

Four-plex units are part of the next phase of the OceanGreens development

OceanGreens project subject of hearing

By Amitabh Pal
Municipal Editor

The Caswell Beach town board is expected to give formal go-ahead to the next phase of OceanGreens construction after a public hearing on the matter Thursday at 5 p.m.

Initial construction in the development has been completed and occupied, and further development along the Elizabeth River marsh is anticipated later.

The project under consideration Thursday will consist of 18 units with a view of Oak Island Golf and Country Club and 28 units with an ocean view. The "oceanfront" structures will be four-unit buildings with two units per floor. "Golf villas" will be two-unit buildings.

Completion of some units is expected by summer. OceanGreens general manager Dave LaFave said 14 of the "oceanfront" units and five villa units have already been reserved.

LaFave said he expects the majority of the new units will be used as vacation homes. Most of the first-phase homes are occupied by permanent residents.

The project will be linked by road with Caswell Dunes.

LaFave said last week he was hopeful of commissioners' approval. "We've been working closely with the town officials," he said. "This is an asset to the town. People in charge of the town care about maintaining its uniqueness, but they are not anti-development."

He said he has sought input from the town since work started on the project.

LaFave said that during earlier hearings before the planning board and the board of commissioners no significant objections were raised except concerns about adequate parking space, which he OceanGreens has tried to address.

"Over the course of the past nine months we have had a lot of suggestions from neighbors and residents," LaFave said. "We're open to that. By this, we can avoid a lot of mistakes."

OceanGreens construction started in 1990 and the first units were completed in early 1991. Construction on the marshside units is expected to begin next year, with completion three years later. Preliminary approval for the marshside construction has already been granted.

The OceanGreens developer is Caswell Partnerships, which also developed the Arboretum and owns the unsold portion of Caswell Dunes.

Bald Head Creek is closed

By Jim Harper
Staff Writer

Bald Head Creek has been closed to shellfishing due to a high concentration of bacteria in the water there.

George Gilbert, assistant head of

the shellfish sanitation branch of the Division of Marine Fisheries, said the creek was closed because of a high concentration of coliform bacteria in samples taken at the creek mouth in 1988 and 1990, though he said a recent water sample taken farther up the creek showed an even higher concentration of bacteria than in the older samples.

The creek is a primary source of oysters and clams for commercial gatherers as well as for recreational clambers on the mainland and on the island.

Gilbert said water from the station at the mouth of Bald Head Creek is tested five times annually, with results going into a three-year assessment cycle for the Cape Fear River mouth area.

Stations must show a coliform bacteria count of less than 43 per 100 milliliters (three ounces) of water at least 90 percent of the time to be considered safe. He said the standard is one agreed to by various shellfish-producing states and the federal Food and Drug Administration.

The station at the mouth of Bald Head Creek produced a bacteria count of 49 in October, 1988, and April, 1990, exceeding the ten percent allowance for that three-year cycle, Gilbert said.

He said his department's intention was to establish further sampling stations upstream, and the creek was not declared unsafe at that time, but recent pressure by the FDA led to the closure.

He said another sampling station has been designated near the old lighthouse landing, and it produced a bacteria count of 130 on October 7, though a sample taken there November 3 produced a count of only 22.

Coliform bacteria are found in the intestinal tracts of warm-blooded creatures, Gilbert said, and no distinction is made by his department as to whether the source is humans, birds or other animals.

(While it might be supposed that human pollution should be of more concern to humans, Gilbert said that some bacteria, including the highly dangerous salmonella, can be carried and transmitted by birds.)

Gilbert, a field worker in shellfish sanitation here during the 1960s, when upstream pollution caused widespread shellfish closures, said after that problem was solved the Bald Head Creek station had been generally within tolerance until 1988.

He ascribed the increased presence of coliform bacteria to runoff caused by island development, but not to pollution from septic and sewage treatment systems used by island property owners.

David Edwards, manager of Bald Head Island Utilities, said the island has 15 homes served by septic tanks and 357 other housing units served by a variety of waste treatment systems under his supervision.

Edwards said treated wastewater on the island is not discharged into Bald Head Creek. He said there are

no septic tanks along the creek, and that sewage from the marina area, Lighthouse Landing and Timbercreek is pumped inland and treated before being returned to the ground.

'Missing person' is found

Former Brunswick County commissioner candidate Patty Young has been taken off the missing persons list, and it has been determined that she left her home "on her own free will," Brunswick County Sheriff's Department Capt. Phil Perry said Tuesday.

Perry said the sheriff's department located where Young was staying and determined that no foul play was involved.

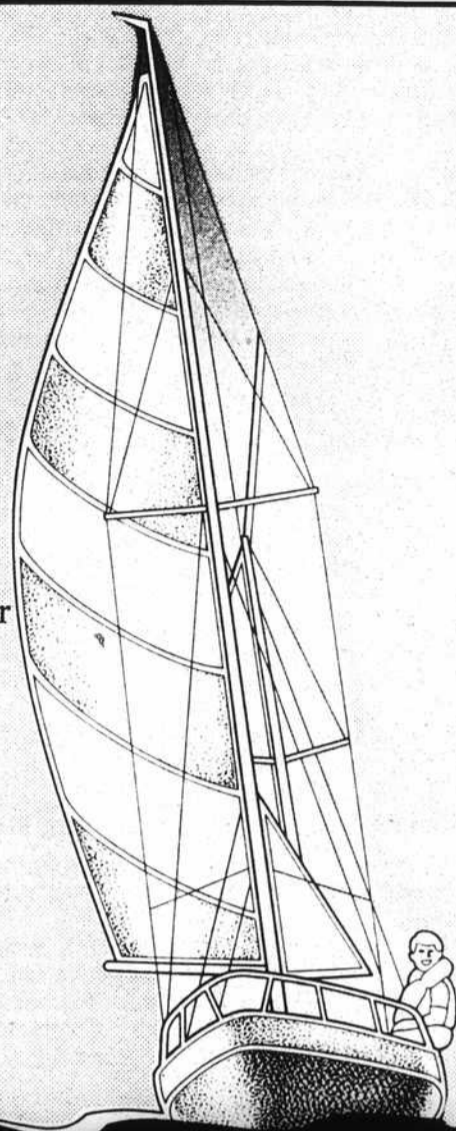
Young was reported missing by her husband on Sunday, November 22, after she said she was going to the Shallotte Wilson's for turkey on Saturday morning and never returned.

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