

Calabash Planning Board Once Again Rejects Proposed Review Commission

BY DORI COSGROVE GURGANUS

Asked a second time to recommend to the town council whether to establish a landscaping review commission, Calabash Planning and Zoning Board rejected the idea again this week.

Meeting Monday night, members voted unanimously to recommend against establishment of a commission to make recommendations about landscaping, architecture and beautification. That decision puts the future of the proposed panel back in the commissioners' court.

A proposed ordinance referred to the board in November would have set up an Architectural and Landscaping Control Commission, more casually known as the landscaping review committee or appearance commission.

The planning board voted before Christmas and again Monday against the proposal, questioning the need for a separate panel for that purpose.

"I don't think any of us is against working with any group," said Pati Lewellyn, chair of the planning board. "I think any of us would welcome any degree of expertise that we could possibly get."

"But our question is," she added, "do we need a separate committee established by ordinance to carry out functions that we feel would be a duplication of what we were doing to begin with?"

In the presence of Hank Rutter, who was appointed earlier by town commissioners to the landscaping commission, the planning board discussed the ordinance that would create the commission. Mayor pro tem George Anderson and Commissioner Stu Thorn attended also.

"We're serving the public here," said Ms. Lewellyn, "and there was a tremendous outcry about this particular ordinance. So, if we sit down and decide to work this out and pass something to please the planning board or the people on this committee, are we in fact doing what the people want?"

By the end of the discussion, the entire board had decided that the landscaping commission was not necessary.

New planning board member Al Smith said he would not support the formation of a group that seems to do what the planning board does.

Smith proposed that the commission be set up as an advisory board, but acceptance never came from the planning board.

"This is not a cut and dried thing," said Thorn of the proposed ordinance and the description of the commission. "It wasn't presented that way."

He suggested that many changes could be made before the panel is activated.

Anderson said he wasn't sure if the commission was needed, either, but that he simply wanted more discussion on the matter.

Origins Of Review Panel

The landscaping commission, formed in February 1990, was set up originally to work with the planning board that would insure the overall beautification of Calabash.

It consisted of T.J. Morgan, Jane Knapp, Glenn Pracejus, Jay Morman, Chuck Radcliffe, Charles O'Roarke, Charlotte Rice and Hank Rutter.

Their first, and apparently only, duty was to develop a landscape and tree ordinance for the town, which they did.

"Are we in fact doing what the people want?"

—Pati Lewellyn
Planning Board
Chairman



That ordinance, which mandated protection of certain types of trees within town limits, never received a recommendation from the planning board. Instead, that board asked that it be rewritten to clearly outline the difference in how the rules would apply to commercial and residential properties.

In a March 12, 1991, letter from landscaping commission member T.J. Morgan, he informed planning board Chairman Warren "Bud" Knapp that the commission was dissolving itself. He cited a "lack of direction, communication and support" from the town commissioners as well as the planning board.

Disagreement last year about the function and actions of the landscaping commission were what Ms. Lewellyn said was "one of the many reasons" that caused the Planning and Zoning Board to collectively resign last August.

Since then, that membership has filled out, and the planning board resumed a regular meeting schedule in November.

The issue was brought into public light again at the Jan. 14 commissioners' meeting, when the Planning and Zoning Board announced it did not recommend the proposed ordinance reinstating the group.

In a telephone interview last week, Ms. Lewellyn said town commissioners requested last fall that the planning board reconsider the ordinance that would outline the duties and powers of the new commission.

A Nov. 15, 1991, letter from Anderson asked the planners to give the ordinance second priority and report back to the commissioners by Feb. 2, 1992.

"We need to know more about it," said Ms. Lewellyn.

As submitted to the planning board, the ordinance would allow the landscape commission to "formulate and recommend to the Town Commissioners the adoption and amendment of ordinances that will serve to enhance the appearance of the town."

However, confusion exists on both sides of the debate as to what the chain of command should be for the panel if it were created.

Members of the planning board were asking why the panel should not submit recommendations to it, rather than to the commissioners, to avoid duplication of effort.

At the Jan. 14 commissioners' meeting, Commissioner Ray Card attempted to settle the confusion, saying that the planning board and town council were "not working in synch."

"We had some rough times in 1991, and we don't want to see '91 repeated," he said.

