

DENSITY LIMIT WOULD BE ONE DWELLING PER ACRE

Bird Island Zoning Proposal Set For Public Hearing

BY LYNN CARLSON

A zoning proposal scheduled to go to public hearing in September would limit development of Bird Island to an estimated 30 single-family homes and possibly a community center.

After almost a year of drafting and refining, Sunset Beach's planning board and town council have scheduled a hearing Sept. 13 at 7 p.m. in the town hall on a proposed "conservation reserve zone" to include the undeveloped barrier island.

The zone, according to the proposal, would provide "effective long-term management of significant, limited or irreplaceable areas" such as wetlands, undeveloped shorelines and the habitats of rare plants and animals. Low-density single-family development would be allowed, but special permission would be required by the town's board of adjustments for a community center.

As proposed, the zone could not include the restaurant, bed-and-breakfast hostel and multi-family units featured in an earlier plan proposed by the island's owner.

Though agents for owner Janie Pace Price of Greensboro have had input into the zoning proposal, they argue that it would "unreasonably restrict" use of Price's land and make her unable to recoup costs she will incur constructing a mile-long system of bridges and causeway to her property.

The zoning proposal seeks to limit development density to one single-family dwelling per acre of "to-



A VISITOR looks over the undeveloped beachfront at Bird Island, a barrier island off Sunset Beach which straddles the state line. Though Bird Island is not in the town limits, it lies within the Sunset Beach zoning jurisdiction.

tal net buildable area" in the zone. A professional planner's study of Bird Island last August estimated the island has 32.9 acres of uplands which are outside existing city and state setback regulations.

Though one dwelling per acre is the total density objective, homes could be built on half-acre lots under the proposed plan. "If there is an acre-and-a-half-acre piece of upland, you'd be able to build three homes there—but that would count as three

of the total units allowed of the total 30 or so," Planning Board Chairman Richard Good explained.

Permitted uses would include single-family residences, spoil sites, fences, accessory buildings, swimming pools, bulkheads as permitted by the state's Coastal Area Management Act, private noncommercial piers and docks, coastal reserves and estuarine/wildlife sanctuaries, underwater utility crossings, bridges and causeways permitted by CAMA and other agencies.

Special uses, permissible only with the consent of the board of adjustments, would include a community center and recreational amenities, such as a swimming pool, tennis courts and a boat dock. The community center would have to be on at least one acre of land and would count as one of the total allowable units. The boards agreed that the community center could serve food to residents but could not operate as a public restaurant.

Additional density requirements

proposed include:

- Maximum lot coverage of 30 percent by buildings, accessory buildings and impervious surfaces such as driveways.

- Minimum required front yard depth of 50 feet on all lots other than oceanfront. Oceanfront homes would be required to be built 65 feet from the established Coastal Area Management Act line.

- Thirty-five foot height limit.

- Maximum six bedrooms per residence.

In a July 26 letter to the planning board, mayor and town council members, Price's attorney calls a number of the provisions "overly restrictive." H. Glenn Dunn of Raleigh said Price and her son, Rees Poag of Raleigh, "consider it unjustifiable that Bird Island should be subjected to much more severe restrictions than Sunset Beach itself" and adds that many of the restrictions proposed exceed federal and state wetlands regulations and septic tank requirements.

Dunn said his clients are most concerned about the proposed dimensional requirements. "It remains our opinion that 7,500-square-foot lots are adequate to accommodate septic tanks." He adds that the proposed front yard dimensions of 50 feet for non-oceanfront lots and 65 feet for oceanfront lots, combined with rear yard requirements of 25 feet, "severely impact our ability to utilize the oceanfront areas of the site and the narrower portions of the site's interior."

"When the impacts of a one-acre lot requirement are combined with the proposed yard dimensions, it be-

comes economically impracticable to develop the island," he said.

He argues that not allowing multi-family development "does diminish our design and market possibilities" and that "hostels, restricted to seven rental rooms, (are) an important component of an upscale development."

He calls the six-bedroom limit "unjustifiable."

Dunn concludes that the proposed ordinance will limit Price's development of the island to about 25 residential units. "This level of use is not adequate to make it financially feasible to provide access to the island. Consequently, we strongly believe that the proposed ordinance precludes economically viable use of the island."

Price has applications pending before the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for permits to build bridges and a causeway to her property. As recently as four months ago, she said her plans were to build a 15-homesite family compound on the island, if she developed it at all.

However, a proposal presented to the town government in March included numerous single- and multi-family homes as well as a marina, restaurant and inn.

Family members have said they would consider selling the island to a conservation group or government entity, but have received no offer. The Sunset Beach-based Bird Island Preservation Society, sponsored by the N.C. Coastal Federation, continues to raise funds toward a possible purchase. Rep. David Redwine, D-Brunswick, has agreed to seek state funding to help.

Brunswick Paving Projects On Agenda

The State Board of Transportation will consider allocations totaling \$2.64 million for Brunswick County road projects when it meets Friday in Greenville.

Specifically, the funding requests include:

- An additional \$1.75 million for preliminary engineering on U.S. 17 at Supply to the South Carolina state line, 21.3 miles;

- Highway Trust Fund allocations of \$431,500 for secondary road paving projects: \$200,000 for Benton Road (S.R. 1502, 2.2 miles from end of pavement to U.S. 17), which serves Supply Elementary School; \$6,000 for Evans Circle (S.R. 1800) and S.R. 1848 off N.C. 130; \$13,500 for Dale Street (S.R. 1466); \$212,000 for Burge Drive (S.R. 1802), Pine Bur Circle (S.R. 1804), Wrenn

Drive (S.R. 1805), Melvin Drive (S.R. 1806) and Petty Drive (S.R. 1807) in Pine Bur Acres; Carlyle Street (S.R. 1243) and Jericho Road (S.R. 1244) in Carlyle Acres.

- Highway Fund allocations of \$424,500 for secondary road projects: \$16,000, Carter Street (S.R. 1176); \$15,000, Bo-Tuck Road (S.R. 1809); \$47,000, Charlotte Avenue (S.R. 1821), Lower County Street (S.R. 1860) and Wilson Avenue (S.R. 1227); \$30,500, Garner Street (S.R. 1187 and S.R. 1188); \$35,000, Shoreline Drive (S.R. 1288) and Kelford Street (S.R. 1856); \$30,000, Cumbee Road (S.R. 1131); \$121,000, Albright Road (S.R. 1508); and \$130,000, McKay Road (S.R. 1511).

- An additional \$35,000 allocation for right-of-way signatures.

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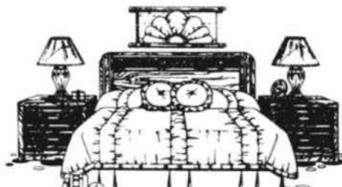
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