

Ocean Isle Board Grants Variances

Two property owners were granted after-the-fact zoning variances Tuesday night by the Ocean Isle Beach Zoning Board of Adjustments, which also agreed that the language in the town's zoning ordinances needs review.

Future versions of the setback and sundeck ordinances, for instance, may come with diagrams to help clarify and interpret the town's intent.

"There are some ambiguities," Mayor LaDane Bullington said in reference to the language. "We need to reword it so that no matter who reads it they can interpret and understand it."

Town commissioners serve as the adjustment board, with Betty Williamson as chairman. Mayor LaDane Bullington serves as clerk to the board.

On a motion by Connor Cox, the board voted unanimously to grant Jerry C. Scott relief from a side yard requirement.

Scott bought his Fairmont Street home unaware that a set of steps in the side yard exceeded the side yard setback by eight inches.

Building Inspector T.D. Roberson said that if the steps were narrowed,

they would no longer meet the N.C. Building Code.

In the second appeal heard, the board, on a motion by Debbie Fox, unanimously granted Mr. and Mrs. James Hesser a variance in the sundeck requirement. The Hessers will be allowed to rebuild a cantilevered sundeck on the front of their just-completed home at 44 Union Street.

Builders had begun tearing down the deck after learning it extended two feet farther than allowed into the front setback area, Hesser said. The flooring has been removed, with only joists remaining.

Ms. Fox said the Hesser's sundeck is "in harmony" with the intent of the sundeck ordinance and that the violation was apparently unintentional.

"Our intent was to prohibit the blocking of parking as well as blocking the neighbors' view," she said. "In this case it certainly does not."

Audience member Robert Ball questioned whether cantilevered sundecks along the street side of a home interfered with parking, a neighbor's view or control of run-off. He said the front area before most homes is typically covered with gravel or paved for parking, not grassed.



Stick 'Em On

Holden Beach residents have through Feb. 28 to register their vehicles at the town hall and to obtain stickers like the one Commissioner Hal Stanley (above) has mounted on his front windshield. It costs \$5 to register a vehicle; failure to do by the deadline so costs \$5 per day each day of violation. The idea of the sticker emerged after Hurricane Diana, when a need was noted for identifying vehicles that belong on the island.

Rose's Staff Coming Friday

Congressman Charles Rose will have staff members at the Shallotte and Southport post offices on Friday, Feb. 22 to talk with and assist constituents who may have problems involving federal agencies or regulations.

He asks that visitors to the mobile office bring related documents or letters with them.

Staff members will also note any comments concerning important issues for relay to Rose.

Rose's staff will be at the Shallotte Post Office from 8:30 a.m. to 10 a.m. and at the Southport Post Office from 10:30 a.m. to noon.

People unable to visit during the hours specified may call Rose's

Wilmington office at 343-4959 or his Washington office at (202) 225-2731.

Correction

A statement in a page 1 article on oyster relaying in the Feb. 14 issue of The Beacon was incorrectly attributed to Arcelia Smigiel.

Mrs. Smigiel, of Varnumtown, was correctly quoted as supporting a daily limit so as to prolong the length of the harvest, but not as stated, "and to keep 'those Calabash people from coming up here and getting 50 or 60 bushels of oysters and selling them for \$5 a bushel.'"

That statement should have been attributed to Alex Kuigre, also of the Varnumtown community.

Inspections May Extend County Fire Districts

BY TERRY POPE

An effort to extend county fire districts and improve insurance ratings for homeowners has undergone a first round of testing by the N.C. Insurance Service Office, said Brunswick County Emergency Management Coordinator Cecil Logan.

Logan said an agent with the ISO, Charles Rhodes, inspected fire departments in southern Brunswick County last week and was scheduled to begin testing Southport and Yaupon Beach Volunteer Fire Departments Tuesday morning.

The inspections of county fire departments and their state-required equipment is part of a plan to extend all fire districts to five-mile distances, and to hopefully provide homeowners with lower insurance ratings in the future, Logan said.

"I requested it through his office," Logan said of the inspections, "since we have existing (county) water lines in some areas now, and a move to install more lines is underway."

Rhodes' office will continue to inspect the departments on a routine basis, after this round of testing is complete, Logan said. Extending the fire districts will make it possible in the future for "all departments to join each other" at some point throughout the county, he added.

The departments' response timing and types of equipment available are some of the things Rhodes' office checks during the inspections. Insurance rates may vary for homeowners, depending on whether or not the fire departments servicing

the districts have access to fire hydrants, Logan said.

That makes the installation of county water lines an important asset for homeowners who would like to see their insurance rates lowered.

"It looks real good," Logan said Monday morning. "There have been no problems with what he's inspected so far."

One area of the county that would like to increase their fire protection and department response time is the Northwest community near Leland, Logan said. Residents there have been discussing the possibility of obtaining their own fire department.

"This is something that has been in the making since a year ago," Logan said. "They contacted me about it, and I told them what they needed to do to get their own department."

The Northwest community is located outside both Leland and Acme-Deleo Volunteer Fire Department districts, an equal distance from each station.

"It's about 20 or 25 minutes, whether Acme-Deleo or Leland answers," Logan said.

There is no other community in the county that is as far away from a department as the Northwest and Maco communities, Logan said.

The best way to provide fire department services to these communities is one subject county commissioners are now discussing, Logan said. It is not known if fire department substations or new departments would help with both service and county funding problems.

Bicyclist Injured In Accident Dies

An Ash girl who was struck by a car while riding her bicycle on Feb. 9 became the county's first highway fatality for the year last Thursday.

Crystal Marie Harper, 11, died at New Hanover Memorial Hospital in Wilmington after being listed in critical condition following the accident. A funeral service was held Monday at 3 p.m. at Magnolia Baptist Church with burial in the Etheridge Cemetery.

According to State Trooper L.M. Richardson's report, Miss Harper was struck by a 1970 Ford driven by Hester Smith Babson, 57, of Ash. Ms. Babson was traveling north on RPR

1331, or Mill Branch Road about seven miles north of Shallotte, when the bicyclist cut across the highway and into the path of her car.

Miss Harper and another passenger on her bike were riding on the shoulder of the highway before pulling into the path of the car, Richardson reported.

No citation will be issued in the accident. Richardson indicated a violation on the part of the bicyclist in his report.

Both victims on the bicycle were taken to the Brunswick Hospital, but only Miss Harper received critical injuries. She was later transferred to New Hanover Memorial.

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