

The SHORE LINE

Published by The Town of Pine Knoll Shores In The Interests Of Its Citizens

Post Office Box 757, Atlantic Beach, N. C. 28512

Volume V - Number 11

November 1984

Noel Yancey - Editor

Strong sentiment in favor of permitting Roland Britt and Cliff Benson Jr. to construct a multimillion-dollar shopping mall at the Salter Path Road - Pine Knoll Boulevard intersection was expressed by most speakers at a public hearing November 13. A packed house attended the hearing in Town Hall.

SHOPPING MALL

A substantially smaller number argued against the project at the hearing conducted by the Town Board of Commissioners. Actually, the hearing was on a long-standing proposal to give the 10 acres at the rear of the tract

SPARKS DEBATE

the same shopping center designation the front 15 acres already bear, thus making a 25-acre tract available for the proposed center. The board deferred action on the request until its December meeting.

John Elder led off the parade of those favoring the shopping center. He said the town needs a shopping center, that the plans for the center are "in good taste and realistic" and that the tract of land has been tagged for a shopping center ever since the town's first land-use plan was adopted.

Ross Earnest, who wants the property preserved in its natural state and added to the adjoining Roosevelt Natural Area, presented a petition supporting this position signed, he said, by 200 "permanent and seasonal residents of Pine Knoll Shores." Earnest urged a public referendum on the issue and predicted a "substantial majority" of the voters would back him.

During the hearing, Developer Don Brock -- in answering a question by Elder -- revealed that Benson and Britt had recently purchased the property from the Roosevelts who developed Pine Knoll Shores. No purchase price was revealed, but it was speculated that the property was worth \$1 million or more. Brock, who represents the Roosevelt interest, has made it plain they want the shopping center built.

The arguments made it apparent that the town cannot permanently block -- even if it wanted to -- the construction of a shopping center on the property -- at least on the front 15 acres without getting in a lawsuit and that there is no money in sight to purchase the property -- as Earnest would like -- even if the developers were willing to sell.

Jim Smith, who observed that a referendum would be the only way to determine if a majority want a shopping center, asked Mayor Ken Haller if the town could do anything

TOWN OF PINE KNOLL SHORES

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