

Board debates endorsing bill

Steve Earley
News Editor

Once World Series-winning manager Jack McKeon – and the entourage of citizens and media which he attracted – left the Town of Elon's Board of Alderman agenda-setting meeting Monday, it was a discussion on sales tax that drew the most attention.

McKeon, 72, an Elon resident and 1966 Elon graduate, was presented with the key to the town at the beginning of the regularly-scheduled meeting.

Following a 15-minute reception, the board resumed normal business.

In the most lengthy discussion of the evening, the board debated the merits of taxing Internet, telephone and mail-order sales – collectively known as remote sales.

The board was asked by the North Carolina League of Municipalities to endorse a federal bill which would facilitate state taxation on such sales.

Currently, Supreme Court rulings prevent states from collecting sales tax on remote sales. Due to widely varying tax structures among the 50 states, the high court ruled it would be too complicated and burdensome for vendors to collect the tax.

The bill, known as the Simplified Sales and Use Tax Act, would create more uniform state sales tax structures and lift the restrictions created by the court rulings.

Under the proposal, consumers would pay sales tax to their home state regardless of a vendor's location.

Alderman Ed Swing said the proposal

would be burdensome on tax collectors and Mayor Pro Tem Richard Keziah criticized the measure as counterproductive and said it would probably reduce Internet commerce.

Town manager Mike Dula cautioned his colleagues: "The tax is owed. It's just too hard to collect. I would encourage you not to walk away from valid sources of revenue."

According to the North Carolina League of Municipalities, more than \$593 million in state and local taxes go uncollected because of the restrictions on taxing remote sales.

The board will decide whether to endorse the bill at its regular meeting Tuesday.

In other business, the board approved to give Duke Power a 50-foot right-of-way on the Elon Park property along Cook Road. Because of projected development in the area, additional power lines were already needed. Thus, in exchange for the right-of-way, the power company agreed to install power lines on the park property at no cost to the town.

Dula said B&H Grading and Charles Jones Construction started work on the park's community center site about two weeks ago and were expected to have the site ready for construction by yesterday.

Russell Swartz, the contractor who won the bid to build the park's disc golf course is also ready to begin construction, Dula said. Swartz's bid of \$16,000 was \$9,000 less than the town's estimate for construction of the course.

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Cannon room now art gallery

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of weeks, it was incredibly stimulating," House said. "It is what the liberal arts and sciences are all about."

As part of the resulting decision, the Isabella Cannon room is now designated as an art gallery, House said. The room, located adjacent to the Ward Gallery in the Center for the Arts, is already a frequently-used exhibition space, as well as a site for university meetings and banquets. House said all other areas in the Center for the Arts are designated as multi-purpose art spaces.

The use of these spaces will be determined by a committee to be organized by Hassell. He said he will meet with other art department faculty to decide some basic parameters concerning the committee, such as the number of members, who can be a member and how members will be selected.

Hassell said he endorsed the idea of having students as well as faculty on the committee. Discussions regarding the committee may begin as soon as today during the depart-

ment's regular meeting.

"We've been given this freedom and responsibility and we need to start working on it right away," Hassell said.

The Tack-Tiles exhibition should also restart promptly. Amy Trageser, president of Blueprints, the student art organization running the exhibit, said she plans to start the second phase of the project with the posting of digital art in the Ward Gallery Monday.

Trageser, one of three students who had nude works in the October exhibit, praised the resolution.

"I'm thrilled," she said. "It may have been a long process, but I don't think any of us can complain."

House said that the committee is a temporary solution until the art department can have a building of its own, acknowledging that the three departments in the Center for the Arts – art, music and performing arts – have outgrown the 20-year-old facility.

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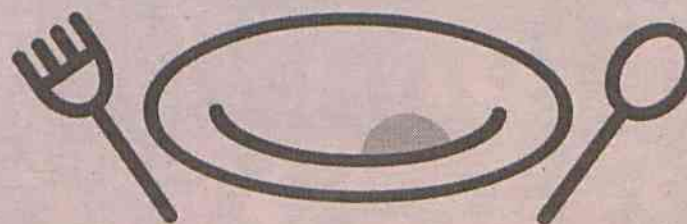
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