

Shell Point Residents Want More 'Responsive' Commissioners

BY TERRY POPE

Some Shell Point residents say they plan to vote for two-year terms for county commissioners at Tuesday's election.

"They point to their community's water crisis, and the lack of a timely county solution, as a need for more 'responsive' commissioners."

Bob Black, who lives in Riverview, believes his community has been overlooked by those elected to represent him.

Since September 1990, Black has attended the Brunswick County Utility Operations Board meetings asking for county water. UOB members make recommendations to commissioners on water projects.

Black followed the November 1990 elections closely, carefully listening to candidates for their stand on county water expansion. During spending cuts by commissioners in June, a plan to route a main line down Mt. Pisgah Church Road to serve the Shell Point and Civictown communities was dropped from the 1991-92 county budget.

Sometimes, he says, he wonders if anyone is really listening.

"I'm going to vote for the two-year term," said Black. "I can't stand around for four more years."

Those who argue for four-year terms say elected officials need time once in office to become familiar with county issues. Persons who argue for two-year terms

say elected officials become better representatives if they are not given the comfort of four years in office.

"We need to put that two-year term on them," said Black. "Then maybe they'll be more responsive. Maybe if they work a little harder they'll be more responsive to the people who elect them."

The battle over length of terms began in May, when State Rep. E. David Redwine introduced House Bill 586 to the N.C. General Assembly. The local bill requires voters to decide whether to change the makeup of the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners and Board of Education from the existing staggered, four-year terms to two-year terms for all members.

If approved, all members of both boards would be

elected to two-year terms in 1992 and every two years thereafter. The issue is binding and is part of the official ballot, not part of an optional and non-binding exit poll.

Voters will not get the option of choosing two-year terms for one board and four-year terms for the other.

The Brunswick County Democratic Party voted in April to ask Redwine to change the length of terms by legislative action. Brunswick County Republicans, in control of all five seats on the board of commissioners, voted in March against two-year terms.

Redwine decided in May to let the voters decide. "We'll put them back on two-year terms, if that's what they want," said Ishmael Chadwick, of Shell Point. (See SHELL POINT, Page 2-A)

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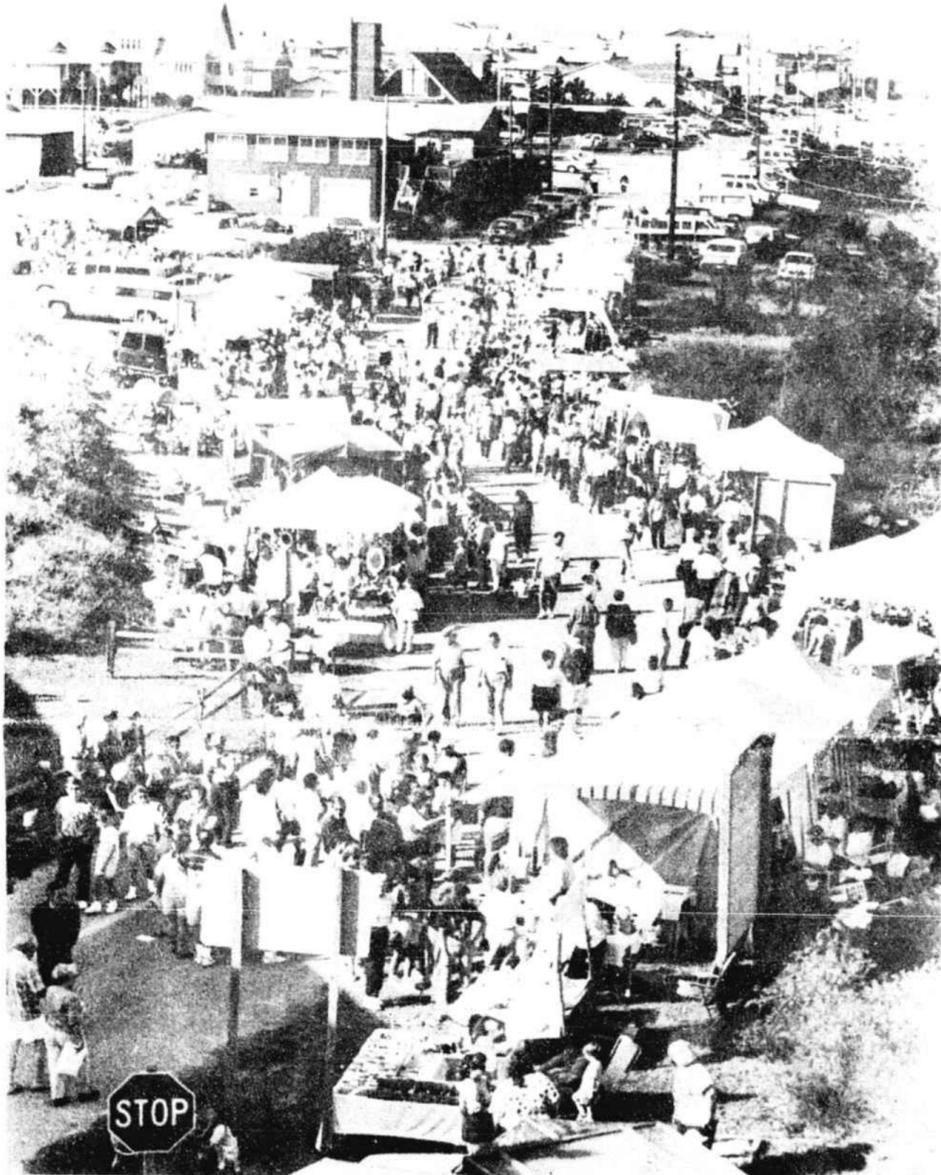
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Thousands Attend Festival

