

Officials Upset At Being Bypassed In Location Of Ash Transfer Site

BY SUSAN USHER

Upset at not being consulted regarding plans to locate a coal ash transfer site in the Leland Industrial Park, Brunswick County Commissioners were to meet with Resources Development Commission Executive Director Michael deSherbinin on Wednesday (Sept. 23) to find out why they were bypassed.

"I would like to send him a letter letting him know he bypassed the board," District 2 Commissioner Benny Ludium first suggested.

County Manager John T. Smith told commissioners Monday night that KBK Enterprises of Marietta, Ga., has begun clearing four of the 15 acres it has obtained in the industrial park in preparation to transfer ash from the new Cogentrix steam co-generation plant in Southport. He said the site had been approved by the state.

"I think this board should have been made aware of this," District 3 Commissioner Jim Poole said, going on record against the plan.

The decision relieves Brunswick County of its responsibility for helping Cogentrix dispose of its ash, a commitment made when the company agreed to locate here, Smith noted Monday.

KBK had first wanted to locate its facility in the Mill Creek community, but after residents of the rural area complained to the commissioners in July, the board asked KBK to look for an alternate, industrial site.

At that time, KBK Vice President Jerry Chumley told commissioners

his company didn't need the commissioners' approval to locate in the county, that it was a courtesy.

However, a state regulation regarding transfer facilities notes that state approval of such plans hinges on receipt of an approval letter from the unit of government having zoning authority over the site where the facility is to be located.

Chumley has said the company plans to store the ash in cells on the transfer site on a temporary basis until they are used as fill material.

The county manager said Monday that KBK engineer Richard Woodham "thinks there is a great market for the product in this area."

"But at this time," he added, "I can't report that to be the case."

Commissioners say they are concerned about the safety of storing or using the ash, a concern noted Monday by Smith.

A report in August from Walter E. Marley, county soil scientist, noted various uses for coal ash, usually in the form of heavier bottom ash, not

as the mixed fly and bottom ash produced by Cogentrix.

"I don't think they'll be able to use it. I think they will store it there and then run off and it will become our problem," said District 3 Commissioner Jim Poole.

Poole said he considers the transfer site "a waste" of the 15-acre tract owned by the Brunswick County Economic Development Council.

Marley's report also showed several potential problems: the ash (See OFFICIALS, Page 2-A)

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STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

Cathy's Off To Ireland

National Oyster Shucking Champion Cathy Carlisle (right center) and her mother, Norma Light (left center), waited nervously at New Hanover County Airport Monday before heading to Ireland via New York City. Ms. Carlisle will compete in the World Oyster

Opening Championship in Galway, Ireland, on Sept. 26. She was sent off by her husband, Gary (right), best friend Tara Futch (left), and several South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce officials.

Three Escapees Back, But The Jailer Is Gone

BY SUSAN USHER

Three inmates who escaped early Saturday from the Brunswick County Jail went back behind bars Tuesday and the jailer on duty at the time of their escape resigned.

Deputies recaptured Daniel Wayne Briles, 21, of Shallotte, about 2 p.m. Tuesday in the Seaside area, said Sheriff John Davis.

Shortly after 9:30 p.m., Riley Bradford Ridgeway, 17, of Shallotte, and Jimmy Dean Nolan, 28, of Leland, were arrested by sheriff's deputies and Shallotte police officers near the end of Mulberry Road just outside the town limits.

All three will be charged with escape, an offense punishable by up to two years imprisonment.

Davis also said officers expected to file additional charges against one or both of the men arrested Tuesday night after further questioning, including possession of a firearm and possession of burglary tools.

Officers do not know how the three escaped, but Davis said they apparently had help, that someone had been waiting for them outside of the jail.

Also on Tuesday, Davis accepted the resignation of 23-year-old Chris Farmer, the jailer on duty Saturday morning when the men escaped.

Davis said he had given Farmer the option of resigning or getting fired because he failed to follow jail procedures. The sheriff said the jailer apparently either left a jail door unlocked or had left a key exposed to the prisoners.

"The jailer said he doesn't know how it happened," added the sheriff.

"If he had followed procedures, it

would never have occurred," added Davis of the first escape from the jail since he became sheriff and only the third since the facility opened.

He was referring to procedures, adopted in July, that prohibit inmates from being outside the locked cellblock door after 5 p.m. Only jailers, officers, magistrates and bondsmen are to be in the booking area inside the jail after that hour.

The procedure also limits inmate visits after 5 p.m. to only ministers and attorneys, and then only in the visiting booth.

Violation of the policy is grounds for immediate dismissal, according to Davis.

