

## Heather Finnell

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**From:** Martha Myers <myersmartha@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 19, 2023 11:03 AM  
**To:** Heather Finnell  
**Subject:** Public Comment Dec 19 Meeting

Dear Mayor Holden, members of the BOC, and Town staff,

The following written comments are submitted to you as part of the public comments for the December 19, 2023 meeting.

At the October BOC meeting, and reported in the Beacon, but not contained in the Meeting Minutes approved at the November BOC meeting, was the following statement : "This ADA stuff that we've been going through has been a nightmare that we did not anticipate."

That statement was totally uncalled for, inappropriate, and quite frankly an insult to the disability community. No one with a disability asks for or anticipates their situation or added expenses either. Or the "nightmare" that goes along with just getting through daily life after acquiring a disability.

Accessibility is not a "nightmare". It is an issue that is here to stay, and it won't end with completion of the Mediation Agreement. It's not something you can claim you "didn't anticipate". It's your responsibility as Town officials. Accessibility isn't controversial, or something that can be done halfway. Things are either accessible, or they're not.

Significant work has been done so far on the remediation efforts. MOST Town leaders have made statements demonstrating an understanding of the importance of addressing accessibility. Going forward let's hope that increased accessibility in Holden Beach is a priority embraced by everyone.

Sincerely,  
Martha Myers

## Heather Finnell

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**From:** Carlton Pittman <rucpitt@gmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 19, 2023 11:31 AM  
**To:** Heather Finnell  
**Subject:** Pier Plan?

Heather,

I'm not sure if it is too late to get this included in the written public comments for the BoC meeting later today. If you can, that would be great.

Apologies for the late notice.

**There are a number of issues regarding the pier that need to be ironed out or resolved to move forward and or before the pier can reopen. There needs to be a REAL PLAN for the pier before any other pier related work, consultations, or monies are spent. The PLAN put forth during the purchase process is NOT a plan. It is only a document that says we could do this; we could do that.**

**THAT is not a plan, particularly when the town spent \$3 MILLION of borrowed \$ for a discretionary purchase.**

- 1. Lease the pier to a 3<sup>rd</sup> party to run, or have the town run it? If you lease it to someone, do they take all the profits (assuming there are any) or are profits split with the town in some manner?**
- 2. What happens to the lease or tenant when a storm blows in the ocean side wall and they lose all of their inventory – they are going to bail on their lease.**
- 3. OKI bought the pier there, leased it out for a year, then took it back over as it wasn't going well having a third party running it. What happens to the HB pier if that happens? The town would have to HIRE a number of new town employees to work the pier all summer and when open. I'm not sure this is ideal, nor what was originally envisioned for the HB pier.**
- 4. The Sunset Beach pier has a waiting list for yearly passes it is so popular. It would be nice to have that demand for the HB pier, but only time will tell if that type of demand is here.**
- 5. When the pier work DOES start, there will have to be a number of parking spaces set aside for work related stuff – materials, parking for workers, etc. All of that cuts into parking revenue, and also makes the pier area even more congested.**

6. **When the pier reopens – there will need to be a number of parking spaces dedicated to pier only use, as opposed to beach goers. Do these parking space users also pay to park, or do they get a voucher for using the pier?**

**There are a number of issues like this that have not been discussed, at least publicly, and now is the time to have these conversations and come up with a plan that addresses many of the items I noted, and probably many others I haven't thought of or included.**

**Let's come up with something we can ALL be proud of.**

## December 19 Commission Comments

Good evening. My name is Rick McInturf and I am a full time resident at 122 Frigate.

My comments tonight are in favor of refurbishing the pier and come from the standpoint of a long time visitor to the beach, because that is what I was for about 25 years prior to purchasing our home here.

My wife and I would visit Holden at least once a year and sometimes two or three times a year. During that time we were blessed with 18 grandchildren and great grandchildren who would often join us in our adventures at the beach. A couple of times we had the entire family with us which created a unique set of memories.

During each visit, we would reserve one night to visit the pier. We would walk out on the pier, watch the fishermen, look for sea life over the edge, try to find our house along the beach and take lots of pictures to preserve the memories.

To deny this memorable experience to future generations of visitors to the beach would be a shame. The pier is an important part of the island's history and deserves to be preserved. As we move forward, I encourage the Council to leave no stone unturned as you search for funds and funding options to complete the pier refurbishment project and reopen the pier to visitors as soon as possible.

