

Board Replaces Clegg With Carter On Water Authority

BY ERIC CARLSON

As Brunswick's newest county manager attended his first commissioners meeting, the county's previous manager was stripped of his last official responsibility and replaced by another former county manager.

In a 3-to-2 vote that followed party lines, the county board of commissioners Monday removed David Clegg from his seat on the Lower Cape Fear Water and Sewer Authority and appointed former county manager Billy Carter to serve as one of Brunswick County's four representatives on the board.

Commissioner Wayland Vereen, who made the motion to replace Clegg, said Carter "is a lot more familiar with it than anyone who's on there now." He noted that Carter was county manager during the authority's formative years.

"Since we're their biggest customer, I have a lot of concerns about the authority," Vereen said.

Warren was joined by fellow Democrats Vereen and Tom Rabon in voting to remove Clegg from the authority. Republican Commissioners Donald Shaw and Jerry Jones voted against the replacement.

"It's all politics," Jones said after the meeting. "Evidently they don't want him (Clegg) to have anything to do with county government. I believe he's done a good job."

Shaw also praised Clegg's work on the authority, saying he was "more knowledgeable" than Carter about its operations.

The authority is a nonprofit public agency formed in 1972 as part of a five-county effort to provide for the region's water needs. It has 13 members, including four from Brunswick County, one from Bladen County and two each from the City of Wilmington and Columbus, Pender and New Hanover counties.

Brunswick County put up the \$5.6 million in seed money that al-

lowed the authority to qualify for the additional \$7 million in state funds needed to create a raw-water intake and pumping station above Lock and Dam number one on the Cape Fear River. The county also became the authority's sole water customer. Earlier this year, the authority began repaying the loan.

By replacing Clegg with Carter, Brunswick County will lose its chairmanship on the authority, which will vote to select a new leader.

In other business at Monday's commissioners meeting:

Warren asked newly hired County Manager Wyman Yelton to research ways in which Brunswick County might regulate cable television companies. Warren said recent deregulation of the industry might allow the county require improvements in cable service quality and rates. But, he said, the county only has until Nov. 1 to enact such regulations.

Commissioners voted 3-to-2, with Jones and Vereen dissenting, to adopt a resolution delaying implementation of the county zoning ordinance. The measure allows the board to put zoning into effect at future date "retroactive to July 1." County Engineer Robert Tucker said

he would need 90 to 120 days to train a zoning administrator. He said he will be prepared to recommend an implementation date within 30 days.

The board received petitions with more than 200 signatures from residents of the Grissetown area asking the commissioners to consider regulating hog farming in the county. A landowner in the area reportedly plans to open a hog farming operation nearby.

Everett Morrison of Holiday Haven subdivision presented a petition bearing 98 signatures from residents who favor the adoption of a county noise ordinance. Morrison said he was "being harassed to no end by youngsters on trail bikes" riding through his neighborhood. Warren said a rough draft of a noise ordinance had been prepared and would be considered by the commissioners at a future meeting.

The commissioners agreed to terminate the county's \$70,000 contract with architect John Thompson for designing a proposed \$1 million warehouse facility at the county complex in Bolivia. During recent budget deliberations, the board voted to delay the project and to give the money to the school system for new computers. Tucker said the move would leave the county with a

complete set of plans for the building. But it would cost an additional \$7,000 for a "bail-out" payment to the architect.

The board voted 3-to-2 along party lines against Shaw's re-nomination of Eulis Willis to retain his seat on the county social services board. No other nominations were made. Willis's term expired June 30.

At-large member Pearl Stanley and District five representative Edith Tillman were re-appointed to the Brunswick County Library Board. Warren was named to replace at-large member John Jacobs, who reportedly asked not to be re-appointed.

William T. Hardee was appointed to replace Scott Willets as District 4 member on the zoning board of adjustments. Jones voted against the motion, which was made by Rabon.

