

AT HOLDEN BEACH

Corps Clears Way For Marsh Bridge

A permit allowing construction of a wooden bridge to a marsh island at Holden Beach should be issued shortly following a federal inspection of the site Tuesday.

An Army Corps of Engineers representative has decided that a federal permit won't be needed to build a 900-foot-long bridge to Bacon Island in the wetlands on the north side of the island.

Ernie Jahnke of the Corps of Engineers regulatory branch in Wilmington made the ruling after visiting the site of the proposed bridge Tuesday, said Corps spokeswoman Marty van Duyn.

"Basically the bridge is crossing irregularly-flooded 404 wetlands and a traditional pile-supported structure is not considered fill," she said. "Therefore they do not need a (federal) permit."

The Corps ruling clears the way for Holden Beach Building Inspector Dwight Carroll to issue a CAMA minor permit to Holden Beach Enterprises, which owns the 25-acre island.

Carroll said Tuesday he won't issue a permit until he gets the Corps' findings in writing. The inspector

expected to receive a letter from Jahnke by early next week.

Bacon Island is located north of Ocean Boulevard West between Sand Dollar and Swordfish drives and is surrounded by water or wetlands.

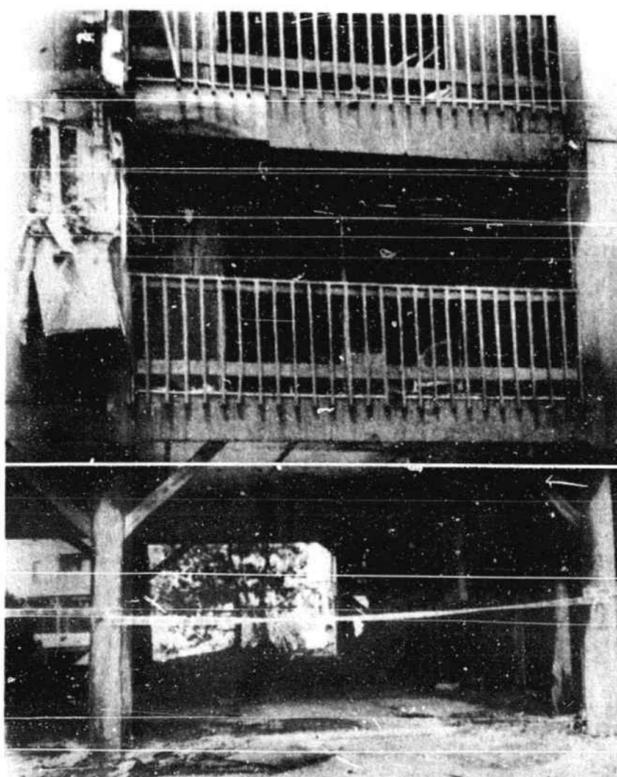
Holden Beach Enterprises doesn't plan to build the bridge or develop the island right away, according to Virgil Roberts, secretary-treasurer.

The island is zoned R-1, which would allow construction of single- and two-family houses. Roberts estimated that 12 to 16 acres are developable.

Ms. van Duyn said the Corps of Engineers may have required a federal permit if the area between Ocean Boulevard and Bacon Island was tidal wetlands, which flood and drain with the changing tides.

However, Corps officials believe the bridge will not harm the wetlands as long as the area isn't filled with dirt or concrete to support the bridge.

Opposition to the proposed bridge has been minimal. The town has only received three letters from people worried about its impact on wildlife and the environment.



THE CHARRED REMAINS, at left, of a wall separating two condominium units was the path of flames that destroyed three vehicles and damaged four units in an early Monday morning fire at Ocean Isle Beach.

STAFF PHOTOS BY MARJORIE MEGVERN

Shaken Vacationers Unhurt In Ocean Isle Condo Blaze

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injury. Volunteer fire units from OIB and Sunset Beach were on the scene in a matter of minutes, Barbee said. "There was a fireman from Roanoke, Va., staying nearby and he borrowed some gear and helped us, too."

