

**HEARING SET ON LAND USE PLAN**

# Holden Beach Wants To Keep Its Family Image

BY DOUG RUTTER

Holden Beach leaders want to maintain a residential community with strong economic ties to tourism, according to the latest update of the town's land use plan.

Commissioners say in the proposed plan that they want the island to remain "a quiet, family-oriented beach community of primarily single-family residences with limited commercial development."

Holden Beach adopted its first land use plan in 1976 and has updated it twice since then. A public hearing on the 1990 update is scheduled Monday, Aug. 5, at 7 p.m. in town hall.

A land use plan provides "a blueprint for future growth so that growth will occur on the community's own terms rather than in a haphazard fashion."

Town board members use land use plans to guide their decisions, and state officials use them when considering project funding and permitting.

The Holden Beach plan includes background information on population and building as well as land use policies and regulations. It lists constraints to development and estimates future demands and land use needs.

The permanent population of the island increased 170 percent be-

tween 1980 and 1990, from 232 to 628. The number of full-time residents is expected to more than double by the year 2005, with a projection of 1,338.

Housing units also have increased over the last decade, from 1,027 in 1980 to 1,724 last year. The number of housing units is expected to rise to 2,586 over the next 15 years.

Presently, more than 90 percent of the houses on Holden Beach are used as seasonal homes or rental units. There have been 302 new structures built since the last land use plan update in 1985.

A key policy in the proposed plan addresses the handling of sewage. Most homes on the island use conventional septic tanks, but two recent engineering studies have recommended the town move toward a central sewer system.

Town commissioners voted in April 1990 to establish a management entity to oversee the installation and maintenance of existing and new septic tank systems.

The land use plan says the management program would not be a permanent solution, but rather "an interim measure which will not preclude the ultimate development of a central sewer system at some time in the future when economics favor the development of such a system."

It's pointed out in the land use plan that the soils on Holden Beach could be a constraint to future development. Much of the soils are subject to ponding, flooding or wetness, it says, which could affect their suitability for septic tanks.

According to the proposed plan, town officials discourage overcrowding of houses, which can overload septic systems and cause them to fail.

Holden Beach Commissioners also frown on the use of package treatment plants, but may consider them on a case-by-case basis.

Among the other policies in the proposed plan, town officials support the development of special tax districts that would allow landowners to pay for the maintenance dredging of canals.

The town also says in the land use plan that it will comply with state regulations against erosion-control structures that harden the shoreline, but "would not be opposed to the construction of a jetty at the badly-eroding east end at Lockwood Folly Inlet."

The proposed plan includes a policy opposing the development of any marinas on the island, and a section devoted to hurricane preparedness and recovery.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

### Flower Garden?

Betty Clemmons of Shallotte Point holds a volunteer watermelon that grew in her flower garden. When the plant sprouted from seed, neighbors told her it wouldn't grow on her concrete patio. "This goes to prove you can grow vegetables anywhere," said Ms. Clemmons.

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### Alligator Found

Cathryn Mintz (left) and her cousin, Jody McCoy (right), hold a 40-inch alligator that recently wandered into the back yard of the Mintz home on U.S. 17 south of Shallotte. After temporarily taping its snout shut, Wildlife Officer Fred Taylor (far left) said he planned to relocate the young reptile to the Green Swamp. Cathryn's father, John Mintz, looks on at far right.

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