

# THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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## Remove Insulting Passages From Draft Land Use Plan

It is a shame that a mostly commendable document such as the draft Brunswick County land use plan has gotten off to such a rocky start. The document has managed to alienate and infuriate our community's manufactured home owners and dwellers as well as those who make their living by selling T-shirts and fast food.

It is these two passages in the draft plan which are causing the stir:

■ "From an economic development perspective, it is an unfortunate truism that the occupants of manufactured homes are less educated and have lower incomes, on average, than occupants of site-built single family homes. The addition of this many (4,000 of 5,000 Brunswick County building permits in 1991) mobile homes has implications for the county's tax base, education and quality of the labor force. The figures also reflect on the per household disposable income within a heavily tourist-based, service economy."

■ "The subject of tourism as an economic development industry was a focal point of discussions during the leadership interviews, as well as during Planning Board discussions in the early stages of land use plan preparation. The central issue of discussion revolved around the type of tourism that the County wishes to promote. Fundamentally, it was agreed that the County needs to encourage high dollar tourism as opposed to 't-shirt and fast food tourism.'"

"Contrary to conventional wisdom, the tourism industry can offer high paying jobs if the tourism market sought after is of high caliber. This requires restaurants and accommodations offering services commanding a fairly high dollar."

"In turn, the amenities developed (e.g. golf courses, marinas, oceanfront resorts, equestrian facilities, etc.) must be of a quality to also draw a high quality tourist. If, on the other hand, Brunswick County goes the way of cheap t-shirt shops, fast food outlets and other lower end attractions, there will only be a perpetuation of the low wages and subsistence level economy Brunswick County residents have tolerated for decades."

It should be pointed out that these passages are part of the plan's narrative and are not official county policy. As the introduction states, "It is important to understand that the narrative (discussion) is not policy, and does not carry the same degree of importance as the actual policy statements. The narrative is designed to provide background and rationale for the ensuing policy statement."

It is almost inconceivable that the plan passed through more than one set of hands before ending up in a public meeting containing those statements, which are insensitive at best, and inflammatory at worst. It is hard to believe that someone in the loop couldn't have recognized the ballistic potential of those few paragraphs and anticipated the reaction.

The statements reinforce all the ugly stereotypes about "trailer trash" and "tourist traps," which anyone who's paying attention knows are unfair and untrue. While there is no argument that the county's business is to maximize its tax base and the way it spends our money, the plan's authors should have paid more attention in the plan to serving and improving the quality of life of every citizen who pays property and sales taxes, whether that citizen lives in a travel trailer or a Taj Mahal.

Now, take a look at the actual policy statements which accompany the controversial passages of narrative:

■ "A variety of residential development types is encouraged within those areas of Brunswick County identified as appropriate by the land classification map in concurrence with the provision of necessary urban services."

■ "Brunswick County encourages the development of a high-quality tourism trade as a primary element of the county's economic future. Investments in services, facilities and growth management controls shall be employed to foster a high caliber of tourist clientele."

No argument there. The controversy over those first paragraphs, unfortunately, is likely to overshadow and divert attention from the plan's strong points. Among those strengths are a stated commitment to planned growth, protection of the county's considerable wealth of natural and cultural resources, and an emphasis on attaining and maintaining a quality educational system enlisting the help of parents and the business community.

Such elitist language has no place in even a draft document so long as thousands of Americans remain homeless, an even greater number are desperate to get any kind of job, and the average middle-class family stays stretched to the breaking point trying to feed itself and pay taxes to governments which have no business insulting them.

We hope the offensive passages are removed so the furor can subside. Only then can the plan be thoughtfully and rationally studied and discussed by the people it is intended to serve.

We couldn't say it better or more succinctly than did a letter to the editor in last week's *Beacon*. Regina Britton of Supply spoke for many when she wrote, "I, for one, enjoy the brilliant mixture of cultures and activities in Brunswick County. I moved here for a simpler lifestyle, to get away from the 'mega-buck' society and to enjoy the luxury of being a full-time mom in my mobile home." She sounds like a woman who has her priorities in the right place.

