

COMMISSIONERS WON'T ENDORSE

Health Board Suggests Supply Location For New Nursing Home

BY SUSAN USHER

Brunswick County Board of Health members stopped short of endorsing a specific nursing home for the county Monday night, but unanimously recommended that when such a facility is built that it be located in the Supply area rather than a more southerly "growth loop".

Across the county complex in the administration building, Brunswick County commissioners told representatives of Britthaven Inc. they didn't feel qualified to recommend a specific nursing home project based on the information available to them.

Britthaven is one of six firms applying for a certificate to build up to 100 nursing home beds in the county.

Representatives Cathy Matthews and Glenn Potter pressed commissioners to reach some position on the proposals, but to no avail.

Both the commissioners and board of health, meanwhile, bore the brunt Monday of complaints about relocation of a Jan. 16 public hearing on the nursing home proposals from Bolivia to Southport. There were charges—apparently unfounded—that the change was a deliberate effort to boost a proposal to expand Ocean Trails Convalescence Center at the expense of other located in the Bolivia to Shallotte corridor by making the meeting less accessible.

Unanimous Vote

After its two-hour discussion, the health board also voted to recommend to Cardinal Health Systems Agency that it consider applicants' responses to four of five goal statements developed by the health department.

The goal statement excluded was No. 4, which said that "based on future population growth projections, most patients, families, volunteers and nursing home advisory members would benefit by a nursing home located in the loop formed between Shallotte and Lockwood Folly."

Beverly Enterprises of Rockville, Md., is the only firm that proposes to build in the Supply area, while three companies, Health Care and Retirement Corp. of America, Autumn Corp. and Britthaven, propose to build in or just outside the Shallotte town limits—in the described growth loop. One other applicant would expand an existing Southport facility, while the sixth would build near Bolivia.

Chairman John Madison said the health board's intent was not to endorse a single facility, though he added that he could understand how some people might interpret the board's vote "in that direction". He said the board simply wants Cardinal to consider all these factors in reaching its recommendation to the N.C. Division of Facility Services, which will make the final decision on what nursing home or homes builds in the county.

"They can consider them better than we can, realizing we aren't experts. We identified five goals we thought would benefit the people of Brunswick County, location happened to be in that."

"We felt we were not in a position to evaluate all the information we had."

Applicants scored 0 to 8 points per goal statement based on how well their responses conformed to the objectives, with each objective ranked the same.

Two companies, Autumn Care and Britthaven, garnered the most points, regardless of whether

responses to No. 4 were considered, with Health Care and Retirement Corp. of America rated third.

The other goal statements addressed type and number of beds proposed, priorities of admission for county residents, accessibility to the waiting list and the degree to which the facility's atmosphere would be like that of a residential home or a medical institution.

Absent from the health meeting were Commissioner Frankie Rabon, who attended the commissioners' meeting going on at the same time, (See OTHER BUSINESS, Page 3-A)

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THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

HOAG & SONS BOOK BINDERY 12/31/99 SPRINGPORT MI 49284

Volume 23, Number 9

Shallotte, North Carolina, Thursday, January 10, 1985

25c Per Copy

20 Pages



STAFF PHOTO BY TERRY POPE

New Year's Baby Born

Although he arrived two days after 1985 officially began, Jeremy Eugene Nichols was the county's first baby delivered for the new year. The seven-pound, three-ounce baby boy was born Thursday, Jan. 3, at 1:20 p.m. at the Brunswick Hospital in Supply. Jeremy's parents are Kevin and Nancy Nichols of Long Beach. They have a second child, Jason, 5. Although Jeremy was due on Dec. 27, Nancy said she was hoping for a New Year's baby while her husband was hoping for a 1984 baby in time for "a tax deduction." The baby was delivered by Dr. Robert Hassler.

Board 'Tightens Ship' With Changes In Personnel Policy

BY SUSAN USHER

Brunswick County Commissioners tightened the reins on county employees Monday night in a series of moves members said would increase accountability.

They placed specific restrictions on employees and returned all administrative duties to the county manager, while returning Assistant County Manager John Harvey to full-time duties as planning director.

