



Candidate Responses

2015 Meet the Candidates Night – Written Questions

1. House Size and Usage

1.1. Should house size restrictions be implemented to prevent future “mega-houses”: Yes or No? Explain your reasoning.

John C. Fletcher: I have yet to meet a resident that hopes to have 9,000 square foot rental (double lots) homes built on each side of their home. Where it is possible, within the existing statutes, I would support an ordinance that restricted home building to single 50-60 foot wide building lots using our existing ordinances to control footprint and height. If this cannot be enforced, I would support an ordinance that would limit the overall size of a structure on a double lot to 5,000 sq.ft.

Peter Freer: The size of a house only makes the possibility greater that the house will be used for mega events and lead to other ordinance violations, IE large assembly, noise, parking and fire violations. The Planning and Zoning Board is still reviewing the Rules & Regulations For The Occupancy Use In Rentals and is also investigating other proposed solutions regarding events at residential properties. We also need to investigate how or if other municipalities allow for special events to take place in residential areas. If the only viable and legal solution to the misuse of residentially zoned properties is to restrict the square footage of the house, then yes, I would support the restriction of house size.

Kim Isenhour: YES --- Qualified. The term “Mega-House” implies that the size of a house rather than its use creates a problem. By itself, the size of a house presents a problem only when it blocks views and ocean breezes or otherwise interferes with the use and enjoyment of neighboring homes. The Town has zoning and building restrictions that establish set-back lines, foot print size and, of course, the maximum height. Given these restrictions, it is generally impossible to build a very large house (greater than 5,000 square feet of enclosed space) on most normal lots in the R1 and R2 zoned Residential Districts. There may be an exception on particularly deeper lots in the west end and east end communities, but they have their own architectural restrictions. To build a very large house on most lots, you would need to combine two adjacent lots. It is my understanding that legally the Town has very little ability to prevent the combination of adjacent lots. It is also my understanding that under North Carolina law the Town cannot impose restrictions on the number of bedrooms, that although the Town might legally impose square foot or cubic restrictions, these would be very complicated to enforce. All four the members of the Preserve Our Family Beach team of candidates would support exploring a restriction on the width dimension of houses that would block ocean and marsh view or ocean breezes of other houses --- much like the height restriction protects those views. This, however, has nothing to do with the very serious problems presented by Party Houses and houses operated as commercial event venues and mini-hotels.

Kenneth Kyser: No Let me begin by saying that I am not in favor of the huge house at the West end. I know that this is the big issue but it doesn't have to be. I know that the home owners association asked for a moratorium and a rule passed that would limit the building size to 5000 sq. ft. As a board member I am sworn to uphold the laws and regulations of the state and declaring a moratorium would have violated these laws and regulations which would open the town up for law suits and violate my oath of office which I am not willing to do. Limiting the house size to 5000 sq. ft. would mean that all houses over that size would become nonconforming. This now means that they would not be able to remodel or upgrade their house and this would decrease their property value. This would also decrease the lot

2015 Meet the Candidates Night – Written Questions

value for any lot that could have qualified for a house greater than 5000 sq. ft. Since the 5000 sq. ft. is an arbitrary number (per the town attorney) we could expect to be sued. Law suits cost money and our insurance would most likely not cover them thus costing the town a good deal of money. Think about it. If property owners in the 50's and 60's had looked at the 2 story, 2000 sq. ft. plus homes that most of us live in now and said, "I don't like them; lets ban them." The board might have acted on it and most of us would live somewhere else today! But it is **not** the size of these houses that is the real issue, it is how they are used. We need to stop acting in a panic and use our heads to come up with an Island wide solution that is legal and makes sense. In acting in a panic all we do is waste time and increase anxiety.

Regina Martin: I do not feel that "mega houses" are an issue of concern for the Island as a whole. I had thought the West End Phase I and II POAs had resolved their issues by adding more restrictions to their sub-division covenants which they can do. If you choose to live in a gated community you live under the established POA rules. Many of us choose to live and build our homes on the unrestricted portion of the Island. Since I am still unclear as to what constitutes a "mega house". My neighbors house maybe twice as large as mine and I might deem it "mega" but I do acknowledge his right to use his property as he sees fit as long as he meets the State and local building laws and requirements. A recent North Carolina new law known as Senate Bill 25 was signed into Law in June of this year. Its purpose was to clarify when a county or municipality may enact zoning ordinances related to design and aesthetic controls. It prevents governments from regulating many elements of design, including the number of rooms and their use within a structure.

Sandy Miller: No The house size is not the issue. The way it is being used is the real issue.

H. Ashley Royal: From my understanding of current policy, the bigger issue is there are no restrictions on the purchase of multiple adjoining lots and building a structure on the permitted footprint of the combined lots. In my view, this is a vulnerability to existing homes in neighborhoods with vacant lots in that the nature and appearance of the community could be adversely impacted, and could potentially negatively impact the value of the existing homes. Additionally, I see opportunities to develop or update land use plans that better define the planning and zoning logic for the island. From my recent observations, the Planning and Zoning Board has faced challenges with reviewing the merits of rezoning requests due to outdated zoning documentation; particularly with respect to rezoning from conservation to residential. With respect to "mega-houses", see response to 1.2

1.2. Should house usage restrictions be implemented to prevent future "event venues": Yes or No? Explain your reasoning.

John C. Fletcher: YES! I suspect the original housing permits and usage restrictions on R-1 property exist now to prevent the use of rental houses for assembly purposes or as special event venues. Our Planning and Zoning Committee is studying this issue. If our current ordinances do not prevent the misuse of the rental homes, we should pass ordinances that do. We are and want to remain a safe and quiet Family Beach, not a Large Party Beach.

