

Tape Played For Aldermen

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department.

Hewett played the tape for individual aldermen and consulted with town attorney Mason Anderson on whether the town had any type of tenure law before suspending Campbell.

The mayor said Campbell told him he taped the conversation between the two "because he had heard rumors on the street that I was going to fire him."

But that wasn't true, Hewett added. "I'd never thought of it. It never has been in my mind. We were talking about personnel problems within the department."

Sgt. Rodney Gause and Patrolman Carey Gaskins, senior officers in the department, had come to Hewett with their suspicions about the alleged bugging of police cars and the departmental telephone.

Hewett said there is no evidence, "only suspicions," that the buggings occurred.

Hard Decision

While board members were unanimous in their decision, none of them liked the vote they felt forced to take.

"It just gives me a feeling of hurt. I



MAKING THE MOTION to dismiss Charlotte Police Chief Wayne Campbell was an unpleasant task for Mayor Pro Tem Paul Wayne Reeves.

really feel bad, sick about it," said Reeves. "It will make a person think about being elected, having to do not what they want, but what they feel they had to do."

Other board members called it "the hardest thing I've ever had to do," and "a sad situation."

Mayor Hewett simply said, "I hate it happened."

Sunset Taxpayers Eye Ballot-Box Solution

BY SUSAN USHER

Frustrated in their attempts to influence town decision-making from the fringes, members of the Sunset Beach Taxpayers Association talked seriously Saturday of switching their voter registration to Sunset Beach.

"My vote would carry more weight here than in Charlotte," pointed out one member.

Other members also talked of forming a political action committee so that SRTA members could channel money to candidates supportive of the organization's platform.

They also adopted two motions dealing with conflict of interest.

Most of the organization's members are presently registered to vote in other communities, a point reaffirmed by a show of hands Saturday.

But those who can legally qualify as a resident before the November election were urged to do so by Everett L. Wohlbruck of Charlotte.

"Register to vote at Sunset Beach—rather than somewhere else," he told the group of 60 to 70 members gathered at the Sunset Beach Volunteer Fire Department.

"The only thing we can do of any consequence is register and vote down here and that's exactly what I'm going to do."

Vice-chairman Warren "Bud" Knapp agreed to send out information in the next newsletter on the

state's requirements for voter registration and establishing voter residency.

And he also agreed to a request from Wohlbruck and others to advise members of any challenges they might expect of their registration.

"If half the people here registered at Sunset Beach I would expect it to raise a massive stink," said Wohlbruck. "The people would go berserk."

Conflict?

Much of the discussion during the two-hour session concerned the pivotal position played by Mayor Pro Tem Ed Gore on the town council and whether a conflict of interest exists between his roles as developer and council member.

Even when challenged by other council members such as Kathy Hill on the question, Gore has steadfastly participated in votes that directly affect his business enterprises. If he didn't, Gore explained after one meeting, he would lose his vote on most matters coming before the board. He also claims to support only actions that would be in the best interest of the town.

However, town attorney Michael Isenberg advised in a recent letter to the board that Gore should "of course" disqualify himself from voting on a road abandonment resolution if the closing of any road would vest any property to him or one of his corporations.

Conflict of interest for elected officials is generally viewed as an ethical rather than legal problem in North Carolina. But Sunset Beach Taxpayers Association members don't see it that way and called for legal constraints on elected officials.

They adopted two motions Saturday on the subject. One is to petition the State Attorney General's office to determine if a conflict of interest exists for Gore. The second asks Rep. E. David Redwine to introduce legislation covering conflict of interest as it relates to municipal government.

Members looked at several ways to register their protests against Gore's role on the board, including looking at alternatives for handling their rental units and seeking his censure by the N.C. Board of Realtors. That was an option Wohlbruck said he "wouldn't take seriously" if he were Gore.

Town Clerk Linda Fluegel said that prior to the 1983 town elections Sunset Beach had 135 registered voters.

Those present generally registered mixed reactions to a proposal by the town to abandon portions of several streets, wanting to know the impact of the change as well as other specifics.

Chairman John McCarthy said he thought the changes would be mostly "environmental," allowing property

owners to either build larger homes on their lots than they could before or allowing development of lots that couldn't otherwise be developed at all because of changes in state law. The developments would also mean increased traffic and people on the beach, he noted, where parking is already a serious problem for those who don't live on the island. The town is expected to consider the elimination of parking along the right-of-way of the oceanfront boulevard, he added.

The taxpayers' group has gone on record opposing any activity that results in greater density or greater building heights.

McCarthy urged those present to write letters opposing the roads proposal in order to "build a preponderance of opposition."

In discussion of a land use survey circulated among 100 randomly-selected property owners by the town (16 SBTA members received copies), members also expressed opposition to a high-rise bridge and to a sewer system.

"I feel as long as we don't have a sewer system it will discourage condominium development," suggested McCarthy, noting other alternatives are costly to developers.

On another question, only one person at the meeting, a permanent resident on the mainland, supported a high-rise bridge.

Other Fires Reported

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Four fires were set early Sunday morning on the Old Georgetown Road between N.C. 904 near Grissetown and Four-Mile Road at Ocean Isle Beach, reported Cecil Logan, Brunswick County Emergency Management coordinator.

The fires were all set along the shoulder of the road sometime between 5:30 a.m. and 6 a.m., Logan said. After receiving the call, Logan rushed to the scene where he estimated he trailed the arsonist by "about five minutes."

All four fires are under investigation by Logan and the N.C. Forest Service. Logan used pine limbs to fight the small patches of fires until fire trucks arrived.