The N.C. Festival By The Sea lured thousands of area residents and visitors last weekend to Holden Beach, where they enjoyed arts and crafts, food, games and beautiful weather. Look inside for festival coverage.

Voters To Decide County Issues And Town Races

Brunswick County voters have some important decisions to make between now and the time they go to the polls next Tuesday, Nov. 5.

They will be asked to decide two countywide issues and give their opinion on three others.

Some voters also will be called on to help fill the 63 seats available on 18 municipal, hospital and sanitary district boards. All but one Brunswick County municipality—the Village of Bald Head—have elections slated Tuesday.

In two referendums, county voters will decide whether to shorten terms for county commissioners and school board members from four to two years and whether to approve a county redistricting plan.

An exit poll will allow voters to

Candidate Profiles Inside This Issue

give their opinions on three other issues—zoning, fire and rescue tax districts and a non-partisan school board.

Brunswick County Board of Elections Supervisor Lynda Britt is hesitant to predict turnout for next Tuesday's balloting.

"I don't know," she said Tuesday morning, expressing concern that having county issues but no county candidates on the ballots might discourage voting by residents outside of municipalities.

"In the precincts that have a municipality the turnout will be much larger than in the rural areas," she

predicted. "If I have 20 percent in my rural precincts I'll be pleasantly surprised."

On the municipal front, some of the most tightly contested races in the county this year are in the South Brunswick Islands.

Holden Beach voters will choose from two candidates for mayor and 12 candidates for the five seats on the board of commissioners.

In Shallotte, voters also have two people running for mayor and will choose from among nine candidates to fill four available seats on the town board.

Countywide, there are 114 candidates running for 63 seats on 16 municipal boards, the Doshier Hospital Board of Trustees and the Southeast Brunswick Sanitary District Board.

Ballot, Exit Poll Asks 5 Sticky Questions

All registered voters in Brunswick County are eligible to vote next Tuesday to help decide two issues of countywide concern.

In addition, they may choose to answer three questions on an optional exit poll.

On the official ballot, residents will decide if members of the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners and the Brunswick County Board of Education should be elected to two-year or four-year terms. They will also vote for or against a plan to redraw the county's five residency district lines.

The exit poll will ask residents if they favor a county zoning ordinance, if school board elections should be non-partisan and if service districts should be created to fund the county's volunteer fire and rescue services.

County Zoning

The exit poll will ask residents if commissioners should "enact a comprehensive zoning ordinance to regulate all unincorporated areas of Brunswick County," to take effect on or before Jan. 1, 1993.

Commissioners have not ordered a zoning ordinance, and one has never been written, said County Manager David Clegg.

"There are pieces of a zoning ordinance," said Clegg, "or components of it."

Zoning establishes districts where land use is regulated to lessen congestion, to secure safety from fire, to prevent overcrowding, to conserve the value of buildings and to encourage appropriate uses of land.

The Brunswick County Planning Board has been designated as the planning agency to oversee the drafting of an ordinance, said Clegg.

That official appointment came several years ago when commissioners explored the need for a zoning ordinance and held public hearings on the topic, said Clegg. But commissioners then instructed the Planning Department to halt its work.

"A public hearing would still have to be held on the ordinance," said Clegg.

Commissioners appear divided on zoning. District 4 Commissioner Frankie Rabon said he believes peo-

ple who purchase land should be able to do with it as they like.

"The fact is that subdivision regulations and zoning ordinances are being used to protect the wealthy," said Rabon. "and make it more difficult for the working class and other low income people to buy and build homes."

Redistricting

A plan to redraw the county's residency district lines, according to population counts from the 1990 U.S. Census, must be approved by voters or else a new plan must be drafted and presented to voters.

Commissioners selected a plan that divides the county into five districts with an average of 10,197 residents each.

If voters do not approve the plan, commissioners must call for another vote. By law, board members must hold their seats until a plan is adopted. An election cannot be held until a district plan is chosen, said Clegg.

The districts are for residency purposes only, said Clegg. Five members each are elected to the school board and board of commissioners, one from each district.

(See BALLOT, Page 2-A)

OTHERS LIKE PAVING STANDARDS

Some Think Ordinance May Slow Area Growth

BY TERRY POPE

Some local developers predict Brunswick County's new subdivision ordinance will slow area growth.

"People in rural areas are not going to develop any more land," said Bobby Long, a Shallotte surveyor. "I really think it's not in the best interest of the county."