Tax Collector Nancy Moore and Tax Supervisor Boyd Williamson were reappointed to a one- and two-year terms respectively.

Public hearings were set for Aug. 16 at 5:30 p.m. on the county's Coastal Area Management Act land use plan and Aug. 10 at 5:30 for proposed changes to the county zoning ordinance. Both hearings will be held in the public assembly building at the county complex.

Holden Beach Fighting Occupancy Tax Measure

BY DOUG RUTTER

Upset by pending legislation that would place tight restrictions on use of occupancy tax, Holden Beach officials plan to bombard state representatives with letters and phone calls in an effort to kill the bill.

House Bill 800 would require towns such as Holden Beach that raise more than \$100,000 per year in occupancy tax to remit the funds to a local tourism promotion agency.

The agency, created by a local ordinance, would decide how the money is spent. At least half of the agency's board members would be required to have expertise in the travel and tourism industry.

Occupancy tax, which tourists pay when they rent rooms, is currently legislated by 90 local bills that have passed the N.C. General Assembly.

Intended to set uniform occupancy tax rules for the entire state, H.B. 800 has raised a stink along the coast.

"It just takes away our occupancy tax which we use to help defray the cost of having tourists come in here," Mayor Wally Ausley said at Tuesday night's town meeting.

Holden Beach expects to collect \$225,000 in room tax this fiscal year and plans to use it for sidewalks, police salaries, beach patrol, trash pickup, fire, street lights and other expenses.

If the bill passes, Holden Beach officials say it would reduce the town's options for spending the money. Commissioners plan to send a resolution to state legislators this week opposing the bill.

The resolution will point out that the town uses occupancy tax to pay for services required by visitors and that restricting the use of occupancy tax would cause a 67-percent increase in the property tax rate.

Ausley said Holden's representatives in the State House, David Redwine and Dewey Hill, both are opposed to the bill and have vowed to do their best see it defeated.

"He is 100 percent, unalterably opposed to this bill," Ausley said of Hill, a member of the House Finance Committee that is currently considering the legislation.

Ausley said all of the beach communities in Brunswick County that rely on occupancy tax revenue are working to defeat House Bill 800. As proposed, it would take effect July 1, 1995.

If the bill passes, Ausley said local representatives have told him they will try to get the local bills that enabled Holden Beach and other area towns to levy occupancy tax "grandfathered" so they would still apply.

"At this point they're not even sure it has enough support to get off the ground in finance," Ausley said.

Two Streets Closed

Despite some public opposition, town commissioners voted to "close" two streets near the east end of Holden Beach Tuesday night that

have never been used in the past.

Sections of Carolina Avenue and South Shore Drive stretching from the western edge of the Old State Park property to Ferry Road have been formally closed.

The streets were platted years ago, but they were never opened or accepted by the town. The closings were requested by the owners of the property, Canal Investment Society and W.F. Sledge.

Spokesman Harry Lockwood said the owners think the original subdivision that included the two streets can be re-designed better. "There aren't any plans to do anything with it," he said. "There is no hidden agenda."

If the existing subdivision is re-designed, it would have to be approved by the planning and zoning board and board of commissioners. Lockwood said the developers would lose at least eight lots if the subdivision was re-platted.

In a public hearing preceding Tuesday's vote, residents Elias Pigford and Roger Williams urged the board to keep the streets open in case they are needed for access in the future.

If Ocean Boulevard is washed away, they said access to the east end of the island would be reduced.

"At some point we're going to need a second way to get down this beach," said Williams, chairman of the planning board.

Other Business

In other business Tuesday, commissioners:

■ Took no action after meeting for 25 minutes in executive session. Mayor Ausley said the board discussed "pending litigation."

■ Appointed Charlotte Pringle to the Holden Beach Board of Elections. Pringle replaces Mabel Dutton, who resigned recently after more than 15 years of service.

