

# Holden Beach Reverses Decision On Building Permit Policy

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 unfairly penalizes the majority of the builders on the island. He estimated that 95 percent of the plans presented to the building inspector can be accepted as accurate, while only 5 percent of the builders operate in a "gray area."  
 He also pointed to a memorandum from the town attorney concerning the amended policy.  
 Attorney Doug Ledgett wrote that the debate over rooms designated as bedrooms will continue until the town comes up with a definitive means of determining bedrooms on house plans.  
 He said the definition included in the state regulations adopted last week by the board was drafted to be used by local health officials in determining maximum potential septic

system use. The attorney also stated that he believed use of the policy would not stand up in court.  
 However, Ledgett also wrote that the amendment was fine as a temporary policy to strengthen the building inspection program until a more definitive method of determining occupancy use of a residence could be adopted. He suggested that the board watch for results of the policy change before amending it again.  
 Drawing from 18 years of experience with a number of public bodies, Ledgett wrote, "The only result of rescinding board action within days of its passage is confusion of town policies and deterioration of the board's image with the public."  
 However, in pushing for a return to

**"I am not going to vote against anything that the state does."**  
 —Georgia Langley  
 Holden Beach Commissioner

the old policy Commissioner Williamson said he thought the major problem is lack of enforcement of septic tank regulations by the local health department. He also said that the new policy would put too much pressure on the building inspector.  
 Board member Atkins also took exception to the manner in which the issue was presented last week. Although it was listed on the board agenda, she said the proposed change was not included in the packet each board member received prior to the meeting.

She argued that she and businessmen affected by the change did not have an opportunity to study it before action was taken.  
 However Buck pointed out the issue had been discussed during a board workshop in February and that there should have been no question that it was coming up last week.  
 He also said the building inspector is capable of judging the intended use of a room and noted that the present policy runs contrary to the responsibility of a local governing body to

uphold state regulations.  
 Buck again pointed out that builders who are refused permits can always appeal the decision of the building inspector to the town board of adjustment.  
 Like Buck, Commissioner Langley stood firmly behind last week's decision and stressed that the policy amendment had brought the town in line with existing state regulations.  
 "This is state policy. It's used all over North Carolina by everybody," she said. "I am not going to vote against anything that the state does."  
 However, the majority of the board sided with several builders in the audience who argued that they were being penalized for the actions of others who may have abused the town policy in the past. Among those

speaking out against the policy amendment were Alan Holden and Mark Saunders.  
 The original amendment to town policy last week reversed a 1986 board decision that the town follow a policy of accepting the building plans at face value as long as setback, height and other applicable restrictions were met.  
 Mayor John Tandy, who said at the start of Monday's meeting that he did not expect the board to rescind the policy change this week, admitted that there is an ethics problem with some builders who have taken advantage of the policy and built more bedrooms than were permitted by the health department.  
 Referring to the long history of the debate, he said, "We have booted this thing from here to China and back."

## Tax Distribution Opposed

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 acted on or discussed. "I really don't feel like proper notice was given to the towns in this particular case."  
 Mrs. Williamson added that she spoke with County Commissioner Kelly Holden following the meeting and was assured that she would be contacted prior to any future actions which could have a major impact on the town.  
 However, Pinkerton said he would not have done anything differently if he had to act on the measure again. "There was some homework done on it," he said. "I think it was done properly."  
 Looking at the county as a whole, he said distributing revenues on the basis of population is fairer than the ad valorem method. Pinkerton said land values in the county are more extreme now than they were when the previous method was adopted in 1971, making distribution on a population basis more equitable.  
 Pinkerton also noted that the majority of the counties in North Carolina base sales tax revenue distribution on population. "The trend is going to per capita because it seems to be a more fair way of distribution."  
 In his letter to County Manager John Smith, Martin stated that Bald Head Island stands to lose approx-

