

## West End Update

On behalf of the Town Council, I want to take this opportunity to update all residents and property owners of Dauphin Island on pending matters that would directly impact the West End. I am aware that much information and misinformation is currently out on the streets and hope this memo will clear up some of these issues that are important to all of us who call Dauphin Island “home”.

First, it was the one-two punch of Hurricanes Gustav and Ike that destroyed the berm that was constructed following Hurricane Katrina in 2005. As a result, the Town of Dauphin Island submitted a damage survey report for a replacement berm during our post-disaster inventory of damages to Town owned property and infrastructure. This is standard operating procedure following all “declared disasters”. Subsequent to our submittals, FEMA notified the town that it would not fund a replacement berm (although a template and cost estimate was produced by FEMA reps) as there was (in its opinion) no stable shoreline on which to construct it. The Town then had an option to appeal the decision or not. After some consideration, the Council voted to appeal the decision with hopes we could keep the lines of communications open with FEMA and possibly find a way to provide long term protection for the West End area.

As the appeals process has continued, Town staff has had several meetings with representatives of the Alabama Emergency Management Agency (EMA) who serves as our liaison with FEMA. During the most recent meeting, the idea of a “levee” (not a berm) was suggested as an alternative by AL EMA to FEMA. FEMA is now considering the alternative. **IT IS IMPORTANT THAT YOU KEEP IN MIND THIS WAS MERELY A VERBAL STATEMENT AND NOTHING WAS PUT IN WRITING NOR ARE ANY PLANS OR DRAWINGS IN PLACE FOR THE PROPOSED LEVEE!** The suggested levee would be placed on Town rights-of-way along the south side of Bienville

Boulevard for an undetermined continuous length. This would block any side streets that currently serve the south beach.

Why would anyone suggest such a thing? Well, it appears FEMA is concerned with leaving Bienville Boulevard (and the associated infrastructure) unprotected from future storms. The Town has also received word that unless we provide for some level (my words not theirs) of protection for Bienville Boulevard, the Town may not receive future Federal and/or State assistance in a post-disaster situation. Obviously, that could prove quite costly for our island community if that were to happen. With this information on the table, we were forced to seriously consider the proposal while looking for ways to mitigate the “inconveniences” it would bring to those who own property south of Bienville Boulevard. Maintaining vehicular access on the south side of the levee is of high importance but comes with a variety of challenges. Understanding that “Crossovers” would likely not be allowed, talk turned to the possibility of an “access road” running parallel to the south side of the levee made of some type of crushed stones or other base material. Contrary to information you might have received, NO materials or products have been purchased for such an access road or levee!

Recognizing the serious nature of this matter the Town Council opted to hold an informational meeting on Wednesday, May 13, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. (site TBA) for all interested persons. The Council is also trying to determine if the meeting can be broadcast over the internet via live streaming video (or some other format) for those who are unable to attend the meeting in person. We will let you know when this information becomes available.

In conclusion, the Town Council will likely make a final decision on the proposed levee for the island’s West End at a meeting of its choice following the public informational meeting on May 13, 2009. In the meantime, the council will be meeting with EMA officials prior to the public meeting to get the latest and most accurate information to pass along to you.