



Town of Southern Shores

"A Town of Volunteers"

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Special Meeting

Public Hearing

February 7, 2002

9:00 a.m.-Pitts Center

Mayor Sutherland called the special meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. Note: Councilman Denny was delayed and arrived at 9:35 a.m.

Mayor Sutherland led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mayor Sutherland explained the purpose of the meeting and public hearing. The purpose of the public hearing is to consider the proposed plans for traffic changes for NC12 in the vicinity of the Town Hall. Don Conner and Jerry Jennings, NCDOT representatives, were present to answer questions.

D. Conner stated that Council had requested NCDOT submit plans for a center turn lane on NC12. He stated that two proposals were submitted, 1) a center turn lane with no right-of-way issues and 2) a center turn lane from Town Hall to Skyline Road with an extension of the two northbound merge lanes from Pelican's Watch to Skyline Road that requires right-of-way agreements. He stated that Council agreed to review the second proposal.

He explained that there is federal money available to be used for safety improvements and the center turn lane as proposed from Town Hall to Skyline Road is a consideration as proposed. He stated that a traffic light would be installed at the intersection on NC12 near the Crown gas station.

He stated that the completion date, optimistically, is to be Memorial Day if the right of way issues can be resolved. He stated that to install the center turn lane a portion of the multi-use path would need to be moved but that NCDOT would do only what is necessary to lessen the impact to all the surrounding area. Relocation of the multi-use path will be at NCDOT's expense.

A question was asked if pedestrian's crossing on NC12 were a consideration? D. Conner said no. He stated that this plan is to aid in keeping cars moving.

Mayor Sutherland stated that State Representative Bill Culpepper attended the February Council meeting and he supports the Mid-Currituck Bridge and does not support the widening of NC12 through Southern Shores to accommodate 4-5 lanes.

Mayor Sutherland expressed his concern regarding the possibility of additional driveway cuts and how they will impact the traffic issues.

Mayor Sutherland asked D. Conner if the proposed plan is approved but not completed by Memorial Day would NCDOT continue with the construction? D. Connor stated that the construction would not be continued during tourist season but the work would be after Labor Day and language would be written in the contract addressing this.

Dan Ottavio made a comment that the ^{CPDA} CHPOA made a request some time ago for a directed traffic light to be placed at Chicahawk Trail and nothing has been done.

D. Conner stated that the objective is to have a center turn lane to Chicahawk Trail but funding is needed to continue the turn lane beyond Skyline Road. He thought that funding would be available after 1 July and possibly in time to incorporate this into the proposal considered by Council.

Mayor Sutherland explained that there is \$150,000.00 in the transportation budget that may be used for intersection improvements (Ocean View Loop and Skyline Road).

Mayor Sutherland called the public hearing to order at 9:37 a.m. and asked those who wish to speak to state their name and address.

Geri Sullivan, 31 10th Ave., stated that she and her husband strongly oppose the NCDOT traffic change proposal to NC 12. She continued by saying it is an inadequate and costly solution to the traffic congestion caused by seasonal migration of visitors to Currituck County. It will be of no benefit to the residents of Duck or Southern Shores. Some issues to consider are the environment, property devaluation, public safety, and emergency situations. She recommends the best solution to the traffic congestion is to build the Mid-Currituck bridge. She strongly urged Council to place its effort on pushing NCDOT to expedite the bridge process. She also suggested that Council reach as many far away property owners as possible to get their input and to hold public hearings at night to allow working people to attend.

2-7-02
Pub Hearing
NC12 DOT
changes

My name is Geri Sullivan. My husband and I are recent residents of Southern Shores, moving here in late 2000, but we are not new to the Outer Banks. We vacationed here for over 30 years before moving here, as I am sure many of you did.

My husband and I strongly oppose the NCDOT proposed changes and any other changes to widen North Carolina 12 through Southern Shores. We see this as an inadequate and costly solution to the traffic congestion caused by the seasonal migration of visitors to Currituck country. The proposed changes will only move the traffic congestion further up the road and set the stage for a 4-lane highway from Southern Shores to Currituck, providing no benefit to Southern Shores or the Duck communities.

The project carries a high-price tag in cost- to the environment, property devaluation, and public safety in addition to development costs. These costs will be borne by our community while benefiting only Currituck county, where the cost should be borne. Let me explain:

1. Cost to the environment will be the increase in hardscape and reduction in beach vegetation, which houses wildlife.-birds, squirrel, deer and fox only to name a few. And should a bridge across Currituck eventually be approved, the damage to our environment will not be undone- we will not take down the extra lanes and replace the vegetation.
2. Property devaluation goes without saying as we turn our country setting into a bypass for a highway- Do we plan to erect concrete barriers to replace the trees and mask us from the traffic pollution as they did in Norfolk? ~~My husband and I already see the damage done by the travelers- ashtrays dumped along the road, tossed bottles and fast food packaging - and we have even seen some of these travelers relieving themselves in our yards.~~
3. Public Safety- My husband and I watch and talk to visitors waiting to cross the road-with their beach chairs, coolers and boogie boards. Today they have to cross 2 lanes of road, when traffic stops. If we build a bypass lane or 4-lane road, and traffic doesn't slow, do we want them to try to negotiate to the bypass lane and risk being hit by a car. We in fact will be discouraging them from walking - so we will have to provide more beach access parking - won't we? ~~Do we fill in the ponds and add more parking lot space.~~ And if this new project is being proposed for public safety, what is the history of accidents resulting from this traffic today - or is it the inconvenience and complaints from visitors traveling to Currituck.

Futhermore the proposed solution does not address emergency situations. The first that comes to mind is hurricane evacuation, which has already been discussed. A second more frequent occurrence is a medical emergency. Our neighbor Denise Deacon works at the Duck Fire Department. She says that there are issues when medical emergencies have to be transported from Currituck beaches – both in time and distance.

The best solution to the traffic congestion would be a bridge across Currituck- which was previously approved but is now being restudied due to environmental impact. This would reduce the traffic, mileage traveled to northern beaches and associated car pollution as well as address emergency circumstances.. I strongly urge our council to place its effort on pushing NCDOT to expedite the bridge decision process and work towards finding ways to address the environmental concerns-such as providing alternate wetland areas if needed. Our representative Bill Culpepper said a full-time effort should be placed on this to get the decision process expedited.

I would like to make one final point to the council. I feel due to the importance of this type of issue, more effort should be made to get our property owners input – did we do a survey as they did in Duck. Many of our property owners are not full –time residents but are working to the point so that we they can retire here. Are we giving them a forum to be heard. Also, many of our citizens have full-time jobs and cannot attend public hearings during the day. I would recommend that future hearings be scheduled offhours to provide them an opportunity to express their opinions.

Thank you for letting my husband and I express our feelings on this issue.