imately \$95,000 per year under the new plan. The village will receive about \$100,000 this fiscal year in sales tax revenue, but will receive \$5,000 next fiscal year based on the island's year-round population of 38.  
 To recoup the lost funds, he said the municipal tax rate will have to be increased 8.2 cents per \$100 of valuation.  
 The letter states, "We do not question your authority to make this change, only that some consideration be given to the effect this change will have on the beach communities that are largely responsible for generating this sales tax in Brunswick County."  
 Martin also wrote that property owners on the island paid \$675,000 in 1988 taxes to Brunswick County, and in return, received \$21,000 in support of the volunteer fire and rescue organizations.  
 The revision in the method of distribution is expected to either provide more revenues or have little impact in Shallotte, Sunset Beach and Calabash. More populated municipalities like Southport, Long Beach and Boiling Spring Lakes will also benefit.  
 Varnamtown, which incorporated last fall, will also likely benefit from the change. The town's population is about 408, while the tax base is approximately \$9.2 million.



BRUNSWICK COUNTY COMMISSIONERS listen as Supply resident Louie Lewis (standing at right) urges them to call for a public referendum on zoning.

## 'Fact-Finding' Zoning Forums End; 'Further Deliberations' Promised

BY RAHN ADAMS  
 A series of public forums that came in like a lion in early March went out like a lamb last week in Bolivia, as more than 50 citizens from across the county gathered to discuss zoning.  
 Last Wednesday's 45-minute forum—the last in a slate of nine meetings spread over five weeks—was conducted by Brunswick County Commissioners. It was the first forum attended by the full board. Brunswick County Planning Board members Thomas Dixie, Alan Holden and Shelton Stanley also were present.

However, with the exception of a forum last month at Hood's Creek Community Building where opposition was strongest, speakers at the meetings have been fairly split on the issue, with supporters saying zoning is needed to control the county's rapid growth and to help protect natural and manmade resources.  
 While last Wednesday's meeting was characterized by an orderliness that was absent from several earlier forums, positions taken by nine speakers represented basically the same opinions—both for and against—expressed throughout the series.

Five individuals from the Supply and Leland areas spoke against zoning, with most of them maintaining that property owners should have the right to use their lands as they see fit without interference from government.  
 Burness Hewett of Supply said that if he wants to sell his land for residential, commercial or industrial use, "that should be my privilege." Louie Lewis, also of Supply, said Brunswick County financially "can't afford" zoning and urged commissioners to call for a public referendum on the issue.  
 Of the four zoning supporters who spoke, Carson Varnam and Annie Smigiel—Varnamtown residents who are leaders of the local conservation group, Save Our Shellfish—emphasized that steps must be taken to further control development near waterways such as the Lockwood Folly River.

In February, commissioners called for the forums to gauge public feeling on county zoning before they decide whether or not county planners should begin work on a zoning ordinance.  
 The zoning issue—one that commissioners rejected in 1987—was revived this year by Commissioner Kelly Holden. Both he and Commissioner Gene Pinkerton promoted zoning in their election campaigns last fall.  
 Commission Chairman Frankie Rabon told the gathering last Wednesday that the board was in no position to make a decision that night, but did not indicate when the matter would be formally addressed. He said commissioners would use input from the "fact-finding" forums in "further deliberations."  
 When the cross-county series of meetings began March 9 at Sea Trail Clubhouse, several of the area's leading developers—though outnumbered by zoning supporters—severely criticized county officials for "selling" zoning and denounced it as an unnecessary layer of bureaucracy.  
 As the forums moved from district to district and similar opposition was heard, Holden noted that the negative response reflected a "basic mistrust of public officials."

After the forum, commissioners retired to the county manager's office for a 20-minute executive session requested by Commissioner Benny Ludlum to discuss "personnel." Rabon said no action was taken.  
 The board recessed until Monday night (April 10), when it was to meet in Leland with Wilmington City Council and Biogrow representatives to discuss sludge management.

