

State Will Decide On Nursing Home Applications By March 30

BY SUSAN USHER

A state decision on which of six applicants will be allowed to build a nursing home in Brunswick County will be made by the end of March. But with an appeal of the state's decision very likely, it could conceivably be much longer before construction of a nursing home actually begins, said state project analyst Lee Hoffman.

"In situations like this in the past a high percentage of these decisions have been appealed or they've asked a contested case hearing," she said. "There's almost no way to avoid it when you have six firms competing for X number of beds."

She said an appeal or a request for a contested case hearing can be requested "by almost anyone," in-

cluding any of the firms whose applications were rejected or residents of the area to be served.

A choice of two "first steps" exist for an appellant: 1) requesting a reconsideration hearing, at which new information will be presented the appellant thinks the state needs to look at; and 2) the contested case hearing, the most frequent choice.

Reconsideration hearings usually are not chosen because usually there is no new information to be considered, said Ms. Hoffman.

Once begun an appeal can take a year to two years to resolve, with no construction begun in the interim.

The time taken up depends in part on the number of cases contested and reviewed at the same time, and the number of extensions to gather infor-

mation requested by lawyers for both parties, she added.

Presently, the certificate of need section is coping with what Ms. Hoffman described as "the largest batch of applications for a certificate of need it has ever received for any service at one time."

The flood of applications began when a two-year moratorium on nursing home construction was lifted last July 1. The result has been a long and sometimes confusing application process.

To help cope with the crunch, the section has expanded its staff, allocating a project analyst to each health system area in the state. It also extended, for the full 150 days allowed by law, the review period for all nursing home certificate of need

applications. March 30 is the deadline for decisions on the Area 5 applications reviewed by Ms. Hoffman.

Area 5 is the 15-county southeastern area served by Cardinal Health Agency of Lumberton, a regional planning organization that determines health care needs.

In January the Cardinal board of directors recommended the state grant the certificate of need to Beverly Enterprises, which plans to build a 100-bed facility adjoining Brunswick Hospital at Supply, supporting the recommendation of its project review committee. Earlier Cardinal staff members had recommended in favor of Autumn Corp., which planned to build in the Shallotte area.

In most cases, but not always, the

state recommendation is the same as that of the health system agency.

Criteria for project review include community need; accessibility in terms of both geography and financial concerns; extent to which the project fits into the state health plan; extent to which the proposal will help meet the needs of underserved groups such as minorities or poor people; cost containment and financial feasibility; and quality of care, including indicators such as staff-patient ratios.

Ms. Hoffman said the state also is reviewing licensure deficiency reports of all nursing home applicants as well as complaints about facilities and any resulting action taken by the state.

When the state will not check to see if previous projects were built within the projected cost figures given in earlier applications, she said, proposed costs of the proposed projects are compared with costs of comparable current projects.

In addition to Beverly and Autumn, applicants for the Brunswick County certificate of need include Triad Medical Services, which operates Ocean Trail Convalescent Center in Southport; Britthaven Inc. of Hookerton; Health Care and Retirement Corp. of America, of Lima, Ohio; and Unifour Medical Management Inc., which would operate a nursing home in conjunction with a proposed life care community, Cypress Springs.

ABC Issues Refined

(Continued From Page 1-A)

maps and report prepared for the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The town must adopt floodplain ordinances for residents to qualify for regular federally-subsidized flood insurance.

Under the present emergency program, eight policies have been written on in-town property valued at \$235,000.

Reeves said, based on his preliminary review of the study, that restrictions on development in the floodway of streams would have the biggest effect in Shallotte. The most floodprone areas are along Charles and Mulberry branches. Before it was opened for better drainage the Charles flooded during every rain, the mayor added.

ABC Issues Refined

Aldermen fine-tuned questions that will appear on a ABC referendum ballot in May or June, dividing the wine question so that voters could approve the sale of unfortified wine for consumption off-premises without automatically approving its sale for consumption on-premises or vice versa.

The ballot will ask voters whether to allow the sale of malt beverages such as beer for on-premises consumption. Sale for off-premises consumption is already allowed.

Presently fortified wines such as Thunderbird and Mt. 20/20 and North Carolina produced wines may be sold in town, but not most unfortified wines. Unfortified wines are of lower alcoholic content than fortified wines and include wines typically served with meals.

Mayor Beamon Hewett recommended the change and also told aldermen they could put all the beer and wine questions allowed by law on the ballot if they chose to.

Aldermen Wilton Harrelson said no, "The more you put on the more confusing it gets."

"If one passes all of them will," he projected, with Alderman David Gause agreeing.

To effect the change, Jerry Jones rescinded the motion he made two weeks ago and offered a substitute that was approved with unanimous support.

Lynda Britt, supervisor of the Brunswick County Board of Elections, has advised Mayor Beamon Hewett it will take two to 2½ months to prepare for the referendum.

Meanwhile, Mayor Pro-Tem Paul Wayne Reeves suggested that "a good editorial or letter to the editor would help" make the issues involved in the ABC referendum clear.