2015 Meet the Candidates Night – Written Questions

Peter Freer: My understanding is there are usage restrictions already in place for residential zoned properties, IE Assembly Occupancy. Yes, I support additional restrictions to the mega event venues that would restrict the number of events and manage these large events at residential properties. The management elements of the ordinance should address the issues of noise, parking, fire safety and security.

Kim Isenhour: YES. I certainly do not have anything against weddings, parties or family celebrations. The four members of the Preserve Our Family Beach believe that everyone should get to enjoy their home anyway they want --- just as long as they don't interfere with their neighbors' enjoyment of their homes. What we have a problem with is a few businesses operating commercial in R1 and R2 zoned residential districts by party houses and event venues on a regular basis. For example, one very large house was rented 16 times for 50+ person (many over 100 person) parties during the four month fall and spring shoulder seasons of 2014-2015 --- almost one large, catered event per week. The Town's existing ordinances prohibit all commercial activity in R1 and R2 neighborhoods, with the limited exception of rental as a family vacation rent home. The owners of these commercial event venue businesses are trying to broaden that narrow exception beyond all common sense. The Town's ordinances and North Carolina law also prohibit the "assembly use" of structures that have been permitted as residences. As reported by the Building Inspector at the last BOC meeting, the Town has already issued a warning to one property owner related to the assembly use and commercial use of a property that was permitted as a single-family residence in a residential zoning district. We think this is a good start, but as the Building Inspector noted the ordinances lack specificity. All four of the members of the Preserve Our Family Beach would support exploring a change to the Town's ordinance making it clearer what is meant by the "vacation home rental exception."

Kenneth Kyser: Yes In my opinion, the problem with that house and maybe 1 other is the way that they are being used. That really is what is bringing in the complaints [noise/parking/others]. So instead of attacking the size I think what we need to address is the use and get it to the point that it is used for the primary purpose that it was **built for** which was **family rental** not for continuous parties/weddings/reunions [assemblies]. In addressing this issue for the whole island we protect everyone. We can set a number where the usage moves from family rental to assembly rental which these homes are not zoned for. We cannot stop any house from the occasional assembly [2 to 3 time per year] but we can set a number where the usage moves from family rental to assembly rental. This doesn't mean that there couldn't be an occasional party but it would not be every week. This limiting of assemblies would take away the financial reason to build these huge houses in the future.

Regina Martin: No Not in favor of restriction on personal property usage. In a Coastal community such as ours it is a balancing act between bringing tourist to our community and learning to co exist with those that make our living here very affordable. Our low tax rate is due to our local industry which is Tourism. Much of what we have here on the Island is afforded us those Tourism dollars. We should be cautious in limiting what owners can and cannot do with their property. For the 53 years that my family has owned property here there has not been an issue regarding "events" Families which I do strongly support come here year after year to celebrate there achievements as a family be it a birth, a wedding or a family reunion. Does it matter if they rent one house or 10 houses? Whatever is being celebrated

2015 Meet the Candidates Night – Written Questions

will be a Family Affair and what better place to do that than at one of the Best FAMILY Beaches in the US. Point being this has worked here for years, the tourism authority supports events, our fellow Island on either side of us encourage events. And I feel sure our neighbors would be happy to have our business.

Sandy Miller: No. Those structures that are deemed as “assembly “ have their own rules .

H. Ashley Royal: Not necessarily. If existing regulations contain sufficient definition of permitted activities for residential dwellings, then the issue becomes enforcement. If not, I would support developing new or more specific regulations that are enforceable, and I would expect consistent enforcement in order to preserve and protect the quality of life in the neighborhood.

1.3. Should houses with three stories of living space be allowed to be built in the future: Yes or No? Explain your reasoning.

John C. Fletcher: Yes! So long as a structure complies with our existing height and footprint restrictions, a third floor allows the family more room to enjoy their property and should increase its value.

Peter Freer: Yes, three stories should be allowed. The current height limit is sufficient to protect property values and our Family Beach.

Kim Isenhour: YES --- Qualified. As stated in response to Question 1.1, I do not think that size restrictions are the answer to the commercial party house and event venue problem. Moreover, I understand that North Carolina law would not permit the Town to restrict the number of stories, as opposed to restricting footprint, height, etc. The four the members of the Preserve Our Family Beach team of candidates believe that the recently adopted revision to the Town’s overall height limit for buildings is sufficient to preserve the “no-high rise” character of Holden Beach and the homeowners should be free to design the inside of their house as they see fit within current building code restrictions.

Kenneth Kyser: Yes Over the years there have been three story homes built that were allowed because of the way that the height was measured. We still have the height restriction. The new rules that were implemented actually reduced the number of three story homes that can be built. I don’t believe that we could legally restrict them as long as they meet the height requirement.

Regina Martin: If a structure meet our current building code then it should be allowed. There are a number of 3 story homes on the East end of the Island that have been there for years. When the way we measure structures was changed earlier this year it afforded in some areas the possibility of 3 floors of living space. By adding 2 feet of free board it also helped homeowners to get cheaper insurance rates. I support this change as a way for homeowners to get cheaper insurance.

Sandy Miller: Yes. The number of living spaces is not an issue. As long as the house meets the building code, this is legal.

