

Special Commission Meeting of the Town of Ocean Ridge held on Monday, September 26th 2005 at 8:00 AM in the Town Hall Meeting Chambers

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Kaleel and roll call was answered by the following:

Commissioner Allison
Commissioner Bingham
Mayor Kaleel
Commissioner Hogan
Commissioner Pugh

Engineer Tropepe, of Shalloway gave a presentation with 4 alternative solutions. The presentation included a drawing showing the elevation levels of the road and homes on Coconut Lane. It showed that 5 homes were currently below the FEMA recommended levels of 7ft. Ocean Ridge's required level is now 8 ft.

Alternative #1 or the "Hudson Alternative"

Build the road up higher to prevent flooding. Five homes would have to be raised or knocked down. This could be done through individual people, grants, loans, tax incentives or even the condemning of homes and then rebuilding them per code. This would give a 10 year level of protection. It would also make the street comfortable like Hudson Avenue. However if you only raised the streets, then the low homes would be trapped under water during heavy rains or storms.

Cost Range: \$600,000 - \$950,000 (excluding the cost related directly to the affected homes).

Alternative #2

Regrade the swale system & driveways. This won't give a 10 year level of protection. Landscape must be removed/relocated.

Cost Range: \$350,000 - \$500,000 without drain well
\$900,000 - \$1.4 mil. with drain well

Alternative #3

- 1) Shave high points off road
- 2) Replacing swales only where needed
- 3) Replacing driveways only where needed

Cost Range: \$150,000 - \$350,000 without drain well
\$900,000 - \$1.2 mil. with drain well

Alternative #4

Regrading only the swales and areas where there are real problems.

Cost Range: \$75,000 - \$200,000 without drain well
\$900,000 - \$1.1 mil. with drain well

Engineer Tropepe stated that Alternative #1 or the Hudson Alternative would be the most severe change to the Coconut area. Hudson Avenue is working successfully. It does not include the acquisition of properties or raising of the low level homes. One specific alternative did not have to be selected, they could be mixed/combined.

SPECIAL TOWN COMMISSION MEETING HELD MON., SEPT. 26, 2005

Comm Bingham asked on the cost of the drainage well. Engineer Tropepe stated that it was bid out, but that the price then was approximately \$950,000. It has a pump, and a box or wet well that fills up, and then the water is pumped into the drainage well.

Comm Bingham stated that she believed Coconut was a different situation than Hudson Avenue because of the low-level cul-de-sac. She stated that Coconut Avenue always floods during high tides, and was concerned if the drainage well worked during high tides.

Engineer Tropepe stated that with Alternative #1, the high tide wouldn't effect it. The road would be raised. On Alternatives #2, #3, and #4, the high tide would greatly effect it because the cul-de-sac is so low. Also on Hudson, they had water behind the alleyway, and we raised the road 2 feet.

Comm Allison asked how the homes would be raised with Alternative #1. Engineer Tropepe replied that they could be jacked up with supports, and a new foundation laid.

Manager Mathis reminded the commissioners that the price of Alternative #1 does not include the raising of the homes.

Engineer Tropepe stated that they could have the choice of eminent domain or a buyout of the low-level homes or a raising of the homes or have new homes built to replace them. The new homes would be built to code. In the year 2000, there were several homes that had low elevations but now that number is down to only five.

Fred Sternberg, 50 Coconut Lane stated that they have never flooded. He added that theirs is an older home and the water drainage is natural through pavers.

Engineer Tropepe stated that with Alternative #1, the whole dynamics would change if the road was raised. The homes would not be lower, and it would be a permanent fix.

Mayor Kaleel mentioned that most of the homeowners had lived there for a long time. He agreed with a long term solution, but the town couldn't afford the cost at this time. Alternative #2, #3, #4 wouldn't work well without the drainage well. If one location was reduced, the water would just settle somewhere else. The problem would now be a different location.

Comm Bingham stated that a catch basin works with gravity, not where the land is low.

Comm Allison asked what type of daily maintenance would be required. Engineer Tropepe replied that there is currently a berm at the end of the cul-de-sac. It's plugged at high tides and then unplugged at low tides. This is done 4 times a day. They had applied for a Lake Worth Lagoon Grant of \$500,000 and a FEMA Grant of \$700,000 but they have not been awarded. The FEMA Agency has their hands full with other areas (Gulf Coast) at the moment, and we are not a high priority. Shalloway has also been working on a 319 Grant. It is a Federal Grant like from the EPA. When federal funds are awarded, a town or municipality may only actually receive 2/3 of it. Approximately 1/3 of the funds are applied to the cost of the government's paperwork.

SPECIAL TOWN COMMISSION MEETING HELD MON., SEPT. 26, 2005

Comm Hogan stated that her concern is spending this sum of money without additional breakdown of how the funds are spent. The money belongs to the taxpayer, and would average to about \$67,000 per home. She requested that assessments be done to aide the cash flow for whatever the grants may not cover. Comm Hogan stated that she couldn't make a fair decision without more details as to how the money would be spent. The cost of this project affects the entire town.

Mayor Kaleel stated that they have researched and discussed having tax assessments in the past. In 2001 assessments were considered and it was felt that the drainage situation was a town-wide problem, along with the bridge repair and other projects. The cost was then spread among all the homeowners. He reminded the commission that there were many other projects coming up. The town may have to consider refinancing and applying for a Drainage Assessment Bond to cover all the drainage problems. Mayor Kaleel stated at this time a cash flow statement is premature, as we have not picked out one of the Alternatives yet.

Comm Bingham stated that some of these homes were the first properties in our town, and these homeowners are now retired and on fixed incomes. This would force them out of their homes.

