

# Sunset Beach Council Favors New Flood Insurance Standards

BY BILL MCGOWAN

Sunset Beach officials favor new federal flood insurance standards and agreed Monday night to implement a new floodplain management ordinance which mirrors those requirements.

The action will result in relaxed building requirements on the island and lower insurance premiums for Sunset Beach property owners.

Town council unanimously approved a resolution paving the way for a public hearing on flood insurance rate map changes and an appeal period to proceed final adoption of a flood management ordinance.

The new federal flood insurance standards are the result of a two-and-a-half year study conducted by the Federal Emergency Management Agency which administers the federal insurance program.

"In reviewing it, I found no argument with the study or the way the maps were done," said Mayor Pro Tem Ed Gore. "I don't see that we should object during the objection period. We have been treated better than in the past in typography and in setback from the ocean."

As a result of the detailed flood study, the minimum building level at Sunset Beach would be decreased from 14 feet to 13 feet. Next door at Ocean Isle Beach, however, the new standards would increase requirements from one to three feet higher.

According to Town Manager Wallace Martin, the standards which will benefit the island community have resulted from the use of new zones. For the first time, the impact of wave actions in areas zoned "V" for "coastal high hazard zones" was used in determining minimum building levels. According to FEMA officials, areas with higher sand dunes could cause a reduction in those standards in the V zones.

The entire study was reviewed by county and town officials in January. Both groups will be adopting floodplain management ordinances that meet at least the minimum standards for flood hazard reduction set

forth by FEMA.

Following approval of a resolution Monday night, a 90-day appeal period will be observed during which time comments on the federal agency's findings will be accepted. The town must then wait 60 days before finally adopting the ordinance.

### Street Abandonment

Also at Monday night's meeting, Councilwoman Katherine Hill asked what will happen to the land abandoned by the town in its streets abandonment project.

Martin told council property on either side of the center line of the streets will revert to adjacent landowners.

Gore further clarified the streets abandonment resolution introduced last month by saying the land would be distributed in two ways.

On North Shore Drive, for instance, Gore said, lots abutting the marsh on both sides of the road would get 20 feet in added depth, leaving the town with a 40-foot easement. Canal lots, however, are different.

Since both tiers of canal lots front estuary waters, Gore said, property owners on both sides will be given the advantage of an additional 10 feet.

The additional footage for many lots is needed, Gore explained, so that septic tank setbacks will conform with state requirements and the town can issue permits.

### Tax Sale Set

Town Clerk Linda Fluegel was given the go ahead to conduct the town's tax lien sale.

As of Monday, she told council members, the town had \$7,500 in tax liens.

Council agreed unanimously to allow Fluegel to conduct the sale June 10 at 10 a.m. at the town hall.

### Damages Go Unchecked

Town Manager Martin received council approval to proceed with action against a Sunset Beach property owner who has apparently refused to repair damages to an old business.

Martin told council he has contacted Dr. John T. Madison several times about the bad state of repair of the old Continental Apartments. The

condition of the building deteriorated appreciably during Hurricane Diana and could be considered a hazard to the public, Martin said.

According to Clark Fluegel, the building is in bad shape with upstairs floors rotted out, windows broken out and doors off their hinges.

"I have the responsibility to take care of the situation," Martin said, "but I would really just like the consensus of council."

The town manager hinted at condemnation of the property if the situation is not improved. "That's a last ditch business that I don't like to get into," he said, "but I'm ready."

Martin added that if successful in condemnation proceedings, the town could have the building torn down, charging the cost to Madison.

### Other Business

In other business, council did the following:

- Passed a resolution of appreciation which will be sent to all state and local agencies which assisted the town after a barge rammed the Sunset Beach bridge in January.

- Heard that the town used 12 million gallons of county water during the past three months at a cost of \$11,849.

- Refused to grant relief to S.T. Smith for a waterline break at his home during which some 14,640 gallons of water was wasted. Smith had agreed to pay the minimum monthly charge of \$8 and was requesting relief from \$7.10 in overcharges.

- Heard that the town's police department investigated two breaking and entering cases during January, and issued five town citations and two state citations. Department officials drove 3,563 miles during the month and police cruisers burned 436 gallons of fuel. The sanitation department used 127 gallons of gasoline during January, while the water department accounted for 37 gallons.

- Learned that the town has been planting new and used Christmas trees on the beach to build dunes. Martin reported the project has been successful and is still in progress.



## Cubs Tour Beacon

Cub Scouts from Shallotte Pack 227, Den 2 toured The Brunswick Beacon offices Monday afternoon as an activity during National Scout Week (Feb. 3-9). The cubs got a firsthand look at how Beacon employees produce a newspaper each week. Pressman Steve Anderson guided the scouts on the tour through the news, advertising, business, production and circulation departments.

Pictured in the Beacon pressroom are (front from left) cubs Kelly Edwards, Jody Bowen, Brandon Cheers, Lemorris Stanley and Randy Woodard; (back row) assistant den mother Jean Cheers, den leader Carolina Hill and son, Corbie, and Anderson.

## Public Hearing Set On Assessment

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tendant at the station. If the state says it must, that will require addition of a building and septic tank at the site, which is located near the intersection of Holden Beach and Oxpen roads.

- Adopted a preliminary assessment resolution on the county loan participation plan for Brooks Drive, setting a public hearing Monday, April 15 at 6 p.m. at the public assembly building. A similar resolution was not adopted for a road in Lockwood Folly Township because matching funds will not be available from the state until July 1, Attorney David Clegg said. The latest state estimate for bringing Brooks Drive up to standards is \$19,700, lower than the previous estimate.

