

Agriculture, Road Bills Advance In Legislature

An agricultural finance bill sailed through the House and a substitute highway bill was on its way to a conference committee Tuesday, according to Rep. David Redwine.

Meanwhile, a proposed statewide occupancy tax bill was killed in the Senate, never making it over to the House. The bill had prompted local concern as it threatened a source of revenue for several communities, including Ocean Isle, where a local room tax is helping to finance construction of a sewer system and other projects that benefit both permanent and summer residents.

"It's not going anywhere," said Redwine.

But an agricultural finance bill that would make loans available for everything from land to seeds is on its way to the Senate after passing its third and final vote in the House by unanimous vote, he said.

Not so the roads bill.

"We don't know what final form the Future Highway Bill is going to take," said Redwine. "But it will contain a gas tax increase."

A committee substitute version of the bill passed on its third reading in the House, he said. That means a conference committee will have to hammer out the differences between the House and Senate versions. Committee members will have numerous points on which to bargain.

Originally Gov. Jim Martin had proposed a 2.75¢ gas tax increase, plus transfer of the driver's education and highway patrol programs from the Highway Fund to the General Fund, freeing up about \$200 million to meet highway needs.

Lt. Gov. Bob Jordan, in turn, proposed a 2¢ tax increase plus a 3¢ wholesale tax, plus a one-time only two-year staggered license registration fee, along with transfer of only the driver's education program to the

General Fund. That plan, approved by the Senate, would have netted approximately \$172 million.

The House substitute, however, eliminated the driver's education transfer and the license registration fee, reducing the first-year income to about \$132 million. That figure should increase, by House members' calculations, because the gas tax revenue would increase as gas prices increase.

Also, the House has tacked on to its version a further point for negotiating—elimination of the household property tax.

Following a Democratic caucus Tuesday, an amendment to transfer the driver's education program to the General Fund was defeated on a 60 to 57 vote. Redwine and about 20 other Democrats joined House Republicans in voting for the transfer. "We felt the Highway Fund needed the dollars," he said.

In voting contrary to the House leadership, Redwine said he voted for what he thought was best for his constituents. He said he hoped his vote sent a message to the transportation secretary and area transportation commissioner, who have pushed the governor's package and said that even more monies are needed to maintain and expand the state's network of roads.

When it comes time to spend the proceeds of the bill, Redwine added, maybe they'll remember how he voted.

In a token gesture, legislators adopted a non-binding resolution in which they recommend that the 1987 General Assembly transfer the driver's education program to the General Fund if sufficient growth has occurred that funds are available to absorb the cost.

"That could spark some interesting debate in the next session," he said, as legislators try to determine if the right amount of growth has occurred in the economy.

Updating Land Use Plan Next On Shallotte Agenda

BY SUSAN USHER

Traffic, utilities and zoning rank among the top priorities Shallotte aldermen want the town's land use plan update to address, they said last Wednesday night.

At its July 18 meeting the board expects to select a firm to update the plan during the coming year.

Wednesday, they met with a state planning consultant in the Division of Coastal Management and with a planner whose firm wants the contract to update the plan. Alderman Paul Wayne Reaves was absent.

All 20 counties under the N.C. Coastal Area Management Act are required to prepare land use plans every five years, while plans are optional for municipalities within the same areas. Each plan covers a 10-year planning period and is drafted according to guidelines prepared by the state. Each plan includes an inventory of data such as population, resource and economic data; maps of existing use, hazards and land classifications; and then policies to help implement the town's goals.

The town has a \$4,500 grant from the state for preparation of the plan.

State planning consultant Haskell Rhett said a preliminary draft of Shallotte's plan should be ready by June 30, 1987, for review by the state, revision and adoption by the town, then approval by the Coastal Resources Commission. Public participation—through meetings, surveys or other means—is required as the plan is created.

With the plan, he said, "You're trying to determine how you're going to grow and how you want to grow."

By adopting policies with "teeth" as part of the town's strategy for implementing the plan, he said, the town can have a say in how and where growth occurs and the type of growth the town experiences.