H. Ashley Royal: Yes, if the houses conform to the existing height and footprint limitations.

2. Beach Nourishment

- 2.1. The draft EIS estimates the cost of the preferred option for a Terminal Groin at \$34.41M. Are you in favor of the Terminal Groin: Yes or No? Explain your reasoning. How should it be funded? Are you willing to increase taxes to pay for it?**

John C. Fletcher: Yes! The terminal Groin is projected to cost \$34.41 million over a 30 year period. However, the cost savings and beach protection benefits are valued at in excess of \$40 million. The preferred alternative appears to be a cost effective way to protect our beach strand. I would be in favor of including it in our Master Beach Management Plan (updated in 2009). The Terminal Groin Project would be financed with a Bond Issue to be repaid over a 20-30 year period. I would expect our Town Management to investigate all possible other sources of financial support (local, state and federal) and possible cost reductions in current operating expenses before considering any tax increase.

Peter Freer: The Terminal Groin project needs to be evaluated as part of the Town's comprehensive beach management Plan (my understanding is the current plan is "Holden Beach 2009 Beach Management Plan"). I would be in favor if the Terminal Groin if confirmed to be a priority and a cost effective way to deliver on the goal to optimize the groin benefits with reduction of both annual maintenance costs and future beach nourishment costs. I am not in agreement to increase taxes to pay for it. If needed, I would favor a long term Bond to finance it.

Kim Isenhour: NOT UNTIL WE HAVE MORE INFORMATION. If the Terminal Groin works as hoped (and, as the experts remind us, projecting ocean currents is not an exact science), the Terminal Groin will prevent erosion along the ½ mile at the East End --- eliminating the need for "beach nourishment" over the 30 – 50 year expected life of the groin. Of course, there will be on-going cost for maintenance of the groin and monitoring. The Terminal Groin will not eliminate the need for continuing beach nourishment in the Central Reach --- we will still have to address the Central Reach regardless of whether or not we build the Terminal Groin. The Central Reach project is a priority because the Island is vulnerable to literally being cut-in half by a hurricane. **In short, the Central Reach Project with an estimated cost of about \$15 million is designed to put about 1 million cubic yards of sand on the Central Reach and restore about 10 years of erosion.** Obviously, this is not a permanent fix and we will have to do a Central Reach Project every 10-15 years. By contrast, the Terminal Groin Project is \$34 million today to protect the ½ mile East End Beach for 30-50 years. The most important thing is to recognize that we cannot make a decision about the Terminal Groin Project on a stand-alone basis. We need to make a comprehensive long-term plan for beach nourishment FOR THE WHOLE ISLAND not just ½ mile of a 9 mile strand. If we commit \$34 million of the Town's borrowing capacity to building the Terminal Groin, will we be able to fund beach nourishment for the 4 ½ mile Central Reach?

Kenneth Kyser: Yes I am in favor of the terminal groin. It will cost around \$2M. to build and another half to a million to backfill with sand. Once this is done in reality the only money that it will cost is to do the monitoring which we already are doing and paying for as part of our engineered beach. It will be paid for by part B money.

2015 Meet the Candidates Night – Written Questions

Regina Martin: Since, there is much more work, many more hoops and studies to be done in the months to come I am neither for or against a Terminal Groin at this point in time. I would like to clarify the cost of the option that seems to be most appropriate at this point in time. While the cost is stated as \$34.41M that is over a 30 year time frame. The initial cost would be around \$2M. Weighing the cost of constant re nourishment projects against the cost of the Groin, if it is found to be a viable option would in the long run be very cost effective. The Town currently has a consultant that deals in large projects looking in to various funding sources for the Groin and the Central Reach project. I do not believe an increase in taxes would be the answer for a project or projects of this magnitude.

Sandy Miller: Yes. I do favor a terminal groin. I believe the estimate for a Terminal Groin is too high. Therefore there should be some money already set aside to complete it.

H. Ashley Royal: From my review of the Terminal Groin studies, I am in favor of including it in a comprehensive plan to protect and replenish the beach. With respect to financing, I am impressed with the Town's past initiatives of cost-sharing with county, state and federal agencies for important improvements. I would support continued cost-sharing, and financing, as necessary, with the issuance of a Bond. I would only support a tax increase as a last resort; and only after all other options such as prioritizing, delaying, or cancelling other less important initiatives.

2.2. The Town Manager has estimated the cost for the Central Reach Project at \$15M. Are you in favor of the Central Reach Project: Yes or No? Explain your reasoning. How should it be funded? Are you willing to increase taxes to pay for it?

John C. Fletcher: Yes! While this is not my first priority, like the Terminal Groin Project, it is high on the list. The Central Reach Project is designed to protect a large portion of our beach strand which is at the heart of the Town's value as a residence and rental location. The last such project protected the strand for some 13 years and the strand appears to be in better condition than it was at the time of the last major re-nourishment project. This project would be funded with a 20-30 year bond. I would look carefully for operating expense reduction and revenue enhancements as well as support from state and federal agencies before considering any tax increase to pay for the project.

Peter Freer: Yes, I am in favor of the Central Reach Project. The 2014 Annual Beach Monitoring Report states the Hurricane Irene mitigation FEMA aid dove-tailing with the Central Reach project, would represent the most cost-efficient approach for beach nourishment and management. I am not willing to increase taxes to pay for it. I favor a long term Bond to finance it.

Kim Isenhour: YES --- See answer to Question 2.1. The Central Reach Project will cost about \$15 million. The Town does not have \$15 million in the bank, and no one is likely to give us \$15 million, so it would be irresponsible to suggest that I am for the Central Reach Project without acknowledging that some existing tax must be raised or some new tax or assessment must be imposed to pay for it.

