

Town Eyes Alternatives To Sewer Plant Expansion

BY SUSAN USHER

Voluntary water conservation and buying goals are just two of the alternatives Shallotte aldermen began considering last Wednesday as they try to buy more time.

They're looking for ways to allow the town's steady growth to continue without immediately having to expand the capacity of the Forest Drive sewerage treatment plant.

Their discussion will continue at the August 7 board meeting.

While development is allowed on existing sewer mains, the lines cannot be extended into new areas such as

those brought into town through annexation. The ban was set by the N.C. Department of Natural Resources and Community Development, based on its statistics on effluent-treated sewerage—leaving the Forest Drive plant.

The treatment plant has a design capacity of 120,000 gpd sewage. State records indicate that if all existing lots along existing mains were developed, the plant would be at or exceeding capacity.

But town officials think those figures are misleadingly high and

are seeking data to back up their claim that usage is significantly lower. Low enough, suggested Mayor Beamon Hewett, that the town's growth can continue at its now "regular" rate for a number of years without plant expansion.

"We're going to keep perfect records so we can get some action," he said.

The town wants to reduce flow into the treatment lagoons as well as proving that a dilutant, rainfall, constitutes a significant portion of the flow from the lagoon.

Reserve Funds

Meanwhile the board clarified its intentions regarding payments to a capital reserve fund to help finance the future expansion of the treatment plant at a cost of about \$400,000.

Persons who obtained a building permit before July 1 do not have to pay an impact fee based on the size of the home or business, said board members, agreeing with Alderman David Harrelson. And this impact fee is to be collected at the time the customer pays for a building permit, the board told Superintendent/Building Inspector Albert Hughes.

"Anything else would be changing the rules in the middle of the game," said Alderman Wilton Harrelson. But if someone who had a building permit before July 1 did not pay for water and sewer connections before that date, he or she must pay the additional cost reflected in the 1985-86 utility budget, which became effective July 1. The new fees reflect the town's actual cost of installation plus \$250 that will be set aside in the capital reserve fund.

One inch of rainfall on 3 1/2 acres, Harrelson said, equals 26,000 gallons of extra water—and effluent—in the system.

Eying the state's records for effluent discharged between June 1984 and May 1985, he postulated that if the town studied the monthly effluent rates against rainfall data, it would come up with an exact correlation between the two. In September, for instance, when Hurricane Diana dumped 18 inches of rain on the area, the effluent rate jumped to 4,036 million gallons per month. In October, when rainfall was also excessive, the rate was 3.53 million gallons per month. Taking out the three top months drops the yearly average to a level that would allow the town to continue growing if the state agrees with that finding.

A.R. Rubin, a state agricultural extension specialist in biological and agricultural engineering, met with Mayor Hewett and Public Works Superintendent Albert Hughes last week on ways to increase the capacity of the plant without a construction project.

Rubin estimates most homeowners could easily reduce their indoor water consumption by about 30 percent through the installation of simple devices and appliances such as low volume toilets, shower heads and faucet aerators or displacement devices such as bricks that reduce the amount of water required for each flush when placed in the water closet. Another choice is one or more "dams" that block off portions of a water closet, reducing water consumption by about two gallons per flush. And, said Rubin, a simple washer can be inserted into a water line or faucet that will reduce the flow to about three gallons per minute.

"He suggested we possibly give

the washers to our customers to encourage conservation," added the mayor.

With a reduction in hot water usage the homeowner would also save on energy costs, Rubin predicts in an extension bulletin, "Water Watch."

At the Forest Drive site, Rubin proposes conducting several tests to determine if the acreage can hold more effluent than is now being applied, or if it can be modified to accept more effluent.

"He thinks the soil can hold much, much more than what we're putting out," said the mayor. Rubin proposes taking soil and vegetation samples, Hewett said. Rubin also repeated an earlier suggestion from Harrelson to change the cover crop from pine trees to sprigged coastal Bermuda grass, which should absorb about four times more effluent because the grass grows quickly and is harvested frequently.

To prove that point, he proposes a test plot, half covered in existing pine trees and half cleared of trees and planted in Bermuda.

The plots would be deliberately overwatered in order to determine the actual saturation point, with monthly rather than quarterly monitoring well samples taken to check for groundwater contamination.