Glenn Harbeck, manager of planning services for E.A. Stone and Associates of Wilmington, said a properly drafted plan would become a reference tool and guide used regularly by the board as it makes decision.

"I know what makes a bad plan, a shelf-sitter, and what makes a good one, one that is used day in and day

out," Harbeck told the board, citing his practical experience in planning with New Hanover County and Wilmington before joining E.A. Stone.

Inspection Fees

Council members reviewed proposed changes in building inspection fees and tabled the schedule for consideration at their next meeting.

"I think ours are low in the town, but they are (too) high in the county," Alderman Sarah Tripp said.

Currently the construction-related permit fees for a 2,000 square foot house would cost \$80 in Shallotte, which doesn't require mechanical and plumbing permits. If the proposal studied Wednesday night were adopted, the fees would increase to \$149.50, with construction permits increasing to \$99.50, plus \$50 for the new plumbing and heating/air conditioning fees.

Mayor Jerry Jones noted the town doesn't want to charge an

"outrageous fee" or to discourage building within the town, but agreed also with Alderman Wilton Harrelson.

"The purpose is to keep a handle on things," said Harrelson. "The reason we charge fees is because somebody has to do the inspections and they're expensive."

Member Sought

In other business, the board formally accepted the resignation of Emerson Arnold from the planning board, and each member was asked to come up with a qualified person as a candidate to complete the unexpired term.

"The planning board is really working now," said Mrs. Tripp. "I think we need someone who will add to it."

Referring to development of the land use plan, Alderman Harrelson added, "Someone who can ask hard questions."

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MAIN STREET, SHALLOTTE

DOT Sets Hearing On Roads

Local citizens will get to comment this month on secondary road improvements proposed by the N.C. Department of Transportation for the next fiscal year.

The Division of Highways has scheduled a public hearing for 7 p.m. at the July 21 meeting of the Brunswick County Commissioners, in their chambers at the county complex in Bolivia.

State recommendations for spending the county's 1986-87 allocation have been posted on a map in the

county's Administration Building. They are as follows:

DOT proposes to base and pave dead end road S.R. 1102 (Berry Farm Road) off N.C. 133, two miles in length.

It proposes to stabilize five rural roads: S.R. 1131 (Cumbee Road), S.R. 1350 (Ward Road), S.R. 1240 (Caison Road), S.R. 1422 (Blue Bank Loop) and 3.2 miles of S.R. 1426 (Mt. Misery Road).

It would widen two roads in high-traffic areas: S.R. 1115 (Stone

Chimney Road/Old Ferry Road) from S.R. 1125 to S.R. 1520, a distance of 2.3 miles; and also from U.S. 17 to N.C. 211, a distance of 4.2 miles; and S.R. 1145 (Village Road) from N.C. 179 to S.R. 1146 (Copas Road), a distance of 1.2 miles through Shallotte.

It proposes to add four roads to the state system and to grade, drain and base them. They are Stevenson Road, .3 mile; Davis Drive, .36 mile; First Street, .07 mile; and Pine Street, .3 mile.

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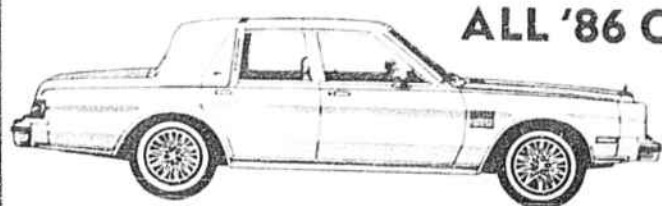
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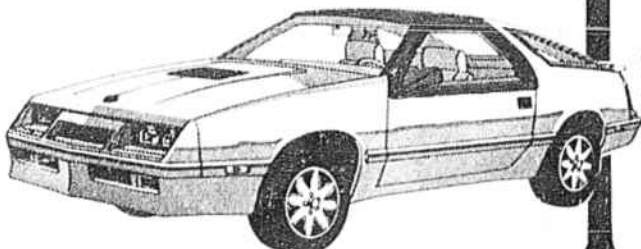
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