



Cape Fear Firebird

The Light of Save the Cape

November 12, 2014

Take calculated risks. That is quite different from being rash.
–George S. Patton

Chutzpah

“We recommend that you list the 600-acre property at Southport for sale and aggressively market it for industrial use.” That’s what we told Secretary of Transportation Tata and Paul Cozza, CEO of the State Ports Authority, a few week ago. We even provided a resolution for the Board.

Yes, folks, that’s the 600-acre property the Ports Authority had purchased for a huge container terminal near Southport. And the very same 600-acre property where we have been working very hard for the past year and a half to establish a new State park for Brunswick County.

Have we given up? We have not. But we cannot move forward until the Ports Authority has examined alternatives to park use, and the Brunswick County Commissioners learn that the property cannot be sold for industry. Indeed, the Commissioners have adopted a resolution supporting

the parcel being used for an industrial purpose. Furthermore, we encourage the North Carolina Port Authority to jointly market this site with the North Carolina Department of Commerce, the Brunswick County Economic Development Commission and any other agency or group for industrial purposes that meets the regulations as set forth by the EPA and the North Carolina Department of Environmental and Natural Resources.

So let them find out if there’s a market for industrial use. We suggested to the Ports Authority that they list the property for sale for a year; when that fails, move forward with the park project.

What’s the risk? As for the Ports Authority, they have a dilemma regarding market value. The property is on their books for \$30 million, the amount paid by a previous administration. But a recent appraisal suggests the actual value is a fraction of that. Buyers will want a bargain and won’t get one.

As for the County Commissioners, they are putting their faith in Jim Bradshaw, the Director of the County Economic Development Commission--we are, too. We are betting he will fail, as he has failed to bring industry to the County even with thousands of acres of fine industrial sites near highways and the railroad. But the Commissioners have to see for themselves about sale for industry.

Don’t worry. We aren’t. The Ports Authority property is near neither markets nor materials. It is relatively inaccessible. The river next to the property is a foot deep and the channel is a mile away. And the last time a major industrial enterprise opened in Brunswick County was in 1976.

What but a park could be near a nuclear plant and an ammunition depot? Parks and nuclear plants are often neighbors. And part of Carolina Beach State park is in the Sunny Point blast zone.

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