

SOON TO BE REVIEWED BY STATE PANEL

Ocean Isle Board Makes Last-Minute Changes In Updated Land Use Plan

BY DORI COSGROVE GURGANUS

The latest land use plan for Ocean Isle Beach will soon be on its way to a state review panel after a few last minute changes Tuesday by town commissioners.

The land use plan, which must be updated by coastal municipalities every five years under the Coastal Area Management Act, had been submitted to the state's Division of Coastal Management for preliminary comments.

In return, they received a list of recommended changes from Haskell Rhett, planning engineer with the agency's Wilmington office.

Roger Briggs, a planning consultant with McKim and Creed Engineers, was asked by the town to serve as liaison between Rhett and the commissioners to make sure the land use plan would be ready for an official review by the Coastal Resources Commission (CRC).

According to Mayor Betty Williamson, Rhett needs to give his tentative approval of the document to ensure that the CRC wouldn't return the final version for more changes.

"We just wanted to make sure there were no problems," she said.

The town's planning board, Briggs told commissioners Tuesday, met and drafted three amendments as suggested by Rhett and the agency's guidelines.

As approved by the commissioners Tuesday, they include:

- A clause stating that the town will protect any archaeological or historical sites found in the town limits;
- A clause stating that the town will go along with any decision made by the agency regarding precautions taken against rising sea levels, an agency requirement due to concerns

that global warming is causing the ocean to gradually rise;

- A clause stating that offshore exploration for petroleum products may be acceptable after results of environmental impact studies are known.

Such statements are required to be included in the plan, Briggs said, in order for the CRC to approve it.

Other changes involve including "more factual data," Briggs said, regarding the capacity of the town's proposed sewer expansion project.

"Very little has changed," said Mayor Williamson about the latest version of the town's goals for development. "We haven't changed the zoning ordinance at all and we just want to be the family-oriented beach we've always been."

She said the next step is to submit the plan to the CRC this month and wait for that group's reaction.

Received Commendation

Officer Danny Hunter received a letter of commendation from Chief Curt Pritchard at the meeting Tuesday for his "mature, professional approach" during a recent burglary.

Officer Hunter was patrolling the island Feb. 25 when he apprehended two suspects in the robbery of the Winds Clarion Motel on the island and retrieved most of the money stolen.

Chief Pritchard said that this was the second such commendation bestowed upon Hunter during his employment at Ocean Isle Beach, which has been less than one year. "And I'm rather stingy with commendations," the chief added.

Chief Pritchard said he is "very proud of Officer Hunter," who "was making all the right decisions that

day." Nobody was injured in the process of arresting the two robbers, he said, one of whom had a prior arrest record of armed robberies and assaults with a deadly weapon in California.

Other Business

In other business: ■ Commissioners voted unanimously to hire John Carraway to perform the town audit for 1991-92. The certified public accountant, who has contracted with the town for the past several years, was hired at a fee of \$5,350.

■ Mayor Williamson announced that the town received a certificate of appreciation from the Governor's Highway Beautification Council for outstanding beautification along state roads. The town had planted crape myrtle alongside Ocean Isle Causeway to make the area more attractive.

■ Building Inspector Drued Roberston reported that the town's application for a permit to dredge Shallotte Inlet had been mailed that day. The application will ask permission of the Division of Coastal Management for the town to contract dredging service on its own, since the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had turned down a recent request to do so.

■ Mayor Williamson asked that Odell Williamson, utilities commissioner, look into correcting a drainage problem. She gave him two letters from Union Street residents with complaints about a continuing problem with standing water on their street.

■ Commissioners Debbie Sloane Fox and Janet Sanders volunteered to serve on the town's committee to study contract renewal with Chambers Inc., the town's waste hauler. Mayor Williamson plans to sit in on the meetings, the first one of which is scheduled this month. Chambers Inc. has made a bid to renew their garbage service with the town, she said, but the offer must be reviewed first.

■ Commissioners voted unanimously to approve the Vested Rights Ordinance to be placed in the town's ordinance, after hearing no comments at a public hearing held before the regular meeting.

The Cape Fear Council of Governments has asked all towns to adopt the ordinance which states that a builder must announce its intentions when filing for permits and that the town can't change the zoning of that permitted area for a period of two years from the permit date.

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