes, look at occupancy taxes.
- Ask the General Assembly to increase the Occupancy Tax.
- The General Assembly has done it for others, so there is a precedent.
- Visitors love our beaches and would support them with higher occupancy taxes.
- Visitors would pay higher occupancy taxes if they knew what it was being used for.
- We need to be careful not to do anything that hurts our tourism base.
- If we raise occupancy taxes there will be kickback. Let's not kill the golden goose.
- Any kind of new tax will impede business.
- We need a long-term stream of revenue for beach nourishment.
- The money spent to nourish beaches can be wiped out in a nor'easter.

- Hwy 12 is a state road and it is the state's responsibility to maintain it, not ours.
- Californians aren't charged a wildfire tax; we shouldn't have a tax to protect Hwy 12.
- Consider a toll bridge or a toll road that would exempt locals. Other places do this.
- State should not be allowed to pick and choose which road areas they will protect.
- NCDOT's neglect of Hatteras & its road will result in a lawsuit when someone dies.
- Ask NCDOT, NPS, Board of Education, Hyde, & others to pay to protect Hwy 12.
- When beach is nourished, Park Service will claim it as theirs, so make them pay.
- Hwy 12 is a rural road to an NPS destination. Maybe they could fund the road.
- The Department of the Interior is the biggest foe of Hatteras Island.
- Regulations & environmental groups have driven up costs to maintain infrastructure.
- History shows that sand placement on dunes were designed to protect Hwy 12
- Force the Department of Interior to keep their promise and repair the dunes.

- Beach nourishment is a temporary solution that is too costly to bear.
- Need to look for a long-term solution.
- Nourishment will need to be done annually because sea level rise is real.
- Retired geologist said nourishment is a worthy experiment that should last 7-10 yrs.
- A Buxton oceanfront owner appreciates the project and is hanging on to survive.
- Proactively protect Hwy 12 since it's the only way in and out to get medical care.

- School buses have a serious safety issue getting through Buxton.
- There is enough sand in Hatteras Inlet to solve our beach nourishment problems.
- Beach nourishment at Mirlo is only a Band-Aid.
- Jetties would have protected Hwy 12 in Buxton.
- The book “How to Read the Beach” describes the unique structure of the area.
- A geologist has proven that dredging Oregon Inlet is washing away Hatteras Island.
- Don’t waste money building another “temporary” bridge to replace the Lego Bridge.
- This money would better be used for beach nourishment, EMS, and Radio Hatteras.
- Change environmentalist minds rather than pay for another temporary bridge.
- The people of Hatteras have expressed excellent ideas on both sides of this issue.
- Lot of wisdom in this room about beach nourishment issues, please take it to heart.

Inlet Maintenance –

- Consider having Dare County own and operate its own dredging vessel.
- A County owned dredging vessel would create jobs and give us independence.
- Income could be generated by renting out a County owned dredging vessel.
- Obtain an open-ended dredging permit since there is so much government red tape.
- The State should be paying for this; they should invest in a proper dredging vessel.
- Thank you for getting our inlet dredged, although we still have to use a longer route.
- BOC has helped our fishermen, but we still need deeper water throughout the inlet.

Transportation –

- NCDOT needs to fix Hwy 12 trouble spots. Have better marker lines & reflectors.
- No painted lines between the reflectors on Hwy 12 makes it difficult and unsafe.
- There are no markings or reflectors at the Lego Bridge.
- When the current Bonner Bridge is demolished, use it as fill.

Health Concerns –

- Dare Co. needs a proactive plan for the Zika virus. It has tourism implications.
- Do an aggressive vector control program. This could damage our tourism industry.
- The Center for Disease Control is taking Zika seriously, so should Dare County.
- Money should not have been taken away from the Island’s major clinic in Avon.
- Hatteras Medical Center saved my life and the lives of many others.
- The people have fought long and hard for a medical facility in Hatteras Village.
- Avon Med Center can’t always see us; we need an alternative in Hatteras Village.
- We don’t have a retirement center or a hospital; we need basic care and education.
- There is too much red tape associated with providing medical education.

National Park Service Interaction With The Community –

- Superintendent is communicating with us and getting along like never before.
- Specific drainage problem areas on NPS property were identified for Supt. Hallac.

Other County Government Topics –

- There is a desperate need for a public boat ramp. Promises have not been kept.
- Commercial boat ramps charge \$10. Our people deserve free public access.
- The County's Wildlife Commission uses favoritism in handling duck blinds.
- Reduce lot size from 15,000 to 12,000 to get our building industry working again.
- It is unsafe when empty trashcans are not picked up and moved off the roadway.
- Other places issue people fines for neglected trashcans. Consider doing this.
- Revenue from trashcan fines could be used to help pay for beach nourishment.
- Forecasts show more catastrophic storms in 2016-17, how much support will we get
- Stand up to the State so we won't have to get a license to take food from the ocean.
- Information about bridges and other projects needs to be compiled and shared.
- Hatteras Village is at the bottom of the totem pole, just look at our lack of sidewalks.
- Commissioners should make an effort to connect with working people on the job.
- Each year conduct one Board of Commissioners meeting on Hatteras Island.
- Do a Town Hall meeting on Hatteras Island every six months.

Chairman Woodard announced that the County is working on technology for future Board of Commissioner meetings that will give Hatteras Island residents the opportunity to make public comments at the Fessenden Center rather than traveling to Manteo. He said plans are to have this set up in the next 60 days. The Chairman also gave detailed information about how occupancy taxes are collected and spent. He said no decision has been made on a tax Service District and told the audience that before any such action is taken a Public Hearing would be held. Each Commissioner thanked the audience for attending and for sharing their thoughts and concerns.

At 9:00 p.m., the Board of Commissioners adjourned the Town Hall meeting.



Respectfully submitted,

By: _____

Gary Gross, Clerk to the Board

APPROVED: _____

Robert Woodard, Chairman
Dare County Board of Commissioners