

CAN'T AFFORD TO PAY ASSESSMENTS

Residents Say They Don't Want County Water

BY TERRY POPE

Residents say they cannot afford county water lines planned for the Town Creek and Mill Creek communities.

Two petitions given to the Brunswick County Utility Operations Board (UOB) Monday ask that Special Assessment District (SAD) 19, which goes to a public hearing Nov. 25, be dropped. A third petition opposes water lines for the Piney Grove community near Bolivia.

Normally, petitions are presented to the UOB from residents begging for county water. The high cost of lines in rural areas has Town Creek residents opposed to the latest SAD, said Public Utilities Director Jerry Webb.

Lois W. Smith filed a petition Oct. 10 containing the names of 127 residents who live on Zion Church Road, Town Creek Road, Old Town Creek Road and at Palmer's Branch and Hickory Hollow.

It asks that county water lines not be installed on their property under the conditions explained at the community meeting held by the Brunswick County Water Department staff on Sept. 6.

"These people are property owners and taxpayers," Ms. Smith wrote in a letter to the UOB. "They are

my friends and neighbors. Some are elderly and struggling to get by on a small monthly check."

Her letter continues, "They cannot afford the assessment fee for a water line. A lien on their property would be very disturbing. Some are young couples just starting out. They, too, have all the financial obligations they can handle."

A petition from Mill Creek Road (S.R. 1514), part of SAD 19, contains 40 names from residents who state they don't want to be part of an SAD. The project also includes Governor's Road, part of Maco Road to Oak View Estates, Green Hill Road, Cherrytree Road and Crabapple Road.

Ten residents of Neck Road (S.R. 1509) at Piney Grove also signed a petition stating they do not want county water.

Residents were invited to an informational meeting with the water department staff in September to discuss possible costs. About 200 residents attended that meeting, with most of them stating they were opposed to county water, said Webb.

Brunswick County Commissioners set a public hearing on SAD 19 for Nov. 25, 7 p.m., in the public assembly building at the government complex in Bolivia.

District 4 Commissioner Frankie

Rabon, who lives at Town Creek, said he understands a majority of people were opposed to the project. He requested the public hearing, stating that he wanted to get official input from residents there.

Residents at Mill Creek state that the 40 names on their petition represent 100 percent of the people on Mill Creek Road that do not want water, said Lynnine Haas, UOB clerk.

"But that hasn't been verified," she said.

UOB member D.V. Jones said residents often say they are in favor of county water, but decide differently once cost estimates are given.

"I'm afraid you're going to run into that at Shallotte Point also," said Jones. "When I go to Shallotte Point, I keep my mouth shut about the water situation."

Town Creek area residents were given cost estimates for each neighborhood, but those figures were expected to drop where areas were combined to form one large SAD. Webb said Monday he does not have the new estimates.

UOB Chairman Al Morrison said he has heard no one from Shallotte Point speak against county water since he has been on the board.

"I've never talked to anybody at Shallotte Point that didn't want wa-

ter," added Webb.

Webb said cost estimates for the 1,100 or more homes in the Point area would be "within the realm of what we are doing with SADs now."

In other business Monday, the UOB:

■ Heard from Bob Black of Shell Point, who asked if funds were available for a transmission line down Mt. Pisgah Church Road to serve his community. He wants the UOB to lobby commissioners for the Mt. Pisgah Church Road project, which was taken out of the county budget in June.

■ Heard from Alan Lewis, of Houston and Associates of Shallotte, engineers for SAD 10, a collection of subdivisions from Calabash to Ocean Isle, that construction will begin at Calabash Acres first and move toward Ocean Isle in early November, finishing within 150 days.

■ Agreed to study a possible SAD for the Walden Creek Estates subdivision off of Bethel Church Road near Southport, under development by Eric Warner of Winding Creek Development Corp. The 129-acre project lies within 6,300 feet of a county water line, said Webb.

■ Changed the December meeting from Dec. 9 to Dec. 2 at 5:30 p.m.



STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER

Adult Center Receives Flag

Presenting a flag to Brunswick Adult Day Care Center from Shallotte Woodman of the World Lodge No. 160 are (left) Jimmy Marshall, field representative, and (right) Tony Clayton, president. Accepting are Jean Marshall (center left) and client Amber Clemmons of Supply (center right). Licensed in late September, the nonprofit center on Al Street serves mobile seniors. Clients can attend the center on a regular basis, or occasionally as needed to provide their regular caregivers free time.

