

## Calabash Board Seeks Sewer Study Proposals

BY DOUG RUTTER

Calabash officials are in the market for an engineering firm to study the community's needs and recommend how it should handle the collection, treatment and disposal of wastewater.

Town commissioners voted Tuesday night to seek bids for a sewer study and personally contact about eight firms that already have done that type of work in southeastern North Carolina.

Most of the town, including all of Carolina Shores, already is served by a central sewer system.

Property owners in the old section of town, which takes in the Calabash River waterfront and the commercial district, rely on septic tanks for sewage disposal.

Commissioner Jon Sanborn initiated discussion on the study at Tuesday night's meeting. He said officials with the N.C. Division of Environmental Management had suggested the study.

Sanborn said the town could pay for it with money in a restricted fund that comes out of sales tax revenues and has to be used to help meet water and sewer needs of the town.

He said the town has between \$10,000 and \$12,000 in the fund, which should cover the cost of a study.

### Hearing Set

A proposal to add one voting member to the town's planning and zoning board will go to public hearing April 23.

Commissioners have proposed adding one voting member from District 1, which is the old Town of Calabash.

That would mean the board would have four voting members from District 2 (Carolina Shores), two from District 1 and two from the extraterritorial area.

There is already one alternate member from each of the three areas who serves if another board member is absent.

Commissioner Stu Thorn introduced the proposed change in the makeup of the planning board at the March 19 town meeting.

He pointed out that the extraterritorial area (ETA), which includes most land within a mile of the town, has two voting members and District 1 has one voting member.

"I think District 1 is being overlooked here," Thorn said. "The ETA has more people represented than District 1."

Planning board members from the ETA can only vote on issues affecting their area. They cannot vote on issues that only affect the town.

### Other Business

■Voted to advertise the names of property owners who have not paid 1991 town taxes by April 15. Town Clerk Janet Thomas said the unpaid taxes total \$4,300.

■Met in executive session for 30 minutes, at the request of Commissioner Phyllis Manning, to talk about buying land for a town trash dump. A lease between the town and the Carolina Shores Property Owners Association (CSPOA) for the dump site on Persimmon Road expires at the end of the year. Mrs. Manning said the association's board has indicated it will not renew the lease.

■Heard a report from Rose Ann Mack, interim executive director of Region O of the Cape Fear Council of Governments. She said the town could join the organization for \$600 per year and receive 20 free hours of planning services. Additional work would cost \$55 per hour.

## Calabash Compromises On Golf Course Sign

BY DOUG RUTTER

The developer of Ocean Harbour Golf Links will be allowed to erect one sign on the outskirts of Calabash under a compromise hammered out by the town board of adjustment.

Following a series of motions and a sometimes heated debate Tuesday, the board agreed to allow developer Odell Williamson to erect a sign on N.C. 179 near the South Carolina state line.

The sign promoting his golf course between Calabash and Sunset Beach will be allowed to stay up for one year. A variance was needed because it will be an off-premises sign, which is prohibited in the town sign ordinance.

This week's board of adjustment meeting was the third consecutive one at which the Ocean Harbour sign was discussed.

The board had voted 4-1 at its March 5 meeting to grant a variance and allow the golf course owner to put up two signs on N.C. 179.

Board members and Williamson were under the impression that the variance had been granted at that meeting, but it had actually been denied.

In considering the case, the board inadvertently followed rules that hadn't been adopted. Those rules say the board can overturn the building inspector's ruling with a four-fifths vote.

However, existing rules outlining procedures for the board of adjustment require a unanimous vote to overturn a ruling.

Board Chairman George Anderson cast the only vote against the variance earlier this month, and the vote turned out the same way when it came up again Tuesday night.

Once again, Anderson said he would support a variance for one sign but wouldn't go along with two signs. He said the owner hadn't shown evidence that a lack of signs had resulted in a loss of revenue or created a hardship.

Board member Phyllis Manning said the board was at fault the first time it voted and should grant the variance for two signs. She had said before that the golf course needs the signs because it is a relatively new business and its out-of-the-way location makes it unique.

Following this week's 4-1 vote, Williamson criticized the board chairman, calling him the "dominant boss of the whole process" and describing him as "dictatorial."

Williamson said as long as a unanimous vote is needed to overturn the building inspector's decision, Anderson didn't need the rest of the board.

Anderson told the developer that he didn't write the rules for the board of adjustment, but he has to follow them. "I object strenuously to the word dictatorial," he said.

