

**SOLOMONS
COALITION**

A BRIEF HISTORY

In the spring of 1987, the community felt that implementing the Solomons Master Plan was long overdue. The Solomons Civic Association learned that other organizations were also concerned about some of the same issues, so the members drew up a list of their priorities and directed the President, Brian Rothschild, to get in touch with the other organizations and find common issues they could support together.

Throughout the spring and summer of 1987 Brian meet with members from the Chamber of Commerce, Solomons Business Association, Watermen's Association, Solomons Island Yacht Club and the Marina Operators representing the varied aspects and interests of Solomons. A consolidated coalition was born - dedicated to serving the community - through united resident and business ideals of preservation and development.

The now famous 11 POINT LETTER was written, presented to each organization for approval and enthusiastically supported. The Coalition presented the letter to the Calvert County Government on September 22, 1987, thus beginning its mandate to achieve the 11 points; one-by-one.

The Coalition is dedicated to work with the County and State to complete the first major point - *IMPLEMENT THE SOLOMONS MASTER PLAN*. The Solomons Main Street Improvement and Development Project is the First Phase.

With the united support of local organizations, the community can achieve a beautiful Island, and all - resident, business, visitor - will benefit.

**GOVERNOR SCHAEFER
VISITS SOLOMONS**

In the Spring of 1988, the Governor, accompanied by State and County elected officials and other dignitaries, toured

Solomons and was very impressed with our town. He said we had a beautiful town, there wasn't another like it in the State; but our greatest asset, a magnificent view of the Patuxent River, was being used as a parking lot. Your visitors have to climb around cars for a view of the river, he said.

The Governor offered to work with the community, and placed it high on his Development of Waterfront Communities priorities, promising his support and the support of his staff.

**HAVRE de GRACE
HOSTS COALITION**

On April 3, 1989, over 30 people from the community and County Government spent a day in Havre de Grace studying projects similar to ours that the city had coordinated with State agencies to fund. The agenda included a briefing by the Mayor and his staff, a walk along the riverwalk, a visit to their duck decoy museum and other buildings and a short bus tour. The Solomons Business and Solomons Civic Associations funded the bus trip.

**COUNTY, STATE AND
COMMUNITY TO FUND
MAIN STREET
PROJECT**

The meeting with Governor Schaefer in the spring of 1988 resulted in the Solomons Main Street Improvement and Development Project. The first phase, a *RIVERWALK AND PARK*, includes redesign and expansion of parking, underground utilities, sidewalks, crosswalks, riprap bulkhead and riverwalk south and north of Solomons Pier and a Riverside Park with a Kiosk and a Bugeye Waterman's Memorial. Local County funding is in place. The Engineering Phase of the project has been completed.

As part of the project, the County purchased the lot in Solomons known as the

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* PAUVLION

'Harrison property'. This will be the location of public facilities which includes rest rooms and a sanitary pumpout station for marine traffic.

Through the continuing efforts of the Coalition and Senator Fowler, working with numerous State agencies, County government (Commissioners and departments), the State and County have agreed to fund the 4.5 million dollar project, with the State providing two-thirds of the funds.

The only phase of the project not funded is the Bugeye Waterman Memorial. The Coalition, representing the community, has undertaken to raise the 70 thousand dollars projected to build a memorial to the waterman who have worked Maryland waters. (See Build the Bugeye Fund Raising)

In conjunction with the Main Street project is a Commercial Fisheries Marina at the foot of A Street. The County, State and Our Lady Star of the Sea Church are coordinating the project which will include approximately 100 parking spaces, 35 - 40 commercial waterman's slips, an unloading dock, and a walkway from the marina to the main street. The Commercial Fisheries Marina is still in the planning stage.

A COALITION CHRONOLOGY

- MAY 1987 - Organizations and special interest groups began meetings to coordinate community efforts
- SEPTEMBER 22, 1987 - Presented 11 Point Paper to Calvert County Government
- SPRING 1988 - Governors' visit to Solomons
- OCTOBER 28, 1988 - 1st Charette at Calvert Marine Museum - State, County, Community, Organizations, Coalition
- DECEMBER 1988 - 2nd Charette
- APRIL 3, 1989 - Trip to Havre de Grace to study projects similar to Solomons the city coordinated with State agencies.
- JUNE 1989 - met with Senator Fowler
- JULY 12, 1989 - 'Build the Bugeye' Kick Off Inauguration Reception at the Lighthouse Inn



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- AUGUST 28, 1989 - 'Build the Bugeye' T-Shirt Fund Raising Project launched
- OCTOBER 1989 - met with Economic Roundtable
- OCTOBER 18, 1989 - Holiday In Gala Dinner
- NOVEMBER 15, 1989 - Visited by Crisfield officials to study the Solomons Main Street Improvement and Development Project
- APRIL 12, 1990 - Informal meeting with representatives of state, county, community, and organizations
- APRIL 30, 1990 - Formal luncheon with representatives of state, county, community, and organizations.

