



UOB Gets Preliminary Results Of County Water System Study

BY RAHN ADAMS

Brunswick County utility officials got a taste Monday of a long-awaited engineering study whose purpose is to identify major "missing links" in the county water system.

Ed Odom of a Cary engineering firm, William G. Daniel & Associates, presented preliminary results of the \$20,000 study to members of the Brunswick County Utility Operations Board Monday night in Bolivia. Board members D.V. Jones, Robert Nubel, Rudy Simmons, Al Morrison and John Jones were present for the nearly two-hour session.

The 12-page preliminary report is the first information the county has received from the company, which was authorized to begin the long-range water system analysis in June 1988. The entire study was supposed to be finished by March 1989; however, repeated postponements have pushed the completion date back until July.

In explanation of the delays, Odom told UOB members Monday that the county water system was too complex for a computer program his firm initially de-

veloped to use on smaller municipal water systems. A computer model Odom has created of the county system contains data on every component of the system, including small parts such as valves and fire hydrants.

Objectives of the study are to determine where additional trunk lines, pump stations and storage tanks will be required for the system to adequately serve the county's population over the next 20 years. Population projections were supplied to the engineers by the county Planning Department.

While waiting for the study over the past year, county commissioners have put off water system improvements that the utility board, town of Sunset Beach and Shallotte Point residents have described as critical in meeting water needs southwest of Shallotte.

The UOB and the town are concerned about a possible shortfall in the water supply during peak summer usage periods, such as the Fourth of July; Shallotte Point residents want county water service because their groundwater is of poor quality.

As a September 1988 short-term study by a local engineering firm, Houston & Associates, pointed out,

the Northwest Treatment Plant can pump nine million gallons of water per day to Shallotte but only two million gallons per day past the town.

As a result, the UOB recommended in early 1989 that the county undertake a \$5 million capital improvements project to enhance the system southwest of Shallotte. Commissioners have taken no action on the proposal, despite Sunset Beach's recent pleas for the county to proceed with the project.

The proposed project includes construction of a 2,200-gallon-per-minute booster pump station near the intersection of N.C. 179 and N.C. 904; a one-million-gallon elevated storage tank near the intersection of N.C. 904 and Old Georgetown Road; and a 12-inch trunk line on Old Georgetown Road from N.C. 904 to N.C. 179 near Calabash.

As far as new trunk mains are concerned, the preliminary Daniel report lists three coastal areas that contain "missing links" in the system: the section of the county southwest of Shallotte; the Holden Beach and Oak Island areas; and Southport and nearby industries.

"You've got all of your heavy users drinking

through a really long straw," Odom commented.

In the preliminary report, the engineer emphasized that "these possibilities for providing additional water service are not firmly set. These merely reflect the routes that we have investigated." Also, Odom reminded the board that "this (study) is not looking at minor (water) distribution at all. This is looking at moving large amounts of water."

Odom's proposal for the southwestern section of the county involves construction of a trunk line on U.S. 17 from Shallotte to Thomasboro, with smaller mains branching off along Ocean Isle Beach Road, N.C. 904 and Thomasboro Road to connect with the present trunk line running from Shallotte to Calabash via N.C. 179. Two additional pump stations and two additional elevated tanks would be needed. Estimated costs for two different alternatives are \$7 million and \$7.3 million.

In the Holden Beach and Oak Island areas, the preliminary study proposes running trunk lines from U.S. 17 at Supply to the N.C. 211 Treatment Plant and to Sabbath Home Road along Stone Chimney Road, as

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'12th Street' Defendants Settle With Sunset Beach

