

COASTAL OBSERVER

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Racquet club plan goes from highest density to smallest lots

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

A revised plan for the former Litchfield Racquet Club would replace the 17 clay courts with 32 single-family lots that would be about half the size of the adjacent residential parcels. At a "typical" size of 4,600 square feet, the lots are smaller than those currently allowed by Georgetown County zoning.

The plan submitted by Wimbleton Village LLC replaces one for 108 one-bedroom apartments



Tanya Ackerman/Coastal Observer

A group of former members want to reopen the club for play.

on the 8.5-acre site between Litchfield Country Club and the Bridges at Litchfield. That plan, which was withdrawn last month, sought the maximum density allowed under the zoning code, 16 units an acre. The revised plan shows 5.1 units an acre, which is still considered "high density," Boyd Johnson, the county planning director, said.

The property is currently zoned as a "planned development" that originally called for 25 dwellings and the tennis complex. So far, three houses have

been built and 14 duplexes are under construction.

"We have not looked at it except to see what the number was," Johnson said. The zoning change will be up for review by the Planning Commission in June. It will then require approval from County Council.

Because the project is a planned development, it can seek smaller lots than would be allowed under conventional zoning, Johnson said. "Normally, it's 6,000" square feet, he said. "It's not something we

will be pushing, obviously."

Litchfield Country Club has a minimum lot size of 10,000 square feet. The Bridges has a minimum of 6,000 square feet.

The country club property owners association opposed the multi-family plan. It hasn't met to discuss the new proposal, but Jerry Oakley, the interim president, said "there is no support for this plan either, primarily because of the very small lots and because its 32 lots are going to dump a whole lot of cars

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Tanya Ackerman/Coastal Observer

Robbie Buice and Mark Pender are building a frame to display a mural at the Pawleys Pavilion Reunion on Saturday night.

PAWLEYS PAVILION REUNION

Dance rolls out new backdrop

BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI
COASTAL OBSERVER

Most of the people who attend the Pawleys Pavilion Reunion every year never got a chance to dance at any of the island's four pavilions, the last of which was destroyed by a fire in 1970.

But this year's attendees will be able to have their pictures made with a 10-foot by 30-foot mural of the pavilion that stood in the mid-1960s. The image on the mural will probably be familiar to a lot of people since it was taken from an iconic picture postcard taken by the Florence photographer Ernest Ferguson. It was later made into a print.

Craig Stephenson of Custom

Signs and Graphics in Kingstree painted the mural for a Kingstree High School reunion in June 1996. After the event the mural was given to Sarah Grayson of Litchfield, who grew up in Kingstree but spent a lot of time on Pawleys Island with her family.

"I grew up in Kingstree. There was nowhere else to go," said Grayson, who is now 70. "I went [to the pavilion] all my life. I went there to shag."

Grayson said if a young man took her to Pawleys Island on a date her parents would extend her curfew by one hour to allow for travel time.

Grayson gave the mural to Nick Stines, hoping eventually it might end up in the island's new

Town Hall.

"I just loved it," Grayson said. "I wanted to share it."

Stines gave it Paul Kenny because Kenny's wife, Maura, is an artist. The mural was too large for the Kennys to display so they gave it to Robbie Buice, the chairman for the reunion.

"I was trying to convey it to a home that would make good use of it," Kenny said. "He was terribly excited about the idea of doing something with it."

Buice and Mark Pender built a frame for the mural and plan to place it by the Nature Park along Pawleys Creek where the pavilion stood that is now a kayak landing. The mural will be in place in

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PAWLEYS ISLAND

Property owners willing to pay more for beach work to avoid adding new access

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

Property owners in the historic district of Pawleys Island say they would rather pay higher taxes to fund beach renourishment than have the town create a new beach access at the end of the South Causeway. The access was proposed to the town's ad hoc finance committee as a way to attract \$1.5 million in state grant funds.

Town Council last year looked at the access plan in a closed-door session, but took no action.

It re-emerged when the finance committee chairman, Josh Rickler, outlined options for funding future beach renourishment at a meeting of property owners over Easter weekend.

While property owners in the mid-island, which includes several historic houses, were upset by the proposal, members of the committee said it should not have been presented before they could discuss it.

"In my opinion, it was a misrepresentation," Council Member Guerry Green said. He also

SEE "ACCESS," PAGE 3

One easement still unsigned for town renourishment project

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

Only one property owner has yet to sign an easement required as part of a federal beach renourishment project on the south end of Pawleys Island. "It's not holding anything up as long as he signs in the next two or three weeks," Town Administrator Ryan Fabbri said.

Easements are required of 113 property owners to allow the Army Corps of Engineers to place up to 840,000 cubic yards of offshore sand on 1.4 miles of beach and to maintain the beach over the next 30 years. The easements, which are held by the town, ensure that the beach will remain public.

The one property owner, who has not been named, is concerned that the easement could



Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

Storm-driven waves under decks on the south end.

allow the public to use his deck, which sits over the beach. Fabbri said that is not the case, but other owners, who have signed easements, raised the same concern.

Attorneys with the Corps have talked with the owner who

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GEORGETOWN COUNTY COUNCIL

As Beard departs, auditor offers critique of critics

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

Austin Beard cast a handful of procedural votes and joined County Council in discussing a budget he won't be around to vote on. He resigned from the council Wednesday rather than appeal a finding by the county election commission that he does not live in the district he represents.

Beard thanked his colleagues, but didn't have any parting remarks.

Brian Shult, the county auditor, had some. He used the four minutes allotted him during the council's public comment to praise the departing District 5 council member and excoriate Beard's critics.

"Few, if any, of his critics know of his dedication and hard work on behalf of the county and for the interests of these crit-

Austin Beard leaves the council chamber after this week's meeting. Brian Shult, right, the county auditor, had strong words for Beard's critics.

Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

ics themselves," Shult said. "The fact that virtually none of the District 5 voters have joined the slanderous chorus for his resignation is telling."

A complaint by the local chapter of the NAACP led the county Board of Voter Registration and Elections to hold a hearing in March to determine whether he was properly registered in District 5. Beard testified that he had never lived at the address, 510 N. Magnolia Ave., listed on his voter registration. He paid \$150 to rent the house, but

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Spring colors: The color run is the new rite of spring, making a splash with school kids and senior citizens.

SECOND FRONT

Education: Becca-Lyn McRobbie was named the district's Rookie Teacher of the Year. She teaches special ed at Waccamaw Middle.

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Arts: Path to the altar isn't smooth in latest Strand Theater show.

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MARLIN QUAY

County asks court to dismiss rezoning suit

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

Georgetown County will ask a Circuit Court judge to dismiss five of the eight claims made in a lawsuit by a restaurant seeking to overturn a zoning change for the Marlin Quay Marina. The suit is one of four pending over the project to replace the marina shop with a new facility.

In January, County Council approved an application from Palmetto Industrial Development to build a new marina store and restaurant. It was the third version of plans for a facility that was first approved in 2016 by county staff. That decision was challenged by the Gulfstream Café, which is adjacent to the marina and has an easement to share the parking lot.

Gulfstream also filed suit against Palmetto and its owner, Mark Lawhon, after the old marina store was demolished. A jury in that case found Lawhon had interfered with the easement and fined him \$1,000.

In the meantime, Lawhon sought approval for the new facility as a change to the "planned development" zoning for Marlin Quay. That required a hearing by

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