

Town Of Briarcliffe Acres

June 2011

Lot # 65 - Structure Removed:

The long months of legal activity concerning the structure on lot 65 ended in the Town's favor this past spring. The Town secured the legal right to remove the structure. During the month of May, the Town demolished and removed the structure on lot 65. This action was "abating the nuisance" from the Town's Nuisance Ordinance.

In order to accomplish this, the Town sought bids to remove the structure. The bids ranged from \$79,000 to \$24,250. At the April Town meeting the Council voted to accept the lowest bid. The Town Council also voted to pay for the expense of removal (which included grading & seeding) out of the Contingency fund. A lien was placed on the property to recover the town expenses. There was already an existing judgment secured by the property and the Town Attorney successfully negotiated with the judgment holder a subjugation agreement for up to \$25,000. In other words, when the property is sold, the Town recovers its expense first.

Budget:

The town budget for fiscal year 2011-2012 was approved at the June Town meeting. There is no increase in the millage rate from last year's budget of 50.8 mills. Because the 2010-2011 budget had a surplus, the town was able to carry forward some of the unspent money. There is no change in the garbage and recycling fee as this service continues to be included as a cost in the Town's budget.

The legal fees for the extensive legal work for lot 65 for the past year came in as projected at \$17,710. Total legal services came in on budget for 2010-2011.

Fire Protection Contract:

Facing an almost \$8000 increase for fire protection in the coming budget year, Mayor Ken Corbett was able to negotiate the contract price down significantly and lock it in for two years. The Fire Protection Contract,

as agreed upon by North Myrtle Beach, will be \$60,000 a year for each of the next two years.

Trash Hauling Contract:

To lock in a good rate, it was decided to seek bids for a 2 year contract. The Town received two bids. The Trash Hauling Contract for July 2011 through June 2013 was awarded to Waste Industries at the June Town Council Meeting. Waste Industries submitted the lowest bid at \$12.74 per household per month which represents several years without an increase.

Landscape Contract:

Again to lock in a good contract rate with quality landscaping, it was decided to seek bids for a 2 year contract. There were two bidders: Vereen and Thomas Samaha of C&H Landscaping, the current town landscaper. Thomas Samaha was chosen as the town landscaper for July 2011 through June 2013. His contract rate is \$19,656 a year. This represents a decrease of about \$6000 in landscape contract costs from years prior to 2010. At the same time, the quality of the landscaping has been maintained and the town's property has been improved as supported by the comments of many residents.

Watering and the Drought:

Our town is experiencing a severe drought and the negative impact on our lakes and overall water table is significant. Some neighbors have argued that restrictions on watering should be put in place, and if conditions continue to deteriorate Council may have to consider placing restrictions on watering.

In the meantime, voluntary, intelligent conservation is something that all good neighbors can do. Run irrigation for your grass once or twice a week as that is generally what it requires. Do not run sprinklers on days that it rains. Consider placing a rain gauge on your irrigation system to prevent this. For other tips or ideas visit the town's website at:

<http://www.townofbriarcliffe.us/Drought.html>

Some residents are known to be watering for what appears to be 24 hours a day. Remember, in this heat and humidity, this can be very harmful to your lawn which may develop fungus and can be very expensive to remove. Remember-smart conservation is the answer to this problem.



Road Plan:

As part of completing the Town's Comprehensive Plan last fall, a special committee of the Planning Commission chaired by David Parry worked hard to assess the condition of our roads throughout the town. They rated each road and street and determined the actions required to fix or maintain each of them. In some cases, some of the turn a rounds, on the Town's on the cul-de-sacs, will be completely re-done. In other cases, surface paving will occur.

This summer, the Town will convene meetings with David Parry, John Molnar and other interested residents to lay out a specific time table and plan for these specific capital improvements. The Town's objective is to execute the plan over the next 7-10 years such that funding can occur within our current budget framework.

Briarcliffe Acres Water Quality Study:

In 2002, a study commissioned by Horry County was made to identify sources of contamination of the surf zone of the Atlantic Ocean in the County. Samples collected from White Point Swash indicated bacteria were present in the waters. These initial studies presumed that the source of this pollution was the town septic systems. In 2004 White Point Swash, including the Briarcliffe swash, was put on the SCDHEC 303(d) list of impaired water bodies. This list identifies SC water bodies that do not meet State water quality standards pursuant to the Federal Clean Water Act. In 2007 Briarcliffe Acres was required by SCDHEC to take measures to improve the water quality of the swash. The town has yearly compliance requirements to maintain the SCDHEC SMS4 (Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) permit. The town's 2008 Stormwater Ordinance was part of this requirement.

