

Proposed Ordinance To Require Some Street Paving

BY TERRY POPE

Roads that serve 25 or more lots in a proposed subdivision must be paved to N.C. Department of Transportation standards in the future.

That's part of the recommendations the Brunswick County Planning Board will send to county commissioners on the county's new subdivision ordinance.

Paving will be "encouraged" for all smaller streets, but the decision there will be left up to the developer. Those streets must still meet DOT standards for drainage, grading and sub-basing.

Some local developers believe the paving requirement will drive the price of local lots too high for the consumer. Rural subdivisions, they say, do not need paved roads.

But the "general leaning" of the public, from what County Engineer Robert Tucker has gathered, "is toward paving roads," he told the planning board last Wednesday.

He recommended that the board require DOT standards of paving for collector streets, which serve as collectors of traffic for 25 or more lots, or are capable of extending onto abutting land with that capability.

For streets that will not be paved, a minimum depth of six inches of stone or concrete is required. Although the non-paving standards seem like a rather expensive proposition, Tucker said, they are "based upon sound engineering judgment" and are used in all areas of the state.

"The ones that are going for DOT acceptance are using them," said Tucker. "The ones that are not, the sky's the limit they're doing all sorts of things. It depends on how long they want the road to last."

County commissioners asked the planning board to draft minimum road standards and place them into the new ordinance, which will include stricter rules for new de-

velopments outside of town limits. The road standards was the "last remaining quest" commissioners have proposed for the planning board, said Planning Director John Harvey.

Board member John Barbee asked that Harvey notify local developers and residents who spoke at the public hearing on the proposed road standards.

"I don't want it to look like we're trying to slip something through," said Barbee, because a second public hearing is not required on the ordinance.

Commissioners say road standards are important to keep unscrupulous developers from selling lots in subdivisions that have narrow and poorly-maintained streets. Residents often carry their complaints to commissioners when roads are a problem.

New Hanover County's subdivision ordinance requires developers to place curbs on roads there, but gives developers

an option on paving, said Tucker.

The ordinance will now go back to commissioners for acceptance. The present ordinance was written in 1980 and does not contain standards for roads.

"I feel like I can stand behind this," Tucker told the planning board.

Another part of the road standards will allow developers to use the minimum design criteria for subdivision roads in the hilly terrain classification if they wish to include divided medians.

Concerns have been raised that DOT standards would prohibit the creative use of divided medians in subdivisions, but Harvey said DOT officials are more liberal today in allowing trees to remain in divided highways.

"They offered us a tour to show what they have approved in New Hanover County, just to allay these fears," said Harvey.

The hilly terrain classification should

work just as well on Brunswick County's flatland, said Tucker.

"If it's safe in the mountains, it's safe here," he added.

DOT officials view divided medians as possible sight distance problems for motorists and must determine if they are safe for use by the public if accepting them for maintenance.

"I want to make sure we're not tying the hands of someone that wants to use that device," said board member Michael Schaub.

Traffic islands at the entrance of subdivisions are generally acceptable, said Tucker, but long, blanket islands throughout the subdivision "began to get into sight distance problems," he added.

Under the plan adopted, it would be up to the developer as to whether he would plan to dedicate the road to DOT or maintain it himself or through a homeowner's association when choosing to use divided streets.

Father, Son Found Safe After All-Night Search

BY TERRY POPE

Rescue crews were relieved early Monday to find a father and son safe following an all-night search of waters near Winnabow.

Mark Carl Hogue, 32, of Bolivia, and his son, David, 8, were reported missing Sunday evening by Hogue's wife. Brunswick County Sheriff's Deputy Pete Moore reported.

The two had left their home around noon Saturday for an overnight fishing and camping trip down Rice's Creek at Winnabow, said Moore.

Search crews from four rescue squads—Shallotte, Waccamaw, Coastline and Southport—searched local waters until 2:30 a.m. Monday, when the missing pair was spotted in their 12-foot aluminum boat at Rice's Creek, said Cecil Logan, Brunswick County Emergency Management coordinator.

"They were safe and in good condition," said Logan. "They were a little wet, but not injured."

Hogue had left the Cape Fear River around 3 p.m. Sunday and began experiencing boat motor trouble when a clutch in the propeller kept slipping, Logan said.

An emergency electric trawling motor helped guide their boat up-creek, but darkness settled in before they could get back to the N.C. Wildlife boat ramp on Rice's Creek, Logan said.

Logan said the two had been slowly making their way back to the landing the entire evening. Crews began their search after the sheriff's department received the call around 10 p.m., said Moore.

"It was a happy ending," said Logan. "So many times we go out and find a boat, or a body. It was good to find them safe, for a change."