The authors of the draft land use plan, while they may have their hearts and minds in the right place, certainly put their feet in their mouths.

## Happy Birthday, America! Now Go To Your Room!

Looking toward the annual observance of America's birthday, I recognize once again how irritating my brand of patriotism must be to the average patriot. My attitude toward this country reeks of the fault-finding teacher, the severe parent, who would rather take a child to task than praise him.

Actually, my parenting is on the permissive side, but when it comes to America, I have such high standards and am so demanding! The ideals that created her seem to me such noble ones, so desirable, so pure! The notion of the whole world's huddled masses seeking refuge here, breathing free, enjoying a good life without fear without privation. The notions of representative government, people participation and the absence of intrusive tyrants are thrilling concepts.

All of this must have filled the hearts of Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin and their buddies with pride and hope and deep joy, know-

Marjorie Megivern



ing they had set in motion a grand ideal.

But how would they see us today? Are we now, more than 200 years later, a caste-less, free-breathing, unfettered people? Does everyone have enough to eat? Is everyone treated equally? Is government truly of, by and for the people?

Well, I'm already on the soapbox, so I might as well confess that I'm as disappointed in us as I think Tom and Ben would be, and that is not an unpatriotic view. It presumes a great deal of love for this United States and high expectations of her. I would argue that it is patriotism at

its best, to look critically at your country, when it should be much better than it is. It's the way a good parent evaluates that child who has been caught lying, stealing, disobeying, letting down the family standards. It's a love that's better than sentiment.

Many will resort to sentimentality on the Fourth of July, choking up over the sight of the flag that doesn't protect everyone equally, singing words that aren't true, glorifying all our wars as if there were no innocent victims, ignoring all our flaws and simplifying citizenship as "living the American dream."

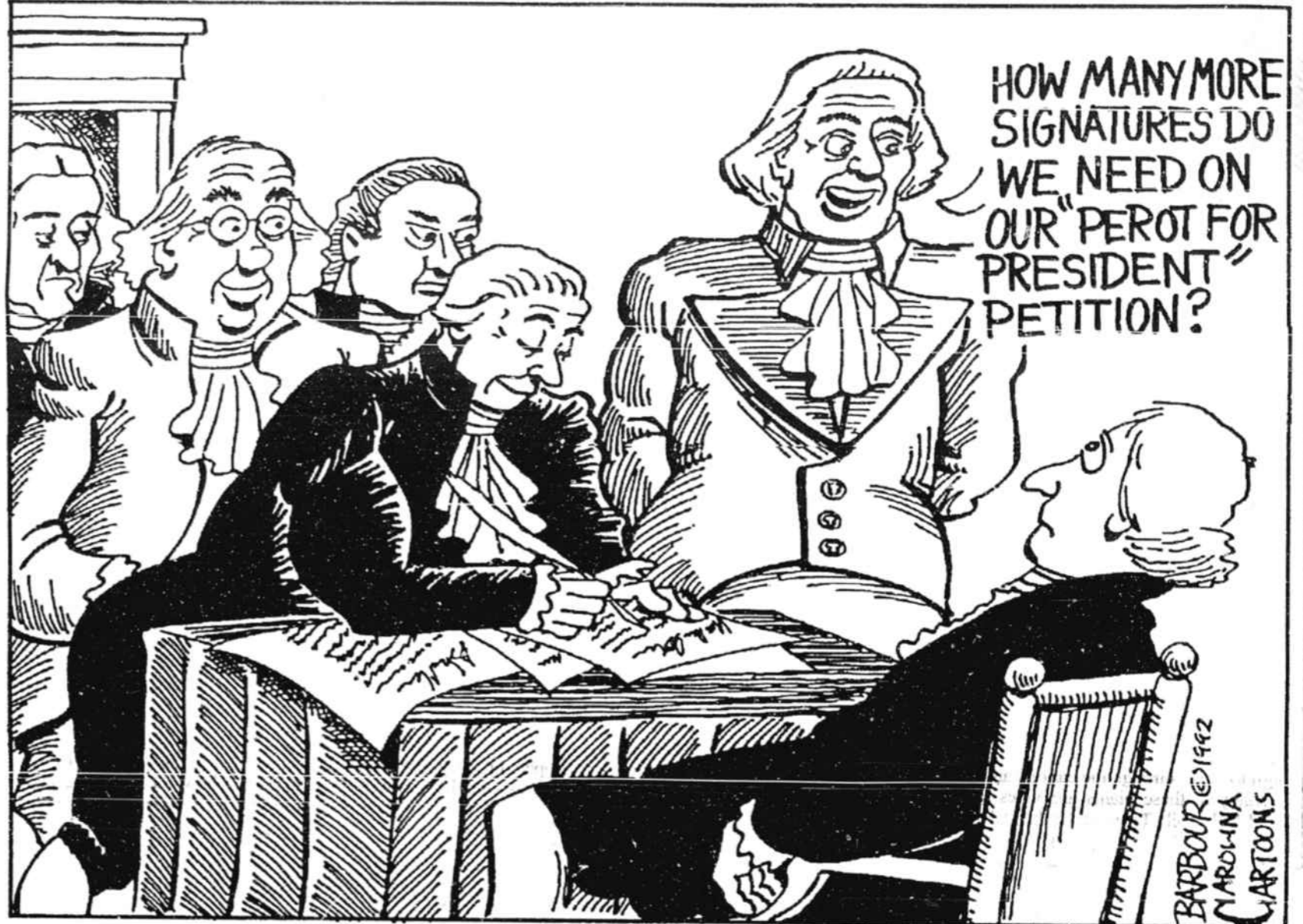
That's another strange attitude I have. The American dream as commonly understood, is very clear to me and has no appeal. It means getting to the top of a corporate ladder, owning a house in the suburbs, the biggest TV, the biggest bank account.

