

Health Board, Beach Towns To Discuss Septic Tank Rules

Letters went out this week inviting Brunswick County beach towns to send representatives to an upcoming meeting of the Brunswick County Board of Health.

At the July 13 meeting at the health department, health board members want to talk with the town officials about ways to address a problem they share: overburdening of septic tank systems used by rental properties. The joint meeting was suggested by a Holden Beach commissioner and endorsed by Health Board Chairman H.J. "Skip" Davis, who sent the invitations.

In one step meant to help address the problem, the department is offering to review house plans on a voluntary basis before construction begins to ensure that a house will meet sewage system requirements. The board stopped short of requiring such reviews for coastal rental properties.

Especially in the coastal area of the county, rental houses with septic systems intended to serve six or eight occupants are often advertised and rented during the summer season to sleep a dozen or more people, overburdening the systems.

Local building inspectors can't prevent the practice themselves, because they must accept an owner or builder's word that a room will be used as designated. However, a building inspector can ask the health department to make a final inspection before occupancy, as was the case recently in Holden Beach. (See related story.) In reviewing a house or house plan, Environmental Health Supervisor Andrew Robinson says his department uses the same definition of bedroom found in the state's general statutes, any room that can be "reasonably expected" to function as a bedroom. Indicators include doors, closets, windows and direct access to a bathroom.

The health board meets at 7:30 p.m. in its conference room at the health department at the county government center in Bolivia.

Sunset Beach Taking Second Look At Height Limit Rules

Sunset Beach is going back to the drawing board to find a better way to define limits on building height.

At a joint meeting Monday evening with the town council, the planning board withdrew its earlier recommendation to take vertical measurements for structures on the island from base flood elevations.

Using the elevations offered advantages, such as greater accuracy and control, said Richard Good, planning board chairman, but had at least one drawback as well.

Areas where the existing ground is above the flood plain elevation may incur a hardship, noted Joseph Tombro of Powell Associates of North Myrtle Beach, S.C., because of the additional excavation (and resulting added costs) required to allow a building of the full 35-foot height permitted. In other areas, where the existing ground is significantly below the flood plain, the peak of a building could be higher than under the current ordinance, but still not detract from the roof lines as seen from the road.

"The board's consensus was that we should stay at the 35-foot height limit," Good said, and try to clarify the wording of the existing ordinance.

Councilman Bud Scramton agreed, nodding heartily and saying, "If it ain't broke, don't fix it."

The planning board begins work on clearing up the language of the ordinance today (Thursday) at a 10 a.m. special meeting called to discuss height limits.

Good said the board agreed with Tombro that language defining the base point of reference and measurement needs to be clarified if base flood elevation isn't adopted as the point of reference. Depending on circumstances, the reference point can be the crown of the road or the natural elevation of the lot.

The Sunset Beach Taxpayers Association has asked the council to seek a local bill that would require a referendum of town voters to change the height limit regulations, but the council hasn't discussed that idea in its public meetings.

Dispute Settled Over Monroe House

BY DOUG RUTTER

Jimmie and Sandy Monroe received a certificate of completion from the Brunswick County Health Department last week after making several structural changes to their new house on Holden Beach.

Among the required changes, the Monroes had to tear down a wall, close off two closets and remove a shower from an upstairs bathroom in their beach cottage at 137 Ocean Blvd. West.

The mandates were outlined in a consent order signed June 18 by the N.C. Attorney General's Office, a lawyer hired by the Monroes and a state administrative law judge.

Andrew Robinson, county environmental health supervisor, said the changes have been made and the final certificate was issued last Friday.

The consent order was needed to settle a dispute between the couple and county health department involving the number of bedrooms in

the Monroes' oceanfront house.

Health officials suspended the couple's septic tank permit for a four-bedroom house in May after a final inspection of the sewage disposal system.

They claimed the two-story house had six bedrooms, which is two bedrooms too many, and the septic system could only handle the number of people who would be expected to sleep in four bedrooms.

The Monroes, who wanted to rent the house, said it only had four bedrooms and they planned to use two other rooms for an office and den.

