

**CONTROVERSY EXPECTED**

**Game Room Owner Says His Business Zoned Residential By Mistake**

BY ERIC CARLSON

The owner of a building who claims it has been used as a business since 1977 asked the Brunswick County Commissioners on Monday to correct its current residential zoning, a move expected to spark opposition from neighbors.

Elizabeth Simmons told the board at its regular meeting that her husband bought the property at the corner of Holden Beach Road and Evans Circle 17 years ago. She said the building built there in late 1962 "has always been commercial."

The two-story block building is currently home to the Idle Hour Game Room. Across the street are an automobile stereo shop and a small used car dealership. Both are located on property zoned for residential use, Simmons said.

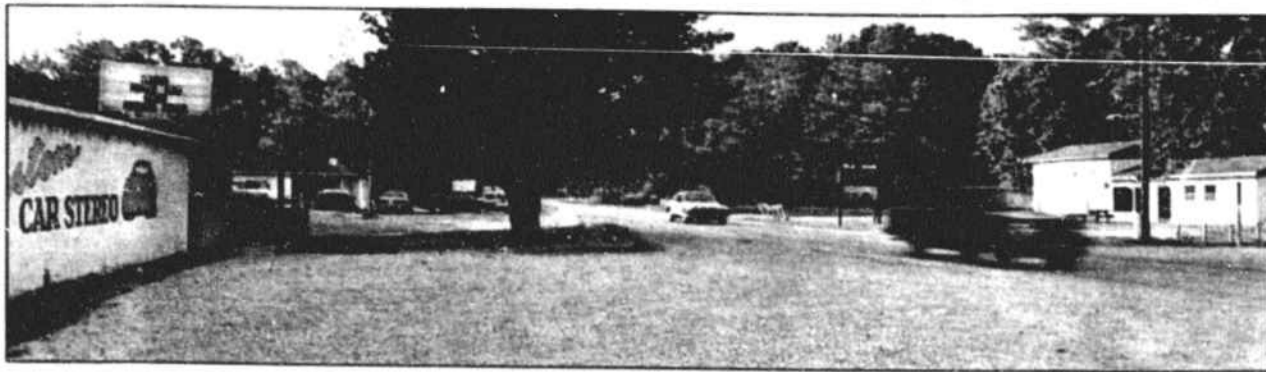
Simmons said she discovered the new zoning designation when she applied for a permit to have the building expanded and found she could not do so as a nonconforming

use in a residential zone.

Her request for rezoning brought loud protests from about 20 residents of the area who attended a recent meeting of the Brunswick County Planning Board. That opposition is expected to resurface when the county commissioners hold a public hearing on the re-zoning Sept. 19 at 5:30 p.m.

The planning board voted against changing the use designation. But the planning staff disagrees and believes the commissioners should consider rezoning the property where the three businesses are located, Planning Director Wade Horne told the county board Monday.

Several people appeared at the Monday commissioners meeting to speak in support of game room owner Ron Flint, who said he heard of "a lot of mud-slinging" about his business when the Simmons rezoning was discussed at the recent planning board meeting. He insisted that



STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC CARLSON

**RESIDENTIAL zoning applies to this group of three businesses on Holden Beach Road south of Shallotte. Owners of the Idle Hour Game Room at right have asked the county to change the designation to "commercial" for the game room, the car stereo shop across the street and a neighboring used**

he runs "the cleanest bar in Brunswick County" and does not allow "any doping or fighting or drunks falling down" on his property.

Randall Brown of Shallotte said he frequently visits the Idle hour with his young son. He said the game room and bar are kept separate

and no one feels uncomfortable about not drinking.

"It's a good, viable business. There's never any trouble there. Those people are asked to leave," Brown said. "It's not appropriate for that property to be zoned residential. There's no logical reason to keep it

that way."

James Poston of Spring Hill said he enjoys visiting the Idle Hour. He called Flint "an astute person" and praised his operation of the game room.

"He's providing the community with a place where they and their loved ones can feel safe," Poston said. "The problems people are worried about are in the community. They aren't because of Ron. He's providing an outlet for the community."

Several residents of other areas appeared before the commissioners

to complain that the usage of their property was improperly designated in the zoning law.

Commissioners Chairman Don Warren told the audience that the county's planning staff has been asked "to physically look at every piece of property in Brunswick County and clean up the obvious inconsistencies before people like you have to come here and tell us about it."

