

Zoning Forums in Shallotte, Leland Yield Mixed 'Input'

BY RAHN ADAMS

Brunswick County Commissioners said in February they wanted public input before they make a decision about county zoning. The input they are getting in an ongoing series of forums is that public opinion is split—but leaning in favor of zoning. Two forums were held last week—one at Shallotte Town Hall last Thursday night, the other at Leland Community Building on Friday night. Some 33 individuals attended the Shallotte meeting, while 22 persons turned out in Leland. The fifth forum in the series was to be held Wednesday (March 22) at Lockwood Folly Community Building. All five commissioners have participated in the forums. Commissioners Kelly Holden and Benny Ludlum attended last Thursday's meeting; Commissioners Frankie Rabon and Grace Beasley the Friday forum. Holden, Ludlum and Commissioner Gene Pinkerton had attended forums held earlier in the month.

The remaining forums are scheduled for Monday, March 27 at the CP&L Nuclear Plant Visitors Center near Southport; Wednesday, March 29, at the Hood's Creek Community Building; Thursday, March 30, at Waccamaw Community Building; and Wednesday, April 5, at the Public Assembly Building in Bolivia.

In both meetings last week, officials heard basically the same arguments—both pro and con—that

dominated the first two forums, which were held at Sea Trail Clubhouse and Town Creek Community Building.

Of the citizens who expressed definite positions on the issue, eight speakers in Shallotte supported zoning, while three opposed it. A show of hands requested by Ms. Beasley in Leland found that individuals there were almost evenly split on zoning. Local surveyor and real estate broker Bobby Long, who attended the Shallotte meeting, reiterated the main opposing viewpoints that zoning would simply create "another regulatory agency to get a permit from" and that restrictive covenants in local subdivisions meet property owners' needs.

In Leland, Jackie Mintz took that line of criticism a step further by saying zoning classifications would be determined "at the whim of planners" and that "politics" would influence how zoning matters are handled. "When you've put zoning in, you've opened a can of worms," Mintz said.

Speaking in favor of zoning, Sunset Beach Mayor Mason Barber said last Thursday that he feels local developers have done well with restrictive covenants in major subdivisions, "but there is a lot of room in between." Barber noted that rural property owners who live outside subdivisions and many who live in smaller developments aren't protected by restrictive covenants. Also at the Shallotte meeting,

Holden Beach Planning and Zoning Board member Jack Scarborough refuted an earlier remark that zoning boards "rubber stamp" the wishes of government officials. He also said zoning would be "simply setting a goal" in writing for the county's future development.

Brunswick County Planning Board Chairman Ed Gore—the second generation developer of Sunset Beach and a principal with Sea Trail Corporation—last Thursday also addressed the largely negative response zoning has gotten from local developers. "Zoning is not a threat to developers; I've never felt it was a threat to me..." Gore said, later adding that he feels "developers are missing out on a chance to embrace the concept for all the citizens of Brunswick County."

At the close of the Leland meeting, Commission Chairman Rabon emphasized that the purpose of the forums is to get public input as to whether or not citizens want zoning. He also pledged that commissioners will be "open-minded" on the issue.

Holden and Pinkerton—both freshman commissioners—have been the only board members to openly support zoning, although Pinkerton has indicated he would respect the public's wishes on the matter. Rabon, Ms. Beasley and Ludlum were three of four commissioners who voted down a similar movement to begin work on a zoning ordinance about two years ago.



HOLDEN BEACH RESIDENT Jack Scarborough, who serves on the town's planning and zoning board, speaks in favor of zoning at last Thursday's forum in Shallotte.

Doctor Dies In Wreck

Charges were pending Friday in connection with a traffic accident on March 14 that claimed the life of a Supply physician, according to Highway Patrol spokesperson Ruby Oakley.

Dr. Nora Hsu Beaman, 60, of Boiling Spring Lakes, died from injuries suffered in the wreck that occurred last Tuesday at 6:55 p.m., nine-tenths of a mile north of Belville on U.S. 17, Ms. Oakley said.

