

# Holden Firms Complying With Occupancy Regs, Study Indicates

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Swarts said all but two companies, Craig Realty and Hobbs Realty, have gone one step further and included in their brochures a maximum occupancy with the description of each rental unit.

The majority of Holden Beach's rentals have more beds than are usually needed to sleep the maximum number of guests. Real estate agents say the extra beds are needed for the convenience of renters.

Of the 786 rental units advertised in this year's brochures, 490 of them (62 percent) advertise excess sleeping capacity based on the number of beds, according to the survey.

For instance, a four-bedroom house that sleeps eight people may have enough bed space to sleep 10 people.

"It's perfectly legal to have eight double-beds in a four-bedroom house. It's not legal to sleep more than eight people in that house," Swarts said Tuesday. "To me, the report shows areas where there are potential

problems."

The report says 35 percent of the advertised units have enough bed space for one or two extra people, 18 percent have room for three or four extra people and 9 percent have space for five or more extra people.

For the individual firms, the percentage of units with excess sleeping capacity ranges from a low of 37 percent for Craig Realty to a high of 89 percent for Hobbs Realty.

Other companies surveyed were Holden Beach Rental Services (55 percent), Brunswick Realty (75 percent), Alan Holden Realty (55 percent), Sand Peddler Realty (46 percent) and Atlantic Vacation Resorts (46 percent).

"I definitely think progress is being made," Mayor Wally Ausley said during Monday night's discussion of the report.

"I really feel the real estate agents are trying to do what the law says," added Commissioner David Sandifer, who operates Holden Beach Rental Services.

Sandifer suggested that people who discover an overcrowding situation contact the real estate company so it can be resolved.

He said if he finds too many people sleeping in one of the cottages he manages, he will force the renters to leave. "We're going to enforce it if we know about it."

Swarts said he hopes real estate agents will use good judgment in dealing with people who violate the law.

"To me it's going to be a last resort," he said of evictions. "I think we should enforce it but use a little common sense at the same time."

Alan Holden, who owns the largest rental agency on the beach, said Monday night that absentee owners who rent their homes feel they are being "picked on" by the town. Holden said state and county officials agreed to leave the real estate companies alone if they complied with the state law, which they have.

He asked why the town couldn't follow suit. "I really wish the town would stop hammering us over the head because we are in compliance."

Marci Callen, president of Atlantic Vacation Resorts, said Tuesday the company evicted guests from two rental units last weekend because they were violating the occupancy limit.

In a letter faxed to the *Beacon* on Tuesday, Callen said many homeowners have sacrificed rental income in order to comply with the occupancy limits, which puts Holden Beach at a "competitive disadvantage."

"This is certainly not a happy situation for our homeowners, but they respect the need to protect their investments and their septic systems," Callen wrote.

Pat Sandifer, wife of Commissioner Sandifer, said at Monday's meeting that too much emphasis has been placed on overcrowding rental units. The state law applies to permanent residences as well.

"I've seen lots of permanent people who are overcrowding their houses and nobody says anything about that," she said. "So much emphasis has been put on rental houses I don't think they (permanent residents) understand."

## Yelton's Condition Stable, While Questions Remain About Future

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scheduled to meet with Warren Monday morning to discuss operations during Yelton's recovery.

### Unanswered Questions

Yelton's absence could not come at a more difficult time for the county administration. Department managers were asked to submit their next year's spending proposals to the county manager next week so work could begin on the 1994-95 budget.

Also left up in the air is the question of who will head the county planning department.

Last Tuesday (March 29), Yelton announced plans to replace veteran Planning Director John Harvey. Yelton said Harvey needed time off to care for his wife Betsy, who was terminally ill. Yelton said he planned to talk with Harvey about working with the planning department on a part-time basis.

That afternoon, an advertisement was faxed to local newspapers offering a starting salary of \$35,564 for the planning director position. Among the requirements listed in the notice was a master's degree in urban or regional planning.

