

Sunset Council Asked To 'Revisit' Low-Density Zoning Of Bird Island

BY SUSAN USHER

Agents for the owner of Bird Island approached Sunset Beach Town Council Monday night asking that it "revisit" the conservation reserve zoning applied to the island because it is overly restrictive.

After months of consideration, last Oct. 4 the council applied the new zoning category not only to Bird Island and its surrounding marshes but to similar areas within the town's planning boundaries.

The zoning was approved one month before town elections in which conservation of Bird Island became a community issue. It effectively limits development on the barrier island straddling the South Carolina/North Carolina line south of Sunset Beach to 30 to 35 single-family dwellings with a maximum of six bedrooms each. It restricts density to one home per acre, with

uplands comprising at least half that acre.

Last October, after the board's vote, agent John Ryder of Century von Olsen consulting engineers of Wilmington asked that the town "reconsider possible zoning relief in the future for Bird Island proper."

Monday night he reiterated that request.

Island owner Janie Page Price of Greensboro initially proposed developing seven single-family homes on the island. Later her agents revised the request, seeking greater density.

The would-be developers propose allowing a density of two units per net buildable acre and eight bedrooms per unit, if septic field capacity allows.

That plan would provide up to 66 units, some on 10,000-square-foot lots with six bedrooms, others on 15,000-square-foot-lots with eight bedrooms.

Hot Climate Can Help Fuel Heartworm Disease

Local veterinarians say this week, National Pet Health Care Week, is a good time to remind Brunswick Countians that the hot, humid coastal environment is a perfect breeding ground for the mosquitoes which produce heartworm disease in dogs.

Heartworm is potentially lethal but treatable if detected.

Here's how it develops:

■ The cycle begins when a mosquito bites a heartworm-infected dog and picks up immature heartworms, called "microfilaria," in the blood.

■ During the next few weeks, the microfilaria develop into infective larvae inside the mosquito.

■ When the mosquito bites a dog, the infective larvae are passed through the proboscis, or feeding

tube, and develop into adult heartworms over the next few months. They eventually enter and reside inside the heart.

■ Once inside the heart, they can grow up to 14 inches long and cause significant damage to the heart and lungs. Untreated, heartworm disease is usually fatal.

Some of the more common signs of heartworm disease are chronic cough, loss of appetite and decreased weight, fatigue or lethargy, and shortness of breath.

The symptoms gradually worsen until the animal dies of congestive heart failure or its complications.

Heartworm tests, treatments and preventatives are currently available, veterinarians advise.

"We want to get the density up to a much more viable utilization of the uplands," said Ryder.

The current proposal would have no impact on wetlands, according to Ryder, and includes environmental protection measures such as stormwater management. The N.C. Office of Coastal Management has asked for an environmental assessment of the project's impact before it will consider issuing a major development permit for the project.

Council took no action Monday.

Planning Board Chairman Dick Good asked that Ryder submit his request in writing.

Interest in developing the island has sparked the organization of the Bird Island Preservation Society. Its 1,600 members are interested in public acquisition of the island for conservation or preservation purposes. Should Mrs. Price be willing to set an asking price, Rep. David Redwine has said he is willing to introduce a bill seeking up to \$1 million in state funds toward that effort.



And The Winner Is...

District I School Board nominee Olaf (Bud) Thorsen lights a victory cigar after winning a close Democratic primary race with incumbent Thurman Gause.



COUNTY COMMISSIONER CHAIRMAN DON WARREN (right) muses over precinct returns with Register of Deeds Robert Robinson. Warren won the District I Democratic nomination.

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