In 2009 Briarcliffe Acres in conjunction with Horry County Stormwater commissioned a water quality study of the Briarcliffe watershed from the firm Thomas & Hutton. The study was intended to confirm or disprove a link between contamination of the swash and Briarcliffe Acres residents' septic tank systems. This study included data collection and assessment, septic tank system surveys, watershed assessment, and water quality sampling. Over the past year they sampled 5 sites in both dry and wet weather and two other sites during wet weather only.

Specialized bacteria source tracking analysis was also completed. This bacteria analysis offered definitive evidence that the bacteria was from human sources.

Other analysis indicated the presence of optical brighteners from wash detergents.

The floodplain adjacent to the swash was determined by the data to be the source of the bacteria and optical brighteners rather than the upland or lake sites. The floodplain (the area between the lakes and the swash) has very sandy soil which limits the absorption of bacteria and also a high water table, both of which have contributed to the contamination of the ground water.

The study made the following general recommendations:

1. All homes in the flood plain should connect to the adjacent sewer system.
2. Other Town residents that are not to be connected to the sewer system and have not pumped out their septic tank in the past 5 years should have their septic tank pumped within one calendar year and every 5 years thereafter. The Town may consider coordinating with Town residents and a local septic tank pumping company to negotiate a standard service (inspection, cleaning, pumping, etc.) for a discounted rate.
3. Residents should install water-saving devices such as low-flow toilets, shower heads, and washing machines in their homes to limit the amount of water discharges to the their septic systems. The Town will provide educational materials and reminders/notices to residents to consider water-saving devices during repairs, remodeling, and new appliance purchases.
4. All residents should be educated on the proper use and care of their septic systems. The Town may consider coordinating this education through collaboration with other outreach entities (SCDHEC, Horry County, Coastal Carolina University, Clemson University – Carolina Clear, etc.).

The complete study has been posted to the town website, www.townofbriarcliffe.us



Why does the Town have a Stormwater Ordinance and what is a Stormwater Permit?

As mentioned earlier, in 2007 the Town of Briarcliffe Acres was required by the South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) to take measures to improve the water quality of the swash. Any municipality that discharges stormwater into state waters is required by the EPA and SCDHEC to have a permit. This permit has requirements that municipalities must meet to reduce pollutants within the runoff. The town has yearly compliance requirements to maintain the SCDHEC SMS4 (Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) permit. There are substantial fines which may be imposed on the Town by SCDHEC, up to \$10,000 a day, if the town does not meet the permit requirements. The Town's 2008 Stormwater Ordinance was one of these requirements.

Relevant sections of the Briarcliffe Acres 2008 Stormwater Ordinance, Section IV.C:

1. The Town prohibits the improper or ineffective disposal of waste (faulty or inadequate septic systems). All private septic and sewer systems must be maintained or repaired so as to meet commonly understood standards of performance to prevent contamination of soil and water. All residences on a flood plain (Ocean View, Palmetto and Beach Drive) must connect to the available sewer system operated by the City of Myrtle Beach within five (5) years of the date of this ordinance (Oct. 2008), or sooner if their septic system is faulty or fails.
2. Dog waste: Residents must be prepared to promptly pick up their dog (pet) waste on town property and on other people's property and properly dispose of it. Fine of \$50.
3. Any remodeling of an existing residence that extends the square footage of a residence by five hundred (500) square feet or more, or adds a bedroom or a room with a door that could be used as a bedroom, or complete reconstruction of a residence, the owner must apply for a new septic permit from SC DHEC.

Firewise:

The town was fully reimbursed for the April Firewise Debris pick up through a grant from the SC Forestry Commission. Per the grant guidelines, the town provided a co-payment in the form of highway frontage improvement on the North end of town and volunteer hours.



Briarcliffe Acres has been designated a Firewise Community. The town is one of thirteen in the state. A presentation for this designation took place at the March town meeting by the South Carolina Forestry Commission.