BY RAHN ADAMS

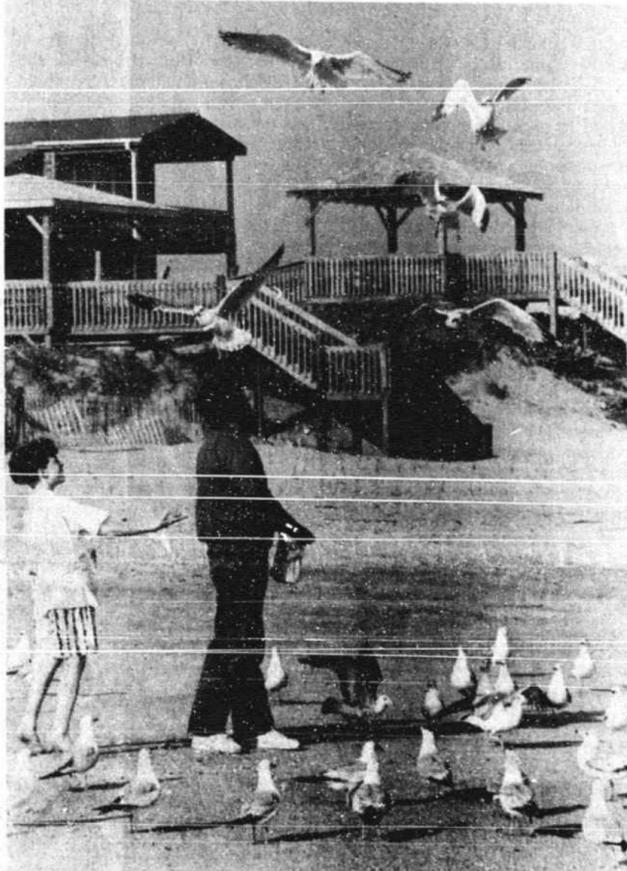
An undeveloped street at Sunset Beach can be opened as a thoroughfare but not as a parking lot, according to the settlement of a two-year-old lawsuit between a group of non-resident property owners and the Town of Sunset Beach.

Sunset Beach Town Attorney Michael Isenberg said the town council accepted the defendant property owners' offer of a settlement in the 12th Street suit during an executive session at the board's March 5 meeting. The suit was decided in the town's favor last November in Brunswick County Superior Court; however, the property owners then appealed to the N.C. Court of Appeals.

Defendants were Mr. and Mrs. Everett L. Wohlbruck, and Mr. and Mrs. John F. Youngblood III, all of Mecklenburg County; Mr. and Mrs. Richard L. Layton of St. Croix, U.S. Virgin Islands; Mr. and Mrs. Samuel S. Conly III of Lewisburg, W. Va.; Mr. and Mrs. Richard Hogg of Wake County; and Mr. and Mrs. Larry W. Calhoun of Horry County, S.C.

Isenberg told the *Beacon* Friday that the agreement gives the town the right to open 12th Street; however, the property cannot be developed as a beach access area, as the town initially planned.

(See 12th STREET, Page 2-A)



STAFF PHOTO BY RAHN ADAMS

'Gullible' Feathered Friends

Brick Landing residents E.O. Bailey and his son, Brandon Bailey, take time out during an afternoon on the strand at Ocean Isle Beach to feed a eager flock of always-hungry seagulls.

CONDEMNATION CANCELED

Holden Beach To Purchase Property

BY DOUG RUTTER

Holden Beach Commissioners have reversed an earlier decision to condemn property on Davis Street to expand the town hall facilities and instead will buy the property.

Commissioners voted March 1 to begin the legal process that would have allowed the town to take over ownership of the lot and two-story house at the southwest corner of Davis Street and Brunswick Avenue. The property, owned by Lynda Thomas of Oakland, N.J., is valued at \$71,120.

After meeting with relatives of the property owner Monday, however, town officials voted 4-1 to buy the house and lot for \$100,000. Holden Beach will also pay closing costs, estimated at \$135, and current year taxes, which will be about \$100.

Commissioner Gay Atkins voted against purchasing the property Monday. She said she wanted to get a septic tank permit for land already owned by the town before buying

"It'll be a long, long time before the town needs any more space."

—John Tandy
Mayor of Holden Beach

the additional property.

Following Monday's meeting, Mayor John Tandy said the town will probably end up saving money as a result of the decision. However, he added that he doesn't know how much the savings will be because the town would have had to pay what the court ordered if the property had been condemned.

The mayor noted that estimates for the legal costs associated with condemnation ranged from \$6,000 to \$20,000. "That's a savings right there," he said.

After the board's recent vote to condemn the property, Tandy said the town and property owner could not come to an agreement on a purchase price. But the mayor said this

week that the vote to condemn was partly the result of an "unfortunate lack of communication" between the town and Mrs. Thomas. He said the owner never received the town's original proposal, which apparently was lost in the mail.

Monday's vote to purchase the property followed an 80-minute executive session called to discuss a real estate matter. During the session, town officials met with the property owner's husband, son and son-in-law, said Tandy.

With the additional property, the town plans to reshuffle offices in the crowded town hall and possibly add bays to the garage area. Tandy said, "It'll be a long, long time be-

(See PROPERTY, Page 2-A)

Democrat Bows Out Of Commissioners Contest

Democrat J.N. "Joe" Gainey of Leland Tuesday announced his withdrawal from the Democratic primary race for the District 5 seat on the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners.

Gainey, 65, told *The Brunswick Beacon* Tuesday morning that "prior commitments had come through." If elected in November, Gainey said he would not have enough time to devote to the job.