CHARETTE

Here's what happened the day we all went charetting. October 28, 1988, a group of people, 10 representing the State, 6 representing the County, 7 representing the Coalition, and 22 from the Community, met at 1:00 P.M. in the Calvert Marine Museum and did some brain storming on the Solomons Main Street Improvement and Development Project.

Gary Thorpe spoke on the Governor's desire to help communities. Thorps said the Governor is impatient to get things done, he is a 'do is now' person; he likes to help people and wants people to work together in united and cooperative efforts, and that the Governor likes to form a partnership with people to improve communities. Thorpe said the Governor prefers small waterfront development programs with interagency cooperation and feels 'they get a lot more

done' instead of 'hugh projects that take forever'

Mr. Thorpe said the State promises the collected efforts of State agencies to help with the project and that Solomons and the County will have a clear identity before, during, and after the completion of the project.

The State Architect presented a briefing on the project: redesigning the existing sidewalk area, road, parking lot. The new design includes a road/bike path, sidewalk, treescape/landscape area, utility-type building, green park area, parallel parking along sidewalk, four crosswalks, parking for over 200 vehicles.

Following a question and answer period, a list was developed that covered such issues as:

- ✓ --the road will be wide enough to incorporate a bike lane
- ✓ --neither a public marina or a fishing pier will be built on the Patuxent River side.
- ✓ --the legal aspects of riparian rights and existing pier must be researched
- ✓ --the riverwalk will be built both north and south of Solomons Pier on the existing bulkhead over riprap to stabilize and repair the bulkhead and will incorporate existing businesses
- ✓ --develop a commercial fisheries area
- ✓ --there will not be any resale establishments in the green park area
- ✓ ~~the Kiosk~~ will be a comfort station and maintenance building.
- ✓ --satellite parking with shuttle bus for special events
- ✓ --County and State must coordinate a traffic flow and parking study
- ✓ a turnaround is needed at Charles Street & Farren Ave

A Task Force representing the County, Coalition, and State was established and directed to carry the project through to completion.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Brian Rothschild, representing the Coalition, took a few minutes to present another community concern to the State and County officials. Brian spoke of the need to address plans for harbor development. The harbor is a major

part of community and one can't be developed without the other as each is dependent, one upon the other.

COALITION LAUNCHES 'BUILD THE BUGEYE' FUND RAISING PROJECT

The Coalition kicked off the 'Build the Bugeye' community fund raising project July 12, 1989 at the Lighthouse Inn. The Bugeye was chosen to represent both the contribution of the waterman and the town of Solomons. Solomons was created by waterman, its shipyards built the most Bugeyes, and it continues its involvement with marine commerce today.

A campaign for pledges and donations has been launched. Bugeye T-shirts and sweat shirts have been designed and are available at local shops. A Gala Dinner was held at the Holiday Inn October 18th, 1989.

The Coalition organizations have launched an all-out drive to raise the funds by 1991. Each organization will sponsor a project. Projects include 'Meet the Personality Dinner', individual and corporate 'Join the Crew' memberships, donation canisters throughout the community, and obtaining grants monies. Organizations will be notified about details very soon.

VOLUNTEERS ARE BEING RECRUITED TO JOIN THE 'BUILD THE BUGEYE FUND RAISING CREW'. CONTACT THE PRESIDENT OF YOUR ORGANIZATION AND BECOME A CREW MEMBER.

CRISFIELD COMES TO SOLOMONS

Calvert County Department of Economic Development and the Coalition took Crisfield officials on a tour of Solomons. After a briefing and luncheon at Holiday Inn, the group toured Solomons and was very impressed with the coordination of the State, County, and Community. Crisfield plans to try some of the same methods to restore their waterfront and to revitalize their economy.

* PAULION

The Coalition presented the original 11 Point Letter, printed here in its entirety, to the Commissioners of Calvert County on September 22, 1987.

