

About Town



A Newsletter from the Town of Duck – Fall Issue 2004

MUNICIPAL PROPERTY PLANNING

Excitement in the Community Builds

The culmination of a year's worth of planning will come to a conclusion when the Master Plan Study Committee presents its recommendations for the municipal park property. "The Park Committee made such great strides in achieving its goal with significant public input and support," remarks Paul Keller, who has steered this planning group since January. A recap of the significant milestones follows...

Beginning, Municipal Property Master Plan Study Committee Established ... in April, Vanasse Hangen Brustlin selected as consulting firm supporting municipal plan site activities ... in May, North Carolina State University reports on the vegetative survey the Maritime Deciduous Forest remnant and the Willow Swamp ... in June, first public hearing and input session ... in August, Town Council adopts Committee's suggested Needs Assessment & Vision Statement for the park ... in October, conceptual renderings on display at day-long community viewing & discussion session.

What's Next?

Derived from comments made by the public in October in addition to responses to the latest questionnaire and on its own deliberations, the study committee has identified two preferred options for the Town of Duck's municipal property – one with a town hall and one without. As a result, Vanasse Hangen Brustlin (VHB) is creating drawings of each concept. Concurrently, while VHB is also preparing rough cost estimates for each plan's essential features the committee is reviewing both options in order to establish implementation priorities. When this work is accomplished, a total package -- including a proposed five-year implementation plan will be presented to the Town Council. Ultimately the actual implementation and funding priorities will be the responsibility of the present and future Town Councils. Clearly, comments from almost all of those responding via e-mail, questionnaires, or at public meetings desire this 10 acres to become the "people's park." The concepts to be provided to the Town Council by the committee will capture this intent.

Over the next 5 to 10 years the park has all of the potential to become an attractive open space in the center of Town to promote both active and passive pursuits, all in a manner that is compatible with the natural qualities of this beautiful tract of land. To illustrate what's next, one need only to reflect on the descriptions included in our vision statement ...

*invites people to enjoy a wonderful sound side boardwalk ...
and is a wonderful gathering place, especially for community events.*

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROGRAM TO BE DEVELOPED

Expenditures Underscore the Need for Visionary Planning

In October the Town Council authorized the submission of a grant to the Dare County Visitors Bureau for the extension of the Duck Trail on the west side of NC 12 and also authorized the purchase of a new fire engine for the Duck Volunteer Fire Department. These future capital expenditures, coupled with other anticipated capital expenditures, such as the implementation of the municipal property master plan and storm water improvements, have underscored the need to enhance the planning for the current and possible future capital expenditures.

Beginning in November, the Town will start to develop its first Capital Improvements Program, or CIP. A CIP is a tool used by local governments to identify major capital projects and acquisitions that are to be considered for funding over a period of time, typically five or six years. The CIP allows for the orderly replacement and/or rehabilitation or acquisition of new capital assets, whether the asset is a road, vehicle or piece of computer equipment. It also allows for the design of the project, or time to develop specifications for a purchase, time to arrange financing of a project or acquisition, and the overall coordination of projects or acquisitions. If developed properly, a CIP will allow a governing body to prioritize capital projects and acquisitions to ensure that the projects or acquisitions meet the goals of the governing body both from a policy and a fiscal perspective.

In addition to identifying the cost of a major capital project or acquisition, a CIP also identifies the proposed funding sources of projects or acquisitions. This funding may be derived strictly from general fund revenues, or may be funded partly or in full by other sources such as grants, bonds, installment purchase contracts, or even special service districts. A CIP also

identifies the anticipated effect of a capital project on the yearly operating budget. All of these factors allow for the reasonable consideration of the capital project and its prioritization.

The Town of Duck Capital Improvements Program will consist of a six year plan; the current year plus projections for five years, and will be developed by the Town Manager with input from all Town departments, agencies, and committees. Acquisitions to be considered for inclusion in our CIP will be valued at over \$5,000, while studies will only be included if their end products result in capital projects. Once a CIP is adopted by Town Council it will be included in the development of the Town's annual budget. It is anticipated that a draft Capital Improvements Program will be presented to the Town Council at its upcoming retreat on January 19, 2005.

THE MAYOR'S COLUMN

By: Gene Schwarz

While hurricane season 2004 spared Duck of a major natural disaster and evacuation, the town did have to contend with the effects of Hurricanes Alex, Bonnie, and Charlie. In each case, although mainly rain events, each storm caused significant flooding in many areas of the town. Town staff, along with the NC Department of Transportation, dealt with each situation in an efficient manner. As pumps labored to clear the roadways of water, volunteers – sometimes knee deep in water -- assisted with traffic control and did all that was necessary to keep Route 12 open and safe. These dedicated citizens deserve our highest praise.