2015 Meet the Candidates Night – Written Questions

Kenneth Kyser: Yes, at this point and time. I can only be sure once all the facts are known and it comes up for a vote. If it makes sense at the time then yes if not then no. The funding for the 50 year project is never going to come so if we are to maintain our beach it is going to be up to us to do it. The town has hired a financial consultant that is going to make recommendations on the best ways to finance the project, so at this time “the how” has not been determined. If we want to add sand and protect our island it may require a tax increase, I am hoping that the majority if not all of it will come from the part B fund.

Regina Martin: We do have a permit in hand for the Central Reach Project and I am in favor of this project. The beach drives our economy. We must work very hard to preserve our beautiful beach for generations to come. As in the previous question I will state we have a consulting firm look at funding sources. Until I can see and review this information I would be unable to state a funding source. It is possible that it could be a combination of several sources. Do not see a tax increase as a source.

Sandy Miller: Yes. It should be funded with BPART funds.

H. Ashley Royal: Yes. The Central Reach Project is designed to protect a major portion of our beach strand, and should be included in a comprehensive plan along with the Terminal Groin. As stated earlier, I would support cost-sharing opportunities, and financing, as necessary, with the issuance of a Bond. I would only support a tax increase as a last resort.

2.3. In your opinion, which project is more important: Terminal Groin or Central Reach? Explain your reasoning. How will funding either of these projects impact the ability to fund other projects?

John C. Fletcher: As discussed above, both projects are important for the long-term health of the Island. They both focus on maintaining our beach strand. The Central Reach Project is much less expensive and has effect on a much greater portion of the Island than the Terminal Groin project. I would like to see both projects implemented. If limited to a single project I would prefer the Central Reach Project. As a beach-front homeowner, I would hope both projects can be financed with minimal impact on property taxes. Either or both of the projects would have a significant impact on the ability to fund other projects.

Peter Freer: The Central Reach Project is more important as I referenced above, the 2014 Annual Beach Monitoring Report states the “Hurricane Irene mitigation FEMA aid dovetailing with the Central Reach project and would represent the most cost-efficient approach”. Either or both of these projects will likely impact the ability to fund other projects.

Kim Isenhour: Obviously, each Project will require bond financing and that will impact the Town’s ability to issue bonds for other projects, including (but not limited to) the Terminal Groin and Central Reach. That is why the four the members of the Preserve Our Family Beach team of candidates have said that it would be irresponsible to go forward with any of these projects until we have developed a comprehensive long-term plan for beach nourishment and the protection of Our Family Beach. We cannot blow the

2015 Meet the Candidates Night – Written Questions

Town's borrowing ability and tax base on one project just because it is the first one to come up. The Board of Commissioners needs to look at all of the alternatives and establish priorities --- that is just common sense and responsible fiscal management.

Kenneth Kyser: Both projects are equally important for different reasons. The terminal groin would keep us from having to continuously put sand on the East end and in the long run pretty much pay for it self and allow us to put that sand on other areas of the beach thus helping the entire island. The central reach project will provide sand over much of the center of the island providing more protection. The funding of these should not affect other projects that come up since the funding for these projects will most likely come entirely from part B money.

Regina Martin: Both projects are of equal importance as they provide sand and protection for different portions of the beach. I would not see funding of one or both of these projects as effecting our ability to fund other projects that might be needed by the Town of Holden Beach.

Sandy Miller: Both are equally important to the Island.

H. Ashley Royal: From the perspective of the entire beachfront, I support both projects. Terminal Groin savings in future sand placement needs on the east end could offset some future Central Reach costs. The timing of implementing both projects would need to be factored into the financing strategy, as well as consideration of impact on other projects. My experience in the private sector is that, in reality, rarely can all needs be addressed within the same timeframe; some are deferred and some are cancelled.

3. Finance and Budget

3.1. What percentage of BPART funds should be spent on: 1) beach nourishment; 2) promoting tourism; 3) programs that primarily benefit property owners and renters; 4) programs that primarily benefit "day visitors" from off the island (i.e., visitors who don't spend the night here)?

John C. Fletcher: BPART funds should be spent primarily on beach re-nourishment (75%). Beach strand health is at the core of the value of the Island. Tourism expenditures should be very focused and their benefits should be measured carefully (3%). We are already recognized as one of the top Family Beaches in America. Most of our rentals are to families that have been coming here on vacation for many years. Preserving our current Family Beach culture can sustain this loyalty to our owners who rent their homes. Programs that primarily benefit property owners and renters (20%). Programs that benefit "day visitors" who pay nothing to sustain the benefits they receive should be limited (2%).

Peter Freer: At this time I believe BPART funds should be spent principally on beach re-nourishment (approx. 70%) and programs that benefit property owners and renters (approx. 25%). The remaining 5% of the BPART funds should be used for tourism and programs that benefit "day visitors" from off the

2015 Meet the Candidates Night – Written Questions

island. But I would welcome community input to determine if these are the correct allocations or are there other needs not being addressed.

Kim Isehour: A portion of occupancy tax revenues should continue to support our community services, such as police, fire and emergency. Our community has a small permanent population during the “off season,” but needs a much larger community service to handle the greatly increased populations during the “season.” Currently, the Town earmarks about \$600,000 per year for “beach nourishment.” According to the Town’s recent beach survey, we need to be adding an average of about 100,000 cubic yards of sand to the Central Reach per year to maintain a stable strand and frontal dune. At an average cost of about \$10 per cubic yard, that represents a cost of about \$1 million per year, which represents about 67% (as opposed to the current 40%) of the Town’s annual occupancy tax revenue. It makes sense to do multiyear projects rather than adding smaller amounts of sand each year. To do that, the Town would need to issue bonds that would be amortized from future tax revenues. There is no free lunch. The Town’s budget must balance each year. If we increase the B Part funding for beach nourishment, we will need to replace that revenue by cutting expenses somewhere else or raising taxes. My biggest concern is that if the members of the Board of Commissioners do not earn the confidence of homeowners and residents by acting as fiscally responsible representatives, when the time comes to make critical decisions about the cost and borrowing requirements for thing like the Central Reach the BOC will not have the credibility necessary to get the job done.