11 POINT LETTER

The Solomons Civic Association, Chamber of Commerce, Solomons Business Association, Watermen's Association, Solomons Island Yacht Club and the Marina Operators are concerned with a lack of progress in implementing and extending the Solomons Town Center Master Plan and a seeming lack of urgency in addressing both non-cost items of concern to the residents and entrepreneurs of Solomons, and in working on alternatives to finance public-sector improvements in Solomons.

As you know, Solomons has experienced rapid growth in recent years in tourism (e.g. the Holiday Inn, the Comfort Inn, the Museum expansion); the new road; restaurants; and planned residential and commercial development. Existing facilities are taxed to the breaking point. There are some problems with parking, public safety, maintenance of public property, harbor use and public decorum, particularly on weekends.

To some extent growth and required facilities have been anticipated by the Town Center Master Plan, but the Plan now needs to be extended to develop a time-phased action plan for public facilities (e.g. sidewalks, lights, bicycle paths); for mobilization of various levels of government to coordinate to solve vexing problems such as the 'mess' on the bulkhead; and the management of the most important feature of Solomons, its harbor and adjacent waterways.

The challenge for all of us is to move quickly. If we do not move with urgency we will forgo our opportunity to model Solomons after the restoration of 'St. Michaels' or 'Oxford'. We will end up with a town similar to those that we find on Route 5. We will not take advantage of our marine setting we will lose the charm of Solomons. The choices are clear. Do we want a community and transient visitors and tourists who are

attracted to an enhanced and protected harbor, a waterfront museum, parks, sidewalks, and a pleasant marine community? Or, on the other hand, do we want to shape our community to attract those who neither contribute to aesthetics nor utilize the full range of businesses in Solomons?

The Solomons Coalition sees the following action items as being essential to meet our goals:

POINT 1 .. CLEAN UP THE BULKHEAD PARKING LOT ALONG THE PATUXENT

The entrance to Solomons is now evidenced by a bunch of beer drinking, shirtless fishermen.

To say it is disgraceful is being polite. We have to post and enforce 'No Fishing', 'No Crabbing', 'No Camping', and 'No Alcohol' signs. We request that the proposed bathhouse be built in conjunction with the (see Point 4) waterman's marina when a location is finally decided upon. We worry that a bathhouse would only institutionalize the fishing and crabbing crowd.

The bulkhead problems may be solved by the County taking over the roads. Before the County takes over the bulkhead and roads, the State Highway Administration should provide guidance for development of a County ordinance which, when passed, would allow SHA to post the signs enumerated above. The winter of 1987-88 is when we would hope to accomplish this. By then the pier above the bridge will be finished and the fishermen may be directed there.

Many parking spaces will be made available when the trailers, campers, etc. are removed from the bulkhead. Some will be lost to the sidewalks (see Point 3) but there should be a net gain in available parking. New homes and businesses should be expected to provide the spaces required by the zoning ordinance. Expanded parking should be made available at the launch ramp as soon as possible.

POINT 2 .. ENTRANCE TO SOLOMONS ISLAND AT THE TIDE BOX AND GENERAL LANDSCAPING

The entrance to Solomons Island at the Tide Box should make visitors feel they are arriving at

a special place. All visitors will have to drive past and many will want to use this area for parking. It simply must be cleaned up and landscaped to represent a vibrant Solomons and to allow it to be used for parking as was intended. Landscaping along the main road needs to be maintained and enhanced.

POINT 3 .. A START ON PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE ACCESS

The entrance to Solomons from the Gov. Thomas Johnson Bridge or Patuxent Plaza needs pedestrian and bicycle access. The whole west side of the road at Patuxent Avenue could be cross-hatched for no parking and, like St. Michaels, be used for pedestrians and bicycles immediately. There are other sidewalk designs under consideration but we need some near-term solutions while working on longer term projects. The sidewalks to be built should include all of the Town Center. There is only one stretch of road between Newtown Road and the new access road which needs to be completed. A vehicular road connecting the two should be engineered.

POINT 4 .. WATERMAN'S MARINA

A Waterman's Marina is an appropriate concept in the Town Center Plan. An oyster and fish sale pavilion and bathhouse could be located there. State funds for the slips and jetty system may be available.

POINT 5 .. A STRICTLY ENFORCED SIGN ORDINANCE

The business community will work to beautify and coordinate existing signs. Ordinances for new signs should be strictly enforced. The Marine Museum should lead the way in erecting a tasteful sign. Deep color and gold gilt are the types of signs that other prosperous communities erect. There are a few such signs in Solomons and merchants should be encouraged by citizens to copy these instead of plastic or tin signs. The Chamber of Commerce is working on a plan for generic business signs and the county should

encourage this venture. A highway sign on RT 2 & 4 indicating the Town Center is needed and should be attractively engineered and located.

