

Holden Beach Board Nears Approval Of Impact Fees

BY DOUG RUTTER

Holden Beach officials are nearing approval of an ordinance that would require owners of new homes and businesses to pay impact fees that would ultimately be used to build stormwater and sewer systems.

Commissioners reviewed the proposed ordinance last week and made a few changes before asking Town Attorney Ken Campbell to come to the board's Sept. 22 meeting with a revised draft.

If approved, owners of new residences would have to pay the town 50 cents per heated square foot, with a minimum fee of \$1,000, before a building permit would be issued. Residential fees also would apply to existing homes that are expanded and homes moved onto the island from outside the town limits.

The proposed impact fee for businesses is \$1 per square foot, with a \$2,000 minimum.

Commissioners are pursuing the ordinance because they want the people who create the need for stormwater runoff and wastewater treatment systems to help pay for those systems.

For parking lots and driveways, the town proposes charging 50 cents per square foot with no minimum fee. Only areas paved with concrete, asphalt and similar impervious surfaces would be affected.

By charging impact fees for paved areas, town officials say they hope to encourage people to build smaller driveways and cut down on stormwater runoff pollution. "This would be an incentive to put concrete ribbons in rather than broad concrete driveways," Commissioners Jim Fournier said at last Tuesday's town meeting.

Commissioners decided that all fees collected would be refunded if the town board had not made a commitment to construct a stormwater or sewer system within 10 years.

"In all sincerity, if we haven't bitten the bullet in 10 years we probably never will," Commissioner David Sandifer said.

New Fishing Rules

Commercial and recreational fishermen who use gill nets off Holden Beach are under a new set of regulations

adopted last week. Commissioners made a few changes to the net fishing rules passed in 1982 and 1983.

From now on, fishing nets set along the strand may not be left unattended for more than 12 hours. The old ordinance allowed fishermen to leave their nets up to 24 hours.

The new rules allow net fishing from the beach from the day after Labor Day through Feb. 1, which is one month longer than the old ordinance allowed.

The new ordinance prohibits setting gill nets from a boat within 300 yards of the beach between New Year's Day and Labor Day.

Holden Beach officials decided to change the local net fishing ordinance after rejecting a set of regulations that was enacted last month by the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries.

Among other things, those state rules required fishermen to remove gear such as ropes, anchors and buoys from the beach whenever nets were not in use. Several local net fishermen objected to that provision.

N.C. Fisheries Director William Hogarth said last week he planned to issue a proclamation soon that would exempt Holden Beach from the state regulations.

The town ordinance requires fishermen to register at town hall before fishing with gill nets. Fishermen also must get written permission from the property owner if his lot is used for beach access or anchoring ropes.

Paving Approved

Marlin Drive, Lumberton Street, Sandspur Lane, Sandpiper Lane and Sand Dune Lane will be soon be paved.

Commissioners approved a street paving contract

with F&R Development last week after the local firm submitted the low bid of \$58,422 for the project.

There were no comments during public hearings on the paving. Property owners along the streets will pay 60 percent of the total cost, and the town will pay 40 percent.

Interim Town Manager Gus Ulrich said landowners will pay approximately \$275 per 50-foot lot. F&R Development will add four inches of base material to each street and cover it with 1 1/2 inches of asphalt.

The work on Marlin Drive and Lumberton Street will include bulkheads at the end of the roads, adjacent to the canal. Ulrich said that work will be done as part of a separate contract.

Commissioners will hold a public hearing Sept. 22 on the proposed paving of the dirt section of Brunswick Avenue East. The owners along that stretch have agreed to pay 60 percent of the cost.

Other Business

In other business last week, commissioners:

■ Adopted an ordinance that simplifies penalty clauses in the town code and increases fines for some activities such as illegal parking and tampering with a water meter.

■ Voted to file a request with the Federal Communications Commission for certification as a cable franchise authority. Certification would give the town the power to regulate basic cable television rates.

■ Passed a resolution agreeing to close the unnamed and unopened streets in the R.H. Holden subdivision and delete them from the town street plan.

CANCER-CAUSING CHEMICAL FOUND

Holden Manager Says Water Safe To Drink

BY DOUG RUTTER

Holden Beach's manager says residents should not be concerned about high levels of a chemical in their drinking water that has been shown to cause cancer in laboratory animals.

Recent tests have shown Holden Beach's public water supply contains higher levels of tri-halomethanes (TTHMs) than is allowed by state and federal drinking water regulations.

Interim Town Manager Gus Ulrich said the town is working to correct the problem by flushing water lines regularly.

In the meantime, Ulrich said residents should continue drinking the water without worrying about health problems. "My opinion is there is not a major health risk involved here."

Holden Beach is mailing notices to each permanent resident this week notifying them that excessive levels of TTHMs have been detected in the water for the two most recent quarterly reporting periods.

Notice is required by the EPA and N.C. Division of Environmental Health whenever the annual average of TTHMs measured at the point of the water system having the highest concentration of TTHMs exceeds .10 parts per million (ppm).

Tri-halomethanes are the byproducts of the chlorination process used to disinfect drinking water. High levels of TTHMs in drinking water

"My opinion is there is not a major health risk involved here."

—Interim Town Manager Gus Ulrich

are caused by long periods of exposure to chlorine and high temperatures.

TTHMs have been shown to cause cancer in laboratory rats and mice when these animals are exposed to high doses for a lifetime.

In the two most recent tests at Holden Beach, Ulrich said the annual average of TTHMs was .11 ppm and .12 ppm.

The first of those tests covered the last three quarters of 1992 and first quarter of 1993. The next period included the last two quarters of 1992 and first two of 1993.

However, a state test conducted July 8 revealed a TTHMs level of .094 parts per million, which meets the state and federal standard.

Ulrich said town officials are confident the level of TTHMs in the water system will be at an acceptable level when the water is tested again at the end of September.

"We fully expect that the running average when the next test is included will be below the standard of .10," Ulrich said.

Earlier this year, Ulrich said the town initiated a program of flushing water lines every three months at the

fire hydrants. Holden Beach did not follow a schedule of flushing water lines before this year.

"We stepped up flushing of the system to keep that number (TTHMs) down," Ulrich said. "They've flushed them in the past when we had problems, but it hasn't been done as a routine operating procedure until this year."

In laboratory tests, Ulrich said researchers have found "occasional" cases of cancer in mice and rats that drink water with heavy concentrations of TTHMs over a lifetime.

In human terms, Ulrich said a person who drank a half-gallon of water with high levels of TTHMs every day for 70 years would increase their risk of cancer by 1 in 60,000.

"That tells me it's a very small risk," he said.

Ulrich said residents at the west end of the island have the highest concentration of TTHMs in their drinking water because water piped to that area is in contact with chlorine the longest.

People interested in eliminating all traces of TTHMs from their drinking water can affix carbon filters to their taps.

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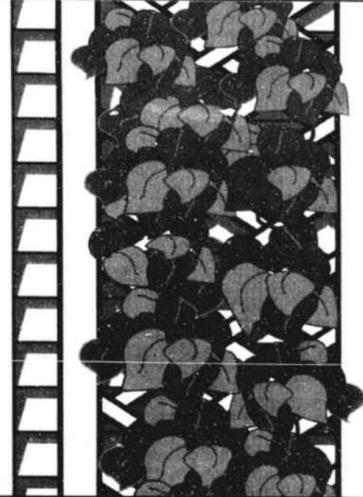


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