Kenneth Kyser: Most of the part B money that is collected goes toward the beach. Next would be town expenses that are primarily for renters. A small amount goes to promoting tourism with very little if any going toward day trippers.

Regina Martin: First let me explain “BPART” legislation. S.L. 1997-364/House Bill 859 Authorizes Brunswick County to Levy a Room Occupancy and Tourism Development Tax it further authorizes certain Municipalities in Brunswick County to levy or increase local occupancy taxes. Under this law in Section 9a Holden Beach Town Council chose to levy a tax of 3%. In addition to the tax authorized by subsection 9a the Town also authorized a 2% tax that is to be used for Beach renourishment and protection only. So we have in the BPART monies all of which must be used as follows: 3% must be used for tourist related expenses such as criminal justice system, fire protection, public facilities and utilities, health facilities, solid waste and sewage and he control and repair of waterfront erosion. The 2% must be used for beach renourishment. Question 1 all of the 2% must be used for renourishment. 2 all of the the 3% must be used to promote tourism. 3 as a result of living in a resort community residents benefit greatly from the occupancy tax revenue just because its use to promote tourism enhances our life and keeps our taxes low. 4 I believe NC law would define a day visitor as a “tourist”.

Sandy Miller: Most of BPART funds should go to nourish the beach. A smaller portion to programs for property owners and renters.

H. Ashley Royal: I would want public input on this matter to see if there are other categories that are not listed here. I would support disbursement of BPART funds as follows: 1) beach nourishment, 70% 2) programs benefitting property owners and renters, 20% 3) programs for day visitors 8% and 4)

2015 Meet the Candidates Night – Written Questions

promoting tourism 2%. My view is that a significant portion should be reserved for beach nourishment initiatives and infrastructure maintenance such as water/sewer, streets, and sidewalks. I do not view programs promoting tourism as important due to current rental occupancy trends and cost-effective use of social media outlets such as Friends of Holden Beach and the Holden Beach Town Hall website.

3.2. Is the risk associated with the sewer system acceptable: Yes or No? Explain your reasoning.

John C. Fletcher: No! The risk to the pumping stations is currently unacceptable. For me, this is our highest priority for capital expenditure. It may cost \$300,000 or more to re-engineer the pumps and power panels. If the Pumping Stations are damaged by an over-wash from a storm surge of a little as 8 feet, the west half of the Island would be effectively uninhabitable until repairs are completed. It is projected to take as long as two months to complete the repairs. During this time, homes may not be legally occupied. This is not an acceptable risk for residents or rental units. This project should be on the critical repair list. Until they are re-engineered/repared, we are at severe risk of any storm closer or more powerful than Hurricane Joaquin.

Peter Freer: No, the risk associated with the sewer system is not acceptable. If the Pumping Stations become damaged from a storm event, my understanding is the Island would effectively be uninhabitable until repairs were made. Resolving this issue should be a top priority.

Kim Isenhour: NO. Our sewer lift station are vulnerable to a long-term (two month) shutdown in the event of a moderate storm surge from a hurricane. An over wash could flood the pumps requiring them to be shut down. To put this in perspective, the storm surge over the past weeks related to Joaquin reached the top of the bulkheads behind two of the stations --- even another foot might have flooded the pumps. Shutting down the flood pumps means there is no sanitary sewer and the island must be evacuated until the pumps can be checked and put on line. That process would take only a day or two after the flooding subsides. The more serious problem is the possibility of a greater storm surge --- say 4' to 6' more than we experience with Joaquin. That is a storm surge that is not well within the realm of possibility in a hurricane. If the saltwater reaches the electrical panels and controls for the pumps they could be damaged or destroyed. **Getting replacement parts and repairing these panels and controls could take two months and under state health and safety laws, the island would have to remain evacuated.** Elevating the controls and panels like we all elevate our houses, building berms around the lift stations to keep out flood waters and working with other communities to warehouse emergency spare parts are options the BOC should consider to solve this problem. The only estimate we have heard to date was more of a "guess" --- \$100,000 to \$150,000 for each lift station. That is a critical expenditure that must be met.

Kenneth Kyser: No The town put money in this years budget to get engineering to look at the sewer lift stations and come up with low cost solutions that can reduce the risk to an acceptable level.

Regina Martin: We have been monitoring the sewer system for sometime. The good news is we survived the huge rainfall of several weeks ago. As far as if the risk is acceptable probably not but we

2015 Meet the Candidates Night – Written Questions

can not undo a poor design. We have been able to work with what we have thus far without major issues.

Sandy Miller: Yes. The sewer system will be shut off during an evacuation.

H. Ashley Royal: No. We were fortunate that during the past month we did not experience higher flood levels. The sewer system pumping stations are a significant threat to the community due to the vulnerability of non-hardened electrical panels that if flooded would likely require months to repair or replace, rendering the affected areas uninhabitable. From a risk perspective, the pumping station electrical power supply is a single-point vulnerability that must be eliminated through raising the panel elevation or hardening the electrical panels.

3.3. Do we have adequate reserves: Yes or No? Explain your reasoning.

John C. Fletcher: Probably not! The risks that we face in the event of a major storm and the need to maintain our infrastructure warrant a fund in excess of \$5 million.