DIETRICH McCall, of Laurinburg, enjoys a chicken dinner at the fire house following Saturday's cleanup at Ocean Isle Beach.

Driver, Students Stranded

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heading off the island into town, but found causeway traffic backed up half-way to the island. One of her daughters recognized the white-topped Union bus.

"I thought, 'We can't leave them there,' so we just went and picked them up," said Mrs. Pessolano. "That's all."

For her it was an opportunity to do a good turn, after having had many area residents help her deal with car trouble.

She offered supper as well, but by that time the youngsters were too full to eat any more, said Ms. Hill. They did, however, enjoy playing hide-and-seek and visiting while their driver called George Brown, school system transportation director.

After learning that the bus was stranded on the island, she said, Brown got in contact with Brunswick County Emergency Management Coordinator Cecil Logan. They planned to send a Shallotte Volunteer Rescue Squad boat to transport the four back to the mainland.

"Fortunately when we got back the bridge was open," she said.

Sunset Beach Police Chief J.B. Buell said the town owns a 16-foot boat that is kept gassed up all the time for use in emergencies.

"Evidently the school people didn't know we had one. We weren't even asked," he said. "If we

were requested to we definitely would have gone over and got them. We didn't know the school system wanted them off the island."

The youngsters appeared to be in good spirits, he said. "They were having a good time. 'People were bringing them drinks and food.'"

Tom Simmons, assistant principal at Union Primary School, said Monday's incident was the first time a Union school bus had been stranded on the island since Jan. 12, 1985, when a barge knocked out the pontoon bridge. The state set up a temporary ferry service to move buses and other vehicles to and from the island for several days.

"It's worked pretty well," he said. "That's just a minor thing. If something major were to happen and that bridge go out, I don't know what those folks would do."

Mrs. Pessolano said she and her husband were attracted to Sunset Beach a little more than a year ago because of its character, created in part by the bridge. People who live on the island adjust, she said.

"If you don't have the patience with the bridge, you go somewhere else. The people who are here are more laid back."

But, while the bridge is "cute," Mrs. Pessolano said she has concerns about safety. "There has to be a happy medium, something between this bridge and the other. They really need to do something."

Sweep Volunteers Find Bottles, Cans And Butts

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cleaned up Bird Island, a site that was "adopted" this year by the Shallotte River Power Squadron.

The group filled 10 bags with about 200 pounds of litter. They found one spot where people have been burying trash in a makeshift landfill.

Ocean Isle Beach

Ocean Isle Beach drew the biggest crowd of the local beaches for the property owners association's annual Trash Bash, which was held in conjunction with Big Sweep.

O'Neil estimated the people picked up a ton of trash, including lots of aluminum and glass beverage cans and plastic bottles. "We're very happy with it. It's been a great success."

Hay Street United Methodist Church in Fayetteville sent 30 junior and senior high school students to help out with the cleanup. It was the church's second year at Ocean Isle.

"They're just very interested in preserving and cleaning the environment," said Steve Smith, an adult leader of the group. "They just want to do their part."

A group of seven Cub Scouts from Southwest Elementary School in High Point and a shell club from Raleigh also helped out.

Ocean Isle Beach Mayor Betty Williamson said the turnout was the best ever, and she was impressed with the number of young people.

"It's the children who are making the difference," according to Ms. Spence. She said youngsters are learning about recycling and littering in school and are influencing their parents.

Elsewhere

Elsewhere in Brunswick County, Ms. Spence said a crew of 26 volunteers picked up 650 pounds of trash at Yaupon Beach. The haul included 19 tires.

Southport coordinator Robert Beasley and two dozen helpers picked up an estimated 252 pounds of litter. And on Bald Head Island, 33 volunteers bagged about 450 pounds of debris.

Ms. Spence said some of the more exotic finds on Bald Head included a whiskey bottle from Cuba, laundry detergent with Spanish writing on it and other pieces of litter that appeared to be from France and Greece.

The foreign trash indicates that people on international freighters in

the Atlantic Ocean and Cape Fear River are throwing litter overboard. Ms. Spence said ocean dumping is prohibited by state, federal and international law.

Up and down the North Carolina coast, she said the most common types of litter found Saturday were plastic bags such as those used for bait and ice, glass and metal beverage containers and fishing line.

Based on the kinds of litter, Ms. Spence said most of it can be traced back to recreational users of the beaches.

She said one of the trends noticed this year is that coastal towns that provide trash cans on the beach for visitors seemed to have less litter than beaches without receptacles.

"We seem to see that people don't carry their garbage very far," she said. "Where you have more trash depositories you have less trash."

At Sunset Beach, volunteer Hal Macon speculated that having a four-wheel-drive beach patrol also serves as a deterrent to would-be litterers.

