

Ocean Isle Beach sends sign rules back to planners

By Shannan Bowen
Staff Writer

OCEAN ISLE BEACH | Some business owners cheered after the Ocean Isle Beach Board of Commissioners voted Tuesday to send a proposed sign ordinance back to the drawing board.

The town board was considering the proposal for the second time after a first vote in March failed to yield the required majority of 4-1 for approval.

Although three commissioners supported the ordinance in March, all were in favor Tuesday of sending the proposal back to the town's planning board.

If the proposal had passed, it would have based the maximum size of a business sign in the town's commercial district on the size of its building. The ordinance would also require monument signs on Causeway Drive instead of raised signs.

Some business owners said they were worried about the lack of exposure that monument signs — ones that are mounted on the ground and not elevated by a pole or other means — would give their businesses.

"The main type of exposure that we have is our signage," said Jim Pierce, owner of Cinelli's on Causeway Drive.

Pierce said he hoped he and other business owners could be involved in drafting a sign ordinance that suits both business and town needs.

"I will show up at any (planning board) meeting anytime to help come up with a compromise that makes sense to all entities involved," he said.

Mayor Debbie Smith said anyone interested in the sign ordinance should attend the planning board's next meeting, which is at 9 a.m. Tuesday.

Clubs regulated

The town commissioners also adopted regulations Tuesday that will govern the locations and standards of private beach clubs.

A six-month moratorium on beach clubs will end June 1.

The moratorium was enacted after town officials noticed a trend of developers promising residents they would have a private clubhouse at the beach for parking and recreation.

The new rules prohibit clubhouses in the residential district.

Clubhouses also must provide vegetative screening and a buffer zone between the property line and any building associated with the clubhouse.

One parking space will be required for every 80 square feet of area under roof, plus one parking space for each employee on the club's largest shift.

Shannan Bowen: 755-6307
shannan.bowen@starnewsonline.com