



**Believe it or not...**  
Leo Smith found this two-headed baby snake on his Ash farm. Creepy story, Page 12-A.



**Grid Action Galore**  
See Pages 8B-11-B for the latest in area high school football news.

**Welcome!**

The South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce has a new executive. Page 12-C.



# THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

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STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC CARLSON

## Emergency Services Center Dedicated

Crystal Williams, Miss Brunswick County 1992, snips a ribbon to officially open the county's Emergency Services (911) Center. State Assistant Director of Emergency Management Buddy Jackson said the "state of the art" center is one of the top two such facilities in the U.S. Shown (from left) are County Manager David Clegg, Sparky The Fire Dog, Emergency Management Director Cecil Logan, County Commissioners Chairman Kelly Holden, Williams, Commissioners Gene Pinkerton, Jerry Jones and Donald Shaw, and Emergency Medical Services Director Doug Ledgett. About 500 people attended an open house at the center Sunday.

## ZONING WORKSHOPS CONTINUE

## Boards Again Relax Rural Lot Size Regs

BY ERIC CARLSON

The minimum lot size requirement for building a home in rural areas of Brunswick County was reduced for the second time Monday as the county commissioners and planning board continued to modify a draft zoning ordinance.

The boards also raised to 40 feet the maximum height allowed for a home, clarified the law's definition of a kennel, considered a regulation to prohibit the parking of large vehicles in residential neighborhoods and eliminated the "residential strip" zone along rural highways.

The two boards have scheduled a series of joint meetings every Monday at 4 p.m. in the public assembly room at the county complex in Bolivia. The proposed zoning ordinance is available for public inspection at the county planning department.

After a single citizen complained that a proposal to require 200 feet of road frontage per dwelling was too strict in rural areas, the boards agreed to reduce the minimum to 75 feet.

Last week the board members reduced the minimum lot size from five acres to one. Monday they further cut the requirement by more than half to allow rural home construction on a 20,000 square foot lot.

Billy Gaither of Shallotte Monday told the boards that while he agreed with the idea of zoning, "it can be carried too far." He said that some of the county's nicest subdivisions have lots with less than 100 feet of road frontage. He said the 200-foot minimum in rural areas was too restrictive.

"That means that if I had 390 feet on a road, I could only build one house on it," he said. "Young people can afford a 100-foot lot and put a mobile home on it and start their lives. They can't do that if they have to buy 200 feet."

County Planner John Harvey noted that the 200-foot frontage requirement was proposed only for "out in the country." He said other zones allowed lot sizes as small as 6,000 square feet with only 60 feet along the road.

"That means that a man who owns land toward the coast can have small lots but not someone out in the country," said Planning Board Member Thomas Gray. "It's not fair. Everybody should be treated alike."

"But that is the point of zoning," said Harvey, "to provide for different housing densities in different areas."

Harvey noted that New Hanover County requires a minimum lot of 30,000 square feet in its rural zone. Pender and Catawba Counties require 20,000 square feet, Chatham county requires 40,000, Carteret 50,000 and Orange County requires a two-acre lot.

One acre equals 43,560 square feet. With the reduction of all rural lot size requirements, the distinction between a proposed "agriculture" zone and the "residential strip" zone was effectively eliminated. The board agreed to combine these areas into a general "rural" designation.

Resuming last week's discussion of how best to keep a major hog processing operation out of rural zones without also prohibiting small farm (See ZONING, Page 2-A)

## Caudill Transplant OK'ed; Money's Still Short

BY DOUG RUTTER

Duke University Medical Center has agreed to proceed with a bone marrow transplant for a local cancer victim despite a lack of funds and ongoing legal battle over insurance coverage.

Doctors were expected to harvest bone marrow Tuesday from Chris Caudill of Supply, a 36-year-old mother of two who suffers from an advanced form of breast cancer, according to one of her friends.

The hospital normally requires proof of insurance coverage or a deposit of \$112,000 before it performs bone marrow transplant operations. Caudill doesn't have proof of insurance coverage or the money.

However, the hospital revised its policy for Caudill's case, said Marlene Varnam of Varnamtown, who has helped raise about \$40,000 for a bone marrow transplant fund.

The hospital agreed to perform the operation for the \$40,000 that's been raised so far along with a commitment that more money will be mailed to the hospital on regular basis.

"That's what they're asking us to do is keep sending money every month," Varnam said Tuesday. "As many people as Duke's helped out, I didn't think they would let us down."

The hospital's decision to proceed with the operation is good news to area residents who have been raising funds to help pay for the operation, which will cost about \$125,000.

Meanwhile, Caudill's legal battle continues against her health insurance carrier. She sued Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina because the company is refusing to cover the bone marrow transplant.

Company lawyers have said the federal employee group policy that Caudill has through her employer, Sunny Point Military Ocean Terminal, specifically excludes coverage for bone marrow transplants.

In a ruling handed down two weeks ago, U.S. District Judge James C. Fox refused to make Blue Cross and Blue Shield pay for the operation.

Attorney Roy Trest, who is representing Caudill, plans to appeal the ruling and said this week that he has filed "summary judgment" motions in the 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond, Va.

Trest filed the motions hoping a judge will rule (See COMMUNITY, Page 2-A)

## Opponents Outnumber Backers At Septic Tank Rules Hearing

BY DOUG RUTTER

Holden Beach's proposed rules aimed at stopping abuse of septic systems took a mighty licking in round one, but round two is yet to come.

Opponents of the ordinance easily outnumbered supporters last Wednesday at the first of two public hearings being held on the controversial issue.

While blasting the proposed regulations, several speakers also took the opportunity to urge town officials to start planning for a sewer system.

