



STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER
INSTALLED MONDAY NIGHT at Holden Beach were Mayor Wally Ausley (third from left) and commissioners (from left) Sid Swarts, David Sandifer, Gay Atkins, Jim Fournier and Dwight Carroll.

New Holden Board Will Meet Monday

BY DOUG RUTTER
 Holden Beach's new board of commissioners, installed Monday night at a mostly-ceremonial meeting, will get down to business next Monday when it meets to set goals for the next two years.

Dwight Carroll, the former town building inspector, is the only newcomer to the board. He joins Jim Fournier, David Sandifer, Gay Atkins and Sid Swarts, who won reelection in November.

Mayor Wally Ausley and the commissioners were sworn into office Monday night by Judge Gerald Arnold, chief justice of the N.C. Court of Appeals and a Holden Beach homeowner.

Ausley said the previous town board, which also included Gil Bass, should be proud of its accomplishments. He said he hopes the board will continue doing what is best for the community.

Prior to the installation, Mayor Ausley presented a plaque to outgoing commissioner Bass, who did not seek re-election.

"It has been a great pleasure to serve Holden Beach," Bass said. "You have done a lot the last two years in our community. I'd like the board in the future to continue down the same road."

Atkins, the high vote-getter in November's election and an eight-year veteran of the town board, was unanimously elected mayor pro tem by the other commissioners Monday.

Reluctantly, she moved from the seat at the end of the commissioners' table that she had occupied since 1987. The mayor pro tem traditionally sits next to the mayor.

"You have to give up that end seat after all these years," Ausley joked. "That's the price you pay for being so popular."

Swarts, starting his second term, suggested the special meeting Mon-

day at 9 a.m. so town board members can discuss what they hope to accomplish in the upcoming term.

Commissioners have decided to continue meeting the first Monday of each month and the Wednesday that falls 12 days before the first Monday meeting. All regular meetings start at 7 p.m. in town hall.

Crawford Hart, president of the Holden Beach Property Owners Association, asked the board if it could schedule one or two of its meetings on Saturday so non-resident homeowners could attend.

Hart said many HBPOA members do not feel they are represented on the beach. "We thought you might want to bend the rules a little bit so some of them can attend your meeting."

Mayor Ausley promised the board would consider the request, but said he took exception to the fact that property owners would say they aren't represented. Ausley said the board replies to every HBPOA concern.

Fournier said the HBPOA Board of Directors, which includes several island residents, should bring property owners' concerns to the attention of the board of commissioners.

"As far as them coming to a meeting and us putting on a dog and pony show, I'll be glad to perform for them," Fournier said. "I don't know if they'll be impressed."

At the Jan. 3 meeting, commissioners plan to conduct a public hearing on a re-zoning appeal and meet with a state official concerning a proposed sewer system.

Holden Beach's planning board recently denied a request to re-zone several lots near town hall from residential to commercial. The land is owned by Alan Holden and John Q. Holden.

Eric Stockton of the N.C. Division of Environmental Manage-

ment will speak with commissioners Jan. 3 concerning free assistance he can offer in planning a sewer system.

Tri-Halomethanes Down In Holden Beach Water

The level of a potentially-harmful chemical in Holden Beach's water has dipped in recent months and now meets government standards, according to the latest test results.

Town Manager Gus Ulrich said the most recent sample taken on the island contained a tri-halomethane level of 81.5 parts per billion, which is below the limit of 100 parts per billion (ppb).

For the first time since the summer, Holden Beach's annual average also is below 100 parts per billion.

Ulrich said the latest sample lowered the running average to 88.9 ppb. The annual average takes into account a series of four water samples taken every three months.

"We're in good shape," Ulrich said last week, adding that the town will take another water sample before the end of March. An independent lab tests the water.

Federal and state health officials consider any tri-halomethane level over 100 ppb as unacceptable. A Holden Beach water sample taken Sept. 22 contained a level of 124

ppb. THMs are a byproduct of the chlorination process used to disinfect water. High levels of the chemical are caused by long periods of exposure to chlorine and high temperatures.

Tri-halomethanes have been shown to cause cancer in laboratory animals that are exposed to high doses over a lifetime. However, it is not clear if THMs have a similar impact on humans.

Holden Beach buys its water from the county, which handles all of the chlorination at its plant.

Since learning of the problem earlier this year, Holden Beach officials have established a schedule of flushing water lines at fire hydrants. Some dead-end lines are flushed every two weeks.

County officials are studying ways to lower the level of THMs in the water supply. High levels also have been detected at Oak Island.

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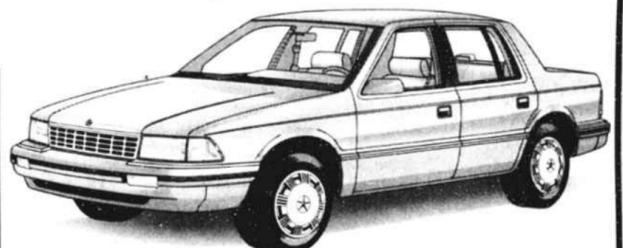
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