"I'm serious about the goats," said the mayor, noting they've been used successfully by other communities. Harrelson is to come back with information on their purchase and availability at the August 7 meeting. "We may have to go on the market for them," warned the mayor. "And they're not cheap anymore."

Other Business

In other business, the board: Voted to write the N.C. Department of Transportation seeking use of "small urban project" funds for the extension of the three-lane of U.S. 17 beyond Coastal Plaza shopping center as proposed by state DOT officials earlier this year.

Took criticism of two new stoplights in town lightly. "I told them the only thing that would help is the bypass," said Alderman Wilton Harrelson. "At least you no longer have to take your lunch with you to make a left turn."

Hired Billy Eason and Larry Pigott as general laborers at the

recommendation of Public Works Superintendent Albert Hughes. Pigott, who recently began work as part-time meter reader, "turned around and applied for a permanent job," said Hughes.

As a result the town voted to readvertise the meter reader position as well as a police post vacant again after the chosen applicant decided against taking it, Chief Don Stovall said. Board members gave him authority to advertise for candidates outside the county as well as locally.

They also authorized Stovall to continue driving a patrol car home at night, with the mayor noting that it needed to be marked so its use would not be considered taxable compensation. Stovall said a full three-inch by seven-inch logo was to be ready Thursday. Vehicles clearly identified as necessary in emergencies, such as the police car and the service truck Superintendent Albert Hughes drives home, are exempt from the tax clause.

Stovall lives at Holden Beach but is looking for a residence in or near Shallotte.

Decided to use their own money to send flowers and a card to Mayor Pro Tem Paul Wayne Reeves, who has been ill for several months.

Agreed their recent annexation of the Al Willis property between Sellers Drive and U.S. 17 automatically included the rights-of-way to the roads as well, which means the town limits will be extended to that point by the N.C. Department of Transportation, according to Mayor Beamon Hewett.

At the planning board's recommendation, aldermen voted to schedule a public hearing August 7 at 7:30 p.m. on the proposed rezoning of a tract on Mulberry Street from industrial to commercial at the request of property owner Rita Stanaland. Planning board members were polled by telephone after the panel failed to attain a quorum on July 8.

"There's no industry happening there," said the mayor. "It's really turning into a commercial area." A special use permit would be necessary to build Ms. Stanaland's proposed daycare center if the area remains zoned for industry. The stretch would be rezoned a depth of 400 feet on both sides of the street.

Schools Asked To Explore Ways To Finance Buildings

BY TERRY POPE

Segment one of the four-year school construction plan prepared by the Brunswick County Board of Education will be funded by the county next year, but what lies after next year remains a mystery.

At a joint meeting of the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners and school board Tuesday night, County Manager Billy Carter said schools will receive all requested funds for the 1985-86 school year, except for about \$337,000 that would have been set aside as a reserve for future constructions.

Having funds for only the first year of the four-year plan only leaves two options, said School Superintendent Gene Yarbrough—to either delay all school construction or to delay the planned second-year renovation at Union Primary School.

County Finance Director Wallace Harding said schools will receive \$1,130,000 in current expenses for the 1985-86 fiscal year along with \$800,000 in capital outlay. The \$800,000 in capital outlay includes the 40 percent of all half-cent sales tax revenues available to the county, he added.

With no guarantee of future funds, Commissioner James Poole asked the school board Tuesday to consider which route they would like to take in raising the \$8 million needed to fund the four-year plan. In the first year, Lincoln Primary School is scheduled to undergo renovations.

Poole said the schools may want to consider a bond referendum to finance the construction, perhaps "run on the same ticket with Brunswick Technical College," which approved a bond referendum

last week to finance its building program.

Commission Chairman Chris Chappell congratulated the school board for looking at "long range plans" with its four-year proposal, but "we really dug and dug to get the funds this year. We may be starting something this year, but what happens in three years?" he asked. Chappell said there were problems with the schools' four-year plan, and specifically noted that "we have one school that is well overcrowded and it remains third on the totem pole."

In the four-year plan, Lincoln would face renovations next year followed by renovations at Union Primary. In the third year, South Brunswick High School would receive an additional classroom building while a new K-8 elementary school would be constructed in the Supply area to relieve overcrowding at Shallotte Middle and Union Primary in the fourth year.

