

WHALEHEAD PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION



www.wpoa.org

HOW IT ALL STARTED
WHERE WE ARE NOW



In the mid-eighties the northern banks north of Ocean Sands was just coming to life. The beach road (now Lighthouse Dr.) was the main road. There were no cross streets. Houses were few and far between. Monterey Shores, Corolla Light, Ocean Hill and Tim Buck II were just drawings on pieces of paper.

Horses roamed free. You had to make sure your kids didn't fall into some of those old rocket silos still in the ground from the days when Morton Thiokol used the area as a test site and Winks was the only place you could buy fuel or food. In the fall the sound behind Winks was a resting point for thousands of wild swans that migrate with the seasons



But land was inexpensive and a handful of builders were busy driving piles into the ground and building people's dreams in an area where Mother Nature still seemed to be in control. The floodgates of people coming to Whalehead were open. What started as a trickle quickly turned into a steady stream. In 1986, Art Smith became frustrated at the lack of responsiveness by Currituck County officials and staff. Simple requests for services in Whalehead were ignored or delayed. So Art and a neighbor across the street on Lighthouse Drive met one evening to discuss what could be done about the problem. They concluded that there is strength in numbers and they should organize a property owners association. They and a few other property owners founded the Whalehead Property Owners Association (WPOA), and they used the County tax records to contact every property owner in the community.

WPOA held its first meeting on the Saturday after Thanksgiving the following fall. We had maybe 30 or 40 attendees, but all had contributed to the financial pot for mailings and other expenses, remember that this was right at the beginnings of the Internet, and email was really new.

We met annually at Thanksgiving for many years. The firehouse was fairly new, and we borrowed or rented chairs to seat everyone. Back then there were more "locals" than "vacation homeowners." The night before the homeowners meeting, the locals would use the firehouse for "The Turkey Trot." We were all invited and the folks who made their livings fishing on the sound or working at Winks quickly became friends.

As houses continued to be built, membership grew over the years and the meetings got larger. Someone suggested adding a spring meeting and that enabled a lot of members to attend who "have to go to Grandma's house at Thanksgiving."

Over the next few years, our activities were oriented around the maintenance of the roads, the existence of the double lots that belonged to the developers, and other issues. We succeeded in getting Monterey Shores to move the rebuilding of NC 12 to the west somewhat to increase the spacing behind our owners on Corolla Drive.



Construction begins to sprout in the mid-eighties.



Horses roamed free both along the beaches and through the growing neighborhoods!



The County Commissioners realize that the Outer Banks is the goose that is laying the golden eggs. And no one wants to kill the goose. Currituck has a good public school system, good fire protection, etc. Our real estate taxes raise about 70% of the County's annual income. The County has really improved its view of "those beach owners." . We are perceived by the County as a reasonable group of people who want to protect our interests in this beautiful beach - but never at the expense of others, rather in pragmatic concert with the interests of the greater community.

Throughout its history, WPOA has sought to preserve, protect, and improve our beautiful community. For many years, the roads were a major issue. Most of the cross streets were owned by the developer, and he refused to

maintain them. We spent \$20,000 for road repairs to roads that we did not even own and that were not our legal obligation. We did it for the good of Whalehead. We did it to keep the renters coming. We did it so that the fire trucks could get out more quickly and safely.



WPOA tried for more than ten years to persuade the developer to transfer the roads to the State, the County, or WPOA. Finally, in 2009, he transferred Bonito and Dolphin to the State and the remaining roads that were not already State roads were transferred to the County.

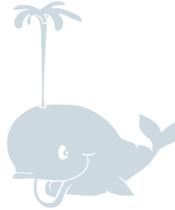
WPOA raised the issue of storm water drainage after the massive flooding that followed Hurricane Enrico. WPOA paid for an engineering study that convinced the County to form a Drainage Service District. Once the County saw how serious the problem was, they paid WPOA for the cost of the study. Since then, the County agreed to create a county Whalehead Drainage Subdivision and a Whalehead Citizens' Advisory Board to coordinate with the County's Engineering and Contracting staff to develop and award four completed phases of drainage renovation contracts totaling over \$12,000,000. Through these contracts, most non-State owned East-West roads were converted into rain retention and collection basins with collection piping beneath and attractive pedestrian walkways above to lower groundwater table levels ahead of significant storms. This system includes pump stations and force mains to remove the water from Whalehead and transport it to two holding ponds, one near Tim Buck II and the other in Corolla Light. While additional phases will continue to be needed as older and smaller homes are replaced by larger homes with more impervious surface and developer and commercial development increases along Rt-12, the amount of serious flooding throughout Whalehead has been significantly reduced --with the exception of the NCDOT owned Bonito which WPOA has continued to attempt to convince the state to partner with the Drainage District to alleviate routine flooding here.

In another initiative just a few years ago, the County agreed to the formation of a Whalehead Maintenance District to address the problem of thousands of empty trash totes left lining the sides of all Whalehead roads throughout the summers with hundreds more full totes left next to houses as new guests were checking in. If guests didn't pull them in, they stayed there. If guests didn't pull the totes out, the trash wasn't picked up. This District developed and awarded a Trash Tote Roll-Out/Roll Back contract to pull trash totes out to the roadside on trash days and pull them back to our homes following trash pickup.

WPOA has consistently opposed the Mid-County bridge because of our concerns about increased day-tripper traffic, trash, and parking problems in season and increased vulnerability to burglaries during the off season. We also pushed for laws against fireworks, for limitations on in-season beach driving, for enforcement of dune protection regulations, and to keep commercial push carts off the beach.

What started as a handful of houses has become hundreds-- and much larger. As of this writing, there are more than 750 houses already built within Whalehead. And we have hundreds of neighbors to the north, south, and west. And we know that the northern Outer Banks will continue to develop whether we like it or not. If things go

as planned, there will be a bridge in the not-too-distant future, both shortening your trip to get to Whalehead, but almost certainly, making it more crowded and hectic. Within the next decade, today could seem like the good old days. However, WPOA will continue to pick the battles we feel we can win to maintain the beach community we all cherish.



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