

SBTA Wants Town To Reconsider Land Offer, Bridge Position

BY SUSAN USHER

Sunset Beach should reconsider two of its major actions in recent months, members of the Sunset Beach Taxpayers Association decided Saturday.

The group of about 75 members voted to recommend that the Sunset Beach Town Council reconsider an offer from developer Edward Gore of 35 acres for public beach access and parking. The town has already accepted the land.

They will recommend the town back off and continue to accept the land only if conditions included in the current deed are eliminated.

The association also voted to ask the new council to reconsider the town's position regarding a proposed highrise bridge. Most also agreed to "take a solemn vow" as proposed by Mason Barber and write their state and federal legislators on the subject.

The prior board had gone on record favoring improvement or replacement of the existing span, opening the door to future construction of the fixed-span, highrise bridge recommended by the state. Public hearing comments were mixed, but over time have leaned in opposition to the bridge.

No Strings

Gore described his land offer as having "no strings attached." However, he deeded the property to the town on condition that it be developed into public parking within three years and that the town continue to main-

tain it for that purpose.

Members of the Sunset Beach Taxpayers Association questioned whether the obligation to maintain the tract indefinitely at a possibly high cost might pose future problems for the town.

"Let the people of the town decide what to do with it," suggested Wayne Serrett of Charlotte. "We take the gift, but with no strings attached."

He and others expressed concern that after public monies are used to develop the tract, the town might lapse in maintenance and the tract suddenly revert to Gore's ownership and become a private enterprise.

Bob Jones, who owns the lot abutting the proposed western spit parking area, questioned how the state and town propose to provide access across the sensitive marsh at Mad Inlet.

No Compromise

"Basically, there's no room for compromise," Chairman Warren "Bud" Knapp told the group regarding the proposed highrise bridge. "Seventy-five percent of the funding is federal and it won't fund anything but a highrise."

Association members have consistently voted against a highrise bridge similar to the one opened at Ocean Isle Beach last week, but have encouraged a look at alternatives to the current pontoon swing bridge—either improving the existing bridge or replacing it with something less elaborate than a highrise.

"We need to improve what we have," said Jim Craig. "In five years what we have will be impossible."

"One member depicted himself as 'vacillating' on the bridge issue because the current structure poses a safety hazard, he said. But he described the proposed highrise as an "irresponsible expenditure of the taxpayers' money."

Knapp distributed copies of a Nov. 19 letter he sent to State Highway Administrator George Wells, following up their Nov. 14 discussion of the proposed bridge. In it, Knapp writes that barge and boat owners and developers are the only groups for which the bridge might be justified.

SBTA members have argued that a highrise bridge would help open the way for density-causing condominium development on the beach once sewer service becomes available on the island.

"The only thing protecting this island and the existing quality of life is a CAMA permit," said Council Member-elect Minnie Hunt.

CRC Permit No. 36, issued first in 1978, limits development within the city limits on lots of less than 15,000 square feet that existed as of July 27, 1978. Only a single septic tank serving a single-family home with four bedrooms or less may be built.

In any case, said Joe Majette of the bridge controversy, "I'm one man who seeks dialogue. I'm getting tired of playing 'chicken at the bridge.'"

Other Business

- Re-election by written ballot of directors Joe Majette, Minnie Hunt, Warren "Bud" Knapp and Albert Wells was announced.
- Treasurer Alan Russ reported a fund balance of \$5,273.65 in the general account.
- Secretary Minnie Hunt reported the association also collected \$7,000—\$1,000 less than goal—for its legal fund to finance a suit filed last month in an effort to have the oceanfront extension of Sunset Boulevard declared public and ownership given to the town. The lot is owned by Beach Enterprises Inc.

Members agreed to invite all Sunset Beach council members to attend the Easter weekend membership meeting. Mayor Pro tem Edward Gore and his wife were denied admission to Saturday's meeting because, said Chairman Warren "Bud" Knapp, it was the group's annual meeting and therefore open only to members.

Members voted to increase their annual appropriation to the fire department from \$100 to \$250 per year and to begin donating to the Calabash Volunteer Rescue Squad, the sum to be determined by the association's officers.

Delayed action or discussion of the parking situation on the island until its April meeting.

Rezoning Questioned But Not Opposed

Although no specific opposition was voiced, questions were asked Monday night when a joint meeting of the Sunset Beach Town Council and Planning Board heard requests to rezone two properties in the extrajurisdictional jurisdiction.

Town Hall was packed with spectators, many of them interested in learning what would be built if the zoning rezone requests are approved.

Doug Stanaland assured the council and the concerned audience that the tract of land he wants rezoned from MR-2, Mainland Residential, to MB-1, Mainland Business, will be "tastefully developed."

