

SPEAKERS CALL FOR REFERENDUM

Zoning Issue Draws Large Hearing Crowd

BY SUSAN USHER

If Brunswick County Commissioners follow the advice of speakers at a public hearing on zoning last Wednesday night, they'll take the issue directly to the voters or else drop it like a hot potato.

More than 20 speakers took their turn at the podium in the county's public assembly building at Bolivia, most to decry additional regulation of property, particularly in rural areas of the county.

"What I've got I worked hard for," said Ira Chadwick of the Shell Point area in a statement typical of the opposition. "I don't want anybody tell-

ing me what I can and can't do with it.

"If these people moving in here are unhappy, why do they come?"

Edison Moore of Northwest Township predicted zoning would be "burdensome" to a certain segment of the people and suggested if people wanted higher standards, they should move into such an area.

Many of those unsure of zoning's impact or even against it still agreed a referendum is in order, either for the entire county or for a specific district. "It could help me or hurt me," said Louie Lewis of Supply. "But if you want this thing to work,

give the citizens an opportunity to vote. If a majority wants it, I will go with it."

But several speakers were set in their opposition: "You people are wrong, absolutely wrong," one Oak Island resident said, while James Bellamy of Shallotte suggested zoning would create problems, not solve them.

H.C. (Cortez) Ward Sr. of Longwood drew the loudest applause. "I don't like anybody educated above their intelligence to tell me what to do with my property," he said. "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

In a show of hands at the close of

the hearing, about 60 percent of the 110-member audience indicated they too were against zoning.

While one speaker, Tony Awecky of Boiling Spring Lakes, said the sentiment against zoning surprised him, Brunswick County Planning Board Chairman Ed Gore said it was about what he expected. "They clearly feel the county commissioners should put it to a vote of the people," he said.

As for comments made during the hearing, Gore continued, "Some people understand zoning, are comfortable with it and see a need for it."

However, he added, people who have always lived in a rural area

with little property regulation fear that their lives and property would be adversely affected by zoning or other land use regulation.

Awecky said he came to the hearing expecting a majority of those present to support zoning.

"Most people who have lived here a long time are against it," he concluded. "The people who have not are for it."

Also, he surmised, "the people against zoning looked at it as a personal thing. I think you have to look at it in terms of what the county will lose or gain."

However, he expects the county to

eventually go to zoning, Awecky added, "because we need it."

Linda Phillips of Southport, a bank employee, recommended countywide zoning because of "predominant value," a principle used in qualifying loan applicants. The loan value on a nice home can be adversely affected by the value of surrounding property, such as junkyards, she said. "Brunswick County is one of the strongest counties in the state. We have got to keep up, folks, we can't stand back."

Most speakers weren't convinced of the need.

Thomas Yagle of Sunset Harbor said zoning would only cost county residents money, "lots of it."

Ocean Isle developer Odell Williamson, who described land use planning as his "long suit," spoke against the county creating a bureaucracy to deal with zoning when it has established neither long-range goals nor a plan to attain them.

"If you have a dream, I'll join you," he added. "But we've got a long way to go."

Walter Reinheimer of Long Beach urged county residents to talk to people who had lived with zoning and without it: "Find out if they like it or don't like it and make up your own mind."

Some speakers, like Henry Williams of Shell Point and Bobby Long of Grissetown, said zoning should be addressed by area, if at all.

"Zoning the county would be damaging," said Long, noting that deed restrictions were slowly 'zon-

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ZONING drew more than 100 citizens to a public hearing last Wednesday night, making it the county's best-attended hearing in the past four years. Above, Henry Williams of the Shell Point area speaks against greater land use regulation.

Vote Will Seek Shorter Terms For Holden Beach Commissioners

BY EDDIE SWEATT

Holden Beach voters will decide May 5 whether to cut the terms of office of commissioners from four to two years.

The special election was set Monday night by the town commission, in its regular monthly meeting, after Town Administrator Bob Buck certified a petition calling for a vote to amend the town charter.

