

Petition to Oppose Kayak Stand & Public Dock at the End of 7th Street

As residents in the vicinity of Bay and 7th Street of Morehead City, we would like to oppose the proposed building of a 500' long public dock at the end of 7th street right-of-way, as well as the proposal for the inclusion of a kayak stand in the area. We appreciate the town's goal to clean up the area, create a park, and provide water access for residents of the neighborhood. However, we have concerns about aspects of the current proposal.

Traffic & Parking Problems as a Result of Promoting a Kayak Park

One of our primary concerns regarding the proposal is the plan to encourage kayak access to Calico Bay from this area. We are not "anti-kayak"--some of us currently own or plan to buy kayaks ourselves. However, promoting such a public access has potential to attract hoards of visitors to the end of 7th street, and we strongly oppose the traffic and parking issues it could bring to our neighborhood. There is absolutely no provision to accommodate parking for these visitors, and we are extremely worried about the potential for an overabundance of vehicles (and small boat trailers) lining the sides of the roads in front our homes. And those of us with children and grandchildren do not want to have to worry about the increased traffic such a publicized public access would bring to our neighborhood streets.

We would all be naïve to assume that parking problems will not arise. Between the internet, kayak clubs, and word of mouth, news of this access could become popular very quickly. There are many sandy-bottom locations outside of our residential neighborhood which are much better options for kayak public access. Unsuspecting kayakers who step out of their boats along our shoreline are likely to encounter oyster beds or else sink up to their knees in mud. Either of the two Radio Island public beach access locations (which have plenty of public parking), and even the south 11th street public access are much more suited for such an access.

500' Long Dock at the End of 7th Street Right-of-Way

The other item which raises concern about the project is the 500' long dock planned for the end of the 7th street right-of-way. We are sorry to see our county's fishing piers start to disappear, but we don't want our neighborhood to become a parking lot for the county's newest public fishing pier. At low tide, a 500' dock at the end of 7th street would hardly reach the water. Besides the much greater cost of a 500' long dock, a long dock would also incur a much larger chance for hurricane damage, and more cost to upkeep. The public dock at the end of north 11th street that was damaged by a hurricane has been in disrepair for quite a long time. We hope that the town has plans to repair such existing public docks. It seems unfair and unwise for the town to spend money on new public docks when current docks have been neglected and remain unusable eyesores. Regardless of where public docks are being planned, the town needs to ensure that funds would be maintained for upkeep and maintenance of any public dock it builds.

Planned Condemnation at End of the Alley East of 7th Street

Feelings run strong and many residents have different opinions and agendas for what they'd like to see happen with the area at the end of the alley east of 7th street. Some don't want any public access at all created in the area. Some residents would like to see a small public neighborhood dock built there rather than a monstrous long dock at the end of 7th street. Some want a public dock at the end of the peninsula they could use to tie up their boats for the day. Some would like to see permanent boat slips available for rental. Some feel it isn't right for the town to take the land...that the area should remain just the way it has been for decades. Even those opposed to the condemnation proposal probably acknowledge that a public access would be a better alternative than a commercial developer eventually acquiring the property to build more god-forsaken condos.

We most likely could never come to a consensus on this topic. But for the most part, we are opposed to the promotion of any plan that has potential to bring a large amount of additional traffic to our neighborhood, and a public kayak access will do just that. The potential negatives which could result from an influx of countless outsiders into our quiet neighborhood outweigh what benefit neighborhood residents would be able to draw from it. Although feelings are mixed about what should happen with the property at the end of alley east of 7th street, we also feel that there is little, if any support from surrounding residents for a 500' long dock starting at the end of 7th street.

The town's Final CAMA application states that this project "has received neighborhood support as well as the support of City Council and other City residents and visitors." Many of the nearby property owners are extremely curious where all this support came from, because it doesn't seem like we were consulted when all these plans were made. A public meeting may be necessary in order for neighborhood residents to properly air their concerns.

Respectfully,

Neighbors of Bay and 7th street block
(Signed petition follows)