Finally, Lewellyn and the commissioners agreed that the planning board should reconsider

its rejection and discuss the ordinance further at its meeting Monday night.

Future Still Uncertain

Despite the planning board's rejection of the proposed ordinance Monday, Rutter said he has always believed the commission was created by the town board of commissioners and should report to it.

He said he thought the original intent was for the review panel to exist for longer than just the creation of the controversial tree ordinance.

"I thought that this was an ongoing thing," Rutter said of the landscaping commission, adding that his group had been using town building inspector Ed Schaack, then on the planning board, as a liaison to that board.

Planning board members agreed Monday that the proposed ordinance did not satisfy their questions regarding who the commission would report to and how much power it would have.

The debate concerning the appearance panel and the ordinance creating it isn't over.

At their Jan. 14 meeting, town commissioners suggested that two members of each group meet to discuss the pros and cons of the matter, and plans were made to follow up on that request.

Planning and Zoning Board members Smith and Bruce Kibblehouse volunteered to meet with two commissioners and two members of the landscaping commission.

A date to meet hasn't been set.



HANK RUTTER (RIGHT) DISCUSSES a proposed town landscaping and architectural review commission at the Calabash Planning and Zoning Board meeting Monday night. The board nixed the proposal for a second time.

Calabash Hears Good Audit Report, Water Test Results

Calabash commissioners heard a favorable audit report at their Jan. 14 meeting, as well as getting a clean bill of health from recent water samplings.

Joy Bullard and Johnny Britt, certified public accountants with S. Preston Douglas, presented the town's audit for the fiscal year ending June 30, 1991.

Calabash is in good financial shape and "is aware of its future potential," said Ms. Bullard.

The tax collection rate for Calabash rose from 92.46 percent as of June 30, 1990, to the 98.28 percent for 1991.

Mayor pro tem George Anderson reported that he had received a report back from the Brunswick County Health Department, which analyzed a sample of Calabash wa-

ter for potential health risks. The report stated, Anderson said, that "all factors were well within EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) regulations" for safe drinking water.

Only the pH level was a little low, he said the report added, having been measured at 5.6 pH.

A Carolina Shores resident had requested at the last town meeting that a sample be tested because he feared the sodium levels were dangerously high in his drinking water.

The commissioners also voted unanimously to donate \$100 each to Hope Harbor Home in Shallotte and the Brunswick County Literacy Council. They have already donated \$800 this year to the Calabash Merchants Association, Anderson said.

Calabash Fills Seat By Luck Of The Draw

Calabash commissioners turned to an orthodox method when selecting the seventh and final member of the town's planning and zoning board last week.

Three community residents had volunteered to fill the seat: Al Smith, Bob Russo and Jack Hinty.

Some commissioners knew one or more or all of the candidates, others knew none. As far as the commissioners knew, all were equally interested in and qualified for the appointment. When it came time to choose one of the three, they were stumped.

Giving equal odds, they decided to let fate have a hand in the decision. Commissioners wrote the name of each candidate on a slip of paper and put the slips in the cupped hands of Mayor pro tem George Anderson. He shook the slips and asked an audience member to draw one.

Al Smith's name was on that slip. He was then appointed to the board by the usual procedure.

Appointment of the Carolina Shores resident fills the last vacancy on the Calabash Planning and Zoning Board, which was all but emptied last summer by mass resignations.

Smith will serve a three-year as one of five representatives from District 2.

Three Killed In Separate Highway Accidents

Three people were killed in separate accidents on Brunswick County highways last week.

Seven people have been killed on the county's roads since the year began, said Ruby Oakley, spokesperson for the State Highway Patrol office in Wilmington.

"That's an unusually high number," said Ms. Oakley. "It has been a terrible January."

Four Albemarle residents were killed in a wreck in Grissetown when their car pulled into the path of a dump truck on U.S. 17 on Jan. 7.

The fatalities last week involved a Grissetown pedestrian, a passenger in a car that struck the rear of a farm tractor near Sandy Creek and the driver of a car that sideswiped a tractor-trailer truck near Bolivia.

Car Hits Tractor

A Wilmington man was killed when a car he was riding in struck the rear of a farm tractor on U.S. 74-76 a half mile east of Sandy Creek Saturday morning.