Spence said 90 of the state's 100 counties participated in this year's Big Sweep, making it the most extensive one in North Carolina history. More than 11,000 volunteers helped clean up approximately 196 tons of litter.

"Without a doubt, this is the best weather we've ever had," said Ms. Spence.

More Rain Is Forecast

South Brunswick Islands residents can expect normal temperatures and above-average rainfall over the next week, according to Shallotte Point meteorologist Jackson Canady.

Temperatures should range from the low 60s at night to the low 80s during the day. Canady expects about three-quarters of an inch of rain.

For the period Sept. 17-23, Canady measured .78 inches of rain. The maximum high temperature for the period was 91 degrees on the 17th. The minimum low was 53 degrees on Sept. 21.

Canady said the daily average high was 81 degrees and the average nightly low was 64 degrees. The daily average temperature of 72 degrees was about 2 degrees above normal for this time of year.

Ash Woman Still Missing

Brunswick County sheriff's detectives were still searching Monday morning for an Ash woman missing from her home for more than a month.

Rhonda Diane Keeler, 29, of Route 1, has not been seen by her family since Aug. 17. Detectives suspect foul play is involved in her disappearance.

"We're still looking," said Phil Perry, chief of detectives. "Nothing has turned up."

Investigators, aided by a group of concerned Ash residents, have searched a wooded area and creek bottom near her home.

Her husband, Timothy James Keeler, 31, reportedly told relatives the couple had become separated

while at a bar in Charlotte. They were reportedly hitchhiking to Asheville to see their two children, who are kept in foster care.

Keeler indicated that he then thumbed back to Brunswick County, but he, too, is now missing. Detectives who want to question Keeler on the case believe he has left the area for South Carolina.

Mrs. Keeler was last seen wearing a light blue T-shirt and jeans. She is 5 feet 4 inches tall, weighs 105 pounds and has brown hair and brown eyes.

Anyone with information that may help locate her should call the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department, 253-4321.

Planners Ignore Pleas

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Brendgord said commissioners haven't been telling planning board members about actions that affect the planning board, including some things discussed in executive session.

Chancellor said commissioners rejected two recommendations concerning the 911 emergency telephone system and a wastewater study, and he never received an explanation.

However, Anderson said the communication problem has been a two-way street. He said commissioners haven't always received recommendations from the planning board.

Commissioner Phyllis Manning, who is involved in community services, said she learned from a town employee that a planning board member had requested a study of the volume of garbage going into the town dump.

She said communication is the key to the whole problem, and officials need to run the town like a business. "The left hand has to know what the right hand is doing and vice versa."

Besides improving communication, Brendgord said planners need to know the goals and objectives of the board of commissioners.

The planning board conducted a citizen survey last year that could be used as the basis for those goals. Brendgord said the last time the town board adopted a written statement of goals was 1975.

The planning board chairman also questioned the responsibilities and powers of the Calabash Coastal Initiative Committee.

He said the group has taken on many of the duties of the planning board such as working toward a sewer system to the waterfront and widening and building sidewalks along N.C. 179.

"These are all functions of the planning board," he said. "With that group, we don't need the planning board."

Brendgord also objected to a proposed ordinance that would establish an architectural and landscaping control commission.

One of the duties of that group would be to recommend ordinances to the town board, which he said is a primary role of the planning board.

"It's not exactly a vote of confidence for the planning and zoning board, this whole ordinance," Brendgord said, adding later that he planned to fight the proposal whether he was a member of the planning board or not.

Hannaway said he didn't like the "off-handed remarks" that commissioners had directed at the planning board in recent months.

"I don't like it, and I have all the news articles and the quotes," he

said. "I did not come down here to be slandered in this manner."

Anderson said reporters pick up certain things that are said "in the heat of conversation" in order to sell newspapers.

Anthony Clemmons, who represents the extrajurisdictional area on the planning board, said the only way to resolve the matter is to stick with the people who already know the problems.

Mrs. Lewellyn also said the past problems won't go away by appointing new members to the planning board. She said the communications issue needs to be resolved before the two boards will be able to work together.

Town Lawyer Says Meetings Are Open

Calabash Town Attorney Mike Ramos advised commissioners and planning board members last week that all meetings held to conduct town business must be open to the public.

Citing the N.C. Open Meetings Law, Ramos said meetings of committees and subcommittees must be open, even if those groups are only meeting to gather information.

Commissioners and planning board members haven't been notifying the news media or public about committee meetings. They said they weren't aware that the public had to be notified if a quorum of board members wasn't present.

Commissioner Jon Sanborn raised the issue of open meetings last week while officials discussed how they could improve communications between the planning board and town board of commissioners.

Ramos said committees and boards can meet in executive session and keep the public out under specific circumstances, such as when they are discussing contractual relations or land acquisition.

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