A report by Trooper D.A. Lewis states that Mrs. Beaman's 1982 Lincoln was headed south in the right lane of the four-lane highway when it crashed into the rear of a southbound backhoe driven by Roger Lee Southerland, 24, of Leland, Ms. Oakley said. The backhoe was owned by W.E. Blackmon Construction Company of Leland.

Southerland and a passenger in the Beaman auto—Mrs. Beaman's husband, 50-year-old Roger Beaman—both suffered incapacitating injuries and were taken by ambulance to New Hanover Memorial Hospital, Wilmington, for treatment, Ms. Oakley reported.

She said a witness told Lewis that the Beaman car's headlights were not on when the collision occurred. The witness reportedly flashed his own headlights to get Mrs. Beaman to turn on her lights, Ms. Oakley said. Although no charges had been filed as of Friday, Ms. Oakley said the trooper's report also noted that the backhoe did not have proper tail lights, though other lights on the backhoe were on at the time of the accident.

Damage was estimated at \$8,000 to the car. The backhoe sustained no apparent damage.

Mrs. Beaman's death was the fourth fatality to occur on Brunswick County highways this year.

Sheriff Asks For Share

(Continued From Page 1-A)

If the sheriff's department receives a share, it cannot be used for current budget items, Davis noted. "You've just got to show that it's used directly for law enforcement," he said, adding that he has used forfeiture funds in the past to buy unbudgeted items such as radio equipment, bullet-proof vests, weapons and a computer for the narcotics division.

The shopping center, located on U.S. 17 South in Shallotte, was seized by federal authorities in September 1987, three months after the younger Willis was indicted by a Brunswick County investigative grand jury on cocaine trafficking charges. He later pleaded guilty to conspiracy to traffic in cocaine and was sentenced to a \$250,000 fine and 35-year prison term. The property was seized on the grounds that the younger Willis used the shopping center to facilitate drug trafficking by storing cocaine and making drug transactions there, and by using telephones there to set up drug deals.

None of the plaza's 23 businesses at the time of the seizure were implicated in the case. Resort Plaza was managed by professional management companies contracted by the U.S. Marshal's Service from September 1987 until the end of the business day on March 14, when the property was turned over to the elder Willis.

According to the settlement agreement, A.B. Willis agreed to pay the \$103,500 and accept the property "as is." Also, he agreed to pay the 1987 and 1988 property taxes on the shopping center and to let the government keep all rent it collected.

"The settlement of this action was driven by two considerations," West said in a prepared statement. "First, the government recognized that even upon forfeiture of the property to the United States, (A.B. Willis) would retain a significant property interest in the shopping center that would not be subject to forfeiture."

The attorney explained that Willis and his son co-owned a significant portion of the property; the deed to that property was conveyed to the two men in 1975. Since there was no evidence that A.B. Willis and his wife, Elizabeth Willis, "ever had knowledge of or consented to the son's illegal acts on the property," the father's portion was not subject to forfeiture.

The second consideration behind the settlement involved the "limited equity in the property, given the significant legitimate interest of

(A.B. Willis) and the substantial mortgage encumbering the property held by NCNB," West said.

West told the Beacon that the government estimated it could have sold the \$82,000 shopping center for only about \$500,000 to \$600,000. The government then would have had to pay off the outstanding mortgage of \$417,000. "We feel like we got at least what the equity would be," West said, later adding, "It was definitely worth going through the process."

He also explained that the younger Willis lost all claim to the property in a March 7 ruling by Judge Fox. The ruling was based on court documents in which Al Willis previously admitted that he had sold cocaine at the shopping center, West said.

However, left unresolved by the settlement is whether or not Willis legally conveyed part of the plaza property to his mother in January 1987, five months before he was indicted.

Describing the settlement as "a resolution of this matter that is both favorable to the government and respects the legitimate interest of (A.B. Willis) and NCNB," West said the forfeiture action's greatest impact has been as a "deterrent" to individuals who would use their property to facilitate drug trafficking.