## Democrats Plan Convention

Ray Walton, a prominent retired attorney and judge from Southport, will be the keynote speaker at the Brunswick County Democratic Party Convention on Saturday, April 22.  
 The convention will start at 1 p.m. and will be held at the Public Assembly Building in Bolivia, said party chairman Bill Stanley.  
 At the top of the convention agenda will be the election of a new county party chairman and county executive committee officers.  
 Brunswick County members of the N.C. Democratic Executive Committee will also be chosen. Also, delegates will be elected to represent the county at the district convention later this spring.  
 "The county conventions are important to the future of our party because the people get to pick out the leaders they know," said Stanley.  
 The Brunswick County Democratic Women will sell refreshments during the convention.

## Expansion Proposal Meets Opposition

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 and proposed a referendum of island and mainland residents to decide the long-standing issue once and for all.  
 Cletis Clemmons, who led a failed effort two years ago to incorporate the Town of North Holden Beach in response to earlier talk of annexation, also noted Monday that landowners on either side of the bridge have different interests.  
 "Your interest is cottages and our interest is businesses, and it's totally two different things," he said. "I say just leave it like it is."  
 Thomas Gray, who chaired a committee which had earlier recommended annexation of an area substantially larger than the present proposal, also suggested that the town give up on annexation.  
 "We won't incorporate if you don't annex," he said, refuting earlier statements by town commissioners who predicted that another municipality would form if the area were not annexed.  
 Those speaking in favor of annexation Monday were clearly a minority.  
 Virginia Craig, who lives on the island and owns businesses on the

causeway, came out in support of the proposal and urged the two sides to work together. "We have something beautiful here. Let's work together to keep it that way."  
 Her son, Johnny Craig, also said he favored annexation as a means of creating some continuity between the island and mainland.  
 Town planning board member Sid Swarts said he supported annexation of one lot on either side of the causeway, in addition to enough land bordering the waterway to ensure that the area qualifies for involuntary annexation.  
 The present proposal calls for annexation of about 67 acres of property on both sides of the commercial causeway. The area includes 114 developed residential lots and 51 commercial lots.  
 The estimated property valuation of the area is \$7.67 million, and it is believed that Holden Beach would break even financially if officials followed through with the annexation.  
 At the close of this week's hearing, Mayor John Tandy invited mainland

and island property owners to continue to comment on the proposal until the time a final decision is made. "Nothing is set in cement as we're sitting here now," he said.  
 Town officials are required by law to wait at least 10 days from the public hearing date to adopt an annexation ordinance, but cannot put off a decision more than 90 days, said Town Administrator Gus Ulrich.  
 The earliest the board can act on the proposal is April 20, but a decision must be made no later than July 9.

## Chilly Temps Revisit Area

Winter-type weather returned to the Shallotte area over the past week, arriving in the form of below-normal temperatures, according to Shallotte Point meteorologist Jackson Canady.  
 For the period of April 4 through 10, the minimum low temperature was 34 degrees, occurring on April 8. The maximum high temperature was 76 degrees, occurring on April 4.  
 The daily average temperature during the period was 56 degrees, which Canady said was five degrees below average. The daily average high temperature was 65 degrees, and the daily average low temperature was 48 degrees.  
 Canady measured 2.07 inches of rain during the seven-day period.  
 The weather outlook for the next several days in the Shallotte area is for the chilly, wet conditions to continue. Canady said temperatures should remain below normal and precipitation should be above average.  
 Temperatures through the weekend are expected to range from the upper 40s at night to the upper 60s during the day, he said. Rainfall should measure about three-quarters of an inch.

### South Rips North 16-3

South Brunswick ripped North Brunswick 16-3 last Tuesday in the Waccamaw 2-A Conference baseball opener for both teams.  
 South Brunswick, the defending state 2-A champions, improved to 1-0 in the WC and 5-3 overall.

### North Brunswick dropped to 0-1 and 1-6.

The Scorpions continue league play Friday traveling to West Brunswick while the Cougars entertain Whiteville.

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