Williamson said later that he would settle for one sign. "I would rather have one than none if that's the way it's got to be," he said.

The developer said he had been to the planning board, town commission and board of adjustment six times before this week to discuss the signs.

"I can assure you that after seven times down here it's getting a little aggravating," he said.

As a compromise, board member Ray Card proposed allowing the golf course owner to put up one sign for two years and one sign for one year.

He attempted to make a motion to that effect, but Anderson cut him short and requested an executive session to confer with the town attorney.

Following a 15-minute closed session, Ed Rice made a motion to grant a variance and allow the golf course to erect one sign for a period of one year. Anderson seconded the motion, which passed on a unanimous vote.

Although she voted in favor of the motion, Mrs. Manning said she thought it was "ridiculous" for the town to give permission for one sign but not two signs. She said it showed that the board is inflexible.

Card also voted in favor of the variance, but said he was unhappy with the outcome. He said Williamson had complied with the town's request to remove four signs last year and he should be allowed to put two of them back up.

After settling the Ocean Harbour matter, the board heard another request for a variance from the sign ordinance but took no action.

Anderson said the board should respond to the request from Linda and Gwyn's Boutique within two weeks.

Chris Chappell, co-owner of the Thomasboro Road shop, said he wants to put up one off-premises sign near the intersection of N.C. 179 and Georgetown Road to direct people to the business.

He said the shop opened about two years ago and three signs were erected in July 1989. The signs were taken down last May at the request of the town because they did not conform with town code.

Chappell said one sign is needed because the business is relatively new and it's located on a lightly-traveled road.

The sign he wants to put up is four feet by six feet. "We need to make all the money we can," Chappell said. "That's the bottom line."

## AT HOLDEN BEACH

# Builders Say New Flood Rules Could Curb House Sizes If Height Limit Not Changed

BY DOUG RUTTER

Several Holden Beach builders say they're worried that recent changes in flood map elevations coupled with the town's building height limit may prevent some people from building homes as large as they had planned to build.

Four builders told town officials last week that new federal flood rules could make it difficult for landowners to build two-story homes in some areas of the island and still comply with the town's 35-foot height limit.

At the town board's request, state legislators passed a law two years ago limiting buildings to 35 feet above ground level. Only the town's voters can change the height limit.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) last year increased the minimum height that new homes in some areas of the beach must be elevated off the ground to qualify for flood insurance.

Builders say the higher elevations, combined with the town's building height limit, have created a potential problem.

The problem comes up when homes have to be elevated 18 or 19 feet above sea level. In some areas, FEMA requires that buildings be 23 feet above sea level to get flood insurance.

In those cases, there isn't enough room to build a normal two-story home and keep it within the 35-foot limit.

"The people have been very satisfied with the 35-foot law."

—John Tandy  
Holden Beach mayor

Faced with an identical situation, residents of Long Beach—which also had a 35-foot height limit—voted March 5 to increase the maximum building height in the V-Flood Zone from 35 feet to 41 feet. The building height limit for the rest of the island remains 35 feet.

Holden Beach Commissioners had more questions than answers when they discussed the matter at a special workshop last Thursday. Nobody was sure how many lots could be affected or where on the island the problem is the worst.

Mayor John Tandy has appointed Commissioners Bob Buck and Gay Atkins and Interim Town Manager Diane Clark to study the problem and make a recommendation to the town board.

"The people have been very satisfied with the 35-foot law," Tandy said.

Bill Leggett of Sea Castles Inc. was the only builder at the meeting who said he has an immediate problem. Three other builders said they expect problems when they try to develop certain lots.

David Sandifer of Holden Beach Realty said people who pay \$95,000

for an oceanfront lot don't want to build a one-story house. They want two stories to get the most out of their investment.

Sandifer said the regulations force people to "cheat" to conform with the building height. Builders are allowed to add fill dirt under the house so it isn't more than 35 feet off the ground.

When two or more feet of dirt is piled under a house, builders said it can create stormwater runoff problems that can affect neighbors.

Rather than restricting how tall a building can be, Sandifer said the town should be trying to regulate the size of buildings. "That's something we can control and it doesn't matter what FEMA does."

Sandifer said if the town restricts the height of the actual building once it is placed on pilings to 25 or 26 feet, it wouldn't matter which flood zone it was located in.

Commissioner Buck said regulating how big a building can be may be the answer to the problem. But he said there's no quick solution because the town still would have to hold a referendum to change the building height.