OIB Mayor Betty Williamson, whose Williamson Realty owns the condominium, was on hand soon after the fire departments, helping the visitors find other quarters.

"We were up the rest of the night, relocating them, first in Ocean Isle Motel, then to an Oyster Bay condominium," she said. "Our Property Owners Association representative got all the insurance information together for them and we refunded their money for that day. We hope they will come back to Ocean Isle."

While all his family's clothes were heavily contaminated by smoke, Walker was fortunate in having parked his car at the end of the building, so it was not damaged, but smoke found its way into the vehicle.

"When you open the doors you can hardly stand the smell of smoke," he said. "I don't know how I'll get rid of it. We've been washing clothes all day to try and get smoke of them."

Walker said his teenagers were pretty scared by the experienced and, immediately after the fire, wanted to go home. His wife, who had been sick that night, was also "upset," but they decided to complete their vacation, relocated to Sand Castle condominium.

"I said at first that I didn't know if I wanted to come to this place again for a vacation," he laughed, "but everyone has told me this sort of fire has never happened before."

Barbee, however, said a similar fire, originating in a car and spreading to a nearby building, had occurred last year in Ocean Cove, and another in Channel Side Landing also began in a vehicle.

According to Williamson, Monday's blaze was minimized by the stillness of the night. "There was no breeze at all," she said.

Dredging Funds Falling Short

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board to delay a vote on rules that would ultimately require bulkheads on all canal lots at Holden Beach.

The proposal would require bulkheads on all canal lots before they are developed, instead of just small canal lots as is now required.

It also would give owners of canal lots two years to install bulkheads, whether they plan to build or not.

Parker said there are approximately 200 canal lots on Holden Beach that don't already have bulkheads. Another 300 have concrete bulkheads that help keep lots from eroding.

Mayor Pro Tem Gil Bass suggested last week that a decision on the new rules be postponed.

"We have 500 lots that may need bulkheading, and we don't have the people out there that can do this in two years," he said.

His motion to delay a decision on the ordinance passed 4-1, with Jim Fournier casting the only vote against it.

Fournier indicated he was ready to adopt the new rules, saying the figure of 500 lots was misleading.

"We need to go ahead with it," he said. "The comments we've heard were overwhelmingly in favor of it."

Nearly all of the people who spoke at a recent hearing or wrote letters supported the new rules, which are designed to reduce erosion in the canals.

Commissioner Sid Swarts said he wants the town to require bulkheads on all canal lots before they are developed, and on any lots that are eroding.

Other Business

In other business last week, commissioners:

■ Awarded a contract to Thomas Gray & Son Builders of Holden Beach for renovations to the town-owned house on Davis Street. Gray was the low bidder with a bid of \$19,500.

■ Amended an ordinance that will allow the town board to accept developed streets regardless of right of way width. The previous rule required a minimum width of 50 feet. The change was approved so the town could accept dedication of Seaview, Seagull and Windjammer streets.

■ Voted 4-1 to spend \$1,000 to put up new paneling, paint the ceiling and put new carpet in the town hall meeting room. Gay Atkins voted against the idea, saying the town should paint over the existing paneling.

WRECK REPORTS

Jealousy, Recklessness Blamed In Crash

A jealous young woman's chase after her ex-boyfriend resulted in two charges of reckless driving in an early morning crash on U.S. 17 Friday, according to Ruby Oakley of the N.C. Highway Patrol office, Wilmington.

A report filed by Trooper D.A. Lewis said Tawyna Marguerite Grissett, 21, of Ash apparently "caught her ex-boyfriend with a new girl and got angry."

She chased the young man, James Matthew Daniels, 23, of Longwood south on U.S. 17. She eventually pulled up beside his car and sideswiped him, the report said. Then both cars turned around and headed

north.

