

Commissioners Deny Property Tax Refund Based On Denial Of Septic Tank Permit

BY SUSAN USHER

A Durham man whose lot at Long Beach does not qualify for a septic tank permit under current regulations asked Brunswick County Commissioners to refund his back taxes Monday night—and was promptly turned down.

C.W. Garner told commissioners he learned only last June—when he decided to build a retirement home—that his lot was not suitable for a conventional septic tank system when he applied for a permit from the Brunswick County Health Department and didn't get it.

"It's not only me," he said. "I'm sure you have a lot of other taxpayers who don't realize their property is virtually worthless and are paying high taxes on it."

This year, Garner paid almost \$600 in town and county property taxes on his lot.

Garner also told commissioners he hadn't expected them to approve his "unusual" request, but that he

wanted the opportunity to express his support for a sewer system in Long Beach.

"Something needs to be done with the Long Beach situation," he added. "The people who are already there have no reason to vote for a sewer system unless their property's been condemned."

He purchased the lot at the corner of 79th Street SE and East Beach Drive about 15 years ago. Its value was reappraised from \$10,000 to \$70,370 during the countywide 1986 revaluation.

Now its value on the tax books had been reduced to one-tenth of that starting with the next tax billing, according to Tax Administrator Boyd Williamson.

Williamson said his office has established a method for dealing with lots deemed entirely unsuitable for a standard septic tank system. Lots can be reduced to 10 percent of their previous value, up to a maximum of \$5,000.

Garner has filed a request to appear before the county's newly-appointed Equalization & Review Board, but Williamson said that panel has no authority to make adjustments for prior year taxes. He noted that state tax laws make no provisions for such refunds and provided for commissioners to act on the recommendation of the tax administrator and county manager.

State statutes require property owners to list their property annually. It is the owner's responsibility to make sure the land is properly valued, according to County Manager John T. Smith. Garner had not appealed his property valuations in prior years, providing no basis for an adjustment.

Commissioners took the advice of Williamson and Smith in denying the refund on a motion by Commissioner Benny Ludlum, "because Brunswick County can't start that policy because of the law enforced this year by the health department."

"You have to take a stand on it, and this is mine," he added, indicating a refund would set a bad precedent.

Tax releases and refunds approved by commissioners for the month of March included 47 releases for lots that were deemed unsuitable, 45 specifically because they did not pass the health department inspection.

Last year the Brunswick County Health Department announced it had been incorrectly interpreting a state law regarding separation of a septic tank from the water table. The state law requires a foot of original or naturally-occurring soil above the water table. The lot does not qualify if less than a foot exists or if the foot is made of up dredge spoil or other types of fill material.

This change and another, affecting building of driveways over portions of the sewer system, have resulted in denial of permits to develop numerous lots—especially in the towns of Holden Beach and Long Beach.



STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG BUTLER

Water Line Installed

Installation of a new 12-inch water line to Ocean Isle Beach continued last week as workers from Zeigler Construction Inc. of Sumter, S.C., completed pipe connections on the mainland side of the causeway. In this picture, Michael Lawrimore (right) looks on as backhoe operator Melvin Grainger lowers a section of pipe into the hands of Carl Ray Henzley (bottom) and Ricardo Otiz. Water Supervisor Odell Williamson said the project should be completed sometime next month.

Wilmington Man Indicted In Leland Shooting Death

BY RAHN ADAMS

A New Hanover County man has been indicted in connection with an apparent domestic shooting incident last month that claimed the life of a Leland area woman.

A Brunswick County grand jury Monday indicted Lorenza Julius Robinson Jr., 36, of 113 Cowan St., Wilmington, on a murder charge, according to the Brunswick County Clerk of Court's office.

In all, the grand jury late Monday afternoon returned 25 indictments involving 14 individuals.

Robinson is accused of the March 30 shooting death of his girlfriend, Ella Jane Pretty, 30, of Route 1, Leland, according to the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department.

Sheriff's Lt. Jimmy Bryant said the incident occurred outside Ms. Pretty's residence on Summerville Loop Road, where Robinson also was living. The victim died at the scene after suffering a single gunshot wound to the right side of her neck from a 30-30 caliber deer rifle, Bryant said.