The ordinance will require that all roads in subdivisions, both private and public, be paved to minimum standards.

It was incorrectly reported in *The Brunswick Beacon* last week that paving requirements had been eliminated.

What was dropped from the ordinance were N.C. Department of Transportation paving standards for private roads in new subdivisions. They were replaced with a local standard requiring six inches of coquina and 1½ inches of asphalt. All other DOT requirements for right of way and drainage were kept.

For new public streets, which are built and dedicated to the state for maintenance, DOT standards are still intact.

Depending on soil types, DOT requires from ¾ inches to nine inches of coquina or marl and up to two inches of asphalt. Roads must also have a 60-foot right of way.

In Brunswick County, DOT has

chosen "as a matter of policy" to require seven inches of coquina beneath two inches of asphalt, "giving a break in the cost to the development community," said County Engineer Robert Tucker.

But not all local developers believe the subdivision ordinance will spell doom for Brunswick County growth. The compromise on paving requirements reached between developers and the county last week has been praised by some.

"I've said all along that there should be a paving requirement," said Kemp Causey of Calabash. "I think they've used common sense. What they've got passed, I see no real problem with it, personally."

Causey has developed approximately 700 lots in the Shallotte Township since 1984, including The Village at Calabash. He served as president of a corporation in Mecklenburg County that developed around 3,000 lots.

In Brunswick County, he has built an estimated seven miles of streets using a six-inch base of coquina and 1½ inches of asphalt, the minimum standards approved by the county last week.

The streets are three to six years old, said Causey, "and they are still in excellent condition."

The planning board had voted

last month that streets serving fewer than 25 lots would not have to be paved, but that collector streets serving more than 25 lots would have to meet DOT standards for paving. In the final draft, the size of the subdivision makes no difference; all must meet some minimum requirement for paving.

Long said the constant changes in road standards have been confusing.

"They've voted on this thing a dozen times," said Long.

A public hearing was held in April, but road standards were revised a number of times since then by the Brunswick County Planning Board and at the request of Brunswick County Commissioners.

Long said he was outside the conference room at the Oct. 16 planning board meeting when the board voted to adopt the new road standards. He had gone to the meeting to represent a couple over a right of way dispute in Ash.

"I think it will be very difficult for them (developers)," said Long. "This is what three commissioners felt like is needed for this county."

"But we'll do whatever is required," he said.

To pave at the required standards, 1½ inches of asphalt over six inches of coquina, costs \$25 per running foot, estimated Long.

"Everybody wanted a subdivision ordinance," said Long. "We did not want one that was more restrictive than what's allowed in municipalities, but that's what we wound up with."

However, some area municipalities do have subdivision ordinances or minimum street requirements. The county's ordinance only affects land in unincorporated areas.

"Exum will be more restrictive than Southport," claimed Long. "You can do things with land in Shallotte that you can't do in the rural communities."

Exum is a rural community north of Ash.

The division of a tract or parcel of land into two or more lots or building sites constitutes a subdivision, under the new ordinance. A rural developer must build a paved street to serve a two-lot subdivision under the rules, said Long.

The ordinance will eliminate divided medians, said Long, for they are not generally allowed under DOT standards. Developments such as Sea Trail Plantation that leaves trees standing in divided roadways for a scenic effect will no longer be allowed to when the new ordinance takes effect Jan. 1, he added.

"I think we have lost something with this," said Long.

Towns Vary On Street Rules

Some developers have questioned if Brunswick County's new subdivision ordinance has stricter street requirements than those followed by area municipalities.

In a poll, *The Brunswick Beacon* has learned that area towns have varying requirements for subdivisions streets within their town limits.

The county's ordinance affects land in unincorporated areas, those areas outside municipalities.

Some towns, like Shallotte, prohibit private streets in new subdivisions and require that all roads be deeded as public and paved to N.C. Department of Transportation standards.

"That's all it says," said Albert Hughes, Shallotte's public works director.

Brunswick County's new subdivision ordinance requires DOT standards for public streets, which are those dedicated to the state for maintenance. Streets that developers want to keep private must have six inches of coquina and 1½ inches of asphalt under the new rules that go into effect Jan. 1.

At Ocean Isle Beach, proposed subdivision plans are examined by the town's planning board, which makes a recommendation to town commissioners. Streets are a part of the subdivision plans submitted for review.

"We don't have any hard and fast formula," said Druied Roberson, Ocean Isle building inspector. "Whatever the planning board says is what you have to do."

However, Roberson said it's usually difficult for any project an acre or larger to meet state sedimentation and erosion control requirements if streets are not paved.

All roads and streets inside Holden Beach's town limits must meet current DOT standards for secondary roads, which means streets there do not have to be paved, said Building Inspector Dwight Carroll.

"All of ours recently have been paved," said Carroll, "and it's to the developer's advantage. Who wants to buy a vacant lot or a house on a dirt street?"

Sunset Beach Town Administrator Linda Fluegel says all subdivision streets there must be built and paved to DOT standards. However, the required width may vary, depending on whether the street is a thoroughfare, she said.