



Jack Reynolds

**END OF THE ROAD:** Compounding a dead end with icy rocks and continuing erosion, extreme winter conditions make the edge of Long Beach Township property at Holgate a hazard early this week.



Ryan Morrill

## Knock-Down, Drag-Out Fight With Nature

*Northeaster's Winds Force a New Housing Start*

**GROUND LEVEL:** Gusts from Sunday's storm caught a home under construction at 5101 Ocean Blvd. at a vulnerable stage. Remains of the partly framed structure had to be cleared away to make room for a new start.

## Winter Storm Gnawing at Beach Puts Machinery in Repair Gear

Long Beach Township Spreading 880 Tons of Sand a Day

What the storms take away, Long Beach Township keeps putting back on the beachfront at Brant Beach; luckily, the money from an earlier \$150,000 emergency appropriation is still stretching to cover the cost of the sand.

Heavy equipment started the engines again Monday and Tuesday to begin filling in a roughly six-block section where last Sunday's northeaster had undermined at least two homes.

"We got a washout from 48<sup>th</sup> Street to 54<sup>th</sup> in Brant Beach," said Long Beach Township Commissioner of Public Works Robert Palmer. "It came back to where we had the problem two weeks ago, only on a bigger scale."

The earlier beach-rebuilding task after a Jan. 31 northeaster had pushed sand under a home at 5301 Ocean Blvd., where six feet of pilings had been exposed. Township Department of Public Works crews pushed more of the trucked-in fill to adjacent areas as well.

"That sand's gone," Palmer said this Tuesday. "We're putting new sand in there as we speak. We're bringing in 40 loads a day," each load comprised of 22 tons of fill purchased from Sahara Sand of Eagleswood, on the mainland.

Even though the earlier fill was swiped by heavy surf, it provided some buffering from the next storm. "If we hadn't have put that sand in there, Lord knows where the house would be right now," Palmer commented.

Up the road in Harvey Cedars, public works trucks echoed the sounds of their counterparts to the south. "We had the ocean come up and start coming over Hudson Avenue," said Borough Clerk Daina Dale. "And at Atlantic Avenue, the one house that was exposed a couple of weeks ago with the mild northeaster got exposed again — the pilings all were showing a little worse."

The public works department brought in some fill that the borough had stockpiled.

The ongoing need for the proposed federal/state/local beach replenishment project was expected to be mentioned again at the coming Harvey Cedars Borough Commission meeting on Feb. 21.

"We definitely need that project," Palmer agreed. "With those heavy winds and high tides, we just took a beating."

Back in the Brant Beach section of Long Beach Township Tuesday, Palmer expected the current fill project there to continue for at least three more days. But he said the money to pay for the work was still coming from a \$150,000 emergency appropriation that the township commission had approved on Feb. 3.

"We're still using the original funding ordinance from the last storm," he said. "I didn't hardly use any of it. We pay about \$8.50 a ton, somewhere in there, for the sand." It was not necessary to call in the county for backup help, Palmer added. "I would have asked the county to step in, but the wind direction changed, so it's not going to get any worse. So we can do it without the county's help."

Meanwhile in the same neighborhood, at 5101 Ocean Blvd., Sunday night's wind gusts had blown a partly sheathed house off its bracing.

Interestingly enough, Palmer was officiating the situation from Florida. The Feb. 12 northeaster hit while he was on vacation.

"That's OK, I'm on the phone every hour with J.J.," he said, referring to the township Superintendent of Public Works, John Jones. "We had a power surge come through and fried some of our computer systems; we had the house blow off; we had a blizzard; we had flooding — it was a bad day."

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## Southern Regional Parents Urge Board to Get on Track

The need for a new track at Southern Regional High School is a topic of ongoing interest throughout the district, especially among track team coaches, members and their parents, who have made it their mission to keep the board of education members on their toes.

Craig Brearly of Stafford, who has two sons on the high school track team, attended the regular board of education meeting of Feb. 8 hoping for a progress report on the district's finding a builder and awarding the contract.

On behalf of the capital projects committee, board member Chris Taylor announced the first round of bidding on the contract brought in two figures from two different companies, both of which were much higher than anticipated, so the project will be put back out to bid this week in hopes of securing a more agreeable price.

The two companies that expressed an interest in the project were American Athletic Courts of Vincentown and Halecon of Bridgewater, whose respective estimates were \$428,750 and \$411,000. The district has earmarked \$250,000 for the project.

By law, according to Business Administrator Lynn Shugars, the board must advertise the bid for 10 business days before the bidding can be opened. Once reopened, "we're hoping the bids come in a little lower," she said, adding the board may try to "shift some monies around if necessary" to cover the cost of the project and get it moving along as soon as possible.

Brearly's position, however, is that the project was grossly underbudgeted in the first place, the board members should have known the range of estimates to expect, and now a lot of time over the winter in which construction could have begun has already been wasted.

Of a similar viewpoint is the high school girls' track coach of eight years Brian Zatorski, for whom the issue boils down to two major questions: where did the figure of \$250,000 come from in the first place, anyway, and what exactly is the holdup here?

"This is going to get ugly," he predicted, based on what he is hearing from angry track

parents on one side and from district officials on the other.

It seems to him, Zatorski said, that finding out the average cost of building a new facility would be a simple matter of placing a few phone calls. But what has really incited the parents, he continued on behalf of those who have relayed their feelings to him, is the way the board seems to be responding to them dismissively or giving them the run-around.

What matters most to Zatorski is that "this is affecting hundreds and hundreds of students." The voters approved the construction of a new track by referendum last April, according to Zatorski, since which time the money has been available and sitting dormant. Meanwhile, the deterioration of the track surface has steadily worsened, to the point where now a chunk "the size of an automobile" has come loose — presumably helped by vandals, he added — rendering the track unusable for the upcoming season.

The existing track, which has already exceeded its life expectancy of 10 to 12 years, falls so far beneath the current standards in track surface technology that "it's the equivalent of running on the street," with "just no give at all," he said.

"I have a more intimate knowledge of that facility than, probably, anybody in the world," Zatorski said. "Just because I'm out there, I see it every day." As such, he submitted a specification sheet to the board as per its request, he said, outlining the components a sufficiently updated facility would have, such as multiple runways for javelin throwing and long and triple jumps. Some of the components ended up being listed as "extras," he said, when actually they are features that are necessary to bring the school's track facility into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

"To host invitationals, you need multiple runways," he said.

He also has had to field embarrassing critical remarks from visiting coaches, along the lines of (an actual quote) "Dude, what's up? We can't have a race here; your track is terrible."

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