My American dream is that we will all put aside our sentimentality,

even on this national holiday, and admit our country's flaws. We are not a well people. We are sick unto death of racism, materialism and a disgusting disregard of the physical environment that has supported us. We are self-indulgent, self-seeking and apathetic about the homeless, the diseased and the whole mass of poorly educated young Americans.

Is it treason, or at least bad taste, to bring up these petty problems? I contend, once again, that it is an act of love. I don't ask us to wallow in self-loathing, but to be honest about the America that is, so we can create the America that can be. We CAN educate our children, allow even the poor to be healthy, live harmoniously with other races and cultures and preserve our natural environment.

But the whole process must begin with a clear admission of the needs and the flaws and the wrong directions. What better day to make this step than on Independence Day! It's America's birthday...the perfect time to begin growing up.



## Getting Away's Fun, Makes Home Look Great

Weekend getaways are growing more and more popular for couples, and if you've ever taken one, you understand why they can become addictive.

Weekend getaways work the same way a beach cottage at Holden or Ocean Isle does for a family that lives in Charlotte. Out of sight, out of mind. So what if work is piling up in the house, in the yard, at the office. You can still get away for a restorative break.

Don and I recently "got away" no farther than Wilmington. If you've never played "tourist" across the river, we highly recommend it. Nothing beats living in Brunswick, but spending a weekend in a beautiful, small and historic city like Wilmington can be fun.

Our base for touring was a well-appointed turn-of-the-century Victorian home in Wilmington's historical district that had been converted into a bed and breakfast, operated by a woman who had tried to get Holden Beach powers to allow

Susan Usher



her to open a similar establishment there. They nixed the idea, equating it with what-I-don't-know. Little do they realize the opportunity that town is missing through that shortsightedness!

Our fellow residents for this particular weekend of pampering included another couple celebrating their wedding anniversary, a pair of honeymooners and an elderly couple enjoying a Father's Day/Mother's Day gift from their son.

From this convenient and friendly point, we eased into what turned out to be a weekend of boats, boats, boats! We couldn't have forgotten

the river's influence on this area if we had chosen to try. Instead, we gave the river its due.

At the Cape Fear Museum which is trying hard to expand to a regional scope, we looked at boats in a miniature of Wilmington's waterfront circa 1860-66. It offered details so precise you could see a boat in its cradle in one of the boatyards. Not to mention all sorts of watercraft on the river itself.