Forty-seven of the town's 359 registered voters, or 13.1 percent, signed the petition asking for two-year terms for all commission members. State law requires a petition of at least ten percent of registered voters to call an election

on a proposed amendment to the town charter.

Signatures on the petition were collected by the Political Action Committee (PAC) of the Holden Beach Property Owners Association, according to committee chairman Don Pringle. The petition was submitted to the town Feb. 2.

The petition drive grew out of discussions at meetings of the association where members concluded that shorter terms for commissioners would make them "more sensitive" to the people and their needs, Pringle explained.

"Several have not been too responsive," Pringle continued, but did not

specify which commissioners.

Commissioner Graham King's motion to hold the election on the first Tuesday in May passed unanimously.

After the vote, Commissioner Hal Stanley suggested the property owners' association host a forum where the issue can be discussed, since the association generally sponsors a meet-the-candidates-night prior to municipal elections. HBPOA President George McDaniel, in the audience, agreed and said he will arrange a date and time for such a meeting before the vote.

"It (two- or four-year terms) makes no difference to me; I've had

it both ways," commented Commissioner Stanley, who has served both two-year and four-year terms.

The town charter was amended in 1981 to provide for four-year staggered terms for commissioners. At the time, there was no sign of disapproval in public hearings which preceded the change.

John Tandy, the present mayor, held that office in 1981 when the four-year term for commissioners was instituted. Lyn Holden is the only current commissioner who was serving at that time. Other commissioners were Jim Mulholland, Roger Morton, John Clarke and Spiro Poulos. At that time, the commission agreed that

longer, staggered terms would provide more continuity in governing the town and prevent a complete turnover of elected officials at any one time.

The top two vote-getters in the '81 election, Jim Griffin and Gloria Barrett, served four years each to begin the staggering process.

After that, elections every two years were to alternate with three commission seats up for grabs one time and two the next time around, with the mayor continuing to be elected every two years.

Before the change in '81, the mayor and all five commission seats were up for grabs every two years. The

petition would bring back the previous system.

The four-year terms of three of the present commissioners are up this year. They are Lyn Holden, Hal Stanley and Graham King. The other two, Gay Atkins and William Williamson, were elected in 1985 for four years.

Most municipalities in Brunswick County use staggered, four-year terms for commissioners and elect the mayor every two years. Only Calabash and Bolivia elect a mayor and all commission members every two years. Shallotte's mayor is the only one elected for a four-year term.

Flood Waters Put Cawcaw District Back Before County Commissioners

BY SUSAN USHER

Flooding in the Cawcaw Swamp area of western Brunswick County had several speakers asking county commissioners Monday night about the status of the former Cawcaw Drainage District.

Carolina Shores resident Warren "Bud" Knapp, for one, wanted to know what the county planned to do about the drainage problem in the area.

He said all residents of Shingletree Precinct were concerned about the flooding and that the high water was creating an image problem for visitors entering the state from South Carolina.

"It reflects a lack of concern on somebody's part," he said.

James Bellamy, chairman of the Brunswick County Soil and Water Conservation District, also was at the meeting, asking the county to take over operation of the district.

But commissioners told Bellamy, for the third time in a year, that the county had no intention of doing so. Instead, they asked again that the district be re-established and its residents assess themselves to support the drainage project. Then, said Commissioner Chris Chappell, the district could approach the county for a contribution as do other organizations.

"Do you want it bad enough to go out and seek a special tax for that

district? That's the only quick solution to that problem," he continued.

However, Bellamy is convinced that the county is responsible and that taking over the maintenance is the fastest and least expensive alternative. He estimates the annual cost at \$1 per county resident.

He told commissioners he wants that question of responsibility settled, through the courts or otherwise.

"When we find out who is responsible, then people flooded like Lynn Petch (owner of Farwinds Stables) will know who to sue," Bellamy continued.

Bellamy said he is present his concerns to the state Soil and Water Conservation Board on March 11 in Raleigh. He also hinted that the U.S. Department of Agriculture is considering taking on the issue as a precedent-setting legal case.