SBHS currently has 16 trailers on its campus to help relieve overcrowding, Yarbrough said. In a prepared statement delivered to the commissioners, Yarbrough said that "while most of the Brunswick County schools may be over-capacity, we are not at this time out of space."

Recent conversations with Dr. Henry Cole of the N.C. Division of School Planning in Raleigh indicates that "the original 15 classrooms projected for South Brunswick High School might be reduced to ten classrooms to allow additional construction at Bolivia Elementary and South Brunswick Middle Schools," Yarbrough added.

"The way Division of School Planning is looking at it," Yarbrough said, "is that we're heading for some rapid growth within the county and the school system itself."

Yarbrough said the two boards need to "set up some form of liaison contact," to work together on meeting the school funding needs, "whatever we decide might be the best way to go."

Residency Requirement

A policy adopted by commissioners requiring that county employees live within Brunswick County was also proposed to the school board Tuesday with mixed reactions.

Although it is not mandated by the county or state, Chappell said the residency requirement is urged by the county. Such a policy was adopted by Brunswick Technical College for its employees last week.

The policy would include a grandfather clause and therefore not affect employees who already live outside the county. Yarbrough said the school administration already encourages its employees to live within the county.

The schools have 850 employees who live in Brunswick County and 195 who live outside the county, he added. The three Leland schools are staffed with a number of teachers who live in New Hanover County since it is nearby, he said.

School board member James Clemmons said most teachers are state paid, and "if the state pays their salary, you can't make them live here."

Yarbrough said all of the schools' supervisors and administrators live within the county, while it is a state requirement for the superintendent. It is now a school requirement for principals while new teachers hired are also encouraged to live in the county, he added.

"We can certainly make it official what we have been doing unofficially," Forstner added.

Calendar Of Events

Thursday, July 25

ABWA CHARTER NIGHT in the social hall of Shallotte Presbyterian Church, 7:30 p.m.

GAME NIGHT at the American Legion Hut, one mile south of Shallotte on U.S. 17, 7:30 p.m.

Friday, July 26

GAME NIGHT at the Sunset Beach Volunteer Fire Department, 8 p.m.

Saturday, July 27

CHRISTMAS IN JULY SALE sponsored by the Holden Beach Senior Citizens to raise money for a senior center and support Tri-Beach Volunteer Fire Department. Crafts, rummage and bake sale and hot dogs, at the fire station, Sabbath Home Church Road, 9 a.m. until dusk. Call 842-2869 or 842-2911 to donate items to sale.

GAME NIGHT at the Calabash Volunteer Fire Department, 8 p.m.

Monday, July 29

TEST-TAKING SKILLS, SAT math review free week-long course begins at West Brunswick High School, 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. daily. Contact Deborah Champion, WBHS, 754-4338.

BRUNSWICK COUNTY BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES meets at the DSS office, Brunswick County Government Center, Bolivia, 5:30 p.m.

BRUNSWICK COUNTY B.A.S.S.MASTERS CLUB meet at Joe's Barbecue, Shallotte, 7:30 p.m.

SHALLOTTE AMERICAN LEGION POST meets at the Legion Hut, U.S. 17 one mile south of Shallotte, no time specified.

Tuesday, July 30

DEADLINE to enter amateur "Celebrate July" photo contest sponsored by Brunswick County Parks and Recreation Department, 253-4357.

Murder Defendant Draws Life Sentence

(Continued From Page 1-A)

John Marlow. Batchelor said Stamper had offered no resistance and voluntarily gave officers a statement. The defendant also agreed to help officers search for the murder weapon, a search that proved unsuccessful, he added.

Stamper came to Brunswick County seeking employment after becoming a victim of layoffs in the coal mine industry in West Virginia, his attorney, William Fairley stated. The murder was an act "that was grossly out of character" for the defendant, he told the judge.

Holding up a manila folder, Fairley said he had a file "two inches thick with letters that say Jimmy Stamper was a gentle, kind, thoughtful person," prior to the crime. The letters were from former teachers, residents and friends in Welch, W. Va.

Mabe had offered Stamper a place to stay on a temporary basis only a week before the murder, Fairley said. The two seemed to get along fine until the "tranquility was broken by a terrible, terrible act for which Jimmy is going to pay for the rest of his life," he added.

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