For more information on the Firewise Community/USA program, see their website at: <http://www.firewise.org/usa/index.htm>

Pond Drained behind 153 Pine Tree Lane:

Since 1994 there have been several efforts made to improve the drainage area of the finger of water that lies west of North Lake, extending behind 146 Cabana and 153 Pine tree Lane. This water body is a natural part of our stormwater system as it drains ground water and rain water from the watershed to North Lake. Last summer, the Town had numerous complaints of excessive mosquito infestation in the area. The "man-made" pond behind 146 Cabana was tested by DHEC and found to be significantly contaminated. The stagnant pond also had heavy algae growth during the summer months. Historical reports have noted the possibility of several natural springs in the area. Before the pond was created, the area was bog-like and would fill with rain water, but then partially drain into North Lake. A positive water flow and filtering agents such as wetland plants are known to inhibit mosquito growth and improve water quality.

In January, the Council took steps to improve the functioning of the watershed. Fallen tree limbs and branches were removed from the swampy area behind 154 Pine Tree Lane and some of the overhanging branches were removed. In line with best stormwater practices which preclude allowing trees to grow within 10 feet of a culvert, trees, roots, and silt were removed from around the bridge/culvert behind 154 Pine Tree. A rock dam was removed

behind 153 Pine Tree so that the pond could empty and return to its natural state. It was discovered during this work, that although the waters are shallow, the mud, or bog, is actually quite deep...up to several feet in some places. Consequently, it is not a play area for children or pets and adults should exercise caution. The watercourse is a natural bog. The Town planted wetland plants during the spring in the bog that serves as filtering agents and also help firm up the soil. The area has been observed to have many mosquito larvae eating fish.

Town Telephone Directory:

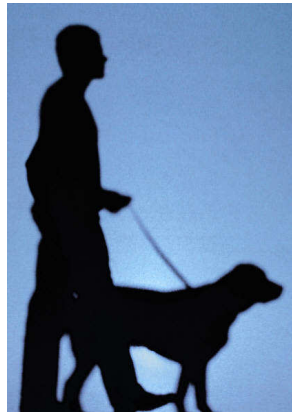
The new Briarcliffe Acres telephone directory was delivered throughout the Town on Memorial Weekend. If you did not receive a new directory, you can pick up a copy at the town office or you may call the town office to make other arrangements. The Town would like to extend our appreciation to Joan Gracy for her continued assistance in maintaining and updating the Town's telephone directory over the years. We would also like to extend our thanks to Martha and David Parry for volunteering to deliver the telephone directories.

Pet Registration:

Pet tags for 2010 expired on May 31, 2011. Letters were mailed to registered pet owners the beginning of May requesting registration for 2011. Many of you have already registered your pets. If you have not done so, please provide the town office with your pet's information (dog or cat; name; breed; sex; and age) along with proof of rabies inoculation. The fee is \$2.00 for each dog or cat. The Town Code requires that every person owning or having the custody or possession of any dog or cat four (4) months of age or over, within the Town, shall obtain a license from the Town for such dog or cat. This includes any dog or cat dwelling within the resident's home or managed by any type of yard monitoring system.

Horry County Mosquito Control:

This year, the County will spray for mosquitoes based on "landing counts," not just on a complaint basis. That is, they will test the number of mosquitoes that land on a body and then decide whether to spray. For further information residents can call Horry County Mosquito & Spraying at 915-5174 or click on the link. <http://www2.scnow.com/news/grand-strand/2011/may/31/mosquito-spraying-begins-horry-county-week-ar-1911028/>



Why Clean Up After Your Dog?

1. Good neighbors do it. (Bad neighbors don't.)
2. Briarcliffe Acres Town Ordinance requires it as part of the town's Stormwater Permit.
3. When pet waste is left behind, it washes into storm drains and ditches. From there it heads to our lakes, swash and ocean.

Please pick up after your pet and dispose of it in the trash to help keep our town and water clean.

North Lake Aerator:

In a joint project with the Briarcliffe Acres Association, the Town provided \$1250 for a new aerator on North Lake near Habitat Park. This was half of the cost. This area of the lake becomes nearly stagnant during many of the hot and humid summer months. The aerator should help keep the water moving and provide a better environment for the fish, wildlife and plants. It is also an attractive addition especially after dark. Hours of operation are from 8am to 10pm during the summer. Please come by and see it. Thanks to Bill George, Huston Huffman, Bill Gurkin and Bob Kennedy for their service in installing the aerator.

Suggestions & Comments Welcomed: If you have any suggestions or comments for the newsletter, please feel free to contact Councilperson Abby Stewart at abigailst@yahoo.com