The largest fire burned an area of about 50 square feet while the smallest fire was contained to under a five-foot section of brush, Logan said.

Another woods fire last Wednesday afternoon on Little Macedonia Road near Supply destroyed about 10 acres before it was brought under control, Logan said.

"It started out as a man burning his trash," Logan said. "Then it got into his storage building and then it got into the woods. When it got into the woods it was gone."

Supply, Civietown and Tri-Beach Volunteer firefighters battled the blaze along with Forest Service and Georgia Pacific personnel. The air tanker stationed at Bear Pen airfield was also called in to help extinguish the flames.

While Tri-Beach Volunteer firefighters were battling a mobile home fire Sunday evening on N.C. 130 near the Coastline Rescue Squad building, some campers cooking pork and beans just a mile away on the Intracoastal Waterway accidentally caught the marsh grass on fire, Logan said.

Those responsible for the fire filed the scene while a nearby resident reported the fire, Logan said. Firefighters from Supply, Civietown and Tri-Beach departments battled the fire with brush trucks.

One resident was charged last week by the N.C. Forest Service with unlawfully burning while a burning ban remains in effect.

Otis Carlton Haskins of Boiling Spring Lakes was charged by Forest Service Officer Michael A. Hardison last Thursday evening. Haskins pleaded guilty before Magistrate Ephraim Swain the following day.

He was fined \$10 and sentenced to the Brunswick County Jail for 30 days, suspended indefinitely.

Gilberts Are Charged

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cemetery had deeded the spaces and the money was paid out, but they did not put the money in a perpetual care fund."

The Gilberts were each charged with the following violations by the commission: 1) failing to make monthly financial reports; 2) failing to make deposits to pre-need merchandise trust accounts; 3) failing to pay fee for grave spaces; 4) failing to make deposits in pre-construction mausoleum trust account; 5) failing to pay penalty for failing to make timely deposits for care and maintenance trust fund; and 6) failing to make deposits in a perpetual care fund.

Gilbert, a Democrat, won re-

elected to the coroner's position during the May 7 primary last year by narrowly defeating school nurse Pamela Gurganus, with 3,934 votes to 3,559 for Ms. Gurganus. He faced no opposition in the November general election.

Following the resignation of Brunswick County Sheriff Herman Strong in 1983, Gilbert sought the sheriff's office through the Democratic party, which chose John Carr Davis to fill the seat.

The couple's funeral home in Southport, Gilbert's Funeral Home, operating since 1959, was also heavily damaged by fire last August. The 75-year-old structure suffered an estimated \$150,000 in damage from the blaze.

Voting Residency Is Subject To Challenge

Changing your residency for voting purposes from one county to another can be simple—unless someone files a challenge.

Any voter is subject to the challenge of non-residency, said Lynda Britt, supervisor of the Brunswick County Board of Elections. But the subject comes up most frequently in odd years when local municipal elections are held because residency is a continuing question or sore spot not only for college towns, but for resort towns as well.

"Residency is one of the worst

things the legislature and the state board (of elections) have had to do," she said.

And a challenge to someone's residency can be lodged by any registered voter.

The question of residency arose again Saturday, when members of the Sunset Beach Taxpayers Association decided the voting box was their only effective way of getting the town board's attention.

Eligible members were encouraged to change their registration to Sunset Beach, but most weren't sure what that might entail or whether they would be challenged.

If challenged by another voter, Ms. Britt noted, the burden of proof is up to the challenger, not the person challenged.

He can still vote, under protest, pending a ruling by the Brunswick County Board of Elections. The county board handles most municipal

elections in the county, including those of Sunset Beach.

Prior to the 1983 town election, Sunset Beach had 185 registered voters, according to Town Clerk Linda Fluegel. That number has most likely increased in the ensuing two years.

In November the seats held by Mayor Frances Kanoy, Mayor Pro Tem Ed Gore, and Council members Kathy Hill and George Foster come up for election. The filing period opens August 30.

While the SBTA is a "non-political organization," McCarthy said, it is for good government. Its individual members are free to vote in support of candidates who favor the organization's position: keeping Sunset Beach "as it has been, a family beach and predominantly single-family."

When someone registers to vote in Brunswick County, they take an oath that this is their residence and that

they have lived here 30 days.

They are also asked about registration elsewhere, because to be registered in more than one location is a felony, Ms. Britt said.

When a challenge comes before the board of elections, there are a number of questions used to help resolve the issue.

These range from whether they do business or bank in the community, have a mailing address here, have a local address on their driver's license, where their motor vehicles are registered and what county they list as their permanent residence when filing tax returns.

"I can't tell them; they're going to have to tell me" whether they're permanent residents, she said. "They just need to be very careful."

You can have a domicile anywhere. But residency is where you leave in the morning, you plan to return to that evening."

Less Than Usual Rainfall On Tap

The South Brunswick Islands will continue to see cooler temperatures and less rain than normal rainfall for mid-April during the coming week.

Shallotte Point meteorologist Jackson Canady said temperatures will range from the mid-40s at night to around 70 degrees during the daytime.

He predicts the area will receive less than a half-inch of rain.

Any rain at all would be an improvement over the period of April 2-8, when Canady recorded no rainfall whatsoever on his backyard gauge.

During the same period he recorded a maximum temperature of 86 degrees on April 4th and a minimum low of 27 degrees on the morning of April 3rd.

An average daily high of 77 degrees combined with an average nightly low of 44 degrees for an average temperature of 61 degrees, which is about normal. However, Canady said that while the numerical average was normal, the area experienced warmer days and cooler nights than is typical for this time of year.

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