

## Coast Guard Arranges Tow For Two Boats Grounded In ICW

Two pleasure boats ran aground in the Intracoastal Waterway last week and had to be refloated by commercial salvage companies, according to a weekly report from BMCS J.D. Arndt, chief of the U.S. Coast Guard Station Oak Island.

At about 2:30 p.m. Nov. 4, the station received a call from a vessel reporting that a 40-foot wooden-hulled pleasure boat was aground near ICW marker 16.

Federal guidelines discourage the Coast Guard from towing grounded vessels unless they are in danger or no other aid is available. Crew members may be removed if requested.

The station issued a Marine Assistance Radio Broadcast (MARB) to give commercial salvors an opportunity to aid the boat and received an affirmative response. The Coast Guard remained in radio contact until the salvage operator refloated the vessel and it was safely moored, Arndt said.

Later that day, at about 4 o'clock, the station was called by another vessel reporting itself aground near ICW marker 32. Again a MARB was broadcast and a commercial salvor responded. The 33-foot pleasure craft was refloated, with the Coast Guard remaining in contact until it was moored safely.

On Nov. 5, the station was called at about 10 a.m. by 30-foot pleasure boat reporting that a person on board had possibly suffered a heart attack. The boat gave its position as three miles southeast of the Shallotte Inlet sea buoy and said it was en route to Tripp's Marina at Shallotte Point.

The station launched its 41-foot patrol boat and contacted the Brunswick County Emergency Services (911) center for ambulance assistance at that location, Arndt said. The 41-footer was recalled after the vessel arrived at the marina and the patient was transferred to an ambulance.

At about 1 p.m., the station received a call from a vessel reporting a 14-foot skiff disabled off Ocean Isle Beach Fishing Pier, four miles southeast of Shallotte Inlet sea buoy.

The station contacted Brunswick County 911 and requested that the Ocean Isle Beach Volunteer Fire Department's ocean rescue unit assist. One of its boats arrived at the scene a short time later and took the stricken skiff in tow, Arndt said.

The local rescue boat asked for Coast Guard assistance when the weather began to worsen. The station launched its 41-footer and a 21-foot rigid-hulled fast-response boat.

The Ocean Isle Beach unit called back a short while later and said they had the skiff safely in tow through Shallotte Inlet. The station's two boats were recalled.

# OIB Delays Action On Proposal To Relax Height Limit On Homes

**BY LYNN CARLSON**  
Ocean Isle Beach commissioners have returned to the town's planning board a proposal to relax residential building height restrictions at Ocean Isle Beach so that new two-story homes built in flood hazard areas can conform to town and federal regulations.

The proposal, submitted to the commissioners Oct. 12 by the planning board, would let property owners in the V-zone (flood hazard area) exceed the current 36-foot height limit by no more than four feet to allow them "two eight-foot-high ceilings on two living area floors so long as the lowest living floor is constructed within one foot, two inches of the required flood plain ordinance base flood elevation."

After a public hearing Tuesday morning, the commissioners agreed at the request of planning board member and Commissioner-elect Ken Proctor to return the proposal to the planning board for "one more workshop."

Proctor said the planning board may propose a new basis for residential height limitations using "a firm starting place" so that "even when the base flood elevation changes, every property owner would have the same limitation."

Different towns use different starting points for their residential height limits. Sunset Beach's height limit on the island portion of the town is 35 feet above the crown of the roadbed in front of a house. Holden Beach limits building heights to 35 feet above the slab under a house. Ocean Isle Beach currently begins measuring at the highest point on the lot.

Ocean Isle's proposal to relax the limit would allow homebuilders to meet federal regulations requiring them to build on high pilings in the

*"Relaxing the building height might open a large can of worms. It could mess up the appearance of the beach as it is now."*

—Kendall Suh, Commissioner

flood hazard zone without forcing them to have very flat roofs in order to make it under the town's 36-foot height rule with a two-story house.

Building Inspector Druid Roberson argued against the contention that the ordinance, if adopted, would affect only a few pieces of property.

"It would actually affect the entire beach, because where you have lots in low areas, if the homes had to be rebuilt, they wouldn't fit under the height limitation."

"Appraisers have gotten skittish now, and they look at every fact. If you couldn't build the same square footage back on the same lot, they would have to take that into consideration. That means it could possibly affect every house from mid-canals on the concrete side to most of the west end, plus the condos in the R-2 (residential) area."

Roberson added, "I agree that the planning board needs a well-defined starting place to measure from."

Commissioner Kendall Suh said relaxing the building height might "open a large can of worms. It could mess up the appearance of the beach as it is now."

Suh argued that "we don't need to guarantee anyone will be able to build a two-story home. Some lots are better than others. It is not the responsibility of the Town of Ocean Isle Beach that every lot will give the maximum in terms of square footage. It is our responsibility to make sure we don't have homes (being built) out of character with the rest of Ocean Isle Beach."

Contractor John Sutton said he'd like to see all residential buildings limited to 40 feet instead of 36. "They're easier to design and build, and if some can go to 40, all should be able to."

Discussion is expected to continue at the board's Dec. 6 meeting.

In other business, the commissioners: presented a plaque of appreciation to outgoing Commissioner Terry Barbee, who lost the Nov. 2 election after serving eight years on the board. Ken Proctor will assume that seat on the board and is to be sworn in Dec. 6.

learned from Mayor Betty Williamson that the town saved \$394,506 in the recent refunding of \$3 million in sewer bonds;

heard the mayor briefly review the recently completed audit for the fiscal year which ended June 30, determining the town to be "in great financial condition" with a 99.88 percent tax collection rate, a tax value up \$5.6 million over the previous year, no budgets overspent and an undesignated fund balance of \$597,400.

gave a round of applause to Finance Officer Daisy Ivey and other town employees for their performance, which was also commended in the audit statement.