Mark Saunders of Coastal Development said the town had no control over septic tank regulations that have thwarted development on the island. He said the town does have the ability to correct the building height situation.

Tandy said it seems that somebody gets hurt whenever a new regulation is passed. "It's a shame, but that's the way the government works," he said.

Commissioner Gloria Barrett said FEMA changed its flood maps because certain lots are vulnerable to storms. She said the federal agency is trying to discourage large buildings on those lots subject to flooding.

But Jim Griffin, who is developing the Wild Dunes section of Holden Beach, said FEMA sometimes acts arbitrarily. FEMA says a house on one lot in Wild Dunes is elevated, but a house on an adjacent lot can sit on the ground.

Building Inspector Dwight Carroll said nobody from Holden Beach objected to the new flood map when it was presented last year. It was implemented in September.

Most commissioners asked why they hadn't heard about the problem before last week since the flood maps have been in effect more than five months.

Commissioner Atkins, who is involved in the home building industry as a real estate agent, was the only board member who had heard of the problem before last week's meeting.

## Bill Would Let Long Beach Assess Lot Owners For Work

Long Beach Commissioners would be permitted to assess lot owners for burying utility lines and improving streets under a bill introduced last week in the N.C. General Assembly.

State Rep. David Redwine introduced the bill that would amend the town charter of Long Beach, according to his weekly legislative report.

Redwine said he has already introduced similar legislation for most of the district's other coastal communities.

The bill would allow the town board to assess property owners who benefit from street improvements without receiving a petition from the landowners. Redwine said more than 70 municipalities in the state already have the power to assess in this way.

"The town would only use this authority where the necessity existed and after a public hearing is held," Redwine wrote.

Also in the past week, Redwine introduced a bill to clarify the authority of the Commissioner of Banks under the Consumer Franchise Act.

The bill clarifies the commissioner's authority in allowing lenders to conduct other business in their offices.

Redwine has introduced another bill that would provide health benefits for handicapped dependents of teachers and state employees.

These dependents were previously excluded from coverage by the Teachers and State Employees Comprehensive Major Medical Plan.

The representative said the bill would help families of mentally or physically handicapped children who would lose their health benefits after they reach the age of 19, or after they cease to be full-time students.

In the past week, Redwine has been appointed vice chairman of the Congressional Redistricting Committee.

Sen. Paul White of Massachusetts also has appointed Redwine to the Organizational Planning and Coordinating (OPAC) Committee of the Council of State Governments, according to the legislative report.

The council is a national organization of state governments that serves as a clearinghouse for information and recommends policies to state governments.

Redwine said the OPAC committee is the strategic planning arm of the executive committee. Its role is to discuss programmatic issues facing the council and make recommendations to the executive committee.

Redwine reported that appropriations committees are continuing to work on cutting \$400 million out of the state's budget.

The Subcommittee on Justice and Public Safety, which Redwine co-chairs, last week cut \$28 million out of the budget request for the N.C. Department of Corrections.

"Our goal for all of the departments we cover is \$40 million," Redwine wrote. "As you can tell, we will have to continue to cut in order to meet our goal."

## Hospice Benefit Features Truck

A red Mitsubishi pick-up truck will be given away at the close of a major fund-raising project benefiting Lower Cape Fear Hospice.

Tickets are \$1 or six for \$5 and are available through June 15 from the Brunswick County Hospice office in Sunward Office Building, Holden Beach. Spices and luncheons.

All proceeds benefit Hospice's program of care and support for terminally ill patients and their families.

Hospice volunteer Jack Corbett is coordinating the project.

More information is available from Hospice, 754-5356.

## Correction

Dr. H.J. "Skip" Davis, recently appointed to the Brunswick County Board of Health by county commissioners, is a chiropractor with an office in Ocean Isle.

It was incorrectly reported in The Brunswick Beacon that Davis is an optometrist. Davis was named to fill the seat held by Dr. Chris Moshour-es, an optometrist, who resigned in January.

Before moving to Brunswick County in June 1988, Davis practiced in Raleigh for 20 years and in Sarasota, Fla., for three years.

He and his wife, Patty, live near Shallotte Point.

"We want to give back something to a county that has been very good to us," said Davis of his appointment.

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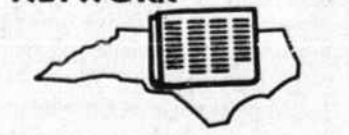
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