

Heather Finnell

From: Louis Cutajar <louisviews@lousviews.com>
Sent: Monday, October 26, 2026 9:00 AM
To: Heather Finnell
Cc: alan@alanholdenrealty.com; Tom Myers; Commisioner Dyer; Sylvia Pate; Keith Smith; Robert Brown; Bryan Chadwick; Christy Ferguson
Subject: Public Comments - Pier

In January 2024, after two rounds of bidding, the Town received just two bids for Phase One of the pier renovation: nearly \$2.2 million from Paragon Building Corp. and \$3.9 million from TD Eure.

Thirty-three months later, the estimated cost of repairs is approximately \$1,177,795.

Given the increase in construction costs over that period, this estimate raises serious questions about whether the full cost of the project has been accurately accounted for.

The concern is even greater when considering the work that is necessary but excluded from the current estimates.

Repairing an aging pier built on a 1950s foundation could mean spending millions of taxpayer dollars for only a limited extension of its useful life.

Before committing additional public funds, the Board must carefully weigh the long-term costs, structural risks, and durability of continued repairs against the cost of a complete replacement.

Sentiment and history are understandable, but major infrastructure decisions must be guided by facts, sound engineering, public safety, and responsible stewardship of taxpayer money.

The Board should formally abandon plans to repair the existing pier and redirect its resources toward evaluating and pursuing a safe, resilient, and sustainable replacement that will serve our community for generations to come.

10/26

Lou

<https://lousviews.com/>

Heather Finnell

From: Tim Thronson ~~Robert Brown~~
Sent: Saturday, October 24, 2026 4:45 PM
To: Heather Finnell
Cc: alan@alanholdenrealty.com; Commisioner Dyer; Sylvia Pate; Keith Smith; tmmyers56@gmail.com; Robert Brown
Subject: Public Comments - Holden Beach Pier

I've looked at the following engineering reports the Town has received: HDR's work in 2025, MidAtlantic Engineering's underwater inspection in 2026, and the Town's own condemnation letter from October 12. Taken together, they make a clear case that repairing the existing pier is the wrong choice.

Both engineering firms rate the overall condition of the pier as Poor. HDR, a nationally recognized engineering firm, inspected the entire pier in 2025. It found the deck, joists and railings in Serious to Critical condition, with railings unable to safely hold a person's weight and deck boards that sag underfoot. HDR concluded that everything people walk on should be entirely replaced, not patched. It also found that the entrance ramp doesn't meet ADA requirements and must be rebuilt from the ground up. It warned that the old piles may be driven only about 14.5 feet into the sand, when modern design allows for up to 10 feet of storm scour.

In the meantime, MidAtlantic found 20 of the 118 piles in need of repair or replacement. One no longer carries any load at all, another is broken seven feet from the top, and several more are split. Sixteen braces are broken or missing, and half of the bracing hardware has lost 50 to 75 percent of its steel to corrosion. Most of the damage is at the ocean end, where the waves hit hardest. That tells us the problem isn't simply age: this is a 1950s pier, patched after Hurricanes Hugo and Floyd, that isn't strong enough for where it stands. On October 12, the Town's Inspections Director formally condemned the pier as "especially dangerous to life" and documented one section racked 1.5 feet out of line.

The Board said it wanted to know what a repair would cost before making a final decision. It still doesn't know. MidAtlantic priced only the piles and bracing below the deck: \$677,795, a rough planning-level estimate built from New York City construction costs. The deck, railings and everything else above the pilings were outside MidAtlantic's scope. The only number for that work is \$500,000 from the Town's building official, based on photographs and a visual inspection. He's right that the pier is dangerous, but his figure isn't an engineering estimate. The firm that actually evaluated the deck, HDR, said all of it must be replaced. No engineer has priced that work. No one has priced the required ADA ramp, the electrical and water lines, or the cost of safely getting construction equipment onto a condemned structure. No one has tested how deep the piles go, which I thought was one of the questions this study was meant to answer. MidAtlantic itself expects more repairs within five to eight years of fixing what it found.

There's another unknown the repair estimates ignore: whether a repair this extensive will be allowed to stay at the old pier's standards at all. Under North Carolina's coastal rules, work on a fixed pier counts as a "replacement" rather than a repair when more than half of its framing and structural components have to be rebuilt. Those components include the pilings, beams and joists. HDR says every joist and deck board must be replaced, and MidAtlantic adds 20 piles, 16 braces and two pile caps on top of that. A repair that size could well cross the 50 percent line. If it does, the state would treat it as a new pier, requiring a CAMA permit and compliance with today's standards. And no matter how the state rules, HDR has already found that the entrance ramp must be rebuilt to meet federal ADA requirements.

So what would a repair really cost? MidAtlantic's figure for the substructure is about \$0.7 million. Using typical construction costs for the work no engineer has priced, replacing the deck, railings and utilities adds roughly \$1.7 million, and rebuilding the ramp to ADA standards about another \$0.5 million. That puts a realistic repair at \$2.5 to \$3 million or more, before any surprises and before extending the pier to the desired 1,000 feet. For that money, the town would still have a 1950s pier at its old height, on its old shallow piles, needing more work within the decade. That isn't saving money. It's spending about a third of the cost of a new pier just to put off the decision.

