

Yaupon Beach day care may not find a home

By Amitabh Pal
Municipal Editor

A proposal to establish a day care home in a Yaupon Beach residential neighborhood has created more commotion than a roomful of noisy children.

The facility Libby Sarner wants to operate at 412 Norton Street has run into opposition from neighbors who say such a facility is unsuitable in a residential area.

Citizens have sent letters and petitions to town government expressing opposition and have repeatedly spoken out at planning board meetings.

The final say lies with the town board, which next meets December 14.

Sarner, who operates a day care home near Southport, is asking the town to amend its zoning ordinance to permit a 12-child day care facility.

"When my clients bought a home to set up a day care center in Yaupon Beach and requested to set up a day care home, they received a letter from the town stating that the zoning ordinance does not allow day care homes and facilities anywhere," said attorney Robert Serra. "We requested that the town amend the zoning ordinance to allow day care homes in residential areas."

A day care "home" serves between six and 12 children. A day care "facility" serves more than 12 children. Residents in Yaupon Beach are allowed to keep a maximum of five children without a license.

The planning board on November 12 recommended that the town not amend its zoning ordinance to allow for a day care home in a residential area. Instead, the board is considering a suggestion that the town allow such facilities in business districts.

"Basically, the planning board did not (recognize) a need ... for a day care center in a residential area," said planning board chairman Buddy Rudd. "There's enough land in the business district."

Serra said he felt the planning board's decision was a "good bit" influenced by sentiment expressed at the hearing. He said the problem was that only people in opposition showed up, and he hoped that in the future people sympathetic to the re-



Sign of the times in Yaupon Beach is displayed on a fence post next to the residence that Libby Sarner wants to turn into a day care facility for Oak Island youngsters.

'It's fear of the unknown They're expecting the worst.'

Libby Sarner

quest would express support.

Serra said he would appear before the board of commissioners December 14 and "try to educate them about the matter."

Serra said if the zoning change is denied his client might pursue the child care option on a smaller scale, or she might sue to change the zoning ordinance as "arbitrary and capricious."

"I'm going to do what I'm allowed to do, and work towards the other,"

Sarner said.

Both Serra and Sarner have invited board members to visit her present day care home at 1030 Captain Adkins Drive in Smithville Woods.

"I just hope they get educated on the situation," Serra said. "I hope they look at the town as a whole."

Sarner said there is a great need for day care in Yaupon Beach.

"I'm shocked that people can't see that," she said. She said she frequently receives calls from Oak Island mothers asking if she has vacancies at Smithville Woods.

She said she can't afford to open a day care center in the business district. "Who has \$200,000 to buy a lot?" she said. "We're not people

with money."

Some residents in the Yaupon Beach neighborhood have been vocal in their opposition to the center.

Jim Beacham of 410 Norton Street said he opposes the idea because he felt any sort of business should be operated only in a business area.

He said such a facility would disturb the neighborhood beginning at 6:30 a.m., and that there were many older residents who would be annoyed.

"It's not even like the children will grow up and move out," he said. "Here, the disturbance will be permanent."

Helga Beacham said she is not against the idea of day care, but

does not want the zoning ordinance changed when there is no need. "We're against turning a residential neighborhood into a business district," she said.

Donald and Ida Adams of 409 Norton Street also oppose the facility.

"We feel that this would downgrade our property values," said Ida Adams. "We feel that this neighborhood and Yaupon Beach are for retired people."

Donald Adams said he is concerned about laying groundwork for other more disruptive businesses in residential areas, and said there were many available locations in the business district for a day care facility.

Serra said residents' fears were "absolutely misplaced." He said child care is a "fairly

unique type of business" and wouldn't commercialize the neighborhood; property value might be enhanced by a child care facility; and traffic flow would be increased by only 12 cars in the morning and 12 at night.

"It's fear of the unknown," Sarner said when asked about her opposition. "They're expecting the worst."

Sarner said she could assure opponents there would not be any noise or disruption, and cited the "peace and quiet" in her Smithville Woods neighborhood as an example.

Sarner said she looked for "one solid year" before choosing the home because she wanted a site easily accessible from Caswell Beach, Long Beach and Yaupon Beach.

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Keeping food safe is worth celebrating

The holidays bring out the urge to throw a party in many people. If you are planning to serve a buffet at a holiday party this year, be sure you don't serve food poisoning bacteria along with your food, say food scientists at the U. S. Department of Agriculture. Bacteria like salmonella can make a guest feel like he or she has the flu.

The distressing symptoms can be avoided if you keep the hot foods hot and cold foods cold. If food will be out all evening, fix small platters and serving dishes of each item. For example, arrange cold sliced turkey and roast beef on three or four smaller platters instead of putting all the food on one large plate. Then you can put out the first platter for guests, while you hold the other three safely in the refrigerator. Foods that are to be served hot can be popped into the oven, so that fresh foods are being brought out throughout the evening.

Hot food should be served from chafing dishes or warming trays that keep the food at least 140 degrees F. Check your chafing dish. Often the warmer only holds food at 110 to 120 degrees, and this is a good growth temperature for some bacteria.

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