



camagram

coastal resources commission report for the august 26-27 meeting

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COUNTIES COVERED BY CAMA:

BEAUFORT
BERTIE
BRUNSWICK
CAMDEN
CARTERET
CHOWAN
CRAVEN
CURRITUCK
DARE
GATES
HERTFORD
HYDE
NEW HANOVER
PENDER
PERQUIMANS
TYRRELL
WASHINGTON

September 9, 1982

LEGISLATIVE STUDY COMMITTEE HEARINGS SET...

Three public hearings in the coastal area have been set by the Legislative Study Committee established by the General Assembly to review the Coastal Area Management Act. The hearings will be held:

- Monday, September 13 at the Pine Knoll Shores Marine Resources Center from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 to 9:00 p.m.;
- Tuesday, September 14 at the UNC-Wilmington Chemistry Building from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. and 3:00 to 5:00 p.m.; and
- Wednesday, October 13 in Manteo at the Marine Resources Center from 2:00 to 5:00 p.m. and 7:30 to 9:00 p.m.

Members of the public are invited to attend and speak at these public hearings which the Study Committee has scheduled to hear how local people in the coastal area feel about CAMA. The members of the Study Committee are: Senators Melvin Daniels (co-chairman), Joe Thomas, Ken Royall, Billy Mills, and Craig Lawing; Representatives Charles Evans (co-chairman), Bruce Etheridge, Harry Payne, Tom Rabon, Al Adams, and Howard Coble; and Mr. Henry von Oesen.

GRIMSLEY ADDRESSES COMMISSION...

On Thursday morning, NRCO Secretary Joseph W. Grimsley met again with the Coastal Resources Commission to give an update on the financial and legislative issues facing CAMA and to pledge his strong support for the program. Grimsley reiterated his firm belief that the state/local partnership of CAMA is the proper tool for protecting the resources of the coast to maintain environmental quality and assure wise economic growth. Grimsley urged all interested citizens to communicate their views about CAMA to the Legislative Study Committee during the upcoming hearings. The Secretary also stated that funding for CAMA was the top budgeting priority for the Department of Natural Resources and Community Development in the next session of the General Assembly. The phase-out of federal funding for this state

program will require increased state appropriation and he urged local governments to communicate with their legislative representatives to assure that adequate funds are provided to make the program of state/local CZM a continuing success.

POST-DISASTER RULES UNANIMOUSLY ADOPTED...

The Coastal Resources Commission voted unanimously to adopt new policies on redevelopment following major storms. These rules had been the subject of public hearings at the July CRC meeting in Manteo and at the August meeting in Wilmington. The general policies adopted include directing roads and utilities to be rebuilt as far landward as possible, including securing new right-of-ways where needed, assuring coordination of the government agencies involved with response to disasters, and streamlining permit procedures. One of the key aspects of the new rules is to add a post-disaster planning requirement to the local land use planning program. Under the new arrangement local plans will address post-disaster reconstruction in the counties and towns preparing the plans. The Commission noted that local governments would need to have policies on topics such as the relocation of roads and utilities to safe locations and the possible public acquisition of hazardous areas. Each plan developed by local government will reflect how that local government wishes to rebuild. The post-disaster plans will reflect the desires of local citizens and coastal governments and will be approved by the CRC to assure that each topic is dealt with. The consistency provision of the Federal Coastal Zone Management Act will require that Federal agencies follow these plans in the event of a major natural disaster in the coastal area. The CRC will work with other state agencies to secure full implementation of the policies.

COASTAL RESOURCES ADVISORY COUNCIL REPORT...

The CRAC met on Wednesday, August 26 and again jointly with the Commission on the 27th to exchange views and receive an update on coastal issues. Chairman Bill Gardner welcomed new members Paul Wilms and Tom Ellis.

The CRAC unanimously approved several recommendations for ways to improve CAMA requested by Senator Royall of the Legislative Study Committee. The Advisory Council membership has been working on these recommendations for the past four months. The thirteen recommendations include changes which would simplify CAMA, improve non-regulatory means of managing coastal development, improve CAMA's efficiency, and increase participation in CAMA activities. Chairman Gardner will personally deliver these suggestions to Senator Royall.