- Approved filling of vacant positions in the social services department and retention of a half-time person by that department to coordinate transportation services. The person was originally designated to handle aging services when DSS was the county's focal point on aging, a responsibility assumed presently by the commissioners.

- At Commissioner Grace Beasley's request, voted to ask Landfill Director Major White to reassess the need for green boxes in the District 5 area and place enough there to handle the need. Ms. Beasley said the number in the northern area of the county isn't adequate.

- Approved a system for handling advance pet immunization fees as outlined in a county ordinance that requires stray dog owners and those adopting pets from the county animal shelter to pay the cost of rabies vaccination before the animal is released. The owner takes an authorization card to a participating veterinarian to obtain the shot, then the veterinarian claims payment. Health Director Tom Blum said the budget system should help track the 30 or so animals that leave the shelter each month and are not vaccinated soon afterward.

- Approved, at COG representative Jim Poole's recommendation, designation of COG as the lead agency to apply for and administer a \$25,000 grant that would be used to screen Brunswick County senior citizens for home health services by contract with the board. Poole said COG could deliver services to more people because it would have lower overhead/administrative costs, yet the county would have a say in the program through the contract.

- Approved using existing funds in the health department to hire temporary help to ease a backlog of clerical work.

- Approved spending up to \$1,500 to

replace an engine in an animal control truck, with instructions to get prices from more than one company. Commissioner Frankie Rabon said he didn't like the idea of buying without obtaining estimates from several companies first, regardless of the item.

- At the recommendation of Clerk Regina White, designed Lynne Haas, secretary to County Manager Billy Carter, to serve as clerk pro tem to the board any time Ms. White is absent. The board met last Wednesday and took action, but there will be no official minutes approved because notes were not kept by a designated clerk.

## Petition Considered Invalid

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ding 1 subdivision on N.C. 179. Council agreed to rezone the entire area from MH-2 to MB-3, which would allow the construction of multi-family housing on the land.

Council members also reached unanimous agreement on rezoning of eight acres in Seaside known as the "Brooks Estate" from MH-1 (mobile home) to MB-1. The land will be used commercially, according to Ocean Isle Beach developer Stuart Cooke, who requested the zoning change on behalf of the Joe Brooks family.

Rezoning of the Brooks Estate also survived an attempt by surrounding landowners to squelch the move by petition. The drive was led by William Taylor of T & T Development, Inc., who holds an option on a parcel of land that lies in the middle of the eight-acre tract requested for rezoning.

According to Town Manager Wallace Martin, the petition is not legitimate and would not stand up in court. He said the town based its decision to consider the petition invalid on the opinion of the League of Municipalities.

Taylor said at a public hearing last week he is not opposed to changing the area from MH-1 to MB-1 where a fish house and restaurant are now standing on the estate, but added he is opposed to rezoning any area next to the site where mobile homes are now parked.

Opposition to the MB-1 classification has existed since it was approved last October, Hill said Monday night. But according to Gore, who joined opponents Hill and Griffith following the meeting to discuss the issue with The Beacon, opposition to the MB-1 zone is opposition to progress and, as such, is unfounded.

"You have to have faith," Gore

told Hill and Griffith. "You can't write a roadmap for everyone's destiny."

Hill disagreed, saying that town council members have a responsibility to make certain that every outcome of the rezoning is foreseen. "You've got to cover your tracks" with respect to future services the town may have to provide, as well as to providing safeguards against environmental hazards, she said. "After it's all over and done with, it's hard to undo. I just hate to see us as a board having to move forward to back up, and in some cases, that is what we are having to do."

Gore noted that a lack of restrictions in the MB-1 classification does not mean developers will be able to take a free hand. He said the value of the parcels of land which have been rezoned will necessitate expensive projects which are high in quality. He added that state density requirements are more than adequate to protect the environment.

Hill countered, saying that newspaper articles during the past week alone have shown that the state Environmental Protection Agency and the Coastal Area Management Act have not provided the necessary restrictions to protect the coastal environment.

Griffith was concerned that council members have little idea of what will be constructed on the rezoned land. "It's funny, though, how everyone's interested in this land now that we've started changing it to MB-1 when no one was interested in it before."

Concerning the rezoning of 13.2 acres at Bonaparte's Landing from MR-2 to MB-1, Griffith said council is "just downgrading your zoning."

"It might be doing that," replied Safrin, "but it's sure upgrading the community."

Just prior to the rezoning votes, Griffith asked why multi-family restrictions are necessary in any case if they are not necessary for MB-1 zones. She asked if it was possible to refer the requests back to the planning board and ask that body to study the effect of high density on the areas proposed for rezoning.

Following the votes on rezoning, Hill motioned that the planning board be instructed to review the MB-1 classification to see if an amendment is necessary, especially concerning density requirements. The motion passed unanimously and Martin said the item would be on the planning board agenda at its Feb. 19 meeting.

## Orrock

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cy's board was allowed 15 days in which to file exceptions with the Commission, but that the time lapsed while her contract with the department was still being completed and signed.

"They (the Commission) wanted to be fair and allow us time to file our exceptions," she said.

Also, Ms. Easley was faced with scheduling problems. She had just begun work as the board's attorney and the Commission date was set a little too close to the day set next week for delivery of the Easley's first child.

The social services board begins interviews Feb. 20 in its search for a new director.

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Established Nov. 1, 1962  
Telephone 754-6890  
Published Every Thursday

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