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Seafood Ordinance Requires More Workers

BY TERRY POPE

If Brunswick County Commissioners want a seafood inspection ordinance, they must be willing to fund at least one more health department worker.

That's the message the Brunswick County Board of Health is sending to commissioners, who will hear a request Monday for an additional health department employee targeted for another program.

The board voted to table the seafood ordinance until its Nov. 18 meeting. The draft must go to a public hearing before final approval.

Health Director Michael Rhodes and Health Board Chairman Bill Rabon will ask the county Monday for a soil scientist position to oversee the county's new low pressure pipe (LPP) sewer system inspection and maintenance program.

A similar position was eliminated by commissioners in the 1991-92 budget cuts in June.

Last month, the health board adopted new LPP regulations, well ahead of the state's plan to implement new rules in July 1992. LPP sewer systems are designed to work in soils where traditional systems do not function.

The LPPs have been blamed for coastal pollution and require regular maintenance and inspections, since they must be wired and equipped with an electrical pump. The position would be mandated by the state in July.

In previous discussions on the seafood inspection ordinance, the need for additional workers has not been mentioned.

District 3 Commissioner Gene Pinkerton asked the health board for the ordinance in August and informed other commissioners then of its need.

"I don't know if they realized it would take an additional staff member to do this," said Rhodes. "Hopefully, county commissioners will give us additional personnel."

Pinkerton said he wants an ordinance to protect residents from old seafood, frozen seafood being sold as fresh and the trash left behind at roadside vending sites.

He was also concerned that there are no toilet facilities for the people who staff the roadside sites all day, making it potentially unsanitary for them to handle fresh seafood.

The ordinance would require those selling from the back of vehicles to be within 100 yards of a toilet and handwashing facility and to sign a contract with the owner stating permission to use the facility.

"Those individuals are going to be hit rough," said Gary McDonald, environmental health program specialist, who presented the ordinance to the health board Monday.

All persons who sell seafood would have to post permits and undergo routine inspections, like restaurants and supermarkets.

"The first year, we would have to go and hunt them out," said McDonald. "Everytime you see a vendor, you would just have to stop."

A specialist riding the county looking for markets and roadside seafood vendors could make from 200 to 400 inspections per year, said John Crowder, environmental health supervisor.

"To implement it, we would need additional manpower," said Crowder, "to maintain our control over food and lodging inspections."

The employee would average from one to four inspections per day, plus do inspection review and be in charge of educational programs for the public, said

Crowder.

When asked if another vehicle is needed, Crowder replied, "We don't have enough vehicles for everyone now."

The department currently has no backlog for restaurant and motel inspections, said Crowder. However, inspections continue to run behind for on-site soil evaluations for sewer systems.

As of last week, there were 176 applications on file, of which 35 exceeded the 10-day waiting period while 49 have exceeded 30 days with no action.

"We are getting better," said Crowder. "The work is slowing down a little, which is helping us to catch up."

The backlog formed when two specialists resigned during the peak summer months for local real estate sales. However, a certified specialist with four years of experience has been hired and will report to work Oct. 28, capable of making on-site inspections following three weeks

Social Security Visits Reduced

Beginning in November, a Social Security representative will be at the Public Assembly Building of the Brunswick County Government Center at Bolivia the second and fourth Wednesdays of each month from 9 a.m. until noon.

The schedule has been changed from the usual weekly visits. It was shortened as a result of a smaller number of residents being seen in

person at the Bolivia location, said District Manager William Laney in a news release.

He said that more people are using Social Security's toll free telephone number to reach a representative.

Persons needing to ask questions or receive counseling about Social Security benefits can call 1-800-772-1213.

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Shallotte Charges Former Employee

Shallotte Police have arrested a former town employee in connection with a break-in last week at the town's maintenance building.

Police Chief Rodney Gause said batteries were stolen from a pickup truck and tractor when the building was broken into last Thursday night.

James Burris, approximately 25, of Route 3, Shallotte, was charged with breaking and entering and

larceny, Gause said.

Burris had worked in the maintenance department from April 6, 1989, to Jan. 3, 1990, according to Town Clerk Mary Etta Hewett.

Gause said the two batteries stolen last week were recovered. It was the fourth time a break-in had occurred at the maintenance building.

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