

# With new sewer, town flush with possibilities

**BY CLARA VAUGHN**  
Eastern Shore Post

A sewer line is on its way to Wachapreague that will connect its waterfront businesses, neighborhood shops, fire station, and the Virginia Institute of Marine Science to a regional sewer network underway on the Eastern Shore.

Local and state officials gathered in the town's Seaside Park Tuesday, Nov. 28, to officially launch construction of the 4.5-mile spur that will bring sewer service to town.

"This is a major step forward both for the Eastern Shore and for Wachapreague," said former Wachapreague Mayor Fred Janci.

"The waterfront was deteriorating and there were multiple property owners who weren't able to maintain their drain fields because of the proximity to the water and the water table," said Town Council member Bob Bilicki.

"If we could get the sewer to them, we could help restore the waterfront," he said.

Hampton Roads Sanitation District — the regional wastewater service provider bringing a sewer system to the mid-Shore — already installed

two miles of pipeline from Route 13 east along Wachapreague Road toward the town, said Project Manager Phil Hubbard.

The group expects to finish burying remaining pipes and install a pump station to connect Wachapreague to a 20-plus-mile regional sewer network by April or May 2024, he said.

The connection will provide opportunities to revitalize the town's commercial waterfront and neighborhood businesses, Bilicki said.

For example, the defunct marina "has been purchased in a sale agreement that is predicated on the fact that this pump station goes through, and that would restore that marina to operate again," he said.

A sewer system will also allow the Island House Restaurant to expand its seating and Lilliston Seafood to install restrooms, he said.

"For Wachapreague, it means an investment in the future of our small town," Janci said.

Though homes will not connect to the sewer network, the new system makes that a future option.

Wachapreague is just one of many mid-Eastern Shore towns joining the

(Continued on page 31)



# Wachapreague

(Continued from page 30)

regional sewer network.

The \$36 million project, funded by HRSD, will bring sewer service along the Route 13 corridor between Nasawadox and Onancock, connecting to towns including Exmore, Melfa, Onley, and Accomac.

HRSD's contractor, Garney Construction, began installing approximately 122,000 feet of sewer system pipes along Route 13 this summer.

Wachapreague was not part of the original sewer network, due to its distance from the highway, but a group of town officials, local leaders, and state and federal representatives worked together to fund the \$3.9 million spur to bring sewer service to town.

That included \$2.4 million from Virginia's General Assembly, \$750,000 from former U.S. Rep. Elaine Luria, and \$200,000 from Wachapreague's American Rescue Plan Act funds, Bilicki said.

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality funded the balance of the project and the Virginia Institute of Marine Science donated the land for the pump station, he said.

Bilicki thanked partners who contributed to the project, including Wachapreague's Mayor Charles Elliot and town council, Accomack County, the Accomack-Northampton Planning District Commission, the Virginia Department of Health, the Virginia Institute of Marine Science, Hampton Roads Sanitation District, Steve Johnsen, and state officials including Gov. Glenn



EASTERN SHORE POST/CLARA VAUGHN

Youngkin, former Gov. Ralph Northam, state Sen. Lynwood Lewis, and Delegate Rob Bloxom, who he called a "critical partner" in the project.

"You all worked very hard to get us to this point today," he said.

Bloxom made the ceremonial "first flush" during Tuesday's event to celebrate the start of the project that has been years in the making.

"This is just hopefully the first of a couple more projects on the Shore," he said of the arrival of HRSD and a regional sewer network.

"I'm looking forward to the real flush," Bloxom said in a nod to the project's projected completion next spring.

Delegate Rob Bloxom makes a ceremonial "first flush" celebrating the construction launch of a sewer pipeline to Wachapreague during a groundbreaking ceremony Tuesday, Nov. 28, at the town's Seaside Park.

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# Mission im-Popsicle: parade ice pops debated

**BY CLARA VAUGHN**

Eastern Shore Post

Independence Day on the Eastern Shore evokes images of beach days, boating, patriotic parades, and Popsicles melting on a hot day.

But in Accomac, the issue of ice pops has become a heated debate.

The topic causing the fireworks: whether the Accomac Town Council should buy less-expensive ice pops, or spring for more-expensive, healthier fruit juice pops,

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# Popsicles

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for distribution after its July 4 parade.

The question divided the town council. Seemingly the only item on which both sides agree is that there are more meaningful items to discuss.

"I think bigger issues are more important," said Accomac Mayor Patricia Smith, one of four elected officials to vote in May in favor of returning to the town's traditional frozen treat.

