

Mayor Ken Haller

1975-1980 and 1983-1985

By Phyllis Makuck

HISTORY STORIES

Reflections of Pine Knoll Shores

Following is the second article from a blog post entitled "Pine Knoll Shores Mayors: 1973 to 2003" at pineknollhistory.blogspot.com. Most of the information comes from back Shoreline issues available on ncdigital.com. Pine Knoll Shores History Committee member Susan Phillips has provided supplementary information from an internet search and communication with Mayor Haller's daughter, Sue Haller Balmat.

In November 1975, Pine Knoll Shores elected Art Browne, Ken Haller, Rudy McBride, Hayes McCulley, James Ramsey and Mary Katherine Smith as commissioners. A referendum on the ballot gave the second Board of Commissioners the ability to exceed what had been a \$10,000 limit on operational and maintenance expenditures, but not on capital expenditures. There were 260 eligible voters, and 208 voted. On November 13, newly elected commissioners, meeting at Bogue Banks Country Club, selected Ken Haller as mayor.

A brief biography of candidates published in the October 1975 *Shore Line* and written by Ken's wife, Newell Haller, provided the following:

KEN HALLER, Oakleaf Drive, was born in Frederick, Maryland, 69 years ago. He received his college degree (Phi Beta Kappa) from Johns Hopkins University and graduated from Harvard Law School. He first practiced for some 10 years in association with a large law firm in Buffalo, New York, but spent the war years on the staff of the General Counsel of the War Production Board in Washington, D.C. With the end of the War, he and others formed a partnership in which he practiced corporate law in New York City for over twenty-five years. Since retirement five years ago, he served as Chairman of the Citizens Committee, responsible for the incorporation of Pine Knoll Shores as a town, and he drew its charter. He also served on the original Planning Board and on the Board of Adjustment. Ken and former Newell Maverick were married in 1938. They have two daughters and two sons (Judy, Sue, Kenny and Hugh) and six grandchildren. Ken likes nothing better than casting in the Sound for live bait and then fishing in the surf at dawn the next morning.

At the time, Ken and Newell Haller were living in a house they had built in 1972 on Oakleaf Drive where Alice Hoffman's house had once stood. In building a new home on the site, they retained some of the remnants of Alice's house, including the foundation and cement stairs on the sound side of the property.

Like Jim Redfield, Ken Haller was a member of Pine Knoll Association (PKA), which in 1975 shared its representation of the largest voting block in Pine Knoll Shores with Pine Knoll Shores Corporation (PIKSCO). We also learn from the *Shore Line* that before becoming mayor Ken Haller was part of a group studying future growth of new subdivisions.

During Haller's first term in office, the Town of Pine Knoll Shores gained recognition in the county. In the summer of 1976, Mayor Haller became the official representative of Carteret municipalities on the Neuse River Council of Governments.

His first term also included reworking zoning ordinances and establishing a Community Appearance Commission, which would have long-term influence on the preservation of trees and lead to Pine Knoll Shores' becoming a Tree City. Mayor Haller led the Board of Commissioners in making recommendations to erect a new town hall and to acquire new fire-fighting and rescue equipment, both of which required voters to pass a referendum, which they did. The referendum was the town's first request for authority to issue bonds and raise taxes.

According to statistics presented by Mayor Haller in 1977, Pine Knoll Shores had the lowest tax rate and one of the highest real property values in the county. It also had the largest population on Bogue Banks and the smallest budget, all of which probably helped support the bond and tax proposals.

Among the more localized issues at the time were requirements for bulkheading and for managing the problem of silting in the canals. But, whether the concerns were small or large, Mayor Haller seemed to take a hands-on approach in working with citizens and the Board of Commissioners.

Volunteerism was always important in Pine Knoll Shores, before and after incorporation. Mayor Haller, like Jim Redfield, was himself an active volunteer. To help solve a litter problem, Mayor Haller led by example. The July 1976 *Shore Line* named him "scavenger-in-chief" because he was picking up so many discarded cans and bottles, "approximately 200 a month."

Neighbors helping neighbors as a way of life was established early on. One such group was Civil Preparedness, a volunteer organization Mayor Haller would call into action when storms threatened.

Unlike Jim Redfield, Ken Haller served multiple terms as mayor from 1975 to 1980 and from 1983 to 1985. He resigned in April 1980 for health reasons, and a *Carteret News-Times* article announcing his resignation also cited the all-consuming nature of the job done without monetary compensation but with "all the criticism in which anyone wants to indulge." Not everyone in town was ungrateful, however, and declaring a "Ken Haller Day" on May 4, 1980, was one way a group of Pine Knoll Shores citizens showed their gratitude.

Wayne Cleveland, who had been mayor pro-tem, became mayor to serve out Haller's third term, and was selected for a full term in 1982. When Cleveland died in office in the fall of 1983, Ken Haller agreed to serve as mayor again, which he did for almost two additional years. He resigned after writing a letter in support of the Roosevelt interests' final plan for the town center. His last few months in office were no doubt stressful, and he was soon to turn 80.

As mayor, Ken Haller supported open meetings. As stated in a February 1985 *Shoreline*, he "welcomed all citizens to attend meetings and offer suggestions and criticisms." The tug-of-war between pro-development and pro-status quo factions often played out at his meetings.

Among the frustrated efforts dragging on for years were proposals for a third bridge. Haller joined a delegation to Raleigh to petition the Department of Transportation to build a third bridge to Bogue Banks. (Today's Pine Knoll Boulevard was, in accord with A.C. Hall's city plan, originally named Bridge Road, anticipating a bridge where McGinnis Point now begins.) Most residents seemed to want a third bridge but did not want it in their neighborhood. Haller, who liked to write light verse, put it this way:



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