Fair Weather Is Expected

Seasonable weather conditions are expected in the Shallotte area through the Easter weekend, according to Shallotte Point meteorologist Jackson Canady.

Temperatures over the next several days should range from the low 40s at night to the low 60s during the day. Rainfall should measure about one-half inch.

For the period of March 14 through 20, the average daily temperature in the Shallotte area was 58 degrees, which Canady said was about five degrees above normal.

The average daily high temperature was 69 degrees, and the average daily low temperature was 47 degrees.

The maximum high temperature during the period was 77 degrees, occurring on March 17. The minimum low temperature was 37 degrees, occurring on March 20.

Canady measured eight-tenths of an inch of rainfall during the seven-day period.

Protective Status Rejected

(Continued From Page 1-A)

Bogue Sound and the Bear Island area; Stump Sound and Masonboro Sound.

Jim Sheppard, public information officer with the Division of Environmental Management, said last week that the report is preliminary and that it may change following internal review and review by other governmental agencies.

"It's a good report, but nothing in it is carved in stone," he said. "That's not our final say on the ORW situation on the coast."

Sheppard said there will be several public hearings in June before the N.C. Environmental Management Commission acts on the coastal ORW recommendations this fall.

He said he had no idea about the chances of the Lockwood Folly River being classified as ORW, but said the fact that it features an important resource does not mean that it is worthy of special protection.

"It's not the intention of ORW to improve water quality in an area," he said. "The ORW status is for existing pristine waters."

The Division of Environmental Management first started considering coastal waters for the ORW classification in December 1987. Sheppard said limited staff and the tedious process of data collection, assimilation and interpretation have caused delays in the recommendations.

Brunswick County Spots Not On Waste Site List

BY SUSAN USHER

While Brunswick County isn't included in the latest group of candidate sites for a low-level radioactive waste storage facility, it also hasn't gotten an all-clear signal.

Ebasco Services Inc., a geological engineering firm in Greensboro contracted to do the screening, has identified 9.5 percent of the state, an area of approximately 5,054 square miles—as candidates for the site.

Linda Fuller, public information officer for the Low-Level Radioactive Waste Management Authority, said Brunswick County is not among those shown with "dashes" on a map released Monday. Dashes represent counties with candidate sites. Instead, she said, "You do have fly specks."

Checking with Ebasco Project Manager Sam Khoury, she said the specks represent isolated areas of the county that were among the "potentially suitable" sites identified earlier in the first phase of the site screening process.

In making the new maps, she said, "they were too small to shade."

An article in a regional newspaper had incorrectly identified Brunswick County as having isolated "spots" that were technically suitable for the facility and warranted further study.

The consulting engineers used technical data to screen out most coastal, mountainous and highly populated areas. Fuller said additional areas will be screened out during the next phase.

Brunswick County's screening out during this second round was based "mostly on things to do with water—period," said Fuller. "Water table levels, flood plain, hurricane storm surge, swamps." State law prohibits the bottom of the facility coming within seven feet of the high water table.

However, Fuller said, Brunswick County's absence from the new "candidate" list doesn't mean it's entirely out of consideration. Those areas initially labeled as "potentially suitable," such as those here, will still be subject to consideration.

"We're not excluding those, so it's possible, however remote," she said. "We're just going to give the others

higher priority."

Ebasco plans to name at least two specific candidates for the site by fall. The authority has said it will choose the site by the end of 1990 so that the facility could be ready to open by January 1, 1993.

North Carolina is part of an eight-state regional compact and has been designated to accept low-level radioactive from throughout the region for the next 20 years. Most of this waste is shipped now to Barnwell, S.C.

Planning Board Cancels Meeting

The Holden Beach Planning and Zoning Board canceled its regular monthly meeting last Thursday.

Town Administrator Gus Ulrich said the board decided not to meet because there was not enough on the agenda to warrant a meeting.

The next regular meeting of the board will be Thursday, April 20, at 7 p.m. in town hall.

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON
 Established Nov. 1, 1962
 Telephone 754-6890
 Published Every Thursday
 At 4709 Main Street
 Shallotte, N. C. 28459
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