

COASTAL OBSERVER

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LAND USE

Commission wants more input on plan to curb density

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

A proposal to cut density for some tracts on the Waccamaw Neck by increasing the amount of open space required in new developments is on hold while planners try to determine if there is another way to limit growth without raising the cost of housing.

"There are a lot of issues with density," commission member Sandra Bundy said. "We're losing our community character in a lot of locations."

But she added that Georgetown County also needs affordable housing and moved to defer action following a public hearing last week that only drew one speaker.

At the request of County Council Member Bob Anderson, the planning staff drafted an amendment to the "general residential" zoning district that would require developments on three acres or more with at least 10 dwellings to preserve half of the land as open space. It would have to be restricted through a deed or easement to prevent future development.

"General residential" zoning allows up to 16 multi-family units per acre and single-family lots as small as 6,000 square feet. There are 38 parcels larger than three acres zoned "general residential" on Waccamaw Neck. Seven of those are over 10 acres.

Under the proposed change, a tract in Murrells Inlet that is currently being developed for 115 multi-family units would have been limited to 68 units, according to the planning staff.

"It doesn't always automatically cut a project in half," said Holly Richardson, the county planning director, because it might not be possible to build on all the land. Wetlands would be unbuildable, but would count toward the open space requirement.

SEE "PLANNING, PAGE 3



The first Pawleys Island Juneteenth parade heads down Petigru Drive.

JUNETEENTH

The start of a tradition

BY JAMESIA ST. LOUIS
COASTAL OBSERVER

Ronald Coleman wasn't aware of Juneteenth. For 91 years, his summer activities included the Fourth of July, picnics and trips to the beach.

"I never thought of June and the abolishment of slavery [together], but now there's another thing," said Coleman. "It was very interesting."

He was among those celebrating at a series of events organized by the Pawleys Island Civic Club over the weekend. It was the ar-



ea's first organized Juneteenth observance and coincided with Georgetown County's adoption of Juneteenth as an official holiday.

A parade through the Parkersville community on Saturday drew about 20 entries, including civic groups, churches, Sheriff Carter Weaver and Midway Fire and Rescue. It ended at the Waccamaw Regional Recreation Center with food and barbecue.

Patricia Rutledge, a Pawleys Island native, said she thinks the holiday should be taught in

SEE "JUNETEENTH," PAGE 3



At left, Erica, 2, and Carter Maddox, 1, watch the parade.



James Linen and Norman Reid lead it.

PAWLEYS ISLAND

Town hires administrator who can bike to work

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

Dan Newquist has never been to the Pawleys Island Fourth of July Parade. He'll be there this year, two weeks before starting work as the new town administrator.

"I'll be working, watching, helping in anyway I can," said Newquist.

He signed a three-year contract this week, replacing Ryan Fabbri, who resigned last month citing conflicts with council members.

Newquist has worked for the Waccamaw Regional Council of Governments since 2009. He was the water quality planner for 12 years before becoming the coun-



Dan Newquist

cil's transportation and environmental programs manager in 2017.

Waccamaw Regional provides planning services to local governments in Georgetown, Horry and Williamsburg counties.

"Today, I don't have any direct experience as a town administrator. Working with jurisdictions throughout our three-county region, you kind of see how towns operate," Newquist said. "I'm in the fortunate position of having a lot of contacts in the region."

His experience at Waccamaw Regional also ties in with projects that the town identified in a strategic planning session in 2020. The town hired a consultant in April to create a plan to deal with the impact of sea level rise on

SEE "PAWLEYS," PAGE 4

ELECTION 2020 | U.S. 7th District

Russell Fry expected a runoff, not a rout

BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI
COASTAL OBSERVER

Fresh off a resounding victory in the state primary and running on about 12 hours of sleep spread over three days, Russell Fry visited with Georgetown County Republicans last week.

Fry, a state representative, garnered 51 percent of the overall Republican vote in the seven-way race in the 7th Congressional District. In Georgetown County, he won 32 of 34 precincts and topped incumbent U.S. Rep. Tom Rice 4,365 to 2,301. At 28.6 percent, that was Rice's highest margin in any of the district's eight counties.

"We squeaked it out," Fry said at a Georgetown County Republican Club meeting two days after the election.

Rice is the only person who has held the seat since South Carolina got a seventh congressional district following the 2010 census. He got just under 25 percent of the primary vote.



Russell Fry talks about the results with supporters.

Fry, who represents state House District 106, was endorsed by former President Donald Trump. Rice was one of the 10

House Republicans who voted to impeach Trump after the Jan. 6, 2021, riot at the Capitol.

"I thought we were going to a

runoff," Fry said. "If you looked at polling, if you looked at Democrats [voting] in the Republican primary, I thought for sure we were going to a runoff."

The Waccamaw Neck was the epicenter of the campaign against Rice last year.

The impeachment vote so incensed Jerry Rovner, chairman of the 7th District Republicans and a Pawleys Plantation resident, that he drafted a letter to all county party chairmen in the state and rallied the other counties in the district against Rice.

Rovner wrote that citizens of the district "vehemently disagreed" with Rice's decisions and actions.

"By his decision to vote to impeach Trump, Rice, a lawyer, denied President Trump due process. He judged the evidence before it was presented," Rovner wrote. "Rep. Rice is in Washington, D.C., to support and defend the Constitution and represent his constituents who elected him

SEE "GOP," PAGE 2

SCHOOLS

Coastal Montessori expansion plan includes space for kindergarten

BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI
COASTAL OBSERVER

Coastal Montessori Charter School has expansion in mind: in both its building and the student population.

Tyler Easterling, who chairs the charter school board, presented plans this week that included two additions and a renovation of existing space that would allow the school to add kindergarten classes. It now has students in grades one through eight who are grouped in multi-age classes, a hallmark of the Montessori method.

Easterling said many people at the school believe parents choose to keep kids in public schools once they've been enrolled in kindergarten. Having those classes at the charter school would keep more students there.

SEE "CHARTER," PAGE 2

INSIDE THIS ISSUE



Moveable Feast: After 25 years, popular literary lunches will become bite-sized.

SECOND FRONT

Pawleys Island: Tree protection may become part of design review. **PAGE 7**

Schools: Former WHS principal heads back to the classroom. **PAGE 12**



Nonprofits: New rescue program finds homes for older dogs. **PAGE 8**

Obituaries 2
Crime..... 5
Opinion..... 6
Crossword 10
Classifieds 11
Sports 16

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