He had advised the Brunswick County Board of Elections of his decision by telephone, and also planned to send a letter.

Gainey's withdrawal narrows to three the number

of Democratic candidates in the May 8 primary for the seat. Incumbent Grace Beasley, 53, of Route 3, Leland, now faces from fellow Democrats Mike Holmes, 40, a political newcomer, and former county commissioner V.A. Creech Jr., 63, both of Leland.

Gainey, a former member of the Brunswick County Board of Education, is the second candidate to withdraw before the primary elections.

Republican Richard F. Bangs of Shallotte has withdrawn from the District 2 Board of Education contest, leaving W. James Payne, also of Shallotte, as the GOP nominee.

Commissioners Leaning Toward Plan To Finance \$25 Million In Projects

BY RAHN ADAMS

After consulting with two financial experts for more than an hour Friday, Brunswick County Commissioners seemed to favor a plan to fund an estimated \$25 million in capital improvements, mainly through an installment method of financing approved last year by state lawmakers.

The full board met Friday afternoon in Bolivia with Ed Regan, executive director of the N.C. Association of County Commissioners, and Raleigh attorney A.P. Carlton to discuss ways to finance at least eight projects that commissioners have described as "immediate needs" of the county.

No decisions were made Friday. However, commissioners indicated that they would hold additional work sessions soon to decide a capital improvements plan to pursue and to review cost estimates of individual projects. Regan suggested that commissioners formulate a five-year plan and keep in mind that it would need to be a "realistic plan" and not a "wish list."

Six Financing Options

Regan, who led most of the discussion, said he based his presentation on talks with Commission Chairman Gene Pinkerton last month in Raleigh. In that private meeting, Pinkerton briefed Regan on the county's capital needs. Commissioners held a work session March 5 and basically confirmed the chairman's position that the proposed projects "are mandated either by the people or by the state."

New capital projects mentioned Friday included construction of a 911 emergency telephone system communications center, an emergency medical services facility, a building for the county recreation and water departments, a new school at Supply to serve students in grades kindergarten through five, a new sewer system for the county government center, a courthouse and water system improvements.

Regan also included construction of a new Department of Social Services building—for which bids were awarded Friday—and already-planned capital improvements at Brunswick Community College in the proposed package he presented to the board. His package did not include the courthouse project, because discussion of it first surfaced at the board's March 5 work session.

The association director began by reviewing six financing options that are available to the county: general

obligation bonds, revenue bonds, special obligation bonds, installment sales contracts, lease purchases and continuing contracts.

Public approval is necessary to approve general obligation and revenue bond projects; no vote is needed for special obligation bonds, which Regan said could be used only for solid waste-related projects such as improvements to the county landfill. Revenue bonds could be issued only for revenue-producing facilities.

Installment sales contracts and lease purchases are relatively new financing methods that do not require public votes. Regan said counties are using those methods to fund construction projects—such as jails—that are unpopular with referendum voters. An installment plan is similar to mortgage financing, in which the facilities themselves are treated as collateral; a lease purchase allows the financing firm to hold title to the facility until the contract is paid.

Continuing contracts generally are used to fund school projects, Regan said. In that method, commissioners would guarantee construction funds to the school board over a period of years, even though the action would commit future boards of commissioners to the appropriations.

Using liberal cost estimates totaling \$20,925,000, Regan offered a proposed financing plan in which the Social Services building, recreation/water building, 911 center, EMS facility and complex sewer system would be funded through the installment sales contract method over a 15-year period, while the middle school, water system enhancements and BCC capital improvements would be funded through general obligation bonds over a 20-year period. (BCC expects to soon issue the final \$4 million of \$8 million in general obligation bonds approved by county voters several years ago. The funds would be used to build an auditorium, the last project in the college's capital improvement plan.)

Regan's plan would require the county to make annual payments of \$958,500 in the 1990-91 fiscal year, \$2,053,500 in 1991-92; and \$2,459,500 in 1992-93, representing tax rate increases of 2.5 cents in each of the first two years and an additional one cent in the third year.

Regan noted that the installment financing method currently is being legally challenged in Wayne County, where commissioners are attempting to use the arrangement. (See COMMISSIONERS, Page 2-A)



STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

Brush Fires Abound

Shallotte firefighters Danny Roden, right, and Kenny Smith douse a brush fire Monday morning outside the Sun & Surf Containers building near Shallotte. There were reports of at least two other brush fires in the Calabash and Sunset Beach fire districts Tuesday as rising temperatures, low humidity and rainfall and high winds made conditions favorable for wild fires.