"This board of commissioners is running Brunswick County and not individuals," Chairman Chris Chappell said after the meeting adjourned. "This is the start of a number of policies originating from this board. I think you will see a lot more changes. We're setting policies we feel the people of Brunswick County (expect)". He warned some mistakes may be made as the recently-seated board makes its moves.

Board members approved the series of four motions by unanimous votes following a two-hour meeting behind closed doors. None of the policies had been discussed publicly beforehand, but there had been indications that changes were forthcoming.

Greater control of accountability by county government had been a recurring theme during the 1984 commissioners' campaign.

Specifically the board: Directed Carter to order department heads to begin keeping employee time records, keeping track of what employees do and when. The time sheets will be submitted to the clerk to the board monthly for review by commissioners and must be available at all times for commissioners to inspect. Most departments already keep some form of time records.

Directed that all county employees must be residents of the county or must move their residence to the county within 60 days, contingent upon approval of the State Personnel Commission. There is a question as to whether the county can make residency a condition of employment after the fact.

Instructed Personnel Technician Debbie Greer to develop a job description for water system director, with salary, grade and responsibilities, referencing the position of water plant supervisor presently held by Kenneth Hewett. Chappell said the board intends to make Hewett director of the system; he presently is part of the public utilities department under County Engineer Dan Shields.

Told Carter of their plans to meet individually with department heads Jan. 23, beginning at 1 p.m. after lunch. Appointments will be set one hour apart but commissioners said they would meet "as long as it may take" to discuss county operations.

When items relating to his or her department are on the board's agenda, the department head is to be present to address that item. During open session, Carter distributed copies of his tentative schedule during January, including out-of-county trips. Commissioners

"We're trying to look under the rug to see if any dirt's been swept under it."

—Chris Chappell Chairman

agreed the schedule was a good idea and asked for it to be continued in the future.

"There's one thing the press and public has to see," Chappell said in discussing the board's actions after the meeting. "You're going to see probably the most conservative board—not Jesse Helms conservative, but conservative..."

He said the board's actions were not a sign of any distrust of county employees, but a matter of greater accountability to the public.

"I think we just want to tighten ship a little," said Commissioner Grace Beasley. "We want more knowledge of operations. That's just good business policy."

Chappell agreed, adding, "We're trying to look under the rug to see if any dirt's been swept under it."

Harvey began compiling a list Tuesday of administrative items that would be turned over to Carter, including day-to-day contact with the landfill department, water system land acquisitions and handling of the recovery of disaster assistance funds due to the county following Hurricane Diana.

Much of his attention during the coming year will be turned on up-

dating the county's land use plan required under the Coastal Area Management Act and getting a building inspections program begun. The program will be an arm of the planning department. Continuing work with long-range planning for solid waste disposal will continue to be his responsibility, though Carter is taking an active role in discussions involving a possible joint incineration project with one or more counties.

Harvey was named "second in command" in the county chain of command March 20, 1981, and was named assistant county manager Feb. 11, 1982, retaining his duties as planning director.

In June 1984 Carter recommended the board divide administrative responsibilities between the two men, placing 11 departments under Harvey, and hiring a full-time planning director because of the load on that department. The board rejected that idea and maintained the status quo.

Harvey will continue at the same salary step and pay.

Snake Ran Up Water Bill, Says Homeowner

Sunset Beach property owner M.B. Hadley of Columbia, S.C. got bit by a snake in November. But the viper's fangs never touched his skin, and the venom was as harmless as water.

It seems the misery began when Hadley received a November water bill from the Town of Sunset Beach to the tune of \$111.12. That was quite a bit higher than the normal \$8 per month minimum. And since his 31st Street house had been unoccupied during November, Hadley set out from Columbia for Sunset.

Once inside his house, Hadley immediately discovered the problem—a leaking toilet—or at least, so he thought.

Upon removing the back of the toilet, he recoiled at the sight of a snake in the basin. Hadley told town officials the snake had apparently made its way past a screen at the end of the pipe, and proceeded to set up shop in the back of his toilet by displacing the rubber stopper inside, thereby creating the leak.