The next morning (March 30) at 10:33, a second fax was sent announcing that the planning director position was filled. Yelton had appointed former Zoning Administrator Wade Horne to the job at an annual salary of \$42,000.

Only six counties in North Carolina offer a higher starting salary for a planning director, according to figures released by the N.C. Institute of Government at Chapel Hill. After more than 13 years in the position,

Harvey's salary was \$49,028.

Horne had been employed by the county for only six months when he quit his \$28,403 job as zoning administrator three weeks ago to accept a \$38,000 position as town manager of Long Beach. He is a 34-year-old engineer and the former town administrator of Emerald Isle who holds a B.S. degree in political science from Appalachian State University.

On Saturday, Betsy Harvey died. Warren said Tuesday he plans to meet with John Harvey to discuss the status of his employment with the county. While he supports Yelton's choice of Horne as a replacement, Warren said he is not sure whether Harvey will be offered his old job back.

"So much has happened in the past few days that things are really in limbo right now," Warren said.

Meanwhile, questions remain about the process by which a new planning director was appointed without a reasonable advertisement and application period.

The county personnel policy requires that "information on job openings and hiring practices shall be provided to recruitment sources including organizations and the news media available to minority applicants." It also requires recruiting "from a geographical area as wide as is necessary to insure that well-qualified applicants are obtained."

While the policy allows the county manager to appoint a current employee who "possesses the best qualifications of all applicants," it requires the county to "carefully consider the qualifications of other applicants in filling the position."

## Taxpayers' Group Talking About Lawsuit, Discuss Future Of Island's Pontoon Bridge

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much more costly, Weddle said. Carl Bazemore sought defeat of the motion, saying sewer is "the first step" and a better choice than a septic tank maintenance system. "We need a sewer system; there's no doubt about it," he told a group of about 60 fellow property owners. "Trying to say we have got to control sewer or stormwater as a means of controlling growth is like blowing in the wind."

"You are fanning fears," he said. "We have a good planning and zoning board; we can do it in the proper manner."

Bazemore said sewer system support would send "a positive message" to other coastal and waterway communities to clean up the water. SBTA Secretary-Treasurer Minnie Hunt disagreed, saying there's no evidence a sewer system will help and that part of the area's water pollution stems from the Grand Strand, S.C., area.

Concluded one non-resident property owner, "Development of the golf courses will happen, but I don't want to pay for it if I live on the island."

The future of the pontoon bridge

*"We would like to keep the entrance to this island as inconspicuous as possible."*

—Clete Waldmiller  
SBTA President

to the island—scheduled by the state for replacement—drew more discussion than usual Saturday, with one member seeking a survey of SBTA members' positions.

President Clete Waldmiller encouraged members to instead respond to a recent newsletter query regarding the bridge. He also reiterated the board's current position: to maintain and keep the pontoon bridge; and if that alternative is not possible, to support a 15-foot bascule.

"We would like to keep the entrance to this island as inconspicuous as possible."

### Secession Motion Fails

A motion by bridge committee

chairman Warren "Bud" Knapp to explore secession of the island from Sunset Beach, the state and the nation on the basis of "taxation without representation" drew serious debate before its defeat 24-19 on a show of hands. One member urged the group to look toward consensus-building, not negativism.

Knapp questioned the time and costs consumed by the N.C. Department of Transportation (DOT) in study when DOT and the U.S. Coast Guard will only support a 65-foot fixed span.

"Nothing has changed," he said. "Sixteen years ago they said the bridge was unsafe and needed to be replaced immediately. We're still being told that. Most of all they are not taking into account what the people of the island want."

Knapp also questioned the lack of an emergency plan to notify island residents when the bridge will be down for an extended length of time.

In a follow-up vote, members asked directors to look into the likelihood of having a bill introduced in the state's General Assembly "to preserve the concept of our bridge."

## Moth Spraying To Begin At Dawn Friday

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three miles from the shorelines of Ocean Isle Beach, Holden Beach, Long Beach and Bald Head Island.