Accomac served a healthier, all-fruit option at its Independence Day parade last year, according to Vice Mayor Christopher Newman.

"Of all of the problems in our world and our country, here we are in our little town in our county seat arguing about Popsicles," said Newman, who said he was one of three to vote in favor of offering the fruit juice bars again this year.

The divide, however, is relatable wherever sweaty kids are quenching their summertime thirst with a frozen treat on a stick.

Low-priced but less wholesome? Or higher-priced and nutritional?

Accomac's non-motorized Independence Day parade is steeped in small-town history. For decades residents have lined the streets in lawn chairs or traveled the parade route by foot, bike, horse, or golf cart.

After the procession along Front Street, residents gather at the courthouse green for a community celebration with live music and pulled pork barbecue for sale by a local church.

Accomac purchases 200 Popsicles to pass out free of charge, along with water, Smith said.

"That's a pretty good turnout for a small town," she said, using the Popsicle count as an indicator of parade attendance in a town of around 500.

Until 2022, Accomac served sugar-free Popsicles, Smith said, but last year purchased a fruit juice option instead, following a decision by the town council.

"I thought if we're giving out Popsicles, we should give something

**'We're a small town. You have to make choices. I chose to have a less-expensive Popsicle.'**

**Pat Smith**  
Accomac mayor

healthier to the children," Newman said.

The fruit juice bars come in lower-count boxes than the 18 packs of orange, grape, cherry, and tropical flavors the town traditionally served, and Newman spoke to Food Lion's Onley manager, who provided a discount for the frozen fruit bars.

Even with the discount, they cost Accomac over \$130 last year, compared to around \$72 the town spent on sugar-free Popsicles in previous years, Smith said.

Those supporting the fruit juice bars contended Accomac can afford the option. Several residents have offered to foot the bill for the difference in cost, Newman said.

"We're representing our town," he said.

But Smith said the money saved can go towards other projects in town.

"We're a small town. You have to make choices. I chose to have a less-expensive Popsicle," she said, adding "that's not a major issue – what kind of Popsicles that you get for a parade.

"The issue is that everybody has a good time."

Accomac will hold its annual Fourth of July Parade on Tuesday, July 4, starting at 10 a.m. at 24010 Front Street at the intersection of Joynes Neck Road.

All are invited to walk or ride in the non-motorized parade, including horses and leashed dogs. The parade takes place rain or shine.

Email [townofaccomac@verizon.net](mailto:townofaccomac@verizon.net) with any questions about the parade.

# County may nix permit required to have fun

## Scofflaw music and festival organizers without necessary permit could face jail time

**BY CLARA VAUGHN**  
Eastern Shore Post

The Accomack County Board of Supervisors will consider repealing a little-used law requiring organizers to apply for a special entertainment permit to hold music events and festivals during a public hearing next month.

Under the law, organizers must obtain a permit from the county before holding a gathering “for the purpose of listening to or participating in entertainment that consists primarily of musical renditions” outdoors and outside of incorporated town limits.

The rule aims to ensure “pub-

**‘I think we need to be very careful with this.’**

**Donald Hart,  
Accomack County  
Board of Supervisors**

lic health, safety and general welfare of the citizens and inhabitants of the county,” but could carry heavy consequences.

Failing to apply for and receive a permit before holding such an event is a class 1 misdemeanor, according to county code, which could earn

out-of-compliance organizers up to 12 months in jail or a \$2,500 fine.

“That could happen unless we work on this ordinance,” said Board Chair Robert Crockett during the supervisors’ July meeting.

“I think we need to be very careful with this,” Supervisor Donald Hart said at the meeting.

Since the law was enacted several decades ago, only two organizers have applied for the permit, Accomack County Supervisor Mike Mason said. Both applications were this year.

The supervisors considered amending the rule during their meeting last month and continued the discussion during their meeting this week.

“Are we trying to create a solution when there’s no problem?” Crockett said during Wednesday’s meeting before the board proposed repealing the section of Accomack County code.

The supervisors plan to a public hearing on the proposed repeal of the rule on Wednesday, Sept. 20, at 6:30 p.m. in the Board Chambers of the Accomack County Administration Building, 23296 Courthouse Ave., in Accomac.

Members of the public are invited to comment on the proposed change during the hearing.

Visit <https://tinyurl.com/ye25rknr> to read Accomack County’s Musical or Entertainment Festivals ordinance.