

Public Shows Little Interest In New Building Code Ordinance

BY SUSAN USHER

Only three people attended a public hearing on a new building code ordinance that will be implemented countywide over the next several months.

Though the county has no choice but to start enforcing all aspects of the state building code, Chris Chappell, chairman of the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners, had proposed the hearing. He wanted to give contractors and others an opportunity to air their opinions on it and to have their questions answered. He had expected a larger attendance.

"It bothers me nobody came," he said. "The first time an inspector stops someone from building because they don't have a permit is when they'll start criticizing and that's when they won't have any right to criticize."

Legislation passed by the General Assembly in 1983 established a staggered schedule, based on size, for all local governments to implement building inspection programs. Brunswick County is part of the last group and must be enforcing the code by July 1. The ordinance will be adopted in April, at which time the county will start advertising for inspectors.

Brunswick County's new ordinance covers all volumes of the state building code, plus wind-resistance and fire-resistance codes and flood plain regulations required for residents of unincorporated areas to qualify for federally-subsidized flood insurance.

Those attending the brief hearing Monday night included a member of the county planning board, the building inspector from Ocean Isle

Beach and an air conditioning and heating contractor.

The contractor, Walter Willets of Holden Beach, wanted to know if the county planned to strictly enforce the code, which he said was "for the benefit of the homeowner," or do as he alleged some municipal inspectors have done, simply collect the money and give out inspection slips without making on-site inspections.

Ocean Isle Beach Inspector T.D. Roberson had policy questions, asking how many inspectors the county planned to hire and how aggressively it would enforce code sections requiring "safe and sanitary" housing.

He said one or two inspectors wouldn't be able to cover a county the size of Brunswick, especially "with all the new ground being broken."

When enforcing safe and sanitary housing requirements, he said, "You

can't really force them out unless you have somewhere to send them."

Clegg said the county would first give the property owner a reasonable period of time in which to bring housing up to standard under an "order of abatement," before considering eviction.

He said next year's proposed budget includes salaries for three inspectors to cover the unincorporated areas of the county, as opposed to an earlier proposal to start with two inspectors.

They will be expected to implement the ordinance "as statutorily strictly as possible," Clegg said, or not expect to continue working for the county.

Clegg said the on-site inspections would be timely so as not to delay contractors.

Presently the county enforces only

the electrical, plumbing and heating and air conditioning codes, contracting the work to part-time inspectors. Their wages are the fees they collect.

Other Business

In other business, commissioners voted unanimously not to seek a planning grant from the N.C. Office of Coastal Management, following the recommendation of the county planning board.

A memo from Planning Board Chairman Ed Gore indicated the grants would be "for such small amounts the red tape involved would outweigh the advantage of the outside help," and that past experience shows proposals submitted by the county for studies "to meet our real needs have not been looked upon with favor."

"We would not suggest doing a study just because someone is dangle-

ing a carrot of funds," he wrote.

Gore also suggested the state doesn't have the funds for such grants and would probably seek funding from the legislature to cover any grants sought, "whereas there may well be higher needs within the state for state dollars than this program."

They also, after waiting several hours for Commissioner Frankie Rabon to get out of a social services board meeting going on at the same time, also reappointed three members of the nine-members Resources Development Commission: Leo Johnson of Shallotte; Walter L. Johnson of Long Beach and Van Clark of Leland. Election of officers and other immediate action needed by the commission had been delayed until the appointments could be made.

Funds Would Support Veterans' Offices

A bill co-sponsored by Rep. E. David Redwine in the N.C. House may provide operating funds for county veterans service programs on a matching basis.

If passed by the General Assembly, the bill would allow the N.C. Department of Administration to contribute up to \$3,000 in matching funds for each veterans service, or up to \$200,000 annually statewide.

Redwine also co-sponsored two bills that "will in my opinion help our volunteer firemen and rescue squads," he added.

House Bill 262 would increase the monthly pension for firemen and rescue squad members from \$75 per month to \$100 per month. Companion bill H.B. 263 would provide firemen and rescue squad workers retroactive membership in the Firemen's and Rescue Squad Workers' Pension

Fund, provided that certain back payments are made into the fund, said Redwine.

A bill to repeal the charter of the Town of Shady Forest passed the House and was in the Senate as of late last week. Redwine introduced the bill because the town has been inactive for a number of years.

In his weekly report, Redwine also mentioned but offered no personal views on two public hearings held last week on key issues. One proposes the state require the wearing of seat belts, the other concerns a proposed career ladder for educators and basic education program for the schools.