In a letter to members of town council, Hadley explained his dilemma, noting that he had enclosed the \$8 minimum, and requesting that the balance be adjusted by council because of the circumstances involved.

While the matter received several minutes of discussion, council flatly rejected the request, with one councilman noting that the problem had occurred on Hadley's side of the water meter and another suggesting that the incident never took place.

Members of council were uncertain as to what species of reptile may have made its way into the Hadley home, but one member said he was sure it must have been a water snake.

Developer Plans Multi-Million Investment At Seaside

BY TERRY POPE

Action taken by the Sunset Beach Planning Board Friday night will make way for a multi-million dollar condominium, restaurant and marina development on a tract of land at Seaside.



WILLIAM TAYLOR of T&T Developments presented a map showing he owns a portion of the land affected by the zoning change. Taylor said he was threatened in the parking lot after speaking against the zoning change.

However, debate stemming from the proposed zoning change led to arguments in the parking lot of the town hall during a public hearing Friday night.

By unanimous vote, planning board members will recommend to the town council that an area zoned residential (mobile homes) be changed to commercial (mainland business) to allow construction of the estimated \$12 million investment. Ed Gore was the only council member to attend the public hearing, making another hearing on the matter necessary before the council votes on the zoning change.

One developer who holds an option on a portion of the land that was rezoned asked that his segment remain zoned for mobile homes. After leading the debate against the change, William Taylor of T&T Development Inc. came back into the town hall and asked that someone call the police saying, "That man is threatening me outside."

Taylor said he would not leave the building until the police arrived, but Town Manager Wallace Martin said the telephones in the town hall had been disconnected and walked with Taylor to his car.

At a Dec. 11 planning board meeting, Stuart Cooke of Cooke Developments in Seaside requested the zoning change for the 2 1/2 acres

abutting the Intracoastal Waterway and RPR 1162 in Seaside. Cooke, who holds an option on the land owned by Joe Brooks Sr. and Joe Brooks Jr., said the 350-foot section of waterfront property would be developed with a new restaurant, condominium, tennis courts, swimming pool, marina and docking facilities.

An amended map of the proposed area was presented Friday night to show that of the 2 1/2 acres a 195-foot section is now owned by Taylor, who recently purchased an option on the land. Board member Mary Allen made a motion to recommend that only the area held by Cooke be changed to MR-3, but board member Robert McCall amended the motion to include Taylor's property as well.

James F. Howard, the Brooks family accountant from Southport, told the board there is a contract ready to sign for \$1 million on the property, awaiting approval from the town to have the area rezoned to business.

"The amount of money to be spent in this area will be in excess of \$10 million," Howard said. "What you have there now is a run down oyster house and a fish house that is caving in."

"There is really only one question as I see it. Something has got to be done in order to raise revenue for the Brooks family," he added. "Would

you rather see an eight-acre mobile home park there?"

Taylor asked the board to delay the zoning change until more specific plans of the development is presented to the board. However, Mason Anderson, an attorney and resident of Sunset Beach, informed the town that such action was illegal.

Pointing out in the state statutes book, Anderson had planning board Chairman Jim Gordon read a section of the law. Anderson said it was "time to set the record straight. I hate to sit here and see this. It's ridiculous. You cannot sit here and pass a zoning change based on what the plans are for the area."

When Taylor asked Anderson if "he was hired to be here," Anderson replied, "No, sir."

Taylor purchased an option on the tract of land in the center of the area affected by the zoning change.

"What happened there is I didn't own that piece of property," said Joe Brooks Sr. "One of my sisters owned it, and Mr. Taylor came in and got the option. It's not anything but he comes in there, works in there to get in, and try to prevent us from what we're trying to do."

Cooke said he had a verbal agreement on the land with the owners to get appraisals before signing an option. The developer presented plans

for the project at the board's Dec. 11 meeting.

"The following day, we learned Mr. Taylor obtained the land through an option," Cooke said.

When asked if he wanted his section to remain zoned for mobile homes, Taylor replied, "I want all (See AREA, Page 2-A)



JAMES HOWARD of Southport, accountant for Joe Brooks Sr., told the board a \$10 million development will be built on the land if the zoning changes are approved.