■ Took no action after hearing a complaint from Burlington Street homeowner Mitchell Roberts. He said his floating dock was damaged by the company that dredged the canals last winter, and the company refuses to pay the \$1,400 it cost to replace the dock. Town officials say they have been trying to help Roberts with his claim against the company.

■ Voted 4-1 to table a proposed ethics code for Holden Beach officials and employees. Commissioners Fournier and Bass, who previously were appointed to an ethics committee, plan to meet soon to develop a joint recommendation. Sandifer cast the only vote against tabling the issue.

■ Accepted the donation of three framed prints from David and Pat Sandifer. Prints depicting the old ferry to Holden Beach, the old draw bridge and the existing bridge will be displayed in town hall. They were donated in honor of Pat's parents, Mr. and Mrs. James D. Griffin Sr.

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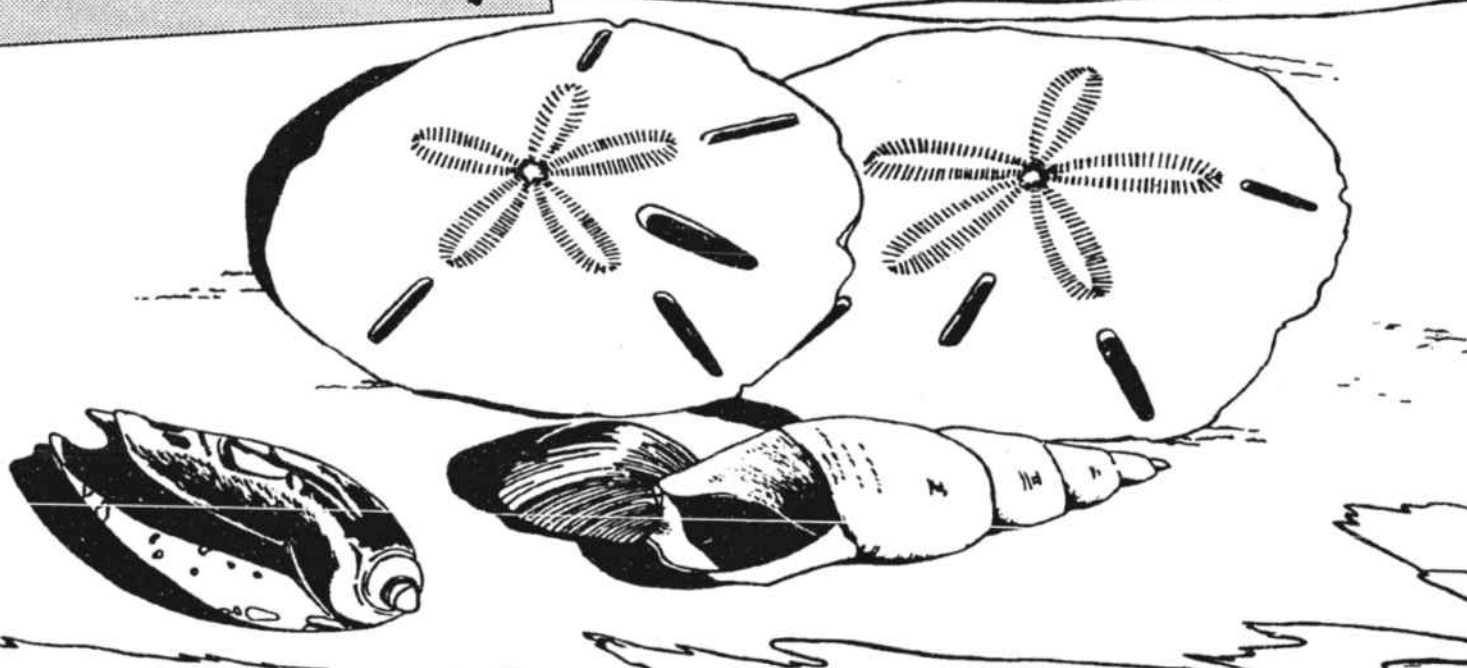
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