

Commissioners Not Pinning Down Date To Begin Zoning

BY SUSAN USHER
Brunswick County Commissioners are delaying the effective date of the county's new zoning ordinance since the county isn't ready to begin enforcing it.

"We're leaving it open until Mr. (Planning Director John) Harvey comes to us and says he's ready," said Don Warren, chairman of the commissioners.

The ordinance was to have gone into effect today, July 1, but Warren said it may take until fall to get ready. The amendment commissioners plan to adopt at their July 6 meeting will make the ordinance effective only "upon further action" by the commissioners.

Warren said there appeared to be no problem with amending the ordinance after the July 1 date had already passed, since the county had not taken the preliminary steps required by law for enforcement. The other alternative would have been to call an emergency meeting, which Warren said the situation didn't warrant.

At a Tuesday night public hearing on the amendment—a technicality required by law—only three persons spoke, none on the question at issue.

Victoria and Severino Alvarez of Town Creek community said they moved their family here from New Jersey to get away from zoning. Saying they think it is unfair for government to tell people what they can and cannot do with property they own and pay taxes on, the couple wanted to know if it was too late to reverse the decision to have zoning.

Pearly Vereen of Exum, a former county commissioner and a farmer, reminded the board that he would like to see agriculture exempted and that he sees no reason "to zone it at all."

He added, "But that decision is up to you and I feel like it's time you made it."

The county zoning ordinance was adopted by the previous board of commissioners last November. Its implementation has been delayed repeatedly since then. Commissioners first voted twice, on motions by Commissioner Wayland Vereen, to delay filling the zoning code enforcement officer post.

Eventually it was advertised, but a suitably qualified candidate was not found. The job was filled after the salary was upgraded and the job combined with that of chief building inspector.

Warren said he understands it will take another three months to prepare to enforce the ordinance.

"October 1, that's my target date," said Warren. "I don't know about

the others, but I'd like to get this behind me."

The zoning laws are subject to change even after they take effect, and several commissioners are still pondering possible amendments.

Warren said much of the concern he's heard about the ordinance appears to be "more of a land rights issue than a zoning issue." At a series of public hearings Warren explained to listeners that farms were exempt,

"but it didn't do any good," he said.

As for the option of excluding a portion of the county from the ordinance, such as rural areas, Warren said he hasn't found a satisfactory way to do that, though other board members might disagree.

"Without a wide buffer such as a river, how do you draw a line?" he asked, since the landowner on one side would come under the regulations and his neighbor would not.



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Successful Bucket Shake

Bob Gore of Cedar Grove hands a donation to Lila Millett of the Brunswick County Literacy Council's summer bucket shake June 17-19. Volunteers manned posts at area grocery stores to help raise funds and acquaint people with the free services and goals of the council to help improve literacy skills in Brunswick County. They collected \$2,991.



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Resources Development Board Renamed To Reflect Its Mission

The Resources Development Commission for Brunswick County has a new name.

As of July 1, the RDC officially became the Brunswick County Economic Development Commission, a change requested several months ago by its executive director, Thomas Monks, and recommended for approval by the county commissioners.

"This name change will more accurately reflect the functions of this agency," Monks said Tuesday. "Brunswick County will join some 50 other North Carolina counties with similar identity."

Because most counties refer to their industrial recruitment agency as an economic development commission, Monks said many people were confused by the name of Brunswick County's RDC.

Monks complimented the efforts of N.C. Rep. David Redwine for introducing a bill in the General Assembly to make the name change official. The enabling legislation was passed April 15.

The Resources Development Commission for Brunswick County was authorized by the general assembly in 1961.

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