In other business, Lorraine Bates, acting chairperson for the Brunswick County Partnership for Children reported on the organization's efforts to obtain a \$1 million grant from the state through Gov. Jim Hunt's "Smart Start" program for pre-school children.

Bates told the board that Brunswick County placed 18th last year on a list of statewide applicants from which the top 12 received grant funding. She said the county has "hit the ground running" this year and fully expects to qualify for the program.

"I don't see how we can fail," she said.

At Bates request, the commissioners agreed to write letters of support to state officials endorsing the partnership's efforts.

**Jones Agrees To Retain Planning Board Seat**

BY ERIC CARLSON

After receiving a unanimous "vote of confidence" from fellow county board members, Commissioner Jerry Jones on Monday agreed to remain the commissioners' representative on the Brunswick County Planning Board.



**JONES**  
three years on the planning board. The surprise

move came after critical discussion in which the commissioners voted to ask the planning department to review the countywide zoning ordinance to identify "obvious inconsistencies" in the law.

Planning Board Chairman John Thompson and Brunswick Planning Director Wade Horne both said in interviews after the meeting that planning officials had already been doing what the commissioners were asking "for months."

Monday's vote to reappoint Jones to the planning board came after it became obvious that no other commissioner wanted the position.

"It's pretty crystal clear that Mr. Jones is the man for the job," Commissioners Chairman Don Warren said.

Jones said in an interview Tuesday that he has "no problem serving on the board" and agreed to serve because "the commissioners need a representative" there. He said he resigned "at a moment when I was upset and discouraged. I figured maybe they thought I wasn't doing a good job. I'd be more than happy for one of the other commissioners to take the seat. It's not exactly pleasant all the time."

Since zoning went into effect last year, the planning board has been swamped with sometimes angry requests for changes in the law.

"People have to realize that nothing is etched in stone and there are going to be problems that have to be worked out," Jones said.

**Legislation Gives Authority More Control**

Legislative action by Rep. David Redwine will make it possible for the South Brunswick Water and Sewer Authority and its sister bodies statewide to manage stormwater the way local governments already can.

In the final days of the summer session, Redwine shepherded through House Bill 1628. It allows the quasi-governmental water and sewer authorities to adopt ordinances to regulate and control the discharge of sewage and stormwater into any sewerage system owned or operated by the authority. It also allows the authority to adopt ordinances to regulate and control structural and natural stormwater and drainage systems of all types.

"We could have done the same thing by transfers of power," said engineer Jim Tombro Monday, "but this was faster and more efficient. It was something the state needed to do for water and sewer authorities anyway."

Each member government of the authority, presently Sunset Beach and Calabash and soon to include Brunswick County, could have adopted a stormwater management

ordinance and then formally transferred its power in that area to the authority.

Authorities already had been given the power to establish stormwater utility systems and set user rates and charges for them. But unlike towns and counties, authorities couldn't regulate either the quantity or quality of stormwater entering the systems, according to Jim Billups of Piedmont Olsen Hensley, consulting engineers with the authority. That control is considered essential in cost controls and in preventing pollution.

Without the legislation there was a risk of delay in implementing the authority's proposed regional sewer and stormwater management project.

As part of Phase I, the authority anticipates constructing wastewater collection lines in the downtown district of Calabash during the upcoming winter months.

However, under an agreement reached earlier this year with state environmental officials, the lines could not be used until a stormwater

management program is in place.

The authority is planning a two-phased stormwater management program. The first would be preventive stormwater controls required during the development or redevelopment of property. These could be implemented as quickly as suitable local ordinances are in place to supplement existing state requirements for larger projects. Sunset Beach has received a state grant to plan its comprehensive approach to stormwater management, including drafting of an ordinance that could be used as a model by other local governments on the coast.

The second phase, remedial stormwater management, will attempt to correct existing stormwater runoff and control problems and will require a long-term effort. It is in the early planning stages.

Under a resolution adopted by the authority at its June 9 meeting, members affirmed the authority's commitment to implementation of a comprehensive stormwater management program and adoption of an ordinance similar to that being developed by Sunset Beach.

It also pledged that the authority would implement enforcement of that ordinance before any discharge of wastewater into its wastewater collection sewer.

The resolution was intended to assuage concerns that the stormwater plan might not be implemented concurrently with the sewer project.