We toured the USS North Carolina Battleship Memorial; if you haven't been there since the new visitors' center opened, it is time to go back, because they have some wonderful new exhibits. Additional new areas are open on board ship as well.

On the Cape Fear River itself, a water taxi ferries customers to and from the battleship memorial dock for \$1 per person. We toured the river on North Carolina's "only stern-wheel paddleboat," delighting in the captain's colorful and informative narrative and the view of downtown as seen from the water.

We tried some "paddling" ourselves, over at Greenfield Lake, where both paddleboats and canoes with paddles can be rented cheaply and the algae problem is under control on at least part of the lake.

On the city waterfront, docked next to the sternwheeler, was the U.S.S. Diligence, a Coast Guard cutter also open for touring. It has a name and tradition of service well-known to Brunswick County. The first Diligence served the Cape Fear in the late 1700s.

In a modern whimsy offered right next door, a \$5 contribution to a charity secured a seat on a new jetboat (we saw one young boy behind the wheel; he was having a blast cutting 360-degree turns in this sporting boat that simply skims the water!)

And then, the way home, the Southport-Fort Fisher Ferry crossing, a perennial, soothing favorite.

Getting away is fun, but Brunswick County's a good place to come home to.

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Another Complaint About Cable TV Service

To the editor:

A recent letter concerning our poor cable TV service reassured me that I was not alone, but I doubt it will help to improve the service. In fact, at the moment I'm writing this, our cable is not working again. Alas, the sky is cloudy.

I wanted to point out one thing to your readers and cable TV subscribers that perhaps many have not noticed before. In the initial contract with the Brunswick cable TV folks there is a clause in very small print which states that the provider is "not responsible" for outages. Now, I'm no lawyer but I have to wonder about the basic legality of a contract which stipulates that one of the parties is not required to provide the service being purchased. Still, like the rest of you, I signed that contract because it was the only way to get any type of service, no matter how erratic that service may be. Personally, I'm thinking about dusting off the old rabbit ears, be-

cause they work rain or shine. Besides, like perhaps many of you, I don't watch half the idiotic channels provided by the cable system. Unfortunately, most of our cable TV watching is for the premium movie channels for which we pay top dollar. This makes it all the more unsettling when the cable goes out during an interesting movie for which I've paid extra. Further, because of the contract I've signed, I have no recourse to recoup the extra money I've paid.

Yep, they've really got us by the remote controls on this one. Robert A. Gray Calabash

Quayle Deserves Better

To the editor:

With reference to the Mark A. Lewis letter in The Brunswick Beacon of June 18, this concerns Vice President Quayle's June 9 address to the Southern Baptist Con-

vention in Indianapolis.

I disagree with Mr. Lewis. Mr. Quayle spoke in favor of morality, traditional values, religion, patriotism and responsibility of parents for conception.

Mr. Quayle spoke against promiscuity, abortion, homosexual parenting and distribution of condoms to school children.

The speech had no racist or anti-attorney overtones. The Southern Baptist Convention was highly receptive to the speech.

As regards the "Murphy Brown" controversy, it was comforting to find that some usually very liberal voices supported Quayle's viewpoint, people like David Broder of the Washington Post, Eleanor Clift of Newsweek and Margaret Carlson of Time. Also Fox TV, which is not a conservative bastion, surveyed its viewers, and out of more than 50,000 responses, 59 percent said that Quayle was right.

I have a hunch that a majority of

Americans are receptive to the Quayle message and are fed up with the results of the 1960s and '70s "anything goes" mentality.

I do agree that Mr. Quayle should not be vice president. He deserves something better.

Ned H. Scott Calabash

(More Letters, Following Page)

### Write Us

The *Beacon* welcomes letters to the editor. All letters must be signed and include the writer's address. Under no circumstances will unsigned letters be printed. Letters should be legible. The *Beacon* reserves the right to edit libelous comments. Address letters to *The Brunswick Beacon*, P. O. Box 2558, Shallotte, N. C. 28459.