

**NEW MAYOR, COMMISSIONERS TAKE OFFICE**

# Holden Board Discouraging Sand Pushing

**BY DOUG RUTTER**  
Holden Beach Commissioners won't be trying to persuade anyone to use bulldozers to build up sand dunes on the beach this winter.

The town board adopted a policy Monday discouraging oceanfront property owners from pushing sand on the beach to strengthen the protective dunes.

It was the first formal policy adopted by the new town board that was elected Nov. 5.

N.C. Court of Appeals Judge Gerald Arnold administered the oath of office to Mayor Wally Ausley and the five commissioners at Monday night's meeting.

Taking seats on the town board were Jim Fournier, David Sandifer, Gil Bass, Sid Swarts and Gay Atkins—the only returning member from the previous board.

Bass, who served as a commissioner from 1987 to 1989, was elected mayor pro tem by fellow board members. He received more votes than any other town board candidate in last month's election.

Commissioners said the strand and dunes appear to be in good shape right now, with the exception of the far east end of the island.

They agreed that pushing sand can often do more harm than good, and that bulldozing should be avoided unless homes are seriously threatened by erosion.

After Dec. 15, property owners can apply to the town for permits that would allow them to push sand from the ocean toward the dunes.

Town officials plan to apply to the state for a three-year renewal on their "blanket" permit which allows sand pushing up and down the beach.

But they hope they don't receive many requests for individual permits this winter. "It looks like Mother Nature is doing a lot for us already," Fournier said.

Ms. Atkins, who lives on the beachfront, said, "It appears that it's building up. I would like not to have

sand pushed unless it's absolutely necessary."

As part of the new policy, anyone who requests a permit will be taken for a ride on the beach so they can see the slope of the strand along the entire length of the island.

The town also plans to call officials with the N.C. Division of Coastal Management for advice in cases where they don't think a sand-pushing permit should be issued.

**Improvements On Hold**

The proposed renovation of the old public works garage at Holden Beach has been put on hold temporarily while new board members review the plans and the town awaits bids.

Town Manager Gary Parker said the bid deadline for the renovations has been extended until Dec. 9. He expects the work to cost between \$20,000 and \$30,000.

Parker said the previous town board approved plans in April to renovate the old garage so it could be used by the police department.

The town's new public works garage, which will cost about \$40,000, is nearly completed.

Parker has proposed several other improvements to the town meeting room, including the removal of dark paneling, purchase of new carpet and addition of an elevated semicircular table.

**Other Business**

In other business Monday, commissioners:

■ Voted to increase the fee for appealing a building inspector's decision to the Holden Beach Board of Adjustment. The fee was changed from \$35 to \$50, even though the actual cost to the town is more than \$170.

■ Adopted resolutions ordering the preparation of preliminary assessment roles for the paving of Shrimp, Salisbury and Burlington streets and for the underground utilities project.

■ Presented plaques to outgoing Mayor John Tandy and board members Bob Buck, Kenner Amos, Judy Bryan and Gloria Barrett, who was absent.



A NEW BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS took office at Holden Beach Monday night. Pictured (front, from left) are David Sandifer, Mayor Wally Ausley, Mayor Pro Tem Gil Bass (back, from left) Jim Fournier, Sid Swarts and Gay Atkins. N.C. Court of Appeals Judge Gerald Arnold administered the oath of office.

# Holden Still Wrestling With Land Use Plan Map

**BY DOUG RUTTER**  
Nearly two years after starting the process, Holden Beach officials are still wrestling with their 1990 land use plan update.

The struggle continued Monday night, as the town commissioners and planning and zoning board held a joint public hearing on a document that's intended to help officials plan future growth.

After 1 1/2 hours of discussion, the new board of commissioners postponed adoption of the plan and were expected to reconvene Wednesday at 7 p.m. to continue their meeting.

The main sticking point Monday was how to label property north of the Corps of Engineers' easement line on the land classification map, which shows where town officials want to see growth occur in the next 10 years.

Planning Board Chairman Roger Williams said the board recommended that the land be classified as "rural," which would allow development as long as state and federal permits were approved.

However, Haskell Rhett, planning and access coordinator with the N.C. Division of Coastal Management in Wilmington, had a different recommendation for commissioners Monday night.

He said land inside the Corps' easement should be labeled "conservation." That would rule out any major development, but still allow construction of piers, docks and gazebos.

