

HOLDEN BEACH ROAD

Scaled-Down Business Zone Adopted In Split Vote

BY ERIC CARLSON

For the third time in as many months, the owners of homes and businesses along Holden Beach Road near Civietown clashed Monday night over the question of whether the area should be zoned residential or commercial.

In round one, opponents of the zoning change told the Brunswick County Planning Board in July that the area of N.C. 130 around Evans Circle should keep its residential zoning to prevent a local tavern from remodeling.

Last month, the owner of the Idle Hour Game Room and several patrons told the county commissioners that the business was a well-supervised operation that did not allow

customers to over-indulge, get rowdy or drive drunk. They asked the board to approve a zoning change that would fit the existing use of the area, which also includes a car stereo shop and a small used car dealership.

This time, the county commissioners heard the same messages from both sides. Then in a split vote, they approved the planning department's scaled-down plan that would create a smaller commercial zone including only the existing businesses. Commissioner Jerry Jones, who is also a member of the planning board, voted against the change.

The original proposal called for a larger commercial zone running along Holden Beach Road from

Woody's store to Jerry Moore's Heating and Air Conditioning, said County Planning Director Wade Horne. It would have taken in eight existing businesses and several vacant lots.

But several property owners in the area expressed concern that they might not be able to build homes on their land if it was zoned commercial. The smaller zone was created to alleviate those fears, Horne said.

Even with its reduced size, several residents of the area voiced complaints. Most were directed toward the tavern.

Thomas O'Brien of Civietown presented a list of signatures from area residents opposed to the zoning change.

Dean Carroll, who said she lives about 100 yards from the Idle Hour, complained that businesses in the area have caused an increase in traffic and accidents. Citing problems with the Idle Hour, she said a man once knocked on her door and asked for a drink, thinking her home was the game room.

But another neighbor, Claude Suggs, who said he doesn't drink, called the Idle Hour "one of the few places that don't allow people to over-indulge or drive drunk." He said the area needed more such businesses.

Randall Brown said he often visits the Idle Hour and brings his children there to play in the game room. He agreed that the road has seen a marked increase in traffic but said the higher volume was not caused by the local businesses.

"That area has always been commercial," Brown said. "To have it zoned residential would be ludicrous."

Randy Edge, who owns the car lot across from the Idle Hour, said the zoning controversy has turned into a fight against having a drinking establishment on the corner.

"That bar is a legal business, just like mine," Edge said. "We're here to decide about zoning. We should stick to the issue."

Elizabeth Simmons, who leases the building to Idle Hour owner Ron Flint, said the property has been used for commercial purposes since



Randall Brown, who also lives near the property in question, asked the board to allow the change from residential to commercial zoning at an intersection on Holden Beach Road where several businesses have been operating as non-conforming uses.



PETITIONS signed by residents opposed to a re-zoning request are presented to the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners by Thomas O'Brien of Civietown Monday night.

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