About 75 people packed the stuffy town hall meeting room, some sitting on the floor and others leaning against the back wall.

Most speakers said they oppose the ordinance intended to keep people from overusing septic systems and advertising homes to sleep more people than they are intended to accommodate.

A second hearing on the regulations is planned Saturday, Sept. 5, at 11 a.m. in town hall. It is being held mainly to accommodate non-resident property owners who couldn't attend last week.

Mayor Wally Ausley opened the one-hour hearing by reading letters from two people who oppose the rules and two who support them.

Ausley indicated that 24 property owners wrote letters saying they are against the regulations, while only three wrote in favor of the ordinance.

When the floor was opened up to speakers, Jimmy Hobbs of Hobbs Realty was among the first to speak out against the proposed rules.

He said the ordinance would hurt families who rent homes each year at the beach, local merchants who depend on summer crowds and the town, by cutting into occupancy tax revenue.

By limiting tourists to two people per bedroom, Hobbs said the rules would prohibit many families from vacationing at Holden Beach. Instead of renting more than one house, he said families would vacation elsewhere.

"This ordinance as it's written would destroy the annual reunions for many of those families," Hobbs said.

The town's wastewater management committee drafted the ordinance to prohibit occupancy of homes by more people than they are designed to accommodate.

The problem of overcrowding is typically worst in the summer, when homes are rented to vacationers. Officials fear overusing septic systems can lead to septic system failure and pollution of fragile coastal marshes and waters.

Fran Vogt, a permanent resident, said last week she supports the "spirit" of the ordinance but is opposed to the "police state and Gestapo tactics" that would be used to enforce it.

*"The real answer is to not enact this ordinance. The real answer is to build a sewer system."*

—Dave Wilson  
property owner

As proposed, the rules would allow the Holden Beach building inspector to inspect homes if there is evidence or probable cause that the rules are being violated.

Mayor Ausley pointed out prior to last week's hearing, however, that no inspections would be conducted while homes are occupied, and there would be no counting of heads.

Elwood Newman, who has been renting homes on the island for more than 30 years, also voiced opposition to the proposal.

Newman said he's never had a problem with a septic system and said the town has

no proof septic tanks are causing pollution. "If your septic tank is not working, you're going to know it."

Dave Wilson of Fayetteville was one of several speakers who opposed the rules and suggested the town plan for a sewer system to handle its waste.

"The real answer is to not enact this ordinance," Wilson said. "The real answer is to build a sewer system."

Wilson's comments drew applause from the crowd, and several other speakers echoed his sentiments about a sewer system later in the hearing.

Homeowner Richard Jones said the cost of a sewer system will get higher every year if the town keeps putting it off.

"This is going to affect all of us owners if we don't stop dragging our feet," he said. "Let's stop looking for a pacifier and look for a cure."

Landis Chavis, another sewer system supporter, said it will take the town five to seven years to get a system on line.

"If you don't get started on this beach today you're going to be in trouble five years down the road," said Chavis, a member of the Cumberland County Health Board.

Several people said the ordinance discriminates against non-resident property owners who rent their homes to tourists and would create conflicts on the island.

"I can't see any good coming out of it," said real estate developer Virgil Roberts. "I can see this beach being divided like it's never been divided before."

George Bradshaw said the ordinance would divide the community like the old yard light ordinance did in 1990.

At one point, Holden Beach sued Bradshaw over his 20-foot-high security light, but the town later dropped the lawsuit.

"You better look at it and look at it hard, because you'll have somebody else in court," Bradshaw said of the septic tank ordinance.

Art and Betty Zucker, property owners who drove from Raleigh to attend the hearing, were among the few people who said they supported the rules.

The couple rents its beach house during the summer and has had virtually no problems with overcrowding, Mr. Zucker said.

Next door, however, there is a problem. Zucker said a five-bedroom rental house is advertised to sleep 24 people and is frequently occupied to that level.

Virgil Verheyden also said he supports the proposed rules, but added that they may need to be revised.

"The ordinance may not be the best...but I think something needs to be done," Verheyden said.

lived and talked to those who would be moving."

Carolyn Williams, Supply principal, said, "We counted on newspaper articles to let people know." "We were sent lists of the kids who would be coming, but we made no effort to notify them."

A map of the new boundaries identifying the districts for each school involved in the change was published June 11 in *The Brunswick Beacon*. Most parents studying the map could determine whether they were within the new school boundaries, though these were outlined three times, creating additional confusion.

Meanwhile, as some parents made phone calls and scratched their heads, the county's newest and most elaborate school prepared to open its doors to its first students.

Workmen were putting finishing touches here and there Monday, but phones were working, all furniture was in place and teachers had spent the last week preparing rooms and bulletin boards.

"My office is a wreck," Williams said, "but we're opening tomorrow, serving breakfast and lunch, sending out 11 buses, and expecting about 650 kids."

Harried with last-minute details, she was upbeat about welcoming her students. "There has been a flurry of kindergartners enrolling this last week," she said. "We now have four classes with 25 in each class."

Teachers like Cathy Milligan and Annie Hewett were putting away colorful new supplies, readying their rooms on Friday. "I'm so excited," Hewett said. Milligan had a bin of "dress-up" clothing for her kindergartners and some visiting children were trying it out.

Visitors could be seen every day last week, touring the school, awestruck by the mammoth gymnasium and entranced by the colors. Little boys spotted the basketball goals, others eyed kid-sized cabinets and chairs in classrooms, everything new and pretty.

Williams said one of the first orders of business this week will be the selection of a mascot and school colors, in which students will participate. "With our location by the ocean, I think we should have some kind of sea theme," she said.