

SAND MANAGEMENT UPDATE

BY: Barbara Henley, Virginia Beach City Councilwoman

In response to a resolution passed by the Sandbridge Civic League on May 21, 2016, the City developed a three pronged plan to address the accumulation of excess sand on private property abutting Sandbridge Beach. The strategy involved short term, intermediate term and long term actions.

The short term action took place on June 21, 2016, when the City Council adopted a resolution declaring an emergency due to the accumulation of excessive sand. This emergency resolution authorized the owners of a dozen properties to remove sand that had created dangerous conditions on those properties without the need for them to obtain a permit from the Wetlands Board as otherwise required by the State's Coastal Primary Sand Dune and Beaches Act and the City's Coastal Primary Sand Dune Zoning Ordinance.

The intermediate actin involved making individual applications for the necessary Wetlands Board Permit more simple and cost effective. In order to accomplish this goal, the City Planning Director issued a letter waiving the requirement for plans sealed by a professional engineer in connection with future applications for sand management permits before the Wetlands Board. At the same time, the City pursued adoption of amendments to the Coastal Primary Sand Dune Zoning Ordinance, which specifically created a "Sand Management Permit" and imposed a reduced application fee (\$100 versus \$300) and eliminated the requirement to post signs advertising the hearing for those permits. These changes were presented to and recommended by the City Planning Commission as required by law and then adopted by the City Council on August 16, 2016.

The long term action is to seek legislation from the General Assembly that would authorize the Wetlands Board to issue a General Permit that would provide standard sand placement profiles that all property owners could utilize by registering with the City. Proposed legislation is being drafted to include in the City's legislative packet of requests to the General Assembly. This can be presented to the Civic League at its September meeting if the community is interested in pursuing this long term measure of authorizing the Virginia Beach Wetlands Board to issue a Sand Management General Permit. I am asking for the community's direction before we proceed.