



STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC CARLSON

### Canine Reflections

"Jake" the dachshund displays two sides of his personality as he enjoys the Festival by the Sea parade from the window of a pickup truck parked beside the Holden Beach causeway last week.

## Lot Coverage Restrictions Draw Fire At Holden Beach Monday Night

BY DOUG RUTTER

A controversial plan to more strictly regulate the percentage of each lot covered by buildings at Holden Beach drew fire from a large crowd at Monday night's town meeting.

After approximately two hours of public comments and discussion, town commissioners took no action on a planning and zoning board recommendation to change residential lot coverage restrictions.

The town presently limits the amount of each lot that can be covered by homes and other structures to 30 percent of the platted, or mapped, area. Roof overhangs are not included in the calculation.

Commissioners are considering changing the rules to start including roof overhangs, and more importantly, limit coverage to 30 percent of the usable lot area, which is less than the platted area in many cases.

Commissioner Jim Fournier said the change is aimed at reducing stormwater runoff, which state officials say is a leading cause of bacte-

*"This is an effort to control building houses that are too big for the lot by going back to the platted area." —Jim Fournier*

rial pollution that has led to the closure of local shellfish waters.

"This is an effort to allow us to control stormwater runoff," Fournier said. "This is an effort to control building houses that are too big for the lot by going back to the platted area."

About 15 people, including several builders and developers, spoke out against the proposed change Monday. They said there are other ways to control runoff besides cutting down on the size of houses.

They said the change would greatly reduce the size of homes allowed in certain areas and prevent people from rebuilding what they al-

ready have in the event of a storm or fire.

However, town code allows the rebuilding of non-conforming, single-family homes. Building Inspector Doug Gillette said the proposal would not affect the replacement of existing homes.

As proposed, the usable area of oceanfront lots would be measured from the first stable line of vegetation. Canal lots would be measured from the bulkhead and lots fronting marsh would be measured from a "wetland" line.

Developer Alan Holden said property owners are concerned that the new regulation would prevent them building their retirement home.

"There's going to be some mad people when they find out they can't build their dream house as some of us have," Holden said.

"This nothing more than a tactic to prevent more people from coming to Holden Beach," he added. "This is more than changing the speed limit. This is taking people's property

and taking people's dreams."

Holden Beach's planning and zoning board recommended the change as a means of controlling density.

Developer Jim Griffin said if the town wants to control density it should restrict the number of bedrooms, not the size of structures.

"If the reason this amendment is being considered is density I think you're going in the wrong direction," he said.

If the proposed regulation had been in effect for the last 25 years, Griffin estimated that 60 to 75 percent of the homes on Holden Beach would not have been permitted.

Jim McSwain, a builder and former town building inspector, said the proposal could affect 600 to 800 of the undeveloped lots on the island that sit along the oceanfront, waterway or canals.

"We still haven't proved we have an overcrowding problem or a density problem," McSwain said. "Do not make a law that is going to affect everybody because of a few people."

Island businessman Larry McDowell said he doesn't think there's anything wrong with the current rule. "I don't think we've got anything broke now so why not leave it like it is?"

Said Don Campbell, "I don't know where this ordinance came from. I think it's ridiculous."

### NOVEMBER 17

## Sandbags, Beach Nourishment On Hearing Agenda For CRC

The N.C. Coastal Resources Commission (CRC) will hold two public hearings at 4 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 17, at the Ramada Inn in Kill Devil Hills on proposed changes in rules governing oceanfront sandbag use and erosion response.

The hearings are part of the CRC's regularly scheduled meeting Nov. 17 and 18, with sessions beginning at 8:30 a.m. each day.

The proposed sandbag rule changes are intended to clarify several points that have made enforcement of existing rules difficult.

As proposed the state would allow sandbags for the protection of threatened buildings and threatened septic systems associated with the buildings. Sandbags could stay in place for two years for structures smaller than 5,000 square feet, and for five years for larger structures. They could also remain for five years in areas actively developing beach nourishment projects.

A sandbag permit would be issued only one time for a given property, even if that property changes ownership.

The intended use of sandbags as erosion control devices is to protect oceanfront property long enough to give landowners time to relocate

threatened structures. But many people have retained the bags as permanent installations.

According to the N.C. Office of Coastal Management, sandbags can cause some of the same problems as "hard" structures, including increased erosion on adjacent properties and interference with pedestrian and vehicular access to the beach.

Proposed changes to the CRC's rules governing erosion response would make clear that beach nourishment, when feasible, is an acceptable response to erosion.

The state's ban on hard erosion-control devices such as seawalls would continue, except when the commission determines there is an overriding need for such a project. For example the CRC made an exception in permitting a seawall at Fort Fisher State Historic Site.

Copies of the proposed rules are available in the North Carolina Register or from the N.C. Division of Coastal Management, 919-733-2293. The deadline for written comments on the proposed changes is Dec. 1. They should be sent to the CRC care of the N.C. Division of Coastal Management, P.O. Box 27687, Raleigh, N.C. 27611-7687.

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## Three Injured Seriously After Rear-End Collision

Three people were injured last Wednesday afternoon in a rear-end collision on Cedar Hill Road near Navassa.

The accident on S.R. 1430 happened at 3:15 p.m. when William Douglas Davis Jr., 46, of Leland, slowed his 1983 Chevrolet station wagon and attempted a left turn into a private driveway.

His vehicle was struck in the rear by a 1984 Datsun operated by Angela Renee McLain, 30, of Long Beach, reported Trooper A.A. Lewis.

Lewis charged McLain with failure to reduce speed to avoid an accident.

Davis, McLain and McLain's passenger, Carl Ballard, 42, of Leland, were transported to New Hanover Regional Medical Center with serious, non-incapacitating injuries.

Damage was estimated at \$1,500 to the Chevrolet and \$1,000 to the Datsun.

Lewis charged two drivers involved in an accident Friday, Nov. 4, at 7 a.m. on N.C. 87 near Boiling Spring Lakes.

Herman Dawson Jr., 55, of Bolivia, had stopped his 1989

Chevrolet across the center line of N.C. 87, to speak with the driver of another vehicle that had just been involved in a minor accident, to find out if he was all right.

Dawson's stopped car was struck by a 1986 Honda operated Susan Mintz Gore, 28, of Bolivia.

Lewis charged Dawson with impeding traffic and Gore with failure to reduce speed to avoid an accident.

Dawson, Gore and Dawson's passenger, Jonathan Johnson, 46, complained of minor injuries.

Damages were estimated at \$2,500 to each vehicle.

An Ash woman was charged with driving while impaired early Sunday after the truck she was operating overturned on Project Road.

The accident happened at 12:15 a.m., reported Trooper D.B. Harvell, as Jackie Lane Babson, 35, was driving east on S.R. 1333 in a 1992 Ford pickup. The truck ran off the right side of the road and out of control, running back onto the highway and overturning.

Babson complained of minor injuries. Vehicle damage was estimated at \$2,000.

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