

BAD DECISION - BAD GOVERNMENT!

Since their election, Councilmen Alan Gilbert, Bill Clark, and Jerry Johnson have appointed three new P&Z Commissioners. All three appointees have been PACE members, an organization of which Alan Gilbert and Jim Rees are founding members. Are our new Councilmen really acting in the community's best interest when they limit board appointments to people within a particular organization or mindset? Should appointments be about finding the most qualified and diverse individuals, or about rewarding their campaign supporters?

**So, the question is:
Why did these
Councilmen appoint
Jim Rees to the
commission, and in
doing so, have they
served the best interest
of the community?**

Jim is a likable and polite fellow, but his experience pales in comparison to the other applicants. So why were the other applicants passed over in favor of Jim? Was it because he was a staunch supporter of these Councilmen during their campaign? Because he is a fellow member of PACE? Or because these Councilmen have a predetermined agenda and only care to appoint people who support their special interests? Whatever the reason, it is never in the citizens' best interest to appoint less qualified individuals to commissions, or to stack those commissions with people having only one point of view.

In addition to Jim's application, there were seven other applications for consideration.

(These application are available at town hall from the planning department)

Here's a brief description of four of those applications:

Greg Reynolds is a graduate of UNC, holds a Bachelor of Arts in Architecture and a Masters in Architecture, and owns and operates an architectural firm. He served on the Board of Adjustments for Chapel Hill, N.C. and volunteers at Murray Middle School and for Pleasure Island Soccer activities.

Michael Kirkbride has a degree in Aerospace Engineering and currently owns a land development/construction company. In Virginia he served two years as the president of the Home Builder's Association. He also served four years on the Zoning Ordinance Review Committee. His experience includes development of new standards for building height, coverage, setbacks, and storm water issues.

Shawn Underwood holds a degree in Political Science. He has 15 years experience working in the news industry reporting on government activities, including 8-1/2 years as Editor of the Island Gazette. As Gazette Editor, it was his responsibility to interact with the citizens, Council, P&Z, and our town government. He is well versed in our town's history and has substantial insight regarding past problems, the town ordinances, and growth issues.

Lonnie Lashley has degrees in Business Management and Data Processing. Before retirement he was a Project Officer with the Department of Defense and served the federal government for 33 years. He served in Virginia on the Community Service Board. He also serves on our town's Parks & Recreation Committee, and is a long-time volunteer at Carolina Beach Elementary School.

Despite all of these individuals' qualifications and experience, the applicant nominated by Alan Gilbert, and voted in by him, Jerry Johnson, and Bill Clark, was Jim Rees. According to Jim's application, he is a self-employed skate park designer/builder, with no previous experience serving on any board or committee, and no record of volunteer activities. Yet, after considering all the applicants, this is who our new Councilmen felt would best serve the citizens?

These Councilmen ran a campaign on the promise of being the voice of the average citizen. Yet, these same individuals recently refused to take any action on allegations of wrongdoing regarding two P&Z Commissioners. Despite the fact that official complaints were filed by *citizens of this town* (citizens these Councilmen pledged to represent), these Councilmen apparently

did not feel they had any duty to adequately investigate the allegations – at least not when the complaints involved members of PACE, who they appointed.

The citizens that filed complaints have never received any response from the Mayor, and there is no record of any action taken. Allegations of wrongdoing, especially wrongdoing related to our planning process, deserve investigation. Findings and facts related to that investigation should be a matter of public record, not swept under the carpet in closed session. Their promise of *transparent government and representation for all citizens* seems to have turned into backdoor deals and questionable decision-making. Or, perhaps their sense of fairness only applies to citizens who happen to be members of PACE.

PAID FOR BY:

CITIZENS FOR CAROLINA BEACH

We'll be Back Next Week

These Councilmen may feel that Jim is no less qualified than other board members, which of course, is not the issue. The issue is about the qualifications of the pool of applicants at the time of any given appointment. Despite their oath to represent the citizens, these Councilmen obviously choose to overlook more qualified applicants because Jim's appointment happened to fit their need. Appointments should not be something Council members hand out to pay back supporters of their campaigns. In this case, we had a pool of highly qualified applicants; at best, Jim was fifth down on that list. Jim's only qualification seems to be his devotion to PACE and the fact that he and Alan Gilbert are friends and surfing buddies. If these Councilmen consider Jim to be the most qualified applicant, then we should all be concerned for our town's future, as they are obviously intent on surrounding themselves with PACE supporters, in town positions, set on promoting their personal agenda.