

# Sunset Council Grants Two Disputed Mainland Rezoning

BY SUSAN USHER

Mixed commercial and multi-family development will be allowed on two mainland tracts after the Sunset Beach Council Monday approved the rezonings by identical 3-2 split votes.

Mayor Pro-tem Ed Gore, presiding in the extended absence of Mayor Frances Kanoy, broke 2-2 deadlocks on both motions made by George Foster and seconded by Donald Safrit. They also voted for both measures. Voting in opposition to both were Councilwomen Kathy Hill and Mary Katherine Griffith. It was a second reading, or vote, on both measures.

The first vote rezoned to MB-1 (mainland business) lots owned by David Stanaland between

Bonaparte's Retreat and the Calabash River Bridge. Portions of the property were previously zoned MR-2 and MR-3. The MB-1 designated allows commercial and multi-family development and sets no height restrictions.

The second vote rezoned from MR-2 to MB-1 a 13.2-acre tract on both sides of N.C. 179 near Bonaparte's Landing, including the old Magnolia Motel property. That change came at the request of several property owners—Island Development Corp., Oceanside Corp., Sea Trail Corp., in which Gore has a minority interest, and the Eugene Angstadts.

Councilwomen Kathy Hill and Mary Katherine Griffith questioned Gore's decision to vote on the second

motion because of his interest in the property.

"Even though it isn't against the law it is unethical," suggested Hill, when Gore said he did not plan to disqualify himself.

Suggested Gore, "I would appreciate the consideration from you two ladies not to put me in that position."

Gore has said consistently that he should not abstain from votes on property in which he has an interest because his vote would be in the town's best interests.

**Other Business**

In other business, the board:

- Approved by unanimous vote revision of a Sunset Beach and Twin Lakes Inc. subdivision on the island's east end creating 13 lots from five.

Gore, the developer, said the lots were larger than required and that the revision creates an easement for maintenance of the seawall overlooking Tubbs Inlet. The board approved the plat and authorized the planning board chairman to sign the maps so they can be recorded.

- Agreed with Town Manager Wallace Martin's proposal to add two alternates to the planning and zoning board so as to increase the likelihood of having a quorum, one for the town proper, another for the extrajurisdictional zone. Both would attend meetings, but would only vote if someone from their area did not attend.
- Heard from Martin that the planning board delayed discussion of proposed MB-1 density requirements for lack of sufficient information.

- Heard, also from Martin, that according to a county meter reading, the town had used only 6,000 gallons of water at the end of February, an indication that the main meter must be replaced. Meanwhile, the town's county water bill will be estimated from usage last January and February.
- Denied a request for relief in the form of a \$9.83 water bill refund requested by Evelyn and L.A. Bridges. The water line broke on their side of the meter, racking up 19,120 gallons usage while they were away.
- Voted to refund \$45 charged a renter to unlock a meter that was locked when a previous tenant failed to pay his water bill. In the future,

- renters or other water users who are not owners, will pay a \$25 deposit rather than the \$16 charged property owners for water accounts in their names.
- Approved the hiring of Gregory Wood to replace police patrolman John Goodwin, who resigned earlier this year to enter Highway Patrol School. Goodwin, formerly a contract employee with the police department, will serve one year's probation.
- Learned that during February police, among other things, issued 13 town citations and trapped three cats. In public works, a purchase order has been written to pay for repair of potholes all over town and security lights are to be checked, at Gore's reminder.



MAYOR PRO TEM Ed Gore of Sunset Beach points out areas proposed for street abandonment Monday night at a public hearing. Grace Gibson and Donald McCoy look on along with Gore's son, Grvg, at the rear. The town board took no action on the proposal.

## Sunset Beach Property Owners Rate Services, List Concerns

BY SUSAN USHER

Sixty percent of the 100 Sunset Beach property owners randomly targeted in a land use planning survey have returned their questionnaires, an excellent rate of return, Town Manager Wallace Martin reported to the town's governing council Monday night.

Among other questions, property owners were asked if they would be willing to keep the same tax rate after the countywide revaluation is completed, using the excess revenue to pave town streets on a priority basis.

The survey is being taken in conjunction with revision of the town's land use plan as required by the Coastal Area Management Act.

Council members Kathy Hill and Mary Katherine Griffith and several members of the public questioned the small number of persons sampled, saying money used in preparing the land use plan in-house should be used to extend the survey.