PERMIT 'FAST TRACK' ANNOUNCED...

Secretary Grimsley, CRC Chairman Parker Chesson, and Colonel Robert Hughes of the Wilmington District of the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers, held a press briefing on August 27 to unveil a new permit fast tracking program. Under this new approach, routine projects which do not involve environmentally sensitive areas can be approved in approximately 35 days rather than 65 days. The process began September 1. The Corps of Engineers praised North Carolina's coastal management program and pointed to it as one of the reasons that they were able to issue a general federal permit to allow this expedited work. Secretary Grimsley explained that new state agency review procedures for certain routine state dredge and fill and/or CAMA permits will be reduced significantly, shortening the review process by a month. Chairman Chesson pointed out that, while it is not particularly dramatic, permit expediting is one of the duties of the Coastal Resources Commission under CAMA and this initiative is one more step in the Commission's history of reducing the regulatory burden on applicants while assuring reasonable protection of the state's valuable coastal resources.

EXECUTIVE SECRETARY'S REPORT...

Kenneth D. Stewart, Executive Secretary to the Commission, recapped highlights of the current budget situation at the outset of the Thursday Commission meeting. Steps have already been taken administratively to reduce expenditures in all areas of the program including: fewer CRC and CRAC meetings, less travel, reduced funding to local governments for planning and permit administration, increased permit fees, and reduction of staff.

INCREASED MINOR PERMIT EXEMPTIONS PROPOSED...

The Commission has agreed to take to public hearing at its next meeting a proposal developed by coastal management staff to increase exemptions for minor permit activities in estuarine areas. Specific exemptions proposed are: docks and piers in public trust waters; land disturbing activities involving single family home construction at least 40 feet from the mean high water line and as far back on the lot as feasible; wooden jetties of 25 feet or less. It was felt these routine activities had very limited environmental impact and could be exempted without harming coastal resources. All projects granted exemptions must be consistent with applicable regulations, local ordinances and land use plans. The CRC will also consider deleting the authority of local permit officers to exempt bulkhead alignments. If adopted in the proposed form, this action will reduce the number of minor permits by 20%, eliminating the need to obtain a permit for approximately 150 applicants each year.

LAND USE PLAN APPROVALS...

In action on Friday, the Commission approved Land Use Plan amendments for Beaufort County and the Town of Bath as well as giving final certification to the Dare County plan update.

FLOATING HOMES...

A committee of the CRC continued its examination of the floating home issue and the questions of definition and authority which surround it. The CRC committee heard that the State Property Office has taken the position that they would not recommend that the Council of State grant an easement for such a structure. Staff was directed to prepare a policy statement, for consideration at the next meeting, that would ban new floating homes.

COMMISSION BACKS HATTERAS PROPOSAL...

The Commission received an update on the status of plans to protect the Cape Hatteras Lighthouse and reviewed the National Parks Service environmental assessment of alternatives. NPS prefers the idea of building a revetment and seawall around the lighthouse to protect it; however, under this proposal the area would eventually become an island. The option of moving the lighthouse would require an additional \$65,000 to \$100,000 of study. After reviewing all of the issues, the Coastal Resources Commission endorsed the revetment alternative favored by the National Parks Service with the additional comment that interim erosion control measures should be continued.

PEAT MINING REVIEWED...

The Commission heard from staff that the NRCD Peat Mining Task Force has been reactivated to review the State's ability to manage large scale peat mining and use. The work will be completed in the near future and recommendations passed on to departmental leaders at NRCD.

UPCOMING MEETING, ISSUES...

The next Commission meeting will be October 6-7. On the 6th the group will meet at the Texas Gulf facility at Aurora. On the 7th the session (including all public hearings) will be held at the New Bern Holiday Inn. The public is invited to all CRC meetings. Among topics for public hearings are: expanded minor permit exemptions; clarification of effective date of rules; increases flexibility regarding location of estuarine bulkheads; and adoption of departmental procedures for public hearings.