Said Harrelson, "The reason I'm for a referendum without a petition is that I think it is unreasonable to be able to go in a grocery store and buy the wines with the highest percent of alcohol, but not wines with 12 or 14 percent."

Entries Viewed

Late last year the board decided the growing town of Shallotte needed a flag of its own.

But a month after the Jan. 1 contest deadline only two entries had been received. One entry by Tony Hewett in orange and blue appears to be a stylized sun and surf. The other entry is a ship's wheel motif designed by Police Chief Wayne Campbell.

Board members said Hewett's entry reminded them of signs for Carolina Shores and the Chesapeake Bridge-Tunnel.

Campbell will revise his proposal to include a fisherman and resubmit two-color sketches. The ship's wheel includes the town's charter date of 1899 and the figures of a skier, deer, sailboat, commercial fishing vessel, lighthouse and golfer between the spokes, encircled by the name of the town, the state and the logo, "Sportsman's Paradise."

Harrelson noted that the town was chartered in 1899, but founded much earlier, though board members questioned whether a specific "founding" date could be established. A community existed as early as 1791, however, when Methodist Bishop

Francis Ashbury preached at camp meetings along the river at the present site of Camp United Methodist Church.

VFD Proposal

Aldermen took home for review a proposal from the Shallotte Volunteer Fire Department to add a probationary class of membership which would restrict the new member's activities within the department, but not his voting privileges as a full member.

The town board must approve changes to departmental bylaws.

To move to regular member status, a vote of affirmation by the department would be required at the end of three months' probation.

The purpose of the new type of membership, would be "to afford a new member with some protection from the dangers of firefighting which may arise because of his or her lack of experience and training."

Probationers would not be issued turn-out gear or added to the fire phone system, would not be allowed to drive fire trucks to a fire or to enter a burning building.

They would be encouraged to drive the trucks back to the station and to drive in other non-emergency situations.

During probation, new members would have to attend all meetings in the three-month period unless excused.

"It basically spells out what they can and can't do," Secretary-Treasurer Susan Arnold told The Beacon. "Every once and a while you get someone who's gung-ho and jumps in without knowing what he's getting into."

Also the department has, in the past, ordered turn-out gear for new members who didn't show up again, she said.

Use of a probationary class of membership is standard in many rescue squads, she said. But she didn't know if it is common among fire departments.

Chief Seeks House-Moving Rules

BY SUSAN USHER

Shallotte needs an ordinance to regulate house-moving, Shallotte Police Chief Wayne Campbell told town aldermen last Wednesday night, though not for the same reasons as neighboring beach towns.

At Holden and Ocean Isle beaches, town boards are developing ordinances that deal with upgrading the safety and appearance of older

houses moved to new locations.

Campbell wants Shallotte to have some say over when houses are moved through town. He proposed requiring 24-hour notice of any move, issuance of a moving permit, and town authority to designate the hours at which a move through town will occur. He's especially concerned about the impact of daytime moves on crowded U.S. 17.

"We've been getting about one a week lately," he said, with traffic stopped and police officers obligated as escorts for hours at a time.

"They come through with no advance notice," he added.

Recently, when a house was being moved from South Carolina to Holden Beach, he continued, "when the lead car almost hit me at the stop light was the first we knew of it."

Especially when traveling around town on Bridgers Road, he said, movers are also knocking down roadside signs which it is their responsibility to replace.

Movers must obtain a state permit to travel state roads, he said, but the state doesn't pass that notification on to towns along the route.

The board plans to pursue such an ordinance, with staff to investigate DOT notification procedures and possibly sample ordinances from the League of Municipalities.

Shallotte Police Arrest

During January, officers in the Shallotte Police Department made 24 arrests and issued 19 warning tickets, according to a report from Police Chief Wayne Campbell.

Officers traveled 7,839 miles on 764.9 gallons of gas and 13 quarts of oil.

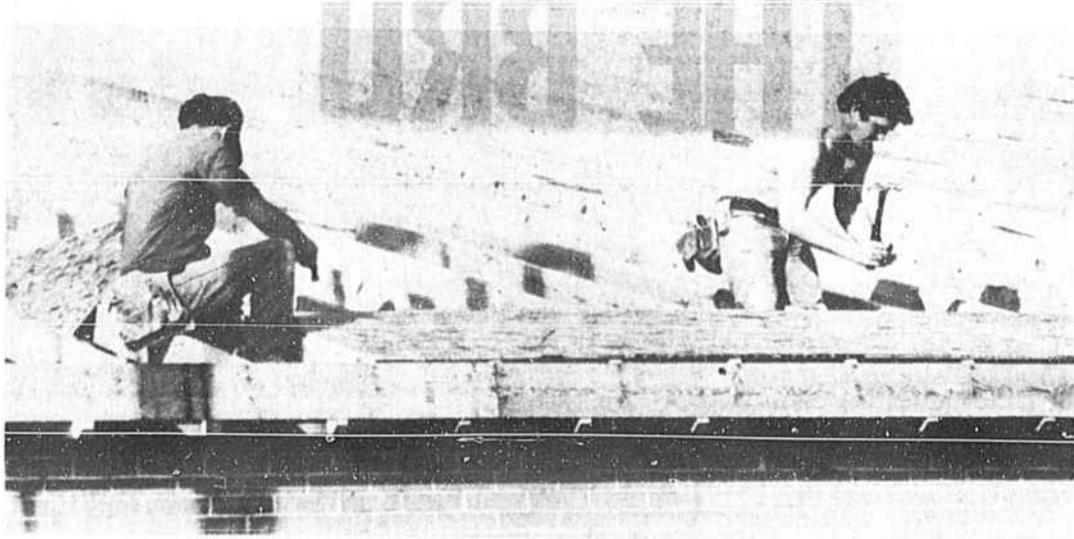
Of the 24 arrests six were traffic-related, 11 alcohol, two drug and five criminal. Officers spent 37 hours in court. They investigated 19 criminal cases and 15 accidents, provided 30 public services and 52 escorts,