Peter Freer: My inclination is to answer no; the current \$5 million reserve is not adequate due to the exposures we face if a major storm hits. But I would like to understand how the current reserves compare to municipal budget best practices for beach towns and determining if we have adequate reserves should be a focus of the Audit Committee.

Kim Isenhour: NO. The town is required to maintain a few months reserve over and above the operating budget. If this is all the extra we have in our budget, then there is no way to be prepared for fixing the sewer system, not to mention any other issues that may arise in the event of a storm. Recently the town manager, David Hewett, recommended that the reserve amount be increased and we agree with this assessment. It is simple fiscal responsibility to maintain an adequate reserve.

Kenneth Kyser: Our reserves meet the requirements of the state and have been slowly increasing which is good but are well below what other towns have for reserves. Personally I would feel better if our reserves were higher but it would take a tax increase to increase them.

Regina Martin: Per NC requirements and our last audit, we have adequate reserves. Would I like to see us have more yes.

Sandy Miller: Yes. The Town Manager always gives us an excellent presentation during budget meetings.

H. Ashley Royal: I am not qualified to answer at this time. My thinking is that the \$5 million reserve should be weighed against other sources of funding for natural disaster recovery such as County, State, and Federal remedies and exploring insurance costs to assist the town in recovery expenses.

3.4. What areas of the budget need to be changed/adjusted in the future?

John C. Fletcher: The budget areas that concern me most are the protection of the pumping stations and the health of the beach strand. I would also propose an independent study to ensure the Town Staff's salaries and benefits are equal or greater than those for similar jobs in our local region. It would be better if the budget process begins earlier in the year and that owners be more involved in the discussions of the proposed budget.

Peter Freer: The budget process also needs to be more transparent and timely. There was apparently little community involvement in the last budget process and we need to ensure that this is resolved. Priorities for the budget should be clear and communicated early enough to promote dialogue. The budget then needs to be addressed as a whole where priorities are selected against the available revenues.

Kim Isenhour: Obviously, beach nourishment and sewer system protection is a huge funding issue that must be addressed comprehensively before we can deal with our budget issues responsibly. These are direct threats to the island, our homes and livelihoods and need to be addressed now. First, the four members of the Preserve Our Family Beach team believe that the Town's current budgeting process needs improvement. Budgeting should be a year-round process; not something we focus on at the end of one fiscal year when law requires the budget for the next fiscal year. Obviously, the Town's managers do focus year-round, but the BOC needs to be much more involved and give its input when that input can actually make a difference. We believe that the BOC should begin a thorough budget analysis and review starting in January. Second, we think that the Town needs to take much more advantage of the expertise that resides not only on the BOC but among the Town's homeowners and residents, many of whom are retired from significant "real world jobs in things like accounting, marketing, IT, engineering, law and law enforcement, construction etc.) We should be tapping that base of knowledge and creativity to rethink and improve how the Town does business. Finally, the four members of the Preserve Our Family Beach team are committed to the idea that the Town should be looking first to how we save money rather than relying on an expanding tax base or tax increases.

Kenneth Kyser: At this point I think that it is a good budget but as with any budget it is somewhat fluid and changes as the need arises.

Regina Martin: I was pleased with the budget presented this year. Not knowing what needs might be in the future it would be hard to suggest areas of change or adjustment.

Sandy Miller: None at this time

H. Ashley Royal: I would want public input on this matter. Some citizens have voiced a concern for increased police patrols and for better compensation of the town's maintenance personnel. The budget areas I see that warrant review are funds for the protection of the pumping stations and beach nourishment initiatives. I would propose a budget process that begins earlier in the year, providing more time for citizen input and comment. I also would expect a budget control process centered on a

2015 Meet the Candidates Night – Written Questions

detailed presentation of the budget line items with justification for each, including contingency measures for reductions in line items to cover unanticipated costs or cost overruns.

3.5. What is your position on the need for an Audit Committee?

John C. Fletcher: An Audit Committee is recommended by our external auditors. It is imperative that an independent Audit Committee provide active oversight to ensure our operating and financial controls at Town Hall are adequate and that our funds are being spent as anticipated by the Board of Commissioners.

Peter Freer: An Audit Committee is definitely needed. This will provide protection to the town's employees and taxpayers.

Kim Isenhour: This is just good business practice and common sense. The most important job of the Board of Commissioners is to review, modify and approve the Town's Annual Budget, but approving the budget doesn't mean much if the BOC does not keep track of the budget on a month-to-month basis. This is hard and detailed work, but if we don't do it, then the BOC is failing in its oversight responsibility. It is the Town Manager's job to manage the Town, but it is the BOC's job to provide oversight.

Kenneth Kyser: I do not feel that one is needed. We are required by law to hire an independent auditor who comes in and using our records audits the towns finances. They insure that we are meeting the requirements of the state auditors office. That audit is then reviewed by the state and if they or the independent auditor find any issues they are corrected. So we have an audit and then a state review of our audit by qualified auditors. The audit committee did not review the town books and records all they did was review the audit report that was already reviewed by the state auditors office by qualified auditors. I see it as redundant and not required. The audit is a public record and can be reviewed by anyone and if they have questions or concerns they can be asked at a board meeting.

Regina Martin: I do not see a need for an Audit Committee. As we meet the requirement of the Secretary of the State. Most municipalities across the state have done away with audit committees.

Sandy Miller: I feel that it is redundant and not needed.

H. Ashley Royal: An independent Audit Committee should be implemented to oversee and certify that our operating and financial controls are sufficient, and that our funds are spent as anticipated by the Board of Commissioners.