On Election Day, the voters of Duck rejected the proposal to compensate our elected officials. The recommended level of compensation was not high but could have helped defray incurred expenses. Perhaps this important issue will be reconsidered in the future allowing for a larger, more diverse number of candidates to enter the ranks of public service. Of the 102 towns in North Carolina with a population of less than 2500, 87 compensate their elected officials.

STORM WATER UPDATE

Short Term Strategies – Long Term Solutions

Since the heavy rainfall and subsequent flooding that occurred throughout the Outer Banks several initiatives relative to storm water management have been started. The Town of Duck continues to work with NCDOT to develop – in the very least -- a short term solution to the flooding at NC 12 and the Tuckahoe subdivision. This short term solution is expected to give the Town and NCDOT enough time to jointly fund an engineering study of NC 12 to determine a satisfactory long term solution to the flooding on the road. In the meantime, the Outer Banks Hydrology Management Committee, convened by Senator Marc Basnight and charged with recommending a long term solution to the flooding problems throughout the Outer Banks, has been meeting on a bi-monthly basis. It is expected that when the committee finishes its work (and before the North Carolina General Assembly convenes) it will have produced several recommendations to address the storm water issues that are impacting our region.

PLANNING FOR FUTURE DEVELOPMENT

Proactive Steps towards Enhancing Our Town

It probably goes without saying that many individuals and groups have an interest in the built environment. Duck is no different. Planning & Building staff work with local builders and homeowners on a daily basis. They evaluate guidelines with the Town's Planning Board and provide expertise to the Town Council as it adopts policy. For months the Planning & Building staff has undertaken a comprehensive review of the Zoning Ordinance, heard land use cases, and conducted local workshops and meetings.

Getting the word out about local procedures, codes, and ordinances affecting our built environment has meant including the building community in workshops designed to encourage dialogue. As in the past, these efforts have helped to identify and resolve issues that arise in the field or during permitting. A winter workshop is anticipated and future sessions are likely. Planning and building staff members have also participated in meetings of the business community and several homeowners associations.

Over the last six months the Town has adopted or revised several ordinances that will impact future development. Commercially, the flexible Village Commercial Development ordinance will encourage creative solutions to renovations and new development in the heart of town. At its core was recognition that a one-size-fits-all formula to development may not be the best approach to positive maintenance and enhancement efforts in Duck. As new sign, display and storage regulations were designed to help preserve the quaintness of the core village area, a newly developed regulatory and incentive plan addresses all of Duck's commercial sites and its structures.

For residential properties, regulations now allow for pea gravel (or similar) for both driveway and parking areas and the number of required parking spaces is related to occupancy as determined by the home's septic capacity. In situations where a minor error exists with the location of a building or site feature, the Council adopted an administrative approval process to accommodate good faith errors. Further, features included in lot coverage (such as overhangs) have been permitted to extend into setback areas. A moratorium limiting the amount of fill that can be placed on a lot is pending completion of a local hydrology study and development of appropriate regulations.

Want to know mores about future planning and building issues? Visit the Town's website to read current ordinances, meeting agendas, etc. For specific Planning & Building questions, contact Sue Cotellessa, Planning Director, Mike Goodwin, Chief Building Inspector, or Sandy Cady, Administrative Assistant at (252) 255-1234.

Information About Town

The Town of Duck Administrative Office is located at 1240 Duck Road, Suite 106 (at the Waterfront Shops). Office hours are Mon. thru Fri., 9 am to 5pm

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A Newsletter from the Town of Duck

Fall Issue 2004 -- Editor: Nancy Caviness

Town Manager: Chris Layton

Chief of Police: Dale Hamilton -- Fire Chief: John Brock

Mayor: Gene Schwarz

Council Members: Alan Beres, Nancy Caviness, Neil Morrison, Monica Thibodeau

Mark Your Calendar

Town Council Meetings: Open, public meetings are held the 1st Wed. of each month (7:00 p.m.) for regular session and the 3rd Wed. of each month (1:00 p.m.) for work session, at the Town's Administrative Office.

Planning Board Meetings: Open, public meetings of the Town of Duck Planning Board are held the 2nd Fri. of each month (1:00 p.m.) at the Town's Administrative Office. *Additional sessions scheduled as necessary.*

Build the Bridge-Preserve Our Roads: Supporting the long standing opposition to the widening of NC12 and the building the Mid Currituck Sound Bridge. For more information: www.buildthebridge.org

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