



THIS UNDEVELOPED BOAT RAMP off Sunset Boulevard at Sunset Beach will be lost with

construction of a new high-rise bridge; however, Brunswick County plans to seek a state shoreline access grant to build a new boat ramp on the mainland within the right-of-way of the new bridge.

Brunswick To Apply For Access Grant To Construct Sunset Beach Boat Ramp

BY RAHN ADAMS

Boaters at Sunset Beach won't be able to use an undeveloped boat ramp beside Sunset Boulevard after the island's new high-rise bridge is built, but they may be launching their crafts from a new mainland boating access under the bridge if Brunswick County receives a state grant for the proposed facility.

Brunswick County Commissioners voted Friday to file a pre-application with the N.C. Division of Coastal Management for a \$45,937 shoreline access grant to develop a new boat ramp facility at Sunset Beach. The board also decided against seeking state funds to build a scenic access on the Brunswick River off N.C. 133 at Belville.

The action was taken Friday afternoon during a three-hour work

session attended by Commissioners Gene Pinkerton, Grace Beasley, Kelly Holden and Benny Ludlum. Commissioner Frankie Rabon left the meeting before the grant application was discussed. County Planning Director John Harvey presented the grant proposals.

Commissioners briefly discussed the grant program at their regular March 5 meeting when Harvey, on behalf of the county planning board, suggested that the commissioners pick at least one of 14 proposed access sites for grant applications. The sites are recommended in the county's recently-completed shoreline access plan, which was prepared by Wilmington landscape architect Howard Capps.

However, at the March 5 meeting, the commission instructed Harvey to prepare additional informa-

tion on the access sites and return to the board with definite recommendations of specific areas for the county to pursue. Pre-applications must be filed at April 2. Coastal Management will pick proposed sites for full-fledged applications.

Harvey said Friday he chose two sites that "might possibly look favorable, as far as the state grant people are concerned": the Sunset Beach site, because the state might favor a joint access project involving Brunswick County and the Town of Sunset Beach; and the Belville site, because Coastal Management requires scenic—or visual—access in local plans but has not yet funded a visual access project.

In keeping with public input on the county shoreline access plan, commissioners nixed the grant proposal for the Belville site, maintain-

ing that public boat ramp facilities and not scenic parks are needed in Brunswick County. Ludlum commented, "I feel like if we're going to be getting some grant money, we need to spend it on boat ramps first."

Estimated cost of the Belville visual access would be \$90,000 to clear undergrowth and landscape the proposed nine-tenths of a mile long park. Ludlum contended that the cost of keeping undergrowth cleared from year to year would be too high to justify developing the facility.

Commissioners had nothing negative to say about the Sunset Beach site. Estimated cost of the suggested boat ramp facility—with paved parking, picnic tables, trash receptacles and landscaping—would be \$61,250. If state funding were ap-

proved, the county and town would split the estimated \$15,312.50 in local matching funds needed for the grant.

When the Sunset Beach location initially was mentioned during recent work on the shoreline access plan, officials indicated that the boat ramp could be constructed in the right-of-way of the present bridge after it is replaced. The grant proposal, however, identifies an area "by and under the new bridge... southerly from N.C. 179 to Canal Avenue, then on the south side of Canal Avenue to the Intracoastal Waterway."

In his memo to commissioners, Harvey noted that since the access project would have to be timed with construction of the new bridge, the ramp might not be built until after the 1990-91 fiscal year. The N.C.

Department of Transportation plans to award bids for bridge construction in July.

The planning director also reminded commissioners that Coastal Management officials have said oceanfront access areas will be given highest priority in the grant program this year. None of the 14 recommended sites in the county's access plan is an oceanfront area.

Other favored sites involving boat ramps in the local plan are the present N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission boat ramps on the Waccamaw River, Lockwood Folly River, Carolina Power & Light Company canal and Rice's Creek, as well as proposed accesses at Bonaparte Landing near Sunset Beach and Summer Place Drive near Holden Beach.

BCC Auditorium Talks Continue

Negotiations are continuing between Brunswick Community College and an architectural firm offered the job of redesigning a community auditorium for the campus.

Ben DeBlois, vice president for administrative services, said that Boney & Associates of Wilmington has advised BCC that it can build an auditorium for the budgeted figure of \$3.2 million, but without a "fly loft."

The architectural firm was approached by college officials last month and offered the contract, provided several conditions could be met. These included design of an auditorium "similar" to Kenan Auditorium at UNC-Wilmington, with 1,500 seating capacity, a single balcony instead of two, along with inclusion of key design elements included in the original plan such as a fly loft. Kenan Auditorium also has a fly loft.

A fly loft or gallery allows scenery panels to be raised and lowered from above rather than moved to and from the wings.

The building design was arrived at by an advisory committee and included numerous items such as the fly loft, a covered orchestra pit that could ramp modeling or beauty pageants, and backstage hook-ups that would allow rock groups to use their own sound equipment.

BCC officials plan to ask Boney & Associates for a precise list of what the \$3.2 million price would include. That information may be shared with the advisory committee that contributed to the original design. They are also asking for a cost estimate for including a fly loft.

"We have to decide how important the fly loft is in relation to other items included," said DeBlois. Only

if something specified in the contract offer were to be left out, like the fly loft, would the item have to go back to trustees for a second vote. Otherwise, if the architectural firm can work out a plan that includes all the essential elements, the project will proceed toward bid-letting.

Trustees, specifically the building and grounds committee, hope to have the requested information in hand when the board meets Wednesday, March 21.

"We are under no real pressure to make a decision then, but we do want to proceed as soon as possible," said DeBlois.

BCC sent the auditorium project back to the drawing board after learning the original \$2.8 million cost estimates by the previous architect, now deceased, were based on incorrect square footage figures.

Head Start Taking Applications Now

Head Start centers at Longwood and Cedar Grove are accepting applications from parents of three- and four-year-old children eligible to participate in Head Start next school year.

Applications are being accepted from 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. each day at the centers, located on Mount Zion Road in Longwood and Cedar Grove Road in Cedar Grove. Parents are urged to apply before the end of March, a news release indicated.

Head Start is a federally-funded program designed to help break the cycle of poverty by providing preschool children of low-income families with a comprehensive program to meet the child's emotional, social, health, nutritional and psychological needs.

For more information, call the Head Start Center in Longwood at 287-3637 or the Cedar Grove Center at 842-6363.

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