"If we're going to serve the public, we need to know what they want," said Ms. Griffith.

While acknowledging it might be discriminatory, Ms. Hill suggested those who live in the town year-round should have greater input since "they deal with the problems day in and day out."

Carolina Beach, noted Ms. Griffin, mailed nine-page questionnaires to several thousand property owners.

Martin noted that the 100 names were randomly generated from a list of town taxpayer's numbers, about 1,000. A 10 percent sample, he added, constitutes a statistically sound survey that meets the approval of Haskell Rhett, the N.C. Office of Coastal Management consultant working with coastal towns in this area on their plans. Planning board members also were surveyed.

Those not tapped for the survey needn't feel left out, however.

The town will hold the first of several hearings on land use planning Tuesday, March 26 at 7 p.m. at the town hall. Martin said the purpose of the hearing is to address

citizens' problems in the area of land use planning.

Sunset Beach property owners surveyed answered 22 questions that covered everything from beach access to traffic control, including why they chose Sunset Beach as a place to live or to invest in property.

They rated the seven services provided by the town on a scale of 1 to 5; indicated whether they would support a tax increase to improve the lowest-rated services; and listed additional services they thought the town should provide.

Other questions included: adequacy of public access to the beachfront; support for added public parking for the general public or for property owners only; adequacy of public participation in town decision making; concerns about lack of a public sewage system in the face of

increased growth; what type of growth they prefer and the types of development they want to see more or less of; whether parking should be allowed along the main street in light of heavy pedestrian traffic;

Also whether they feel a high-rise bridge is justified in the interest of public health and safety; need for recreational facilities other than golf for all ages; willingness to support erosion control projects with tax funds should the need arise; control of vehicular traffic; use of tax dollars to solve street drainage problems; whether construction work should be allowed on Sundays and whether itinerant merchants should be allowed to do business in town.

Participants also got to list what they anticipate as being the most serious problems facing the town over the next five years.

## Road Closings Debated

(Continued From Page 1-A)

general public and the people who come down here to enjoy the beach." McCarthy had suggested the abandonment would mean a loss in capital assets for the town; however, Morrison pointed out the town does not hold title to the properties, only easements.

"If this allows the property owners to build," added Plyler, "it adds to the tax base and benefits the town."

Tucker, who said he could be "ac-

caused of bias" since he works for Gore, questioned if opposition would be as strong if Gore owned none of the lots. He said Gore was a minor land holder in the area.

"There are a lot of people who bought lots with the expectation of building," he said. "Taking land in town has no use for gives these people a leg up."

Gore said similar setback accommodations had been made on other streets to allow development. Further, he said all of the lots in which he has an interest qualify for septic tanks and that the so-called streets in

that area had never been dedicated to the town.

Of the taxpayers association, he said, "We don't get very constructive advice from that element—regrettably."

Responded McCarthy, "I object to that."

Continued Gore, "We would welcome it."

Comment received from that quarter, he continued, "doesn't address the issues and facts of what we're trying to address here."

The hearing was conducted under rules earlier established by the board, with each speaker allowed two to 2½ minutes. Monday, at McCarthy's proposal, the board agreed it would also be proper to allow one speaker to cede his or her time to another. "So long as the issue at hand is being addressed and this meeting is not being used to grandstand on unrelated issues," qualified Gore.

McCarthy also suggested a maximum time, so as to avoid a "one or two hour filibuster."

## Sunset Beach Bridge Ramming Before Judge

A federal judge was to decide Wednesday whether the operator of the tugboat that rammed the Sunset Beach Bridge on Jan. 12 operated the vessel in a negligent manner.

The hearing was scheduled at 9:30 a.m. in the New Hanover County Courthouse before Judge Peter Fitzpatrick of Norfolk, Va.

Jim Kelly of Virginia Beach, Va., has been charged by the U.S. Coast Guard with three specifications, or counts, of operating the *Angelo M.* in a negligent manner. The tugboat was pushing a 210-foot barge when it struck the bridge, destroying one fender and three 17-foot sections and damaging a fourth.

As reported last month by The Beacon, Kelly is accused of running the tug around north of the Ocean Isle Beach Bridge, slightly damaging the fender of the Ocean Isle Beach

Bridge and striking the Sunset Beach Bridge.

L.A. James Carter, the investigating officer, said that if found guilty of any one of the specifications, Kelly faces possible suspension or revocation of his operating license, probation and/or a reprimand.

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