"Integration of wastewater and stormwater controls are a key concern of Shellfish Sanitation," Billups told authority members at the time. "We need to make a commitment that they will be addressed together."

"If there is any issue that would bring upon us having to go from an environmental assessment to a full environmental impact statement on the sewer project, this is it," he said. "Stormwater runoff is the primary secondary impact and this handles it without burdening the wastewater program."

The authority's revised and expanded environmental assessment of the project is being reviewed now by the Department of Environmental, Health and Natural Resources.

**Eight Face Drug Charges**

Four men were arrested on felony cocaine possession charges Friday in the Brunswick County Sheriff Department narcotics squad's latest street interdiction drug crackdown in the Leland/Navassa area.

The enforcement effort, assisted by the N.C. Highway Patrol, also netted five apprehensions on misdemeanor drug and alcohol charges, one arrest for carrying a concealed weapon and 18 traffic citations, according to narcotics squad coordinator Lt. David Crocker.

Two automobiles, more than 19 rocks of crack cocaine and over \$1,100 in alleged drug proceeds were seized in the effort, Crocker said.

Arrested at the corner of Main Street and Park Avenue, Navassa, was local resident William Alfred Alston, 54, who was picked up on outstanding grand jury indictments for felony cocaine possession and sale and delivery of cocaine, said Crocker.

In a search of Alston and his vehicle, detectives allegedly found about seven grams of crack cocaine, valued at about \$3,150. Crocker said they also seized his 1982 Buick and \$1,195 in cash.

Alston was charged with one count each of possession with intent to sell and deliver cocaine, maintaining a vehicle for the purpose of keeping controlled substances and felonious child endangerment.

There were three children, ages four-to-five years old, in Alston's car at the time of his arrest, Crocker said.

Later that night, drug officers arrested three Wilmington men on charges of possessing cocaine. They are Robert Alfred Hamel, 32, Victor Dale Sullivan, 33, and Joseph Brent Pierce, 24. The 1984 Ford Escort in which they were travelling was also seized in the arrest, Crocker said.

In highway interdiction searches

on U.S. 17 near Leland Friday afternoon, drug officers arrested four people on misdemeanor charges of possessing marijuana. A 17-year-old was cited for underage drinking and another man was charged with carrying a concealed weapon.

Traffic citations were issued for a number of offenses including seat belt violations, driving without a license, improper registration and speeding with assistance from Highway Patrol officers.

Crocker credited "tips from concerned citizens" for some of Friday's arrests and urged the public to continue calling the narcotics squad when they observe illegal drug activity. A 24-hour telephone line has been set up at the sheriff's department to handle such reports at (910) 253-4797.

All calls will be kept confidential, Crocker said.

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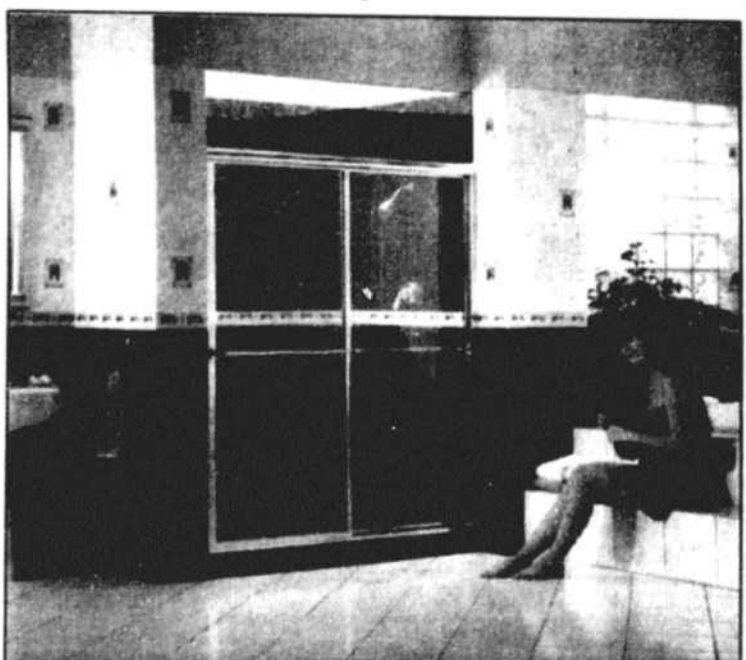
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