4. Town Ordinances

4.1. Is a new noise ordinance needed: Yes or No? Explain your reasoning.

John C. Fletcher: Yes! When residents and/or renters are disturbed by excessive loud noise, it is imperative that our Police be in a position to easily correct the situation. I would propose we invite the

2015 Meet the Candidates Night – Written Questions

Brunswick County spokesman to brief us on the costs and benefits of implementing the new County ordinance. It is likely that we can tailor the Brunswick County ordinance to our specific needs. That ordinance utilizes sound meters which are inexpensive and easily employed by the Police Officers.

Peter Freer: Yes, the police need this tool to preserve our family beach culture and brand. We need a clear and enforceable noise ordinance. The Brunswick County ordinance may not be an exact fit, but we should adopt the parts of the county ordinance that makes sense for us.

Kim Isehour: YES --- In response to the recent HBPOA Survey, 66% of Holden Beach homeowners said the Town needs a new Noise Ordinance. The four candidates on the Preserve Our Family Beach team AGREE. All of the Preserve Our Family Beach candidates are committed to adopting an "Objective" noise ordinance for the Holden Beach neighborhood that are zoned "residential." At the Board of Commissioners meeting last month the Police Chief read the Town's current, very brief and completely "Subjective" noise ordinance that prohibits "excessive noise," but leaves it entirely to the discretion of the Police Officer responding to a neighbor noise complaint what constitutes "excessive noise." Residents and Visitors have both complained that the Police simply don't respond to excessive noise complaint or arrive only to tell neighbors that there is nothing they can do. The Town's Attorney has said that the current noise ordinance is so vague that is "probably not legally enforceable." We support a modern noise ordinance like the one unanimously adopted by Brunswick County last April at the strong recommendation of the Sherriff after a year of study. Modern ordinances like Brunswick County's are "Objective;" that is, they replace the Police Officers discretionary feel about what is excessive noise with objective standards based on measured decibel levels or the established legal standard of plainly audible from the street or neighboring properties. This is better for the neighbors --- there is a bright line test, and it is better for the Police Officer, because they just enforcing a rule and are not the spoil sport shutting-off the music. Effective enforcement would require two handheld decibel meters and an acoustic calibrator for the meters that meet a national technical standard adopted in the Brunswick ordinance. Two meters and a calibrator can be purchased for about \$1000 and community minded homeowners have already stepped forward to pick-up the tab for the meters and the training required for officers.

Kenneth Kyser: Yes. I suggested that this ordinance be reviewed at our March meeting but at that time did not get the support needed to make it happen. It is now in P&Z for review and I hope that they bring us a useful product that makes sense.

Regina Martin: I would support an improved noise ordinance if it were designed for a resort community.

Sandy Miller: Yes. Planning and zoning is looking at this now. BOC will make that judgement when P&Z reports their findings.

H. Ashley Royal: Yes. My experience is that the existing noise ordinance is too subjective to be consistently and fairly enforced. Adoption of a noise ordinance based on the use of decibel meters would provide our police officers with a method that is objective, verifiable, and less vulnerable to litigation if contested by offenders. The noise ordinance enacted by Brunswick County uses decibel meters, and should be tailored to meet the needs of Holden Beach.

4.2. Are other changes needed to Town ordinances and/or their enforcement?

John C. Fletcher: The Town has a number of ordinances which are important for beach safety. Examples include requiring all dogs to be on a leash when on the strand, structures are not to be left on the strand overnight (risking our EMS, Police, Service staff and Turtle Patrol ATV riders), large and deep holes (a danger to beach walkers and bicyclists as well as ATV riders) are not to be left unattended through the night for days on end. It is important that these ordinances be strictly enforced and that dangerous conditions be corrected as soon as they are observed by the Police or Town Staff.

Peter Freer: There are several current ordinances that reportedly are not being consistently enforced such as unleashed dogs on the beach, structures left overnight and large holes left overnight. We need to make certain that the community has confidence that these and other ordinances are being consistently enforced so as not to diminish the family beach environment that we all cherish. Not enforcing these ordinances may also result in accidents that could expose the town to legal jeopardy.

Kim Isenhour: Our primary goal should first be to make sure that the ordinances continue to support our island as a Family Beach. The noise ordinance and an ordinance that directly deals with the party house problem will help to maintain Holden Beach as a wonderful place to live and vacation.

Kenneth Kyser: I think that we need to go after a zoning ordinance change to put the assembly issue to bed and I feel that we need to enforce our hole, dog, cabana ordinance on the beach. I also feel that we need to enforce the no parking on the sidewalk ordinance.

Regina Martin: We have over the past 2 years updated several of our ordinances and currently other than noise I found no need. As far as enforcement I believe our police department does a great job. In order to enforce someone has to complain. With an every changing population it is all about education, education education. Our visitor come from many different place with different rules and laws. I am not sure anyone not involved in law enforcement could understand how different it is in a resort community with a revolving population vs a town with the same residents week after week.

Sandy Miller: No. Not at this time.

H. Ashley Royal: I expect us to have clearly defined, objective ordinances that are consistently enforced. If an ordinance is not clearly defined, I would expect it to be revised accordingly and enforced, or eliminated as appropriate. From my observations and discussions, patrols on the beach to enforce filling in large holes and removal of structures are two areas where enforcement needs improvement.

5. The Future of Holden Beach

5.1. What are the issues and goals that top your agenda if elected as Commissioner?

John C. Fletcher: My goals would include: ensuring our pumping stations are secured and that our beach strand is protected, installing an independent and qualified Audit Committee, protecting the welfare and safety of residents and renters, ensuring that the Town Staff are fairly compensated for their services, and providing pedestrian safety when attempting to cross OBW/OBE. The current driver disregard for pedestrian safety is unacceptable. I would also hope to see the installation of a Committee to monitor beach re-nourishment projects. Staffed properly, these two committees could be of valuable support to our Board of Commissioners, to Town Management and to our owners.

