

Holden Board Votes Against Changing Lot Restrictions

BY EDDIE SWEATT

Holden Beach commissioners decided Monday night not to change the zoning ordinance regulating lot coverage as recommended by the planning and zoning board.

They agreed, unanimously, to an interpretation of the old ordinance and to wait and see what limitations on lot coverage may be passed by "other governing bodies." Roof overhang, up to two feet, will not be counted in the 30 percent lot coverage restrictions in the interpretation of the existing ordinance.

Houses have been built in the past under differing interpretations of whether roof overhang is included in computing lot coverage. Monday night's interpretation lays to rest the old argument about the provisions of the existing ordinance.

Interpretation of the roof overhang provisions is what led commissioners to ask the planning and zoning board

to study the ordinance and make recommendations for changes.

The changes recommended by a 3-2 vote of the planning board were described Monday night as "too restrictive" and "impossible to enforce."

Changes were aimed at limiting density of development by using complicated formulas to restrict coverage to 30 percent of the dry lot area and numbers of bedrooms.

Although most citizens who spoke at a public hearing on the proposed changes last month urged adoption, an overwhelming majority of those who spoke at a public hearing held earlier by the planning board objected to the changes.

In attacking the proposed changes Monday night, commissioners expressed appreciation to planning board members for their efforts.

Commissioner Jim Griffin led the assault saying,

"Each time I read it (proposed changes), I have more trouble with it."

Commissioners Graham King and Gloria Barrett agreed the proposed ordinance is "too restrictive." Barrett said she thinks the existing ordinance is adequate.

Mayor Kenner Amos said he thinks the proposed ordinance would be impossible to enforce.

"In its present form, it really can't be policed," Commissioner Hal Stanley agreed. He said one of the most often heard criticisms of the town government is that it has too many laws it can't enforce.

New regulations of lot coverage are expected to be recommended by the state's Environmental Management Commission for passage by the Coastal Resources Commission.

Monday night's vote was to wait and see if the recommendations are more or less restrictive than those in effect now at Holden Beach.

Commissioner Stanley pointed out that Holden has the "tightest restrictions of all at this time" when compared to surrounding beaches.

Public Hearing Set

Commissioners set a public hearing for Monday, May 20 at 9 a.m. on recommendations of the planning and zoning board to rezone property from residential to commercial.

The area covers from Rothschild St. on the west, Quentin St. on the east, the Intracoastal Waterway on the north and the beach strand on the south. The entire area would be rezoned commercial.

The recommendation follows the town's land use plan and would "square off" an area near the bridge which is already primarily commercial.

Public comment will also be heard on rezoning of property at 137 Ocean Boulevard West from residential to commercial.

Holden's New Litter Law Requires Trucks To Be Covered

With some reservations, Holden Beach commissioners passed a new anti-litter ordinance Monday night.

It requires trucks transporting loose materials to be securely covered. Under a strict interpretation, it would include trucks carrying sand, marl and septic tank gravel to be covered by a tarpaulin.

The ordinance was requested by Mayor Kenner Amos, who said town streets are littered with unused building materials and debris from building sites which fall off uncovered vehicles.

The ordinance calls for a civil fine of \$25 for violation.

Commissioner Lyn Holden said he didn't feel sand needed to be covered since spilling presents no problem. Commissioner Hal Stanley said the law would have to be administered with discretion and applied only when objects are falling from an uncovered vehicle.

"If it doesn't work, we can always change it," Commissioner Gloria Barrett remarked.

One developer in the audience, Alan Holden, suggested it might be better to increase the fine for littering under present ordinances to correct the problem posed by a few and "leave the rest of us alone."

Several changes were discussed before the commission voted unanimously to adopt the ordinance

as written.

To Open Saturdays?

Requiring town offices to be open on Saturdays during June, July and August almost went to a vote, but was postponed until the personnel committee can hear from town employees who apparently don't like the idea.

A Saturday schedule was requested in a letter from Bill Lovelace of the Holden Beach Property Owners Association, which pointed out that Saturday is the only day many non-resident property owners can conduct business at town hall.

Commissioner Stanley said he has favored such a move for 10-12 years. Commissioner Graham King made a motion for one employee to keep the office open from 9-1 on Saturdays and be given compensatory time off during the week.

Just before the matter went to a vote, Town Administrator Bob Buck said he "begged the board not to make a decision until the personnel committee meets with employees." Stanley and Barrett are members of the personnel committee.

Voting on the question was tabled until a meeting set for May 20, although several commissioners indicated they don't expect to change their minds.

At Public Hearings

There was very little public com-

ment at two public hearings which preceded Monday's meeting.

Norma Swarts asked commissioners to appropriate \$100 to Community Watch out of \$4,500 available in federal revenue sharing funds.

She said six or more Community Watch signs need to be added to the eight on the island.

No comment was made on the other public hearing matter, the preliminary assessment resolution for paving of Sunshine Lane.

As the first order of business at the regular meeting, commissioners voted to proceed with the project.

Other Business

In other business, commissioners:

- Appointed Norma Swarts to the Brunswick County Council on the Status of Women;
- Authorized charging \$15 for returned checks after hearing from Administrator Buck that such checks are on the increase;
- Authorized purchase of radios on the public works frequency for four police vehicles at an estimated cost of \$450 each and consideration of a fifth radio for the town dump truck if a quantity discount could be arranged;
- Accepted the low bid of \$200 from R. W. Buck Jr., a professional engineer from Raleigh, to make an inspection of the interior of the water tank to determine if repair or coating

is needed;

•Voted to ask Lewis and Associates of Shallotte to prepare specifications for bidding on work determined to be needed on the exterior and interior of the tank;

•Approved outfitting two town employees in uniforms with town decals and obtaining magnetic signs to mark all town vehicles;

•Voted to allow the meeting room at town hall to be used for a June 8 reception to be given in honor of the 50th wedding anniversary of Hugh and Mabel Dutton, longtime residents of the beach.

Request to use the town facility came from the Dutton's children who live 200 miles away.

Commissioner Stanley, who made the motion to grant the request, said the facility will be made available to all residents who celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary.

He also moved that the town issue a resolution of appreciation to the couple on this occasion for their contributions to the development of the town.

Reports Heard

Only four permits were issued for new house construction valued at \$282,588 during April, compared with 13 the same month a year ago, according to the report of Dwight Carroll, building inspector.

Forty-seven repair and bulkhead

permits were issued for construction valued at \$83,702. There were 58 applications for CAMA permits and building permit fees totaled \$2,045.76.

At the end of the month there were 60 houses actively under construction.

Public Safety Commissioner Barrett said 79 service calls were answered by police officers in April, 16 investigations were conducted, two arrests made, and 33 citations and 54 warnings were issued.

Officers drove 6,463 miles using 457 gallons of gasoline at a cost of \$532.27.

Commissioners were advised that the list of delinquent taxes will be advertised May 13.

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