

My name is Tom Myers, I live at 301 OBW and I am the President of the HBPOA. I am here tonight speaking on behalf of the HBPOA regarding agenda items 14 and 15 on solid waste and rollback services.

The mission of the HBPOA is to represent the property owners of Holden Beach regarding their common issues and concerns. Trash service is one of these issues, since it impacts 100% of the property owners on the island.

Based on our most recent analysis: 89% of property owners do not live here fulltime, and 30% of these property owners do not even live in the state of North Carolina. More than half of the owners do not rent their properties, and for those that do, they are predominantly seasonal rentals.

In general, property owners are concerned about the additional burdens that might be placed on them, and the fact they could incur severe penalties (and possibly even criminal violations) for things that are out of their control. They feel they pay property taxes and are therefore entitled to Town services (which includes trash pickup) and that the Town needs to consider the unique demographics of the island.

There are neighborhoods here with a concentration of permanent residents who all know each other and can help each other out. However, the majority of the island (especially along Ocean Blvd), has a high percentage of non-resident owners who don't always know each other. Most of these property owners come here rarely and randomly – and not always on the weekends.

When they do come, they generate trash, and they typically roll their cans to the street before heading back home. If they live on Ocean Blvd, the Town has been rolling their empty cans back for them. If they live on another street, they are at the mercy of someone else rolling their can back, or else it stays there until their next visit – which could be days, weeks or months later. If a full can is rolled back, it could sit at their house for days, weeks, or months.

These property owners are being considered villains and viewed as people who deserve to be criminally punished. In reality, their actions are simply due to their situation; their only “crime” is not being here full time.

The HBPOA periodically conducts opinion surveys. We did one on recycling, but we haven't had time to conduct one on trash rollout or rollback services. We have tried to communicate information about your proposed ordinance and have received a lot of feedback – much of which I have forwarded to you. However, collecting feedback takes time, and it is impossible to get any feedback on decisions that were made this morning before you vote on implementing them this evening – especially given the timing of a Tuesday, one week before Christmas.

The HBPOA is willing to help you communicate your expectations of property owners, and provide them the information they will need to comply with your ordinance. We just hope it is something that everyone is capable of doing, and that you are being fair to the non-resident property owners who represent the vast majority of our tax base.

Thank you for your time.