POINT 6 .. PROTECT THE HARBOR ENTRANCE AND CLEAN UP THE WATERFRONT

The reason for the success of Solomons is the water. We have attracted the small boat owner with the launch ramp. The large boat owner should now be attracted. PROTECTING THE HARBOR ENTRANCE AND CLEANING UP THE WATERFRONT SHOULD BE A MAJOR GOAL OF SOLOMONS. State money is available and these projects should be implemented.

POINT 7 .. DEVELOP ORDINANCES TO ASSIST WITH LIMITED ENFORCEMENT CAPABILITY

The Solomons Working Group lead by Marvin Riddle has already begun to review ordinances to cover 1) outdoor music, 2) non-music noise from outdoor bars, 3) sanitary requirements at bars and restaurants, 4) closing hours, 5) off-premise drinking, and 6) littering on public and private property. These problems were identified as a MAJOR concern in the Town Center Master Plan. Discussion of draft ordinances should begin soon and be completed by springtime.

POINT 8 .. SETBACKS

The citizens of Solomons were active in tailoring the Solomons Master Plan and Zoning Ordinance to our local needs and desires. County officials accepted and incorporated many of the suggestions which the Civic Association helped to prioritize. There is now the danger that all the work we have invested will be wasted. The main concern is the setbacks which are proposed by the Critical Area Regulation. We have an ordinance which mandates 30' and 100' setbacks and we would like an exception to the Critical Areas 100' setback for Solomons in the cases where 30' is already legislated. We would also like some control over our own destiny with regard to what is happening with the Critical Area submissions from the County. If there is no time to hold the hearings as we were able to

have on the Solomons Town Center Master Plan, we would like to reiterate that we did and still do support the Town Center Plan, the growth allowed therein and the amenities which are enumerated in the Plan.

POINT 9 .. SEWER PLANT EXPANSION ESCROW FUND

We are able to grow and afford other capital improvements because of the water and sewer plan. We hope the money collected for tap fees are being allocated to a sewer plant expansion escrow fund. This will allow the progress to continue and will benefit not only Solomons but also the whole of Calvert County.

POINT 10..DEDICATED PERSONNEL FOR PLANNING AND GRANT ACQUISITION

The County should fund at least two professional positions to assist Solomons with planning, revitalization, and grant acquisition. These personnel would work along with the Economic Development Office and the Maryland Main Street Development Association, Inc., the Main Street Center, the Maryland Community and Housing Development Office, the Circuit Rider Program Office, and the Community Block Grant Office. While it may be thought that this is undue attention to the Solomons Town Center, the personnel in these positions could eventually use the expertise gained in Solomons to assist the development of other Town Centers in the County. The funding of these positions for Solomons evident support for the Town Center concept throughout the County.

POINT 11..ACTION PLAN AND BLUEPRINT

We need a time-phased action plan now to provide a blueprint and timing for progress in Solomons. The County needs to broaden the terms of reference of the "Solomons Working Group" to develop such a blueprint and time schedule within the next month.

There have been some great advances made, notably the underpass exit into Solomons. We

CONCLUSION

thank the Commissioners and Senator Fowler who went to bat for us on this and hope it will be only one of many improvements in Solomons. The Marine Museum's budget allocation which will allow the continuing construction of the building is money well spent and again we thank the Commissioners whose wisdom promoted this very worthwhile project.

Accordingly, we stress the importance of personnel that can be dedicated to Solomons planning and financing, especially for longer-term capital improvement projects. The bulkhead problem and required ordinances can, in our view, be accomplished with the urgency that they merit. It is important to Solomons and to other contemplated Town Centers that we give signs we are capable of moving ahead.

Respectfully,
Solomons Coalition

A NEWSPAPER ARTICLE PRINTED IN THE RECORDER SEPTEMBER 30, 1987 IS REPRODUCED FOR YOUR INFORMATION.

COALITION MEMBERS

The Solomons Coalition is a consolidation of the organizations, clubs, leagues, fraternities, and institutions in the Solomons Town Center. All the special interest groups are automatically members in the Coalition by virtue of being in the Solomons Town Center and are represented at meetings or should be. Contact any of the officers listed on page 2 for more information.

SOLOMONS SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS ARE REPRESENTED ..OR SHOULD BE.

The Solomons Coalition Corporation is dedicated to serving the Solomons Community through united resident and business ideals for preservation and development.