Williams said the planning board proposed classifying wetlands next to the inland waterway as "conservation" to offer the most possible protection to the environment.

But he said singling out certain tracts of land as ones that cannot be developed would violate the rights of private landowners and might create legal problems for Holden

Beach. "We wanted as much conservation on this beach as we could possibly have," Williams said. "We really set it up so if they could develop those islands, it would take an act of God to get out there."

Williams said labeling all of the islands in the marsh as "conservation" also would create problems for the Corps, which is interested in using five or six of them for future spoil sites.

"As a board, we couldn't pick out one piece of property versus another piece of property," Williams said. "We thought it would be spot zoning."

But Rhett recommended against labeling property within the easement as "rural." He said the Corps of Engineers won't allow permanent development of the property anyway.

He suggested that the town board classify the islands needed as spoil sites as "rural" to allow their use by the Corps, and make the other property "conservation."

During the hearing, Tommy Morgan of Brunswick Surveying said classifying land on the map as "conservation" automatically rules out development.

Morgan, who said he was representing Holden Beach Enterprises, said landowners at least have the option of applying for development permits if an area is labeled "rural" on the land use map.

Holden Beach officials started working on the land use plan update in January 1989, but have run into several snags along the way. The plan was scheduled to be completed more than 18 months ago.

Commissioners had adopted the plan in August, but it was sent back to the town after state officials found conflicts between the land classification map and zoning map.

Several tracts were labeled "con-

servation" on the land classification map, but were designated for residential development on the zoning map.

Town officials who worked on the plan update blamed the mistakes on the engineering firm that

was hired to help draft it, Henry Von Oesen and Associates of Wilmington.

The existing land use plan remains in effect until both the town and state approve an updated version.

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# Oceanfront Break-Ins Prompt Discussion At Holden Beach

A rash of break-ins along the oceanfront at Holden Beach has prompted property owners concerned.

Police reports of 10 break-ins on the island during November was the subject of discussion at a meeting Saturday of the Holden Beach Property Owners Association and has prompted action by at least one local property management company.

At Saturday's POA meeting, former town commissioner Judy Bryan said thieves have been gaining entry to homes from the oceanfront side. Police have been using spotlights as they drive along the street, she said, but cannot see the ocean side from the road.

Mayor Wally Ausley said the town has one auxiliary officer supplementing the regular force. He said he hopes it will add more in the future to "beef up" the police department.

George Bradshaw, a resident of Brunswick Avenue, suggested Saturday that more island residential areas should form neighborhood crime watch groups like the one on Brunswick Avenue. That group was started following a series of 21 break-ins in one month in 1988. Since then, he said, no more have occurred in the watch area.

At least one property rental firm is taking action to alert its property owners of the rash of recent break-ins on the island.

"We have had eight homes that we manage broken into in the past four weeks, which is of great concern to me," Jimmy Hobbs, rental manager for Hobbs Realty & Construction Co., said Tuesday.

Of the eight, seven were on oceanfront and one was on second row. Taken most frequently were TV sets, videocassette recorders and microwave ovens, but in one instance most of the flatware, pictures on the wall and small appliances were taken as well. "It looked like they were furnishing a house," said Hobbs.

In a typical year, he said, only one or two properties managed by the firm are involved in breaking and enterings.

Hobbs sent a letter to all the company's property owners. "Mainly I just wanted them to be aware of what was going on and for them to make sure they had adequate (insurance) coverage."

The letter suggests property owners check their policies to see if their beach homes are covered for theft and if, not to consider adding coverage.

Hobbs said he's learned that many owners do not carry theft insurance on their beach homes or coverage for malicious mischief or vandalism.

Unless the house is a permanent residence and qualifies for homeowners' policies, the owner must go through the North Carolina Underwriters' Association for fire and most other insurance coverage.

A theft rider typically costs about \$90 for \$5,000 in coverage and \$120 for \$10,000, said Hobbs. "I'm recommending they have at least \$10,000 coverage."

However, there's an added expense involved. For a beach house to qualify for theft coverage, all entry doors must have deadlock bolts, he said.

Coverage for malicious mischief and vandalism can cost another \$200 to \$300 per home, but would cover related damage, such as destruction of a door in gaining entry to the property.

The break-ins are under investigation by the Holden Beach Police Department. Chief Raymond Simpson and other officers could not be reached for comment Tuesday.

"I hope they'll catch 'em," said Hobbs.

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