

COASTAL OBSERVER

Vol. XL No. 20

Pawleys Island, South Carolina ~ October 28, 2021

\$1.00

LAND USE

Rezoning vote, 3-2, lacks clear winner

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

A thousand names on petitions, hundreds of emails and a steady stream of objections raised at public hearings shifted one vote on a request to rezone residential property along Highway 17 to create additional lots. Whether that was enough to change the outcome is unclear. Georgetown County Council

voted 3-2 this week to change the future land-use map from low to medium density for 14.8 acres along Highway 17 near Waterford Road. The map change was required before the council could approve a request by the owner to change the zoning from half-acre residential to residential with 10,000-square-foot lots.

But Council Member Everett Carolina abstained, so the vote **SEE "REZONING," PAGE 2**



Council Member Steve Gogans listens to comments as Marla Hamby, a Keep It Green member and planning commissioner, holds a map.

Engineer pulls townhouse plan after group questions zoning's validity

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

Questions raised about the validity of a development plan approved more than two decades ago prompted the owner of a tract on Highway 17 at Hagley to withdraw a request to change that plan.

"There seem to be a bunch of questions about vested rights and whether the PD is valid," said Steven Strickland, owner of the Earthworks Group, who represented the property owner. "That's a legal question, not an engineering question."

Darryl Price applied to amend the "planned development" zoning on 2.5 acres just north of the Quality Inn motel. It was created in 2000 to allow over 20,000 square feet of office space in two buildings.

Price bought the property in 2006 through a partnership. He wanted to amend the planned development to allow a mix of commercial and residential uses in 16 townhouses; commercial on the ground floor, residential upstairs.

The citizens group Keep It Green opposed the change. **SEE "PLANNING," PAGE 2**



Photos by Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

Trunk or treat | Joseph Cegledy, 3 months, watches the costumed kids at Pawleys Island Presbyterian's trunk-or-treat. It drew kids from around the region. Below, Paxton Crespo, 8, eyes a T-Rex, with Graycee Maples, 10, inside. At right, Stella Freeman, 3, of Andrews follows the haunted trail. For a list of Halloween events, see Page 6.



ELECTIONS

Council will face challenge to keep 3 minority districts

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

Uneven growth in Georgetown County will make it hard to redraw council district lines that maintain three with Black majorities, according to the head of the state agency that is doing the work.

"Georgetown County is going to be one of the more difficult cases to redistrict because of the population growth and change in dynamic," said Frank Rainwater, director of the state Office of Revenue and Fiscal Affairs, which is helping the county with the process.

The council has had three of its seven districts with majority Black populations since it adopted single-member districts in the 1980s. Growth in the county has been primarily from white people moving in, and the Black population in the 2020 census was 29 percent, or two-sevenths of the total.

Members of the local chapter of the NAACP told council this week that they have already drafted a redistricting plan that keeps three majority-minority districts. Council members said they haven't seen a copy and Marvin Neal, the chapter president, said he wasn't authorized to share it with the press.

But Neal said the plan will keep the Black population in three districts around 51 percent.

Rainwater told council members at a workshop this week that the federal courts have said that the share of minority voters needed to have the opportunity to elect one of their own candidates is "somewhere in the 50 percent range."

"If you go beyond 60 percent,



Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

Frank Rainwater explains the process to County Council.

they're going to think you're putting too many minorities in that district and you're diluting that district," Rainwater added.

Governments are required to adjust election districts every 10 years following the U.S. Census to maintain the constitution requirement of one-person, one-vote. The three council districts that cover the Waccamaw

SEE "COUNCIL," PAGE 4

NONPROFITS | Murrells Inlet 2020

New director will guide community group's return to normalcy

BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI
COASTAL OBSERVER

As the new executive director of Murrells Inlet 2020, Stacy Johnson is getting to meet a lot of visitors to the area.

The nonprofit's office on Highway 17 Business has become a kind of visitors center.

"People come in and ask for hotel recommendations, or what's the best restaurant on the Marsh Walk," Johnson said. "We're really here to just kind of help wherever we can or point people in the right direction."

Johnson has lived in the area for 21 years and is a graduate of Socastee High School. She also graduated from Coastal Carolina University with a degree in political science and worked in the insurance industry for 14 years.

She took the job at Murrells Inlet 2020 because she was looking for a way to give back to something bigger than herself.

Her husband is also an inlet native.

"It's the town that I definitely love," Johnson said.

Murrells Inlet 2020 is a nonprofit focused on conservation

and preservation of the inlet, monitoring water quality, and education.

Stacy Johnson's plans include organizing the return of community events.

Chris Sokoloski/Coastal Observer

"We're really about the community here, and community awareness," Johnson said. "What are some of the things we can do to get the community involved and help out all the businesses here? What are things we can do

SEE "INLET," PAGE 3



INSIDE THIS ISSUE



To be continued ... WHS teams continue their run through post-season. **SECOND FRONT**

sKared: Kiwanis Club raises funds for literacy program that has given away nearly 10,000 books. **PAGE 6**



Habitat: With work underway on its first senior cottage, a group is raising funds for two more. **PAGE 5**

Obituaries	2
Crime.....	7
Opinion	8
Crossword	12
Classifieds	13
Sports	18

Online
coastalobserver.com