Constituents can contact Redwine in Raleigh by calling 733-5749 or writing to him at Room 2219, State Legislative Building, Raleigh, NC 27611.

Supply Man Sentenced

(Continued From Page 1-A)

by made the sexual advances.

Soles said he came to court Tuesday prepared to defend his client against the first-degree rape charge. Using the victim's statements given to detectives at the sheriff's department the day following the incident, Soles defended Holden's actions, saying the woman had waited a day before even reporting the incident. It was her girlfriend who later called the police, he added.

Rather than "cutting off" the defendant completely, the victim had replied, "I don't think so," when Holden asked if he could make sexual advances toward her, Soles said.

"We came with the intentions of trying the case out, but in view of the defendant's prior record we know we would have problems," Soles said.

Holden is on probation from the state of Texas for another sexual offense that occurred in 1982, Easley

said. The court did not act on Holden's probationary status in sentencing the defendant.

In the case from Texas, Holden was sentenced to seven years of probation and fined \$750, Easley said.

On Jan. 8, Holden was charged by Brunswick County Sheriff's Deputy Nancy Simpson with first-degree sexual offense involving a seven-year-old girl who told her teacher Holden had "licked her privates," Easley said.

Because of the girl's age, it would have been difficult to put her on the stand; however, her testimony against Holden's would have been necessary to win the case, Easley said.

"There was no evidence that she was hurt, physically," Soles said of the Gastonia woman.

"There was no evidence that the girl was hurt, physically," Soles added in asking for the lighter sentence.



STAFF PHOTOS BY CAROLYN SWEATT

Checks Presented

Holden Beach Merchants Association President Cletis Clemmons (right) presented checks to Coastline Rescue Squad and Tri-Beach Fire Department at the association's meeting last Thursday night. The donations were from the proceeds of the annual Festival by the Sea sponsored by the association each October. Virginia Parnell (left) accepts a \$1,000 check on behalf of the rescue squad. Doug Todd of Tri-Beach accepts a \$1,000 check for the squad's use and another \$1,000 check to help pay for the new roof at the fire house.

Ban On Open Burning Lifted

A statewide ban on all open burning was lifted Friday afternoon by the N.C. Division of Forest Resources after the area's second rainfall in a week's time.

"Everything's back to normal—at least for now," Brunswick County Ranger Miller Caison said Tuesday. Burning without a permit is allowed between 4 p.m. and midnight or within 100 feet of an occupied dwelling.

The ban—which is stricter than a cancellation of all burning permits—had been imposed after high

winds and dry weather conditions fueled a rash of fires statewide, including 124 fires between March 12 and Friday in District 8 alone. More than 1,500 acres were burned in the five-county area.

But since last interviewed a week ago, Caison said his office had responded to only one or two fires in the county.

"We have not been very busy at all with the fires," he said.

Burning permits can be obtained from county rangers and designated permit issuing agencies across the county.

Weather Remains Near Normal

Weather conditions should remain about the same across the South Brunswick Islands over the next few days, with near normal temperatures and precipitation.

Shallotte Point meteorologist Jackson Canady said temperatures should range in the mid-40s at night to the mid-60s during the day, with about one-half inch of rain.

For the period March 19-24, Canady recorded a maximum high of 80 degrees on the 24th and a minimum low of 20 degrees on the 19th. An average daily high of 70

degrees and an average daily low of 38 degrees combined for an average daily temperature of 54 degrees, about one degree below normal.

Canady recorded seventh-tenths inch of rain.

Brunswick Fastest Growing

(Continued From Page 1-A)

Housing units increased by 72 percent in the Shallotte township, 43 percent in Lockwood Folly, 33 percent in Smithville, 30 percent in Town Creek, 26 percent in Northwest and 21 percent in Waccamaw.

Since the 1980 census was taken, 12,748 permanent residents have moved into Brunswick County, the report shows. In 1981, the population increased by 1,659 residents and grew steadily up to 2,940 additional residents in 1984.

The permanent population increased by 85 people at Ocean Isle Beach,

by 71 residents at Sunset Beach, 33 residents at Holden Beach, by 31 residents in Shallotte and ten residents in Calabash.

Other areas of the county recorded the following permanent resident population increases: Southport, 51 residents; Long Beach, 200 residents; Caswell Beach, 64 residents; Yaupon Beach, 35 residents and Rolling Spring Lakes, 83 residents.

No changes were reported in Navassa, Belville or Shady Forest while Bolivia gained five residents.

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CORRECTION

R.E. Bellamy & Sons circular in this week's issue of The Beacon incorrectly pictures and names a rake. No. 18-815 should be a Bow Rake.

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