## Shallotte Sets Hearing On Zoning Amendments

**BY DOUG RUTTER**  
Shallotte Aldermen will hold a public hearing next week on three proposed changes in the zoning code, two of which would relax restrictions on existing lots and buildings that do not meet minimum standards.

Town residents and landowners will be invited to give their opinions on proposed rules that would affect how Shallotte handles non-conforming uses on Tuesday, Nov. 16, at 7 p.m. in town hall.

Among the planning board proposals is one to do away with a section of the town code that requires all lots not served by a public water or sewer system to meet minimum lot sizes established by the county health department.

Building Inspector Albert Hughes said the town has its own minimum lot sizes for properties in the town's one-mile extraterritorial area that are not served by water or sewer.

Minimum standards are 15,000 square feet for the RA-15 and RAM-15 zoning districts, which are intended for residential and agricultural uses, and 20,000 square feet for the B-2 commercial district.

Two other proposed changes deal with "non-conforming uses," which are land or building uses that do not conform with the town's zoning ordinances.

One change would extend from 90 days to 180 days the period in which non-conforming uses may be discontinued without having to be

brought into compliance. Hughes said the new rule would be used in cases where a non-conforming house or business was destroyed by fire. The owner would have 180 days to start rebuilding instead of 90.

"Ninety days wouldn't hardly give you enough time to settle with the insurance company and start construction," said Hughes, adding that the time period used to 180 days until it was changed a few years ago.

Also going to public hearing next week is a proposal that would allow the development of any lot that doesn't meet minimum lot size standards as long as setback requirements are met.

Under the current code, non-conforming lots can be developed if they are no more than 20 percent below the minimum size limits and were recorded before the zoning ordinance took effect.

The change would allow the use of any property as long as the owner can meet the setbacks requirements of 10 feet for side yards, 25 feet for front yards and 20 feet for rear yards.

"It still has a lot of restrictions to it, but it doesn't say you can't use those lots period," Hughes explained.

If the new rule is approved, Hughes said a landowner would be permitted to request a variance from the code if the lot is too small and setbacks cannot be met.

## STRUGGLE CONTINUES Board, Partners Differ Over 3 Subdivision Plans

**BY LYNN CARLSON**  
Ocean Isle Beach Partners and the Ocean Isle Beach Board of Commissioners Tuesday continued their running struggle over three subdivisions the partners are developing from oceanfront to soundfront just west of the town hall.

The partners, represented on Tuesday by engineer Jay Houston, accused the town board of demanding more of the Ross and Crouse subdivisions and Summer Place than it has of previous developments.

Town officials countered that the partners continually change their plans as the developments progress, requiring additional study and deliberation before plat and permit approvals can be issued.

The partners were required by the town board to provide a public parking lot, and later received permission to change its location from the oceanfront to two 25-foot-long strips across the street.

On Tuesday, the partners asked for a special use permit to build a private swimming pool adjacent to the east edge of the parking lots to serve the developments.

"Ocean Isle Beach needs a pool

like a hole in the head," argued Odell Williamson, utilities and streets commissioner.

The development's preliminary plat, approved by the commissioners, included a pool, said partner John Sutton.

"It was hidden among the topo lines on your erosion control plan," countered Building Inspector Druid Roberson.

"It was not hidden," Sutton responded. "It was in the required plans, and the rules do not specify which one it needs to be on."

The commissioners, acting as a board of adjustment, will consider the request at a public hearing Dec. 6 at 8:30 a.m. prior to its regular 9 a.m. meeting.

The board and partners also differed over whether the partners should be allowed to cut First Street to install sewer pipes, drain stormwater through the public parking lot and move a water line.

"You guys are being singled out," engineer Houston said.

"No kidding," replied partner Phil Holcomb.

Engineer Finley Boney, hired by the town to represent it on the water and sewer questions, said, "I agree

that communication between the town and the developers could have been better, but it's time to sit down, stop avoiding each other and get an approvable plan together."

The mayor appointed Boney, Odell Williamson, Roberson, Commissioner Debbie Fox and herself to set a workshop with the partners "to see if we can work things out."

Ocean Isle Beach's subdivision ordinance is being rewritten with the help of an out-of-town consultant in hopes of closing loopholes and clarifying municipal standards for development. A second draft of the proposal was submitted to the town's planning board two weeks ago.

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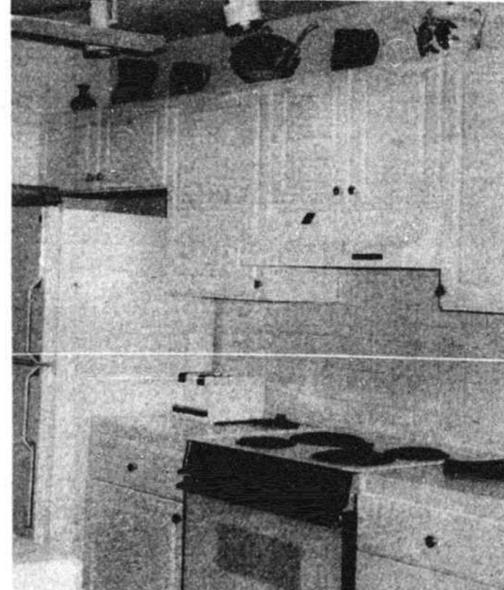
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Every once in a while, an individual comes along who has so much to offer, so much to give and is willing to share himself for the public good.

Eleven good people ran for office on Holden Beach this year and, as in all contests, some must lose. Jim Shafor lost. Holden Beach lost! Thank you Jim for being our friend and for sharing yourself with Holden Beach.

David Sandifer