

Sunset Tells Builders: Keep It Quieter Or Pay

BY BILL MCGOWAN

The building boom is more than welcome at Sunset Beach.

But those engaged in the booming had better hold it down to a muffled roar in the future.

The commotion is about noise on the beach. The response is an amended noise ordinance. And violators will be paying dollars for decibels.

Town Council Monday night approved a motion by Donald Safrit to amend its existing noise ordinance to include a definition of a workweek and to set standards that can be enforced.

The amendment was recommended by the town's Committee on Noise, which met March 28 to attempt to balance the interests of residents, vacationers and builders. The committee was organized after the town

hall received numerous complaints about noise, specifically construction site noise at night and on weekends.

As of Monday's meeting, builders will have to make out their work schedules according to the calendar. From Memorial Day (May 27) through Labor Day (Sept. 2), construction work is limited to between the hours of 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. weekdays (Monday through Saturday).

The ordinance includes "all construction, including excavation, demolition, alteration or repair of any building in a residential or business district" of the town. Council would waive requirements of the ordinance for certain emergencies, such as those involving plumbing or electrical problems, or "a problem adversely affecting health and public

safety."

According to Town Manager Wallace Martin, the committee advised that all licensed contractors who work in the town be sent letters stating the restrictions. In addition, the contractors should be requested to "contact all of their subcontractors and instruct them to avoid the loud, unnecessary noises such as the incessant radio playing on the job."

In its report to council, the committee noted that action by council would make the noise ordinance "enforceable while we wait for the codification of our ordinances by the League of Municipalities."

Martin told council violators will be charged a \$50 fine for each infraction.

He added that the ordinance applies equally to Sunset Beach prop-

erty owners making repairs or remodeling their homes.

Other Business

In other business, council did the following:

•Hear from Martin that Ted Funderburk, Division 3 engineer with the state Department of Transportation, will visit Sunset Beach this week to discuss the installation of a traffic light system for the bridge. Martin said he also plans to ask Funderburk about possible bypasses to route traffic headed for Calabash away from the bridge area.

•Declined an offer from the state Division of Archives and History to record all important town papers and documents on microfilm. The project would require the town to take the material to Raleigh and to stay with it until the microfilming is com-

pleted. Martin said the same service is offered by the League of Municipalities at no cost to the town.

•Discussed drainage problems on several streets. No action was taken.

•Offered continued support to Martin on condemnation efforts of the old Continental Apartments. Owner Dr. John T. Madison has agreed to demolish the structure and clean up the debris by April 24, Martin said. The town will have to take the matter to court if the work is not completed by that time.

•Hear from Martin that numerous potholes on streets throughout Sunset Beach will be fixed this week.

•Agreed to advance Sunset Beach Realty and Management for a \$31.82 water bill the company paid when one of its tenants left without paying. The town will receive reimbursement when the company collects in small claims court.

•Hear from Clerk Linda Fluegel that the town's finances are "in very good shape, especially for this time of year."

•Received the March report from the Sunset Beach Police Department, which noted that officers investigated one case of breaking and entering and one incident of larceny, served 25 town citations and one state citation, investigated two disturbances, delivered 10 messages, and investigated four complaints involving fireworks. The department drove 3,157 in-town miles during March, as well as 730 miles to school, court and the garage, and used 473 gallons of gasoline. The Sanitation Department used 130 gallons of gas, while the Water Department used 35 gallons.

Ocean Isle Woman Pleads Guilty To Embezzlement

An Ocean Isle Beach woman was given a six-month active prison sentence last Thursday after pleading guilty to two counts of forgery and uttering and ten counts of embezzlement in Brunswick County Superior Court.

Susan Ann Vargo, 35, pleaded guilty to the charges involving funds belonging to her former employer, Terry Barbee of Island Realty and Development Co. of Ocean Isle Beach. In a plea bargain agreement with the district attorney's office, Ms. Vargo pleaded guilty to the charges and avoided a trial in exchange for a consolidated sentence.

Assistant District Attorney Napoleon Barefoot Jr. asked Judge

B. Craig Ellis to consolidate the charges for the minimum six-month active sentence and that she be ordered to repay Barbee the \$3,123.50 she still owes him in restitution.

Ms. Vargo was charged in July 1984 following an investigation by the Ocean Isle Beach Police Department and State Bureau of Investigation agents. She was employed by Island Realty as a bookkeeper and held a real estate agent's license until they were revoked by the N.C. Real Estate Commission in September 1984.

According to Barefoot, charges of forgery and uttering were filed against Ms. Vargo for altering two paychecks and cashing them, one

from \$110.72 to \$410.72 and another from \$140.05 to \$440.05. When confronted with the matter, the defendant admitted forging the checks and agreed to make restitution, said Shelia McLamb, her attorney.

After an investigation of the company books, it was also learned that ten payments made to the realty company, involving checks and American Express travelers' checks, had been deposited into Ms. Vargo's account. The defendant began paying back the \$3,718.50 owed to the company, but stopped after paying \$475 when Barbee disagreed over what amount was actually owed, Ms.

McLamb said.

Each count of forgery and uttering and embezzlement is a felony that carries a maximum sentence of 10 years in prison. Ms. Vargo could have been sentenced up to 120 years in prison for the 12 charges.

After consolidating the charges, Ellis sentenced Ms. Vargo to three years in prison, suspended for five years and placed her on five years' supervised probation. A six-month active sentence that must be served immediately was also handed down as a special provision of her probation. Ellis also ordered Ms. Vargo to repay \$3,123.50 owed to Barbee.

Ex-SBI Agent Receives Suspended Sentence

Former State Bureau of Investigation agent John Charles Dorsett of Long Beach received a suspended sentence in Brunswick County Superior Court last week after pleading no contest to forgery charges.

Dorsett was indicted by the Brunswick County Grand Jury Feb. 11 on charges of embezzlement and forgery and uttering a check belonging to the Long Beach Volunteer Rescue Squad. According to the indictment, Dorsett was accused of embezzling \$71.50 from the squad on Oct. 19, 1982, when he served as squad treasurer.

In court last Wednesday, Judge B. Craig Ellis sentenced Dorsett to two

years in prison, suspended for five years and placed him under five years supervised probation.

The SBI began an investigation of the rescue squad funds last summer, and Dorsett resigned in the midst of the investigation on Aug. 21. He was later charged with embezzlement and forgery and uttering a check, using the name of Jack Ritger, a former town police dispatcher, on a check to the rescue squad and then cashing it and converting it to his own use.

District Attorney Michael Easley asked for a special prosecutor in the case, citing a conflict of interest. Edward Grannis Jr., Cumberland County's district attorney, served as prosecutor in the case.

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