assisted motorists 43 times and answered 11 alarms.

As the Shallotte business community grows, said the chief, the number of escorts requested of his department increases. Most are to accompany businesses to the bank.

The department's 1990 Chevrolet, out of service at 171,182 miles with a blown engine, will be advertised for bid. It has been replaced with another used Highway Patrol vehicle.

"We just had to put a wreath on it," Campbell told aldermen last week.

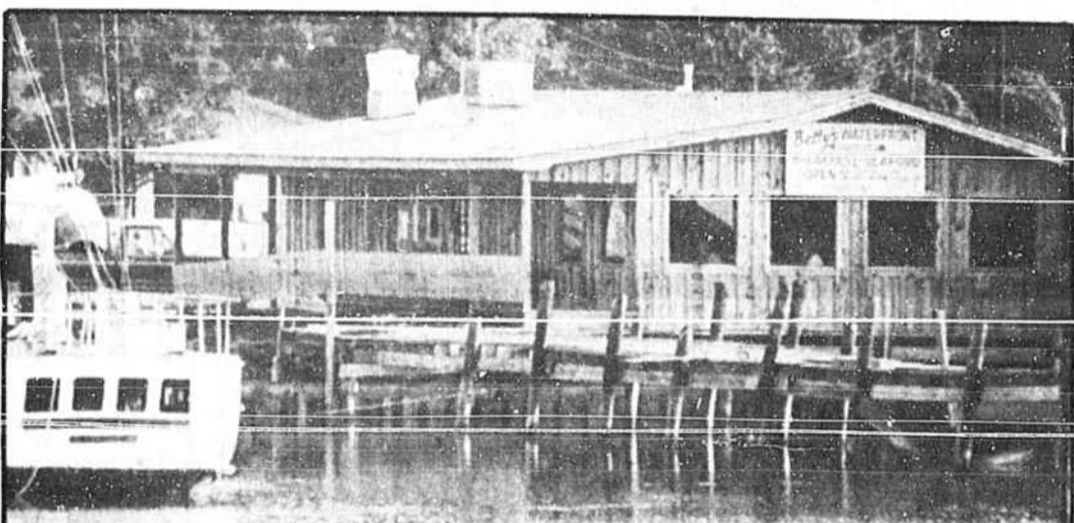


STAFF PHOTO BY TERRY POPE

Making Spring Repairs

A recent wave of springtime weather made the perfect time for making repairs to the Tri-Beach Volunteer Fire Department's roof. With temperatures climbing into the upper 70s Monday morning, Terry Phelps, right, shedded his shirt to catch some sun while

on the job. Helping him is Johnny Singletary of Varnumtown. The roof is being replaced with the help of \$10,000 in county funds earmarked for the project by former county commissioner Benny Ludlum from his parks and recreation budget.

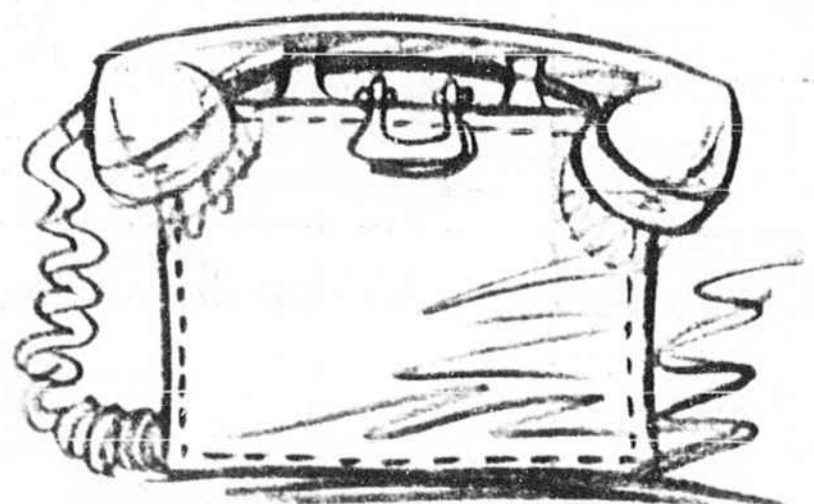


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