

## SHORELINES – May 2006

As presented to the *Island Review* Magazine.

### The Beach Commission

We haven't discussed the Carteret County Beach Commission for a very long while in the *Island Review*, and there is no time better than the present to re-acquaint ourselves with this very important and unique governmental body.

The Commission was formed in 2001, shortly after State House Bill 698 was ratified into State Session Law (SL) 2001-381. The law signified a major change in the County's occupancy tax mindset as the levy was increased from 3% to 5% of the gross receipts derived from the rental of any room, lodging, or similar accommodation. Without getting into the particulars of the law; essentially half, or 2.5% of the tax collection is directed to the County's Tourism Development Authority, and the other half (2.5%) is designated for the purpose of beach nourishment. The Beach Commission was created in the occupancy tax law to serve as a caretaker of the beach nourishment revenues that are permitted to accrue in a reserve in what has been commonly referred to as the "Beach Fund". This fact alone makes the Beach Commission very unique – they are the only governmental body in North Carolina mandated by State law to discuss, manage, and coordinate beach nourishment and conservation activities.

Another unique aspect of the Commission lies in their membership formula that is also codified in the occupancy tax law. The total number of Beach Commission members is eleven including; two (2) individuals who must reside within the town limits of Atlantic Beach, two (2) who reside within Pine Knoll Shores, two (2) who reside within Emerald Isle, one (1) who resides within Indian Beach, one (1) who resides on Bogue Banks, one (1) who resides anywhere in Carteret County, a member of the County Board of Commissioners (1), and a member of the County's Tourism Development Authority (1).

This membership formula provides a diverse cross-section of interests that are represented on the Commission that helps the body speak with a clear voice regarding beach nourishment and related issues. The term for each member is three years, although initial terms for Beach Commission members in 2001 were set for 1, 2, or 3 years to create staggered terms among the entire 11-member Commission. All Beach Commission members are appointed by the County Board of Commissioners. Likewise the Beach Commission may not contract with any particular firm, person, or agency but rather all contracts must be approved by the County Board. The current membership roster for the Beach Commission is included in this edition of *Shorelines*.

<b>Carteret County Beach Commission</b>			
<b>NAME</b>	<b>REPRESENTING / RESIDING</b>	<b>TERM LENGTH</b>	<b>TERM EXPIRES</b>
William Donnelly (vice chair)	Atlantic Beach	3 years	1/07
Tom Doe, III	Atlantic Beach	3 years	1/09
Joan Lamson	Pine Knoll Shores	3 years	1/08
Ted Lindblad	Pine Knoll Shores	3 years	1/09
Buck Fugate (chair)	Emerald Isle	3 years	1/08
Jerry Huml	Emerald Isle	3 years	1/07
Stewart Pickett	Indian Beach	3 years	1/09
James N. Willis, III	Bogue Banks Resident	3 years	1/07

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Jim Stephenson	At-Large	3 years	1/08
Pat McElraft	County Commissioner	3 years	1/09
Jack Goldstein	TDA	3 years	1/07

Former long-time Mayor of Indian Beach and now resident of Emerald Isle, William “Buck” Fugate has served as chair since the first meeting of the Commission in October 2001, and former Mayor and long-time resident of Atlantic Beach, Bill Donnelly has served as vice-chair since 2002. The remaining roster is a blend of elected officials and individuals who have been actively participating with non-profit beach advocacy groups.

The Beach Commission meets on a routine monthly basis on every fourth Monday of the month, 2 pm, at Pine Knoll Shores Town Hall. The meetings are open to the public and archived meeting minutes are available at the Beach Commission’s website; <http://www.protectthebeach.com/beachcomm.htm>. The Commission discusses and acts upon “all things beach” in accordance with their agendas ranging from project specific themes, to proposed State rules, developments from Washington, D.C., monitoring reports, and host of other topics. The Shore Protection Office, under the auspices of the County, receives its direction from the Beach Commission and serves as the body’s full-time staff.

In closing, it’s worth reviewing the Beach Commission’s mission statement adopted just after their inception – it remains just as fresh and relevant as it was almost 5 years ago.

*“The mission of the Carteret County Beach Commission is to identify and develop plans, strategies, and programs to restore and maintain wide sandy beaches and dunes through environmentally sensitive beach nourishment, dune management, vegetation management, and sand management principles. The Commission is committed to obtain funding at the federal, state, and local level for beach nourishment and storm protection that will prevent and mitigate further erosion of the existing shoreline. The Commission supports policies and procedures that comply with all federal, state, and local requirements. The Commission will strive to develop prudent management strategies for sustaining the productivity and economy of our coastal land and seascapes.”*