The tract of land includes his homesite and 8.52 acres on the opposite side of Hwy. 179, bordered by Heritage Haven, Sea Trail Corporation and Bedford Stanaland's tract.

Stanaland said he has no extensive plans for development at this time but he "probably will develop an office complex" on the other side of the road from his home. He said it is possible that some of the property might be a part of a golf course to be developed in the area, but said nothing is definite.

"I live there and I can assure you nothing will be done to detract from the area," he emphasized.

One speaker, a resident of Heritage Haven, observed that "If zoned business, anything he wants can be put in there."

Another speaker wanted to know if

any study has been made to determine if Highway 179 can take any more traffic that would be generated by further business development.

Stanaland said he believed business development on his property would not create more traffic but might cause more of it to stop at the location.

Mayor James E. Gordon advised Stanaland that a good set of plans, including an impact study, would probably help him "sell" his rezoning request both to the planning board and to the public.

Stanaland was told his request would be considered at the Dec. 10 meeting of the Planning Board.

The board will also consider a request from Peggy Turnage to rezone Lot 1, Seaside Road, from MH-1, Mobile Home, to MB-1, Mainland Business. The Turnages told the joint meeting Monday night that they plan to build a small shop in connection with their heating and air conditioning business.

Their plans call for moving their home to one side of the large lot to make room for the shop building, to be used mostly for storage.

They said they did not know there were any restrictions on their property until they applied for a building permit.

Recommendations from the Planning Board in both cases will likely be presented to the Town Council at its January meeting.

Nursing Home Hearing Scheduled Next June

BY SUSAN USHER

A hearing date has been set by the state to consider appeals of a state ruling last March that would allow a Rocky Mount firm to build a 110-bed nursing home in Shallotte.

Lee Hoffman, Area 5 project analyst in the state's Division of Facility Services certificate of need section, said the hearing is set for June 23 through July 7, 1986.

In March, the N.C. Department of Human Resources overrode the recommendation of a regional health planning board and approved a nursing home proposal submitted by Autumn Corp. Autumn plans to build a \$1.79 million nursing facility in Shallotte with 50 skilled, 50 intermediate and 10 home for the aged beds.

Two of the six firms that applied for the certificate of need necessary to build a nursing home in North Carolina have appealed the decision for Autumn, while a third appeal has been withdrawn.

Continuing their appeals are Beverly Enterprises of Virginia Beach, Va., which had proposed a \$1.7 million, 100-bed project adjacent to Brunswick Hospital in Supply; and Brithaven Inc. of Hookerton, which proposed to build a \$2 million, 130-bed project on the outskirts of Shallotte.

The Cardinal Health Systems Agency board had earlier recommended that Beverly receive the certificate of need, overriding a staff recommendation favoring Autumn Corp.'s proposal.

A third company, Health Care and Retirement Corp. of America, has

withdrawn its appeal, Ms. Hoffman said.

A ruling of the hearing officer in the contested case hearing can be appealed to the N.C. Court of Appeals, Hoffman said.

The state has booked similar certificate of need contested case hearings—approximately 35—through October 1986. Several appeals have been withdrawn, Ms. Hoffman said, allowing certificates to be issued and construction to begin.

The appeals process could delay construction of a nursing home in Brunswick County for another year to two years, Hoffman had indicated earlier.

Lifting in July of a two-year moratorium on nursing home construction in the state prompted a flood of applications—and then a flood of appeals—in the counties where additional beds were allocated under a state health care plan.

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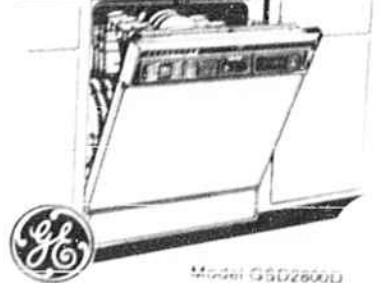
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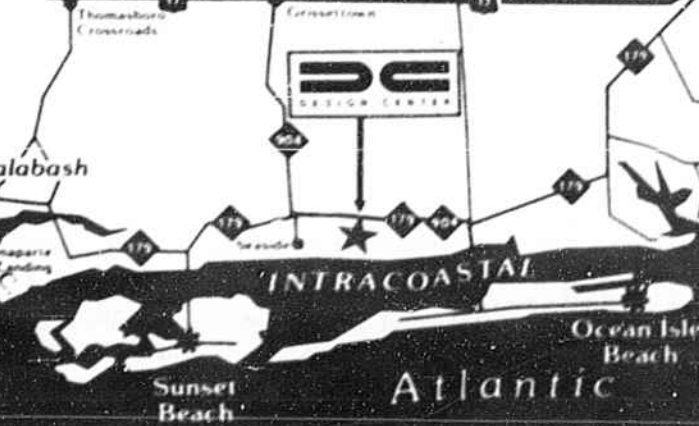
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