Peter Freer: My top goals are making sure the board of commissioners are responsive to the community and ensure the lifestyle and brand of The Family Beach is preserved. It's imperative to quickly act on critical issues like protecting the Pumping Stations and that beach nourishment is addressed as a comprehensive plan. Also, the quality of life issues such as mega events and ordinance enforcement need to be top priorities. Fiscal responsibility by adding an Audit Committee is also needed and will be a top goal.

Kim Isenhour: The goals at the top of my agenda are based on a personal desire to create a wonderful place to raise my children. My husband and I decided to move our family to Holden Beach because we felt that the words "America's Family Beach" were more than just a marketing slogan. In order to maintain the social and environmental quality of this island, there are a few major issues that Commissioners must face in the very near future. Holden Beach needs a similar noise ordinance to the one recently adopted by Brunswick County with objective standards based on measured decibel levels. Because noise often arises from homes that are functioning as a commercial business in a zoned residential neighborhood, it will be important to examine the use of single family homes as event venues. Beach nourishment is vital for the entire island of Holden Beach and must involve a long-term plan which fiscally examines both the Terminal Groin and the Central Reach Project. Finally, of immediate concern is the vulnerable nature of the sewer lift stations. If we have a storm surge, evacuation of the island and the costly repair of electrical panels and pumps could take months. Protecting Holden Beach as "America's Best Family Beach" will entail the development of a strong noise ordinance, the restriction on assembly use of homes in a residential zoned district for a commercial purpose and the development of a comprehensive long-term plan for beach nourishment. As commissioner, I want to improve communication and solicit input from homeowners and business owners. In order to tackle the issues Holden Beach faces, financial priorities must be placed to protect the island from direct storm and general erosion threats. Budgeting should be a year-round process which protects the taxpayer resources.

Kenneth Kyser: Addressing the mega house issue and noise issue. Coming up with long term low cost solutions to the lift station issues. Addressing the East end issues along with the Central Reach Project. Doing additional testing on the water system to ensure we plan for the future.

2015 Meet the Candidates Night – Written Questions

Regina Martin: Getting and keeping sand on the Beach. Promoting tourism and economic development. Keeping our tax rate low. It would be my goal to see us have a new noise ordinances by next rental season. It would also be my goal to put the so called 'mega house" issue behind us and move forward in promoting the same Family Friendly Beach that I enjoyed as a child.

Sandy Miller: Put the mega house issue to bed. Continue to increase salaries for town staff. Continue with beach nourishment.

H. Ashley Royal: I have commented on specific areas above that should be addressed. Beyond these specifics, I would apply the principles I was accountable to as a professional in the nuclear power industry. Those principles established safety as an overriding priority, maintaining high ethical standards, treating others with respect, and accepting accountability for performance.

5.2. What are we doing positive as a town to continue our claim to "A Family Beach"?

John C. Fletcher: The ones we want to preserve on our Island. Holden Beach is loved for many of its unique features, including: its calm and quiet family culture, its un-crowded beach strand, its outstanding Turtle Watch and Turtle Talk program, its superb Chapel with its many support and outreach projects, a highly qualified fire department on the Island, a Beautification Club that adds constantly to the beauty of the Island, a very professional Town Staff, a very skilled maintenance staff for protection of our infrastructure, and a very visible and talented on-Island Police force. We should preserve our culture and protect our "Family Beach" reputation.

Peter Freer: There are definitely many positives that continue our claim to A Family Beach. A talented town staff and dynamic clubs and organizations do a lot to support our Family Beach culture. The Holden Beach Property Owners Association, Turtle Watch and the Beautification Club are examples of what makes Holden Beach a wonderful place to live. Also, the many volunteers at the festivals, concerts and other special events greatly contribute to our title of The Family Beach.

Kim Isenhour: The number of people who are running for commissioner this year is a very good indication of the type of community we have in Holden Beach. There are many people willing to serve on committees, run for office and participate in clubs. We are not an apathetic community. The efforts to create an interactive webpage and an app for residents, homeowners, and visitors will certainly help communicate our desire to be "A Family Beach." Holden Beach is an inviting place for festivals, beautification organizations, environmental groups and vacationing families. The town staff is highly qualified and they do an amazing job.

Kenneth Kyser: I think that the playground and development of the area across from town hall promote a family beach atmosphere. I think that all the beautification projects also help that. I think that the many programs that we are doing in the parks and rec. area go a long way in promoting a family beach atmosphere.

2015 Meet the Candidates Night – Written Questions

Regina Martin: I do not believe we claim to be Family Beach we are a Family Beach and always have been. A family beach is a place that parents and children come to have a break form the daily routine of life. When you reach the top of the bridge looking at the ocean and the Island the clock slows. Many of our visitors have been coming 30 and 40 years, many past families are now residents and many new visitors arrive yearly because others have told them of the great times and experience they have had here on our Island. Memories both past and present and those not let made all make us a Family BEACH.

Sandy Miller: The rec. department is doing a great job of planning family activities.

H. Ashley Royal: I am humbled by the service provided by our many volunteers on Holden Beach. The Holden Beach Chapel is a refuge of hope, worship, and fellowship to members and visitors throughout the year. Volunteer organizations such as Second Helping Food Collection, the Holden Beach Beautification Club, the Holden Beach Turtle Patrol, the Holden Beach Property Owners Association, and Lou Cutajar's *Lou's Views* are some examples of citizens involved in preserving and promoting Holden Beach as "A Family Beach".