Robert Lee Moore, 61, of Hammett Street, was killed in the 9 a.m. accident, reported Trooper D.A. Lewis. Moore was a passenger in the right front of a 1984 Toyota driven by Robert Pollock Jr., 28, of Raleigh, Lewis stated.

The car ran into the rear of a 1978 Ford tractor that was traveling west in the outside lane of U.S. 74-76. The tractor had a rotary brush on the front and a scraper blade on the rear and was traveling between jobs, Lewis stated.

The impact caused the tractor to lose a tire and travel off the road. Its

driver, Kenneth Delano Guyton, 52, of Castle Hayne, received minor injuries.

Pollock sustained class B injuries, which are serious but not incapacitating. He was charged with failure to reduce speed and death by motor vehicle, stated Lewis.

Damage was listed at \$1,500 to the tractor and \$2,000 to the car.

Driver Killed

An accident near Bolivia early Saturday killed the driver of a car that hit a tractor trailer.

William Arthur Clark, 37, of Wilmington died after the 1986 Nissan he was driving crossed the center line and struck the left side of a 1991 tractor trailer traveling north about four miles north of Bolivia, reported Trooper C.E. Ward.

The car then crashed into the rear of the trailer, throwing Clark partially out of his car, Ward stated.

A passenger in Clark's vehicle, Daniel Lloyd Edens Jr., 31, of Wrightsville Beach was seriously injured and taken to New Hanover Regional Medical Center in Wilmington. The driver of the truck, Glenn Thomas Hooper, 37, of Wilmington was not injured.

Damage was listed at \$5,000 to the truck and \$6,000 to the car in the 2:40 a.m. accident.

No charges will be filed, Ward reported.

Pedestrian Killed

A Grissetown woman was killed while crossing U.S. 17 about seven miles south of Shallotte last Thursday, Jan. 16.

Clarice Cedelle Miles, 30, was

pronounced dead on arrival at The Brunswick Hospital in Supply after she was struck by a car around 7:45 p.m., Trooper B.C. Jones reported.

Ms. Miles' daughter, Kimberly Cedelle Clifton, 7, of Shallotte, was crossing the road with her and was also struck. She received only minor injuries and was treated at The Brunswick Hospital and released.

The two were crossing the road from the west side to a private driveway on the east side when a 1990 Pontiac driven by William Henry Stephens, 48, of Long Beach struck them in the northbound lane, said Jones.

Stephens, traveling north on U.S. 17, did not see the pedestrians in time to stop. No charges will be filed, Jones indicated.

Damage to the car was listed at \$1,500.

Six Injured

Six people were injured in an accident Friday evening on N.C. 179 about .7 of a mile north of Calabash.

Ferdinand Williams, 32, of Shallotte was charged with driving while impaired and a stop signal violation after his 1990 Ford traveled through a red light and struck a 1988 Dodge van driven by John Thomas Johnson, 29, of Sanford, Trooper D.B. Harvell reported.

Johnson was making a left turn at the light when his van was struck in the left side by the Williams vehicle,

Harvell stated.

Johnson and two passengers, John Keith Womack, 28, of Sanford and Jimmy Lewis Love Jr., 30, of Sanford, each received minor injuries. A third passenger, Gregory Cowan, 30, of Sanford was seriously injured.

Williams and a passenger in his vehicle, Herman Williams Sr., 38, of Shallotte, were also seriously injured. All were transported to The Brunswick Hospital by ambulance.

Damage was listed at \$6,000 to the van and \$7,000 to the Williams vehicle in the 6:45 p.m. accident.

Brakes Locked

A Supply woman told Trooper D.A. Lewis that her brakes locked when she touched them Friday while she was traveling north on U.S. 17 about 2.5 miles south of Bolivia.

Barbara Turner Hewett, 55, was driving a 1983 Lincoln when her car stopped abruptly and was hit in the rear by a 1989 Chevrolet station wagon driven by James Cobbs, 46, of Wilmington, Lewis reported.

Cobbs was charged with failure to reduce speed, Lewis stated. Ms. Hewett was seriously injured while Cobbs received minor injuries. Both were taken to New Hanover Regional Medical Center.

Damage was estimated at \$3,000 to the Hewett vehicle and \$4,000 to the Cobbs car in the 4:20 p.m. accident.

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