Grissett again tried to pass Daniels, Lewis reported. In doing so she lost control of her car and ran off the shoulder of the road about 6.5 miles south of Shallotte. The car spun around and struck a ditch and a driveway culvert before coming to a halt.

Grissett and her passenger, Rosalind Bryant, 20, of Ash, were taken to The Brunswick Hospital with minor injuries, the report said.

Lewis charged both drivers with careless and reckless driving. There was an estimated \$800 damage to Grissett's 1991 Ford and

Three Killed In Leland Crash

Alcohol consumption and speeding in excess of 100 miles per hour were blamed for an early morning crash in Leland that split a car and killed three residents of the same mobile home park Saturday.

It was the 11th fatal wreck in Brunswick County this year, bringing the number of people killed on local roads this year to 17, according to Ruby Oakley of the N.C. Highway Patrol office in Wilmington. By the end of June last year there had been six fatal crashes with seven people killed.

Found dead at the accident scene Saturday were Jesus Marquez Garcia, 22, Jose Lopez Miranda, 45, and G. Mario Aruelles, 20.

All three men lived at the Chadwick Mobile Home Park in Leland.

Investigating State Trooper T.W. Calder reported that Garcia was driving north on Village Road (S.R. 1472) at more than 100 m.p.h. when he lost control of the 1982 Oldsmobile in a right hand curve about 1.3 miles west of Leland. The car crossed the centerline, ran off the road and road and slammed into a tree.

Calder's report said he found the car broken in two pieces with the passenger compartment smashed against the tree and the front end resting in the yard of a nearby home.

Garcia and his two passengers were killed immediately in the 3 a.m. wreck, Calder said. None of the three men was wearing a seat belt.

Miranda and Aruelles were found pinned in the car. Garcia was thrown from the vehicle, the report said.

The three victims were pronounced dead at the scene and were taken by ambulance to The Brunswick Hospital.

Alcohol use, excessive speed and driving left of center were listed as contributing causes for the crash.

Offices, Banks Close For 4th

Most local government offices, banks and post offices will be closed for business Friday or Monday because of the Fourth of July holiday.

All post offices will close at noon Friday and be closed all day Saturday. There will be no mail delivery Saturday.

Banks and offices at the Brunswick County Government Center in Bolivia will be closed Friday, as will town halls at Holden Beach and Calabash.

Town halls at Shallotte and Sunset Beach will not be open for business Monday, July 6.

Ocean Isle Beach Town Hall will be closed Saturday, but will stay open Friday and Monday.

Trash Dumped At Gates Prompts County Action

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chain and lock they came back and broke in with a bolt cutter."

Late last month the county extended the hours of the convenience sites to allow access 68 hours a week. The sites can be used every night until 7 p.m. They open at 7:30 a.m. on Mondays, Fridays and Saturdays; at 10:30 a.m. Tuesday, Wednesdays and Thursdays; and at 11 a.m. on Sundays.

But that still hasn't stopped the illegal dumping problem. There was another large pile of bagged garbage outside the gate Monday morning.

"This is a disgrace to the human race of Brunswick County!" said James Hewett as he brought a pickup load of garbage to the Oxpen site last week.

Pointing to the pile, Hewett said, "They ought to put every one of them in jail that put that here."

That may be what happens next. Tucker said he has asked the sheriff's department to step up enforcement of anti-littering laws. He noted that anyone leaving garbage outside the gate could be found guilty of illegal dumping.

"I knew there would be a phase-in period of people getting used to the new hours," said Tucker. "But I think that's expired and we need to get more serious about enforcement."

A conviction for dumping less than 15 pounds will bring a fine of at least \$50 and up to \$200 for the first offense. Anyone caught dumping that amount a second time could be fined up to \$500. A similar fine could be imposed for a first offense of dumping more than 15 pounds.

The law also requires that a convicted offender either pick up the garbage or "perform other community service commensurate with the offense."

In addition, anyone convicted of using a motor vehicle for illegal dumping will have one point added to their driving record by the state Division of Motor Vehicles.