The largest portion of the target area is a pie-shaped tract roughly bordered on the southwest by a line between Bolivia and the intersection of N.C. 133 and N.C. 211 near Southport and on the east by the Atlantic Ocean in New Hanover County. The northern boundary of the treatment area extends from north of Bolivia to a point on the Cape Fear River near the mouth of Town Creek and across the north end of New Hanover County.

State and federal agriculture officials began planning for the most extensive aerial spraying program in North Carolina history after Asian gypsy moths were found on a German ship docked at the Sunny Point military ammunition terminal last July. Insect traps indicated that the moths had come ashore on both sides of the Cape Fear River.

The Asian gypsy moth is considered to be one of the most damaging plant pests known. Its close relative, the European gypsy moth, affects more than 4.2 million acres of forest each year. Gypsy moth caterpillars can completely strip trees of their leaves.

### Gypsy Moth Hotline

1(800)449-9007

Asian gypsy moths pose an even greater threat. Female European gypsy moths cannot fly and must lay their eggs near where they emerge from their cocoons. But Asian gypsy moths can fly up to 20 miles before depositing their eggs, allowing them to infest new areas much more quickly.

Task force insect experts began seeing hatching activity in several Brunswick County egg masses last week. Insecticides work best on the gypsy moths when applied to the leaves they feed on during the early stages of development.

Most of the infested areas will be sprayed with a naturally occurring bacterium called *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) that is commonly available in garden centers and plant stores. On 4,000 acres where scientists have determined that Bt could harm rare or fragile species, an insect virus called Gypchek will be used against the moths.

Neither of the pesticides is considered harmful to mammals or to

other insects except caterpillars. However certain precautions should be taken during the spraying period. (See information box.) The sprays are water soluble and will be washed away with the first rain, according to Brunswick County Agricultural Extension Agent Milton Coleman.

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## Authority To Delay Blythe Purchase Study

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nity where most Calabash residents live. The town board is trying to decide whether to buy the utility and upgrade it to serve the downtown business district or to join with Sunset Beach in building a regional sewer system.

## Sunset Okays Sewer Bond

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sewer/stormwater management project. Sunset Beach is working with the authority, other area towns and Brunswick County on a basinwide stormwater management proposal.

The South Brunswick Water & Sewer Authority meets today (Thursday) at 7 p.m. in the Maples Clubhouse at Sea Trail Plantation, Sunset Beach. Meetings are open to the public.

## Normal Weather In The Forecast

Temperatures and rainfall will be near normal in Brunswick County for the next few days, according to amateur meteorologist Jackson Canady of Shallotte Point.

Temperatures should range from the upper 40s at night to the low 70s during the day for the next week, Canady said Tuesday. The area should receive about one-half inch of rainfall during the week.

For the period March 29 through April 4, Canady measured 1.25 inches of rain at his residence.

The daily average temperature was 58 degrees, which is about normal for this time of year. The maximum high reading was 77 degrees on April 4, and the minimum low was 41 degrees on the first and second.

In his report, Willis said he found "widespread evidence of use of good materials, sound construction techniques and continuing levels of reasonable maintenance" at Carolina Blythe.

"There is no evidence that any major immediate repair and replacement will be required to meet the needs of existing customers," Willis said. "There will be required, however, a major construction effort at the waste treatment plant and in connection with the irrigation facilities in the near future."

In his financial analysis of the proposed purchase, Willis reported that "the acquisition of the Carolina

Blythe Utility Systems is feasible," but warned that a significant rate increase would be necessary.

"Trial evaluations of such rate changes indicate that the average monthly bill for water and sewer users will have to increase from the current \$20 level to between \$36 and \$40 per month, and all water and sewer tap fees need be credited to current revenues to offset the equivalent of depreciation," the report said.

Willis noted that the higher rates, "while significant," would not be out of line with those charged by other area sewer systems.

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