

# Calabash To Continue With Annexation Study

BY DOUG RUTTER

Calabash officials recently saw the limits of their town expanded to include another 875 acres.

But they still plan to continue with an annexation study that could lead to further extension of the town limits.

Meeting Tuesday night, council members urged a state official to continue working on the feasibility study. It focuses on a residential area east of town and valuable resort property on the other end of town.

Talk of annexation and the recent consolidation of Calabash and Carolina Shores dominated this week's hour-long town meeting. Landis High was the only board member absent.

Effective Aug. 31, the town limits of Calabash were expanded to include all of Carolina Shores. That brought about 875 acres and 1,000 residents into the Town of Calabash.

The current town board started work on an annexation study earlier this year. Members hope to complete the project or at least have it at an advanced stage before the new board for the enlarged town takes office in December.

"We started it," Councilman Keith Hardee said Tuesday. "We've got to finish it."

Board members have narrowed down the areas proposed for annexation to two sections. One is a residential section east of town between Thomasboro Road and N.C. 179. The other is an area southwest of

town taking in Marsh Harbor Golf Links and Marsh Harbour Yacht Club.

Tom Cassell of the state Division of Community Assistance has been working on the study. He said Tuesday he can have the final report completed for the town's November meeting.

Another section of the study focusing on water line extensions is being developed by a private engineering firm, Houston and Associates of Shallotte.

After receiving the feasibility study report, council must hold a public hearing before it can proceed with any annexation.

### Annexation Requested

In a related matter Tuesday, council accepted a petition for satellite annexation from the Calabash ABC Board.

ABC board member Suzy Moore presented the petition requesting annexation of two lots just west of the town limits on N.C. 179. The ABC board purchased the 10,000-square-foot lots in January at a cost of \$118,000.

Members plan to build a new ABC store there within the next few years. The ABC board currently leases a building at the east end of town, but members say a larger store is needed.

After the petition is verified by the town clerk, the town council will have to hold a public hearing before it can annex the lots.

Following acceptance of the petition this week, town council reappointed all three members of the

ABC board for another three years. In addition to Ms. Moore, Cheryl Hardee and David Arthurs also serve on the board.

### Consolidation Woes

Although there were no harsh words this week about the recent consolidation of Calabash and Carolina Shores, council members expressed concerns relating to the districts set up in the enlarged town.

Following the municipal election in November, the town's new board of commissioners will consist of five Carolina Shores residents and two representatives from Calabash proper.

Council members did not debate the fairness of that point this week. Rather they questioned what will happen if the town annexes any

other areas, such as Calabash Acres.

In the state legislation that provided for consolidation, there is no provision for how seats on the town board would be allocated if the town expands its limits.

Mayor Doug Simmons said, "It's gonna be a problem, but maybe we can work it out."

The General Assembly passed a law this summer setting up the Aug. 22 vote on consolidation and the two districts. Town Attorney Mike Ramos said the legislature would probably have to pass another bill for the districts to be realigned.

"That's just something that's going to have to be addressed as it comes along," he said. "The bill was not as finely-tuned as it could have been."

# Leland, Belville Fight Appears Headed To Court

BY RAHN ADAMS

Residents of the Leland community Tuesday voted overwhelmingly to incorporate and become Brunswick County's 17th municipality, but their action came about 90 minutes too late to keep Leland's shopping district from becoming part of neighboring Belville.

The fight over the annexation area apparently isn't over, though, as officials of the Leland Civic Association—the group that spearheaded the incorporation drive—have said repeatedly that annexation by Belville would be challenged in court due to procedural irregularities.

By about a 91-percent voter margin, Leland residents voted 427 to 42 in favor of incorporation, according to Brunswick County Election Supervisor Lynda Britt. Approximately 640 individuals were registered to vote in Tuesday's referendum. Polls closed at 7:30 p.m.

But while voters were still casting ballots in Leland, Belville Town Council met at 6 p.m. and unanimously adopted an annexation ordinance to take in approximately 79 acres that include two shopping centers and several other Leland businesses, said Belville Mayor Ken Messer. The town meeting last-

ed five minutes.

Under the state legislation allowing the Leland referendum, any area that was not annexed before the incorporation vote passed would become part of the new town. As a result, Belville's decision Tuesday to annex the Leland shopping district pulled it out of the incorporation area.

Before the referendum results were announced, Messer commented, "It (incorporation) doesn't mean anything really except that there will be another town over on the other side of Belville...It would be best for the community (Leland) if they do incorporate, but it doesn't make any difference to us."

He added that Belville's annexation would be "beneficial" to the Leland businesses. They would be able to apply for ABC permits, he said. Also, the town is considering forming a police department within the next two months.

"I think it will stimulate business over there," Messer said of the annexation, later adding about the Leland Civic Association's opposition to the Belville's move, "They better be concentrating on putting their house in order rather than giving us trouble."

Contacted after the incorporation vote was passed, Leland Civic Association Secretary Lynette Carlisle

said residents of the annexation area have indicated they plan to contest Belville's action.

Ms. Carlisle noted that annexation opponents contend that Belville violated annexation guidelines. Alleged violations included not following a state-mandated timetable for holding an involuntary incorporation hearing and not properly notifying property owners of the hearing, she said.

"I'm sure it will end up in court," she said. "This case will go to court on the merits of the annexation."

In a previous interview, Leland Civic Association President Russell Baldwin also told the *Beacon* that the association was prepared to take legal action if Belville annexed the Leland shopping district.

On Sept. 1, in Brunswick County Superior Court, Judge Dexter Brooks denied a motion for an injunction that would have barred Belville from proceeding with the annexation. The motion was filed on behalf of Walter and Martha Futch. Brooks said that while Belville had said it would agree to delete the Futches from the area targeted for involuntary annexation, allowing the motion would have caused the town to suffer because it could lose the opportunity to annex the land in question should Leland residents vote to incorporate.



STAFF PHOTO BY RAHN ADAMS

## Sea Turtle Washes Ashore

Curious beach-goers inspect the remains of a four-foot-long sea turtle that washed onto the strand Sunday morning just west of the Ocean Isle Beach fishing pier. A town water department employee arrived on the scene around 10:30 a.m. and used a backhoe to bury the carcass near the dunes about a mile west of the pier. Town officials said a tarpon that was almost as large as the turtle also washed onto the beach early Sunday and had to be buried.

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