The pier is condemned. Each storm season it stands, it risks dropping debris into the ocean. And construction costs continue to rise. All of that to say that another round of studies that leaves the key questions unanswered is something the town can't afford. Therefore, it's time to abandon the idea of repairing the old pier.

Respectfully,

Tim Thronson

110 Durham Street

Holden Beach, NC

Heather Finnell

From: Rick McInturf <~~rmcinturf1968@gmail.com~~>
Sent: Tuesday, October 27, 2026 8:05 AM
To: Heather Finnell
Subject: Re: Holden Beach Board of Commissioners' Meeting

Second comment - non agenda

I will also comment on this tonight.

The Davenport HOA would like to install mats in place of our current wood walkway with steps. We have learned that there has been a relatively recent amendment to a town ordinance that prevents doing so. Obviously there are mats on the West end, and possibly some other places.

We request that the ordinance be reviewed and possibly amended again to allow these mats to be installed, thus reducing greatly the liability of falling on the steps and making our access much more ADA compliant.

On Sun, Oct 25, 2026 at 8:16 AM Rick McInturf <rmcinturf1968@gmail.com> wrote:

Public comment, non-agenda

The Davenport HOA met on October 24th. Members of the group that walk the beach daily carry trash bags with them. They report that the volume of trash that they collect has increased significantly since the trash cans have been removed. No solution was suggested except the possible placement of cans on the beach strand again.

Rick McInturf - President

On Wed, Oct 21, 2026 at 4:09 PM Heather Finnell <heather@hbtownhall.com> wrote:

Please see the attached agenda for the October meeting of the Board of Commissioners. The agenda can also be found online at <https://hbtownhall.com/agendas>.

Heather Finnell, CMC, NCCMC

Town Clerk

Town of Holden Beach

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Heather Finnell

From: Rick McInturf <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Sunday, October 25, 2026 8:17 AM
To: Heather Finnell
Subject: Re: Holden Beach Board of Commissioners' Meeting

Public comment, non-agenda

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Heather Finnell, CMC, NCCMC

Town Clerk

Town of Holden Beach

heather@hbtownhall.com

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Heather Finnell

From: Carlton Pittman [REDACTED]
Sent: Sunday, October 25, 2026 7:05 PM
To: Alan Holden; Commissioner Dyer; Tom Myers; Sylvia Pate; Robert Brown; Keith Smith
Cc: Bryan Chadwick; Christy Ferguson; Heather Finnell
Subject: Public Comment October 2026 BOC Meeting

Thank you for your time if you get to read it all. And thank you all for your work and service to the town.

VERY happy see to see the fire station moving forward. Thanks to all those that have worked on it so far, and continue to push that forward.

The pier –

Part of the Cadet's Prayer at West Point – the military academy - says – ***make us to choose the harder right instead of the easier wrong and never be content with a half truth when the whole truth can be won.***

Regardless of where we are now, or how we got here, we are where we are, and we need to find a way forward. **There is no way the RIGHT choice is to repair the pier.**

Tear down the existing pier and authorize the staff to move forward with a new pier.

We can even tackle a new building separately. That would give a year and a half if not two years while a pier is being constructed to figure out a building option.

Tim said something back in the winter I thought was interesting – Tim alluded to the opportunity to put a building south of the dunes – over the sand, or out over the water if I understood him correctly. Yes it would be more at risk, but how interesting could that be to have a building over the beach or water?

Two different engineering companies the town has hired have both said the same thing – the pier needs to be **REPLACED, not repaired.**

Build us something that we can all be proud of.

None of us know how a new pier would be paid for. Several individuals have stated they have talked to our elected representatives, either at the State level or the Federal level.

Time for – our elected representatives – to belly up to the bar and have a swig. Let's see what they are made of.

We have incredibly talented staff at all levels that are outstanding at finding ways to fund town priorities when needed, or, save the town money when needed. They can move mountains at times. Let them do their jobs.

In a year and a half, we drop over a million dollars a year of capital debt off the books.

Take the remaining money in this years' budget for the pier and do an RFQ, then RFP for a new 1000' wooden pier. If you want to use HDR because they have already done the 30% work to get the NTE number for the bond referendum that is fine.

If you want nice things in life, sometimes you have to commit to it.

If you haven't been down to Oak Island to see the OKI pier, you really need to do that before it closes for winter. Fairly new, one of the highest piers off the water in NC – 25-27 feet. The center decking is metal grate that allows high waves to wash up through decking.

We can have nice things here at Holden Beach, you just have to commit to it.

If you vote to repair the pier, you sentence every future board into having to pour more and more money into it for the foreseeable future.

Do you want to be known as the board that tore down the pier, **or the board that was bold enough to build us a NEW pier?**

If you do not even try, you will never know what is possible.

Build us something that we can all be proud of. Make the harder RIGHT choice.

Tear down the existing pier and authorize the staff to move forward with a new pier.

Thanks for your time

Carlton Pittman

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