Comm Allison stated that she believed it was fair to split up this cost and any other projects among all town residents.

Cristine Hermansen, 4 Coconut Lane, proposed that Coconut Lane be used as a pilot project for a comprehensive drainage system like the one by Turtle Beach or Osprey. They have drainage systems that work well.

Mayor Kaleel stated that the South Phase Project is a pilot project but Coconut Lane has a bowl effect, and the water will settle in it's lowest spot.

George Berlin, 26 Hudson Avenue, stated that a few years back he had requested quotes for raising his home. The quotes varied from \$20,000 to \$100,000. The price for raising 5 homes may not be that expensive. He also questioned if the Town could legally raise the roads above the current level of the homes?

Mayor Kaleel stated that he was not sure that it was the town's responsibility to pay for the cost of raising these homes because it is their properties and may be their responsibility. He asked the engineers what would be the best solution for the monies spent.

Engineer Tropepe stated that it might involve a combination of Alternative #3 & #4. The water would be moved from the East to the West but may cause problems for the homes on the West side. Manager Mathis asked that if we chose Alternative #2, #3 or #4, could the Town come back at a later time and then do Alternative #1.

Engineer Tropepe stated that if we chose Alternative #3 & 4, the Town could possibly save money if at a later time we chose Alternative #1 because part of the problem would already be addressed. Also by that time grant money may have been awarded, and Alternative #1 may be a permanent fix at a lower cost to the taxpayers. Also a few years ago, several of these lots were vacant, and the excess water flowed to these empty lots without damage to the other homes.

SPECIAL TOWN COMMISSION MEETING HELD MON., SEPT. 26, 2005

Sandra Morrison, 2 Coconut Lane stated that the water that used to go the vacant lots are now going elsewhere on the street. We have more new homes that are built higher.

Mayor Kaleel asked what specific problems needed to be addressed. If the Town did nothing, are there homes flooding right now. Engineer Tropepe stated that at this time there were no homes being flooded. There is water on the properties and the roadways, but not in the homes. There are several problems to address including the middle of the block and the cul-de-sac area.

Manager Mathis stated that the alleyway behind Coconut and Ocean needs to be addressed and repaired. That area does cause some of the flooding. The alleyways are not included in these alternatives.

Terry Cudmore, 5 Coconut Lane asked that if the streets were raised, if a pump could be placed for each low level home.

Engineer Tropepe stated that to have a pumping system for all 5 lots would be more expensive than doing Alternative #1.

Comm Bingham requested the cost of regrading the swales down to the end of the street, and then use one of the town's pumps to pump out the water. Engineer Tropepe stated that Alternative #2 is the regrading of the swales. It does involve daily maintenance. It works to a degree, but not during high tides. Maybe this could be done in phases to help with the cash flow.

Mayor Kaleel requested again as to what problems are we trying to correct. The roads may flood in storms or heavy rains, but the town's priority has to be to the homes themselves. Alternative #1 puts the homes in danger of flooding.

Manager Mathis stated that the Town is in the process of clearing the alleyways. That would allow the water to flow, but it would not be a complete solution to the problem.

Beverly Ackerly, 31 Coconut Lane stated that she only had puddles and it concerned her that the Town was talking of eminent domain. Her yard floods because of other properties that were built higher. The problem of the road does not effect her house.

Mayor Kaleel assured her that eminent domain was just an alternative that was mentioned, and was not being considered at this time. He stated that he wanted to correct the problem not cause new ones. Florida roads are designed to flood. The town's responsibility is to the town homeowners and to correct what we can at a minimal level. He requested that a plan be made to come up with quickest short term solution.

Engineer Tropepe stated that a grading plan could be done for the alleyway to be cleared out.

Comm Bingham felt that clearing and grading the alleyway would fix a lot of the problem. The swales needed to be worked on also. Some of them are blocked off and not allowing the water to flow.

SPECIAL TOWN COMMISSION MEETING HELD MON., SEPT. 26, 2005

Engineer Tropepe stated that the older homes on the street need to be brought up to code. It may be necessary for them to buy fill for the yards to bring them up to the level of the alleyways. If the yards were still lower than the alleyways, the flooding would continue.

Mayor Kaleel commented that DOT may be responsible for a portion of the flooding as the water flows from AIA to Coconut Lane. There is no cash-flow for this in the budget, and the town is capped off with property taxes and the swales on Coconut Lane were not consistent. He suggested that the Town of Ocean Ridge make the homeowners responsible to maintain the condition of their swales? He proposed a consensus to include the following four items:

- 1) Grading of alleyways behind Coconut Lane.
- 2) Elevate low properties with fill or landscaping
- 3) Engineer Tropepe meet with each of the owners of the 5 low level homes and determine the specific problem involved with each property
- 4) If the owners of the 5 low level properties decide to raise their home, the town would waive permit fees or give them a tax break or incentive.

Christine Hermansen, 4 Coconut Lane requested that Alternative #3 be done. She asked that the road be shaved in the middle so that the water would flow.

Mayor Kaleel stated that the water would then flow to the west end of the street, causing the homes on the west to flood. He stated that the four items on the consensus was reasonable for the short term until a finance solution is found. He requested that the Shalloway come back with recommendations for funding and that a bond might be issued to ease the finance problems of the other drainage issues in town. Our town has other problems to address in the future, but these four items the Town could handle at the moment.

Meeting Adjourned at 10AM.

Attest By:

Town Clerk

Mayor Kaleel

Commissioner Allison

Commissioner Bingham

Commissioner Hogan

Commissioner Pugh