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December 25, 2015

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Panel seeks solution on historic Walker building

BY REGGIE PONDER
Editor

The taboo topic of demolition got a brief airing at the first meeting of the task force looking at the future of the two-story former D.F. Walker School building on North Oakum Street.

Edenton Town Councilman Elton Bond voiced

the concern of D.F. Walker alumni that the building not be demolished.

"This is the last piece of history for the Black Community in Edenton," Bond said.

Families have gone to the school to get their education, Bond said.



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Bond said the alumni were interested in trying to find some way to preserve the building.

Chowan County Commissioner Emmett Winborne said that is the goal of the task force—to find a use for the building.

But College of The Albemarle President Kandi Deitemeyer encouraged the task force not to take the demolition option off the table without fully discussing all the pros and cons.

The building is located on COA's Edenton-Chowan Campus.

Deitemeyer asked the panel to consider what it

would mean in terms of campus revitalization if the two-story building were not there, and there was more green space on the campus, and money that might have been used to restore the building was used for other campus improvements.

The future of the two-story former D.F. Walker School building and the

future of College of The Albemarle's Edenton-Chowan Campus are twin concerns of the task force exploring the future of the building, which is located on COA's Oakum Street campus.

At its organizational meeting on Nov. 16 the task force unanimously tapped

See SOLUTION, 4A

Dear Santa



PHOTO BY KIM OBER ULLOM

Kindergartener Carley Layden talks with Santa on Saturday during White Oak Elementary School's 5th Annual Arts and Crafts Holiday Gift Show. Over 60 vendors participated and a crowd of more than 500 people came to enjoy the show and related activities. See story page 6A.

Carawan is new Washington County manager

BY REGGIE PONDER
Editor

Willie M. Carawan has been named county manager of Washington County.

Carawan, who has been Chowan County's finance officer since May 2013, is slated to take the reins in Washington County Jan. 4.

Chowan County Manager Kevin Howard said Carawan's experience and expertise would be missed.

"It's nice when you have a finance officer that has experience as a manager," Howard said.

Carawan served as county administrator in Tyrell County before coming to Chowan as finance offi-

cer. He explained that the county administrator role was similar to county manager but did not involve hiring and firing. Tyrell has since adopted the county manager form of government.

Carawan's salary as county manager will be \$90,000. He has a two-year contract with an annual review and renewal.

Although he currently lives in his native Hyde County, Carawan's contract with Washington County calls for him to relocate to Washington within six months.

Carawan said the biggest chal-



CARAWAN

lenge in moving would be finding a house suitable for his three English Labs.

In addition to his experience as a local government administrator, Carawan also has served as an elected county commissioner in Hyde County.

He said he's looking forward to the new challenge of being a county manager.

Carawan said he appreciated the opportunity to work for Chowan County.

Probably the biggest challenge here was working with the budget to maintain operations when the county commissioners adopted a

property tax rate in 2014 that was less than the 'revenue neutral' rate that is, the rate that would have been expected to generate the same amount of revenue as in the previous budget year.

Carawan said the board faced a difficult choice in that budget and has faced a number of tough choices. He pointed out the board here is very hands-on in dealing with financial matters, mainly because of the experience of the fiscal crisis beginning in 2008.

He said his own goal has been to maintain a high level of transparency regarding the county's finances.

See CARAWAN, 3A

Board to Howard: Devise pay plan

BY REGGIE PONDER
Editor

The Chowan County Board of Commissioners last week asked County Manager Kevin Howard to devise a merit-based salary system based on an overall increase of 2 percent in the cost of employee salaries.

The move followed a decision earlier this fall to authorize Sheriff Wayne Goodwin to implement merit raises in the Sheriff's Office, Detention Center and 911 Center. Goodwin agreed to find the money for the raises this fiscal year within his existing budget.

Howard presented to the county commissioners at their Nov. 16 meeting a study of employee salaries that showed some county employees near the regional average for their position, some ahead of the aver-

See PAY PLAN, 3A

Sell or lease? Council weighs options on building

BY REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writer

Whether to sell or lease the former Northeast Commission building will be a key issue when the future use of the building comes before the town council for discussion next month.

The future of the building will be



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back before the full town council for discussion at the council's Dec. 8 monthly meeting.

That recommendation was made by Administrative Committee Chair Steve Biggs during the council's work session Monday night. Councilman Elton Bond and Councilwoman Norma Simpson, who also serve on that committee, gave the proposal their blessing too.

"Steve, I agree," Bond said. "Let's send it on and get it out there."

When discussion resumes next month it is expected to focus on, among other things, proposed protective covenants and operating

regulations that would affect hours of operation by a prospective business, trash pickup and other concerns. Five citizens who own property adjacent to the building have submitted a petition to the town asking that the council not approve occupancy in the building by any business that includes a commercial kitchen.

Both proposals to purchase the property that are now on the table include eateries as part of their design.

Instead, the petition reads, "I am opposed to making this location a commercial kitchen; I believe that

a retail or multi-retail business would be more suitable for this commercial property."

Biggs said that there were many documents in council's packet for this work session pertaining to protective covenants where he had questions. Nevertheless, he said that being mindful of an email sent by Mayor Roland Vaughan he was determined to keep the decision-making process from stalling again.

"I told the mayor earlier that I was going to try to move ahead

See OPTIONS, 3A

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