

THE COASTLAND TIMES

CSI talks facility costs, partnership

By LINDA PUTNAM

Coastal Studies Institute Board of Directors discussed the progress of the new facility to be located next to the Dare County Regional Airport.

They also talked about proposed partnerships for a shared wastewater system with the N.C. Aquarium on Roanoke Island and with Dare County for emergency management offices that department would like to have located in the new CSI building, at its annual board meeting in Manteo on Friday, September 14.

Updating the board on the status of the new building, Nancy White, CSI director, said it is in the design phase which she expects to be complete by January. The design cost is \$900,000 to be shared by CSI (\$250,000) and East Carolina University (\$650,000) and will be recouped when the construction funds become available from the state.

Groundbreaking for the \$32.4 million CSI facility is expected to take place next summer.

This cost will be completely state-funded through certificates of participation since Dare County donated 34 acres of land next to the Dare County Regional Airport for the CSI facility.

White said the aquarium director has approached her about sharing the CSI waste system with the aquarium footing the bill for the system. White said a partnership with the aquarium would be a good fit for CSI since they had a shared mission.

"I would think we should look on this with open eyes and perhaps favor," said board member Bill Kealy.

The aquarium has also proposed to financially support and increase the CSI dormitory capacity by 12 persons, which the aquarium would use in the summers only.

Allowing the county emergency operations center to be located in the CSI facility was another matter. This could meld

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with CSI research projects, especially on disaster issues, White said, and the county would pay the cost. But, in time of a disaster or pending disaster, this group would "take over the building," observed one board member.

Another drawback is that the CSI facility is so far along in the planning stage that it would be hard to include this space.

"Dare County may not be able to come up with that much money in the foreseeable future," added Richard Johnson, board member and county commissioner. The county would have to decide about it in 60-90 days.

White observed that the aquarium proposals were "mission appropriate."

Charles Evans, board member, said he thought meshing the emergency unit with the CSI facility might be difficult, but the aquarium wastewater proposal has merit.

The board decided to appoint an ad hoc committee to study the proposals.

White discussed the possibility of the N.C. Oyster Hatchery to co-locating in CSI's Nags Head facility. Evans described this as a "very worthwhile project."

The Estuarine and Ecology and Human Health (E2H2) program's stormwater research has been hindered by drought conditions, according to the head of that program.

John McCord, education pro-

gram coordinator, said the group's website has had 10,000 hits since January. He named some of the programs his group has led or taken part in. These programs have been regional in nature, including a lecture in Hyde County.

Programs included a demonstration scale student oyster hatchery with Cape Hatteras Secondary School students, fish aquaculture projects, a remotely operated vehicle competition and a COA/CSI summer institute, among many other projects.

The CSI operating budget for the coming year is \$670,895.

In a final item, Richard Johnson and Joan Weld were named co-chairs of the board.