Asked about stepped-up enforcement at the dump sites, a spokesman at the sheriff's office said county Solid Waste Officer Martha B. Harper is responsible for citing illegal dumpers.

Mrs. Harper refused to comment

"I'm not saying we're using (video cameras) to record illegal dumping, but we have the ability to do so."

—David Clegg
County Manager

on the illegal dumping and her plans, if any, to control it. She referred inquiries to the county manager's office.

County Manager David Clegg said Mrs. Harper has the power to write citations for illegal dumping at the convenience sites. He said county personnel have inspected garbage bags left at the gate and recorded names and addresses found inside. Several letters have been written to offenders, he said.

"The county also owns some video cameras," Clegg said. "I'm not saying we're using them to record illegal dumping, but we have the ability to do so."

Simmons feels many of the dumpers are local residents who got used to stopping at the old dump sites on their way to work and were inconvenienced by the original 9:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. weekday opening times established when Waste Industries took over. But he said the amount of dumping didn't decline much after the sites began to open earlier.

He said many people are dumping enough trash on a regular basis to earn them stiff fines.

"One morning I found a refrigerator standing here all wrapped up with duct tape and oozing juice," he said. "I wasn't about to open it. I just called for a truck to haul it away."

Simmons said the dumping has added significantly to Waste Industries' operating costs. He said he frequently has to call in heavy equipment to haul off the illegally dumped garbage.

Fourth Of July Weather Will Stick To Tradition

Plan for a typical Fourth of July weather across the South Brunswick Islands—hot and humid, with a chance of an afternoon thunderstorm.

Shallotte Point meteorologist Jackson Canady said Tuesday that over the next few days the area should see "about the first normal weather we've had in weeks."

"It looks like a good Fourth of July weather-wise," he predicted.

The outlook calls for both temperatures and precipitation to remain near normal during the forecast period, ranging from an average nighttime temperature of 70 degrees to the upper 80s during the daytime, with about three-quarters of an inch of rainfall.

"It appears at least for the time being we are into a much more normal pattern for this time of year," said Canady, citing a northward migration of the jet stream. "It's rare when we don't have that kind of weather for the Fourth."

While temperatures will be higher than they have averaged in recent weeks, Canady said there doesn't appear to be any "sizzling" type heat on the horizon, and that so far he hasn't recorded a temperature over 93 degrees this summer.

For the period of June 23-29, he recorded a maximum high of 90 degrees that occurred on the 25th and a minimum nightly low of 58 degrees that occurred on the 23rd.

An average daily high of 87 degrees combined with an average nightly low of 69 degrees for a daily average temperature of 78 degrees, which is very near normal. Canady recorded .41 of an inch of rainfall at his home near Shallotte Point.

Sunday Fire Said 'Suspicious'

The Brunswick County Sheriff's Department is investigating a "suspicious" fire that started on the porch of an unoccupied house near Ocean Isle Beach early Sunday morning.

The 2 o'clock fire caused an estimated \$25,000 damage to the living room, kitchen and porch of a one-story wood frame house on 12th Street off Ocean Haven Road, according to county Emergency Management Director Cecil Logan.

The fire might have been set on purpose, he said. But other possible causes are being investigated.

"I say it was suspicious because it started outside and burned into the house," said Logan.

The fire may have started by spontaneous combustion, or by a discarded cigarette, Logan said. The porch was cluttered with stored

items including cans of paint and paint thinner.

There was no indication that any additional flammable materials had been put on the house, Logan said. An investigation will continue into the cause of the fire.

The owner of the house lives in Florida, Logan said. The current occupants, Steve and Linda Davis, had been out of town for about a week. They were in the process of purchasing the house.

The fire was reported by a neighbor who called 911. Firefighters were able to control the blaze within about five minutes, Logan said.

Responding units included Sunset Beach and Ocean Isle Beach volunteer fire departments and the Calabash Emergency Medical Service.

No injuries were reported.

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