

Calabash To Grant Zoning Variance To VFW

BY ETTA SMITH

Calabash Town Council members all say they want the local Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) post to build a private club in town.

That's why they told Building Inspector Bill Dunker last Monday to deny the VFW a building permit as soon as possible.

The town's zoning ordinances, approved in 1982, prohibit private clubs in any zone in the town.

The VFW has had the present council's blessing since it began planning for the building, but a recent review of the zoning ordinance showed Dunker could not legally issue the group a permit to build. The VFW has scheduled an April 5 groundbreaking ceremony at the Carter Street site of the proposed building.

The council voted to have Dunker deny the permit and then have the VFW appeal that decision at a

special joint meeting of the board of adjustments and council scheduled at 4:30 p.m. March 30 at the town hall. At that meeting, the council plans to grant a variance so a permit can be issued in time for the groundbreaking ceremony.

"There's no question that everybody wants the VFW here," said Planning Board Member Charley Thompkins.

Council members also voted Monday to meet jointly with the planning board at its April 6 meeting and to review and make suggestions on amendments to the zoning ordinance. The meeting is scheduled for 4 p.m. at the town hall.

"The present zones are so vague it is difficult to enforce them," said Town Attorney Mike Ramos. "We need to sit down and review them and see what changes need to be made and what we want to keep."

Ramos added that after the town and the planning board review the ordinance it will set public hearings to receive input on any changes that need to be made.

Design Discussed

Consulting Engineer Jerry Lewis suggested council members meet with the Brunswick County Utilities Operation Board to decide what services, such as meter reading, the county will provide after the town's proposed water system is built.

Then, Lewis said, he could begin the design of the system and send it to Raleigh for state approval.

Lewis added that construction on the project could be underway sometime this summer. However, to prevent businesses parking lots from being torn up by the placement of lines, he said the town could postpone construction in certain areas until after the tourist season.

Other Business

In other business council members:

•Voted to send a resolution to United Carolina Bank to open a water system account. Town Clerk Janet Thomas said the bank required the resolution, which authorizes Mayor Doug Simmons or Mayor Pro-Tem Suzy Moore to withdraw the money when it is needed to pay for the system construction.

•Heard Bob Crocker, president of the Board of Directors of the Calabash Volunteer Fire Department, speak about an electric sign that sits above a fire hydrant located in front of the Calabash Seafood House Restaurant. Crocker said firemen have been shocked and had their heads bumped while working on the hydrant, and that the department is considering discontinuing its use until the sign can be moved.



STAFF PHOTO BY ETTA SMITH

Talking Competition

Rabbit competitions are something that siblings Robin, 11, and Adam Gromley, 9, take seriously. The pair were competing against each other Saturday in the Coastal Rabbit and Cavy (guinea pig) Breeders Association show held at Shallotte Middle School. They brought their rabbits all the way from Summerville, S.C., for the event.

Forestry Club's 50-Mile Walk To End At OIB Pier

A 50-mile walk to raise funds for scholarships at Southeastern Community College will end Saturday at the Ocean Isle Beach Pier.

The annual Walk-a-Thon by SCC's Forestry Club is seeking both walkers and sponsors, said club advisor Bill Ball.

Walkers are to meet at the college between 4 a.m. and 4:30 a.m. to register, and to be on the road by 5 a.m. Walkers or runners who want to run with the group at other points along the route should contact Ball to

work out details and sponsor and registration forms must also be filled out. "We'd be happy to have them join us," he said.

Participants must be at least 18 years old or be accompanied by an adult.

Although a support group of three safety vans will check walkers about once each hour, Ball recommends that each walker or group of walkers also arrange for their own support vehicle to provide water, food, fresh

socks, bandaids or transportation.

The volunteers will follow N.C. 130 out of Whiteville to N.C. 905, following N.C. 905 until it meets N.C. 904, which leads directly to the pier.

Prizes will be awarded to the person raising the most money, as well as both the first male and female walkers and joggers to arrive at the beach.

Spectators can expect the first arrivals in mid-afternoon, with the walking ending around 9 p.m.

Funds raised by the walk will be

used to provide two \$75 scholarships each academic quarter to SCC forest technology students, one for excellence in grades and one for outstanding effort or improvement. The club will also contribute funds to the March of Dimes and to the SCC Foundation Inc.

Prospective walkers or sponsors are asked to call Ball at 642-7141 between 8 a.m. and 9 a.m. or 12 noon and 1 p.m. weekdays, or at 642-2947 evenings.

County Will 'Pin' Employees

BY SUSAN USHER

Following the suit of private industry, Brunswick County plans to recognize its employees this year, for the first time, for longevity of service.

Personnel Technician Debbie Bowling said the service pins, authorized by the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners last year, would be awarded for three years' service, five years' service and then for increments of five years.

Custom-designed by O.C. Tanner of Greensboro for the county, the pin consists of two basic parts—a crest in the style of the county seal and an attachment in the shape of the county.

Three-year employees will receive the basic crest, while five-year employees will get the combination pin. Those with longer service are to receive jeweled pins, with genuine diamonds, sapphires or combinations of both arrayed along the wider side of the county figure, she said.

"They're real pretty," said Bowling.

Only employees with continuous service will receive the pins when they're presented at the annual employees' day. That will be held May 23 in conjunction with the opening of Lockwood Folly Township Park near Holden Beach.

While it's more common in industry to begin recognition with an employee's fifth anniversary, Bowling said that the county wanted to

build in a reward during those first years of employment.

"It's just midway," she said. "If they hold on for five years it seems like they stay on."

Turnover is higher in the first years and rewards fewer, with all employees in that bracket earning the same rate of vacation time.

To take advantage of a volume discount, Bowling has ordered 200 pins, with the extras in the three-year unadorned category. She expects approximately 150 pins to be distributed at the May employee recognition service.

She didn't have an exact cost figure yet, but said with start-up costs the program would cost more this year than in future years.

Spring Forward!

Grab your clock, get ready, set! Daylight Savings Time is back—earlier than you expected it.

DST begins at 2 a.m. Sunday, April 5, a full three weeks earlier than in recent years, due to action by the U.S. Congress.

According to the Congressional Research Service of Washington, D.C., the change is expected to save both lives and energy while benefiting certain industries such as tourism.

The U.S. Department of Transportation estimates, for instance, that this earlier starting date will help save more than \$28 million in traffic accident costs and will prevent more than 1,500 injuries and 20 deaths.

The research service also concludes that, "extending daylight savings time will conserve energy, reduce traffic fatalities and crime and have broad economic benefits for industries dependent upon retail sales and recreation."

In North Carolina, the state legislature last week adopted a bill introduced by House ABC Committee Chairman E. David Redwine that put ABC outlets in compliance with the change in federal law.

Timepieces should be set ahead by one hour.

Sunset Board Talks Access

All Sunset Beach Town Council members attended a special closed-door session called Monday afternoon to discuss the town's plans to apply for state funds to improve public access at the beach.

The board intends to apply for assistance from the N.C. Office of Coastal Management's Estuarine and Beach Access Program to develop a regional beach access area at the west end of the beach.

According to Town Administrator Linda Fluegel, the board was to

discuss purchase of a west end lot to provide access to a 40-acre tract deeded to the town by board member Ed Gore and his family, and possibly other tracts as well.

Ms. Fluegel met last Friday with Julie Shambaugh, coordinator of the state's access program, to go over the town's proposal.

The state legislature is expected to fund approximately \$1 million for access this year, though the program had not been included in the budget presented by the administration.

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