He said, "I don't see, for the life of me, why the county commissioners don't go ahead and do what they will eventually have to do."

The district was established in the early 1960s, with the county Soil and Water Conservation District signing a contract with the U.S. Department of Agriculture to maintain its drainage system for 50 years.

The district cut 16 miles of canals that drained about 16,000 acres from the Waccamaw River south and west to Calabash and Grissetown, making them suitable for farming and

allowing development of communities such as Carolina Shores.

Drainage District No. 1—the county's only such district—was abandoned after its board had trouble collecting assessments from residents and a county board of commissioners voted in 1976 to take over maintenance of the canals and paid \$6,000 in debts owed by the district. In 1977, however, another board of commissioners refused to sign a contract with the USDA to that effect.

In the meantime, the Clerk of Superior Court, Jack Brown, had dissolved the district.

The current board of commissioners agrees with Bellamy and Knapp that the drainage district has been an economic boon for the county, but say that if the county takes over the district it will be expected to provide similar drainage projects in other areas of the county.

Two years ago county staff members estimated it would require an initial investment of \$200,000 to thoroughly clean the canals and at least \$60,000 simply to snag along them.

Bellamy also said he would ask the State Soil and Water Conservation Board about county adjustments last year in the local district's budget, when a secretary was reassigned to a county department and a typewriter removed from the office. According

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Home Show Offers Full Spectrum Of Home Improvement Resources

BY SUSAN USHER

Fencing, lumber, wallpaper, furniture, landscaping materials—anything needed when building or remodeling a home will be on display at the second annual Brunswick Living Home Show.

The three-day show will be held at the Shallotte National Guard Armory March 27-29. Admission is free. Hours are from 1 p.m. to 9 p.m. Friday, 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. Saturday and 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday.

Sponsored by the South Brunswick Islands Home Builders Association, the show offers a wide spectrum of ideas and resources for homeowners or prospective homeowners, whether they're adding on a room or deck, remodeling a kitchen or building from the ground up.

Thirty-four exhibitors have already committed to the show, with 11 spaces still available, said Mark Saunders, secretary-treasurer of the association.

Along with displays of supplies and informational materials, said Nick Newton, public relations chairman, "experts in practically every facet of the building trade will be available to answer questions."

"We'll have everything you can imagine relating to

the home or services for it," he added.

Many exhibitors will offer drawings for gifts.

Last year's show was very successful, Newton said. The association was pleased with the quality and number of exhibitors and with the crowds that turned out.

"More than 1,000 people came last year and we're expecting a much larger crowd this year," he continued.

This year exhibitors will compete for three trophies—best single booth, best double booth and best of show, with the winners to be announced at a March 26 preview party for exhibitors.

Exhibitors pay to participate in the show, with profits used by the Home Builders Association for community service projects. This year's projects include a leading role in renovating and expanding the South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce facilities, donations to rescue squads within the group's jurisdictions and support of other activities as possible.

Those interested in reserving one of the remaining booths should call either Saunders, at 842-4939, or Newton, 579-7038.

Way Clears For Shallotte Nursing Home

BY SUSAN USHER

One company has abandoned its two-year legal battle to build a nursing home in Supply, clearing the way for construction of a similar facility in Shallotte.

Douglas Suddreth, director of development for Autumn Corp. of Rocky Mount, said the company

plans to begin construction this summer of a 110-bed facility at the corner of Mulberry and White Streets. The center, which will include 50 skilled nursing and 50 intermediate-care beds, plus 10 home for the aged beds, is expected to open in summer 1988.

"We're moving right along," said Suddreth, noting that the first step

would be to seek rezoning of the tract by the Shallotte Board of Aldermen. The agency received a certificate of need from the state on Feb. 23.

Autumn's action follows a decision by Beverly Enterprises of Pasadena, Calif., to withdraw its two-year appeal of a 1985 decision by the N.C. (See WAY CLEARS, Page 2-A)