## Heather Finnell

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**From:** MARIA L SURPRISE <msurprise@icloud.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 19, 2023 9:00 AM  
**To:** Tom Myers; Tracey Thomas; rpaarfus; Alan Holden; drpagedyer@gmail.com; Rick Smith; brian murdock; arnold.geraldnc@me.com; Heather Finnell  
**Cc:** John Woods  
**Subject:** Comments fo 12/19 BOC meeting - agenda item 16 - Pier bids

Hello all,

Here is my input regarding tonight's BOC meeting regarding the Pier, agenda item 16.

First, to the outgoing Commissioners, Judge Gerald Arnold and Brian Murdock, thank you for your service to the Town of Holden Beach. Congratulations to the new and returning Commissioners, Tom Myers, Rick Paarfus, Tracey Thomas, Dr Dyer, and to Mayor Holden.

I ran for Commissioner because I believe Holden Beach deserves an open, inclusive, and collaborative Board of Commissioners, and because it's time to greatly improve our Town's approach to planning, budgeting, communicating, and creating a long-term vision for what we want Holden Beach to be. This is still true, and it is why I oppose awarding a contract to begin work on refurbishing the Pier.

I attended both the pre-bid meeting, including the Pier walk-through with the contractors, and the bid opening, and it is clear to me more work needs to be done before a contract can be let. The only two bids received were millions of dollars apart, and the bid deemed the most responsive was the lower priced bid. I have concerns and questions regarding the disparity in pricing and how that was addressed by our engineer. The public deserves to know more and the bids should be made available to review.

I strongly urge the Board of Commissioners to table any action on the Pier tonight. Instead, I recommend you convene a special meeting in January to bring the public up to speed on the overall plan for the Pier, where it stands today, and what the possibilities are for the future, including a summary of all costs incurred to date, as well as an estimate of what it will cost to deliver the overall plan. It is obvious the Pier in its existing condition is unsafe for public use, and to bring it into safety compliance in order to reopen to the public is going to be very expensive, at least double the original budgeted estimate.

Given the recent battering our shoreline took on Sunday, along with the necessary sewer station repair work, we need to exert fiscal responsibility and ensure we have the funds needed to keep our beach and our utilities in excellent condition.

I support finding a way forward with the Pier property - it would be fantastic to have a beautiful spot for fishing and gathering with family, friends and neighbors. But we need to do this the right way, with clear and workable plans that adhere to a budget within our means.

Thank you for your time.

Kind regards,  
Maria

Maria Surprise  
159 OBE

## Heather Finnell

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**From:** Keith Smith <insuranceclaims@hotmail.com>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, December 19, 2023 9:17 AM  
**To:** Heather Finnell  
**Subject:** Public Comment for the Commissioner's meeting - 12/19/2023

Good evening,

My apologies for not being able to attend this evening's commissioner's meeting but I would like to offer a public comment for the record.

First, I would like to thank the outgoing commissioners for their public service in our community. There are those that have been critics of your every move, even to the point of alleging misconduct performed in secret. As a public servant, you signed up for scrutiny, but you have suffered personal attacks rather than politic decorum. For those in our community that have caused you to suffer, I apologize. While we know that small-town politics can be outlandish to make a point of distinction between candidates, it can sometimes be overbearing as well. The only remedy for these actions is forgiveness. I hope you can find a place of forgiveness for those who caused you personal angst.

To the newly elected Commissioners, congratulations for doing the work necessary to get elected. You had a plan, you worked the plan, and together you accomplished the objective. It is with this determination and accomplishment that I hope you pursue the needs of the town and leave it better off than when you started. While there are important decisions to be made and responsibilities to be maintained, I wish you the best of luck.

To the Mayor and Commissioner Page, congratulations on being re-elected to office. Your accomplishment should be celebrated and your courage to continue to serve this community be recognized for its resiliency. It is my hope for you to find common ground with the newly elected commissioners without losing the identity that got you elected.

To the current Pro-Tem Mayor, Rick Smith, good job! 😊

With regard to the pier bids:

I am 100% for the reopening of the pier. But after seeing the bids and having conversation with other contractors that reviewed the job, it appears that even if the budget had been sufficient to approve the bids, more work needs to be done to obtain a more cost-effective method of restoring the pier. The bids are just too high for the work needing to be performed. Whether changing the scope of work being performed or performing a review of the engineering to find savings, something needs to change so that a better decision can be made. We do not need to spend money just to be spending money. If you find that the bids received were in fact accurate, then we can address the budget, grants, or public-private partnerships to make up the difference. Keep in mind that spending occupancy tax dollars for pier repairs are not the same as spending ad-valorem tax dollars. No one is suggesting that we raise property taxes to make pier improvements, it is just not necessary. I look forward to a solution.

Thank you,

Keith Smith -  
105 Durham Street  
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