Among other things, the consent order required removal of a wall between an upstairs bedroom and den to enlarge the bedroom.

The Monroes also were required to remove a door from the hallway to the den, close off closets in the office and den and build a permanent desk and bookcase extending the width of one wall in the office.

The order further required the couple to remove the door to the office, extend the opening to the ceiling, and remove the shower in the upstairs hall bathroom.

Under the consent order, the Monroes have agreed not to advertise that the house sleeps more than eight people or rent it to more than eight. They also can't let more than eight people live in the home or stay overnight.

County health department officials will be permitted to perform periodic inspections of the home to make sure it is in compliance.

The county will have to give 24 hours notice prior to an inspection in the off-season when the house isn't rented. During the summer, the county can inspect between rentals without giving one day's notice.

Robinson declined to say how often the county will inspect the house. "We prefer not to make a comment on how frequent they'll be done because they're supposed to be

unannounced," he said Tuesday.

Starting this month, the Monroes will have to provide the county with a monthly water meter reading for the beach house.

Future owners of the home would have to comply with the consent order, which will remain in effect until it is home connected to a sewer system and it is determined that it can accommodate more than eight people.

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SUNDAY N.Y. TIMES DAILY WALL STREET JOURNAL FAX AND PHOTOCOPY

Three Busted On Felony Drug Charges

Three local men were arrested on five felony drug charges in a Saturday evening raid by Brunswick County Sheriff's narcotics deputies.

According to arresting officer Lt. Ronald E. Hewitt, the busts were part of an ongoing investigation by area law enforcement agencies. Hewitt said he was unable to provide further details about the arrests.

Charles Glen Todd, 35, who lives on N.C. 130 west of Shallotte was charged with possession with intent to manufacture, sell or deliver about a quarter pound of marijuana. He was also charged with maintaining a 1984 Chevrolet S-10 pickup

truck for keeping and selling the drug.

Gerald Patrick Grimes, 20, of Todd Street, Shallotte, was charged with felonious possession of more than 42.5 grams of marijuana and maintaining a red 1983 Toyota Celica for the purpose of keeping marijuana.

Billy Joe Lawson, 18, of Todd Street, Shallotte, was charged with felonious possession of an unspecified amount of marijuana.

Grimes and Todd were released on payment of a \$5,000 bond. Lawson remained in jail Monday in lieu of a \$2,500 bond.

The three were scheduled to make a first appearance in Brunswick County Superior Court this week.

THANK YOU

I extend my sincere appreciation to Dr. Marcus Williams, Mark Jones and staff at Carolinas' Wellness Center for accommodating my class these past months. Since my class has grown, we must move to a larger facility at East Gate Square on Holden Beach Rd., Shallotte as of July 1.

For further information please call 754-2772 or 457-9136.

Sincerely, GARY GARNER, Karate/Kung Fu Instructor



CAROLINAS' WELLNESS Health & Fitness Center

Carolinas' Wellness will no longer be offering Karate classes effective July 1st. Karate instructor Gary Garner will be offering Karate classes at East Gate Square in Shallotte. We wish Gary good luck and thank him for his past services at Carolinas' Wellness.

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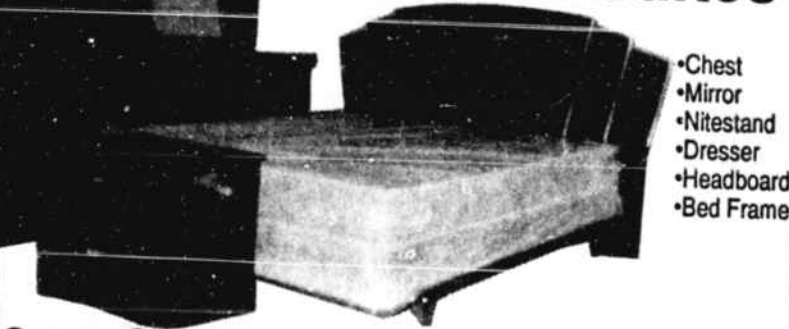
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