The detective said Robinson turned himself in to authorities about 2 1/2 hours after the shooting occurred. The suspect was placed in the Brunswick County Jail under a \$75,000 bond.

According to the clerk of court's office, the grand jury Monday returned true bills of indictments against the following individuals:

- Thomas Blue, rape;
- John Russell Earp, felonious possession of marijuana and felonious possession of cocaine;

- Leroy H. Faircloth, attempted breaking and entering, two counts of felonious breaking, entering and larceny and two counts of felonious breaking and entering;

- Richard D. Harrelson Jr., attempted breaking and entering, two counts of felonious breaking and entering, two counts of felonious breaking, entering and larceny;

- Sylvester Hooper, felonious breaking and entering;
- Ronnie Lee Shaw, felonious breaking and entering;

- David Thomas, two counts of first-

degree burglary;

- Terry Earl Hooper, felonious breaking and entering;
- Eric Von Jordan, felonious possession of stolen goods;
- Jeffery Mark Harden, felonious possession of stolen goods;

- Michael Lindy McDuffie, felonious possession of stolen goods; and one true bill of indictment for felonious breaking and entering, felonious larceny and felonious possession of stolen goods;
- Rodney Wayne Suggs, one true bill for felonious breaking and entering, felonious larceny and felonious possession of stolen goods;
- David Wright, felonious possession of stolen goods.

Man Charged With Murder In Stabbing Death

A knife fight between two Leland men over the weekend ended with one dead and the other injured, according to the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department.

James Alfred King, 28, of Leland, was arrested early Sunday morning in connection with the death of Billy G. Taylor of Leland, said Sheriff's Capt. Phil Perry.

King was taken into custody after he received treatment at New

Hanover Memorial Hospital in Wilmington for a knife wound to the throat, Perry said.

Brunswick County Coroner Greg White said Taylor died in the emergency room at New Hanover Memorial Hospital after being rushed there from the Leland residence where the stabbings occurred.

According to Perry, the incident happened Saturday around 10 p.m. at

a home on Library Road, Leland.

"Basically, from what we've gathered, this all accumulated over a week's period," Perry said Monday. "These two have been scrapping back and forth, and this is the way it ended."

After a fight broke out between the two, Taylor cut King, who in turn stabbed Taylor in the upper stomach area with a large knife, Perry said.

A woman at the residence reported

the incident to the sheriff's department shortly after it occurred. Officers found Taylor lying on the floor inside the home, the detective noted.

After undergoing hospital treatment for his cut, King was taken into custody and was charged with murder. Following a first court appearance Monday, he remained in the Brunswick County Jail without bond.

Normal Temps Forecast For Weekend

After experiencing unseasonably cool weather over the past week, temperatures in the Shallotte area will return to normal over the next few days, according to Shallotte Point meteorologist Jackson Canady.

Temperatures through the weekend are expected to range from the low 50s at night to the mid 70s during the day, Canady said.

Rainfall also is expected to be near normal at about one-half inch.

During the period of April 12 through 18, Canady said the average

daily temperature was 56 degrees, which was seven degrees below normal.

The daily average high temperature was 66 degrees, and the daily average low temperature was 47 degrees.

The maximum high temperature during the period was 76 degrees, occurring on April 18. The minimum low temperature was 38 degrees, occurring on April 14.


Canady measured 3.29 inches of rain during the period.

Citizens Group To Endorse Hopefuls

Members of the Brunswick County Concerned Citizens Association, a political action committee, will meet Monday, April 25, to endorse candidates in the May 3 primaries.

Spokesman Linda Green said the meeting will be held at the Public Assembly Building at the Brunswick County Government Center in Bolivia.

The endorsements follow forums in which the association questioned candidates on various issues.



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Democrat candidate

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- 1984 delegate to the district and state Democratic convention
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- Board of Directors of Farm Bureau
- Board of Directors and editor Brunswick County Historical Society
- Past President Lions Club
- Nominating committee BEMC
- Friends of the Library, BCC
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