Kirkman deplored the animosity that differences over the shopping center have generated in Pine Knoll Shores. He said he had seem many issues debated here but "never before have I seen a situation in which honest differences of opinion have evolved to the point personal motivations were questioned."

Libby's motion on building heights would limit the number of 50-foot high buildings in the center to one and reduce the maximum height of its other buildings from 35 to 30 feet. The center will include a grocery store, department or discount store, drug store, bank and other shops, possibly including a bakery and jewelry store. There may or may not be a restaurant on the fourth floor of the 50-foot building.

During the debate that preceded the vote on the center, Ed Olson, who lives on Arborvitae Drive, said he does not question the town's need for a shopping center but objected to its size. He said he feared traffic generated by the center would increase hazards for residents on his street where several small children live. He told the board 25 of 28 residents in his area had signed a petition opposing the center.

In defending the proposed mall, John Sullivan asserted that the developers appear to be committed to preserving much of natural flora and the dunes on the site and are committed "to quality construction and attractive construction."

Maureen Parker praised the architects of the town's Land Use Plan -- Art Browne, Bob Armstrong and Larry Jerome -- and said their work had helped it evolve into a "year-round residential community with limited transient facilities." However, she warned, "once an extensive commercial facility is established to serve the needs of the hundreds of thousands of visitors to the Marine Resources Center, there is considerable danger that PKS can then develop as a resort beach community, with resort recreational zoning."

After the board had voted Mayor Ken Haller read portions of the following statement on the shopping center battle:

"Now that the Shopping Center vote has been cast, I want to take a few minutes to review some of the facts which led to the decision.

"Certainly, discussion of the Shopping Center, and dissemination of information about it, has been more than adequate. Innumerable letters about it have been written to the Editor of the Carteret County News-Times. It was the subject of a portion of at least one television program. It has been discussed in many issues of our own Shore Line. It was examined at length at 4 meetings of the Board of Commissioners, two of said meetings having been Public Hearings, and at all of which there was public participation. The Shopping Center was also considered at 7 meetings of the Planning Board and at 7 separate meetings of the Community Appearance Commission. In most, if not all, of those meetings the public took part. More recently, the Shopping Center was the subject of 2 lengthy articles in Raleigh's News & Observer.

"Initially, the sole, or at least the foremost, objective of opponents of the Center was to retain in its natural and undisturbed state the area on which the Center would be built. However, it soon became apparent that that objective could not be attained unless someone, or some organization or some group was prepared to advance a large sum, perhaps in excess of $1,000,000, to purchase the area in question and unless the owners (i.e. the Shopping Center developers) would be willing to sell it. As time passed and no such prospective purchasers appeared on the scene, it became evident that the suggested purchase was, within any reasonable time frame, simply impractical and, indeed, impossible. That route, then, appeared to be closed.

"The size of the proposed Center was then attacked. It was described as "awesome". But the fact remained that if all requirements of law were met (such as building requirements of the State Code and such as health requirements, etc.) there appeared to be no way in which the promoters could be effectively denied the right to build even a large shopping center in an area zoned for a shopping center.