Farmer discovered the three missing from their cells at breakfast Saturday about 6:30 a.m. They had apparently escaped sometime since 7:30 a.m. that day.

The theory, he said, is that the inmates escaped through a rear door to a walled outdoor exercise area, a door he said "is never unlocked" and also not checked during rounds that an inmate could have unlocked earlier in the day. When he made rounds during the night, he said, the beds in their cells looked like people were sleeping in them, with shoes at the foot of each.

All three inmates had been charged with breaking and entering and larceny charges.

Tuesday Briles was also charged with escape, which Sheriff Davis said is an offense punishable by up to two years imprisonment.

Monday afternoon Sheriff Davis said the office learned that Ridgeway and Nolan may have fled to Florida.

While not denying blame, Farmer

told The Brunswick Beacon he was following standard jail procedure the night of the escape, if not the written policy.

"I'm not saying it was not my fault it happened," he said, "but it could have happened any time."

When he came on duty at 9 p.m., he said, Ridgeway was already cleaning the floors in the booking area outside the locked cellblock and had already had access to the keys.

While against written procedure, he acknowledged, it was standard for trustees to do the floors after 5 p.m. "That's the only time they can do it," he said, because of daytime traffic in the area.

"They don't like it, but it happens," he asserted.

However, Sheriff Davis said Ridgeway was a youthful offender who was not to be with the rest of the jail population and was definitely not a trusty.

A trusty is an inmate entrusted with carrying out errands around the jail, with a greater degree of freedom of movement than other inmates.

However, Farmer said, "the jailers considered him (Ridgeway) a trusty."

Ridgeway had been in jail approximately seven months, about the same time Farmer had been employed as a jailer.

As for Farmer's assertions that jailers allow certain inmates to perform chores outside the cellblock after lock-up, Davis said Tuesday, "If I catch other jailers doing it, I'll do the same thing to them."

"They can get someone to do it during the day or they can do it at night themselves."

Utilities Operation Board Bucks Proposed Policy

BY RAHN ADAMS

Brunswick County Utilities Operation Board members Friday rejected a proposal by the Brunswick County Commissioners to, in effect, underwrite the cost of extending water lines to a major golf course/residential development.

In a policy that if adopted would also be applied to similar projects in the future, the commissioners had proposed that the county and the developer of Lockwood Folly each pay half the cost of water lines to the road near the entrance of the Holden Beach-Varnumtown area subdivision. In turn, the county would allow Lockwood Folly the equivalent sum in free connections to the water system.

But Friday the UOB rejected that

idea. Instead members agreed to propose to commissioners that the developer pay a sum equivalent to the cost of a six-inch line along the way—the assessment that would have been paid by property owners along the water lines if an assessment district had been created as first recommended by the UOB.

Brunswick County Commissioners, meeting Monday night, did not discuss the draft policy or the UOB recommendation. However, at the request of the UOB, commissioners agreed to a joint meeting on Sept. 23 at 7 p.m. in their chambers to discuss basic relationships and means of operation of the UOB.

The commissioners' policy proposal apparently was discussed in executive session, in an apparent viola-

tion of the N.C. Open Meetings Law.

According to approved minutes of the UOB's Sept. 14 meeting, Commissioner Frankie Rabon, an ex-officio member of the UOB, gave UOB Director John Harvey a proposed policy draft dealing with the Lockwood Folly water project. The draft was given to Harvey "in mid-afternoon (Sept. 14) from a County Commission meeting," the minutes said.

(See UTILITIES, Page 2-A)

Two Injured When Building Collapses

BY SUSAN USHER

At least two workers were injured last Wednesday afternoon when a golf cart storage building under construction at Brick Landing Plantation suddenly collapsed.

A construction crew had just set the trusses for the 52-foot by 110-foot building in place atop the framing. "They were going back to straighten them up when it came up," said Construction Supervisor Gene Shelley of Brick Landing Associates Ltd., who had just left the building site at the time of the accident. "A storm was coming up to the east and the wind just gusted up and just laid it down."

Ronnie Dunn, of Best Golfcarts, said he was assembling new golfcarts on the adjacent vacant lot when the trusses toppled over.

"We didn't see it, but we heard it," he said. "It started at one end and went to the other, sort of like dominoes: clank, clank, clank. There was no time to do nothing."

Several employees were in the framework when the accident occurred, he said, but most were clustered at the end that fell last and escaped serious injury.

One employee, Jay Thomas, injured his wrist, Shelley said shortly after the accident. Another employee, who had fallen face down, was struck by collapsing trusses.

Several of the trusses broke as they fell and the side framing had broken at one place on its north side.

Shelley could not be reached later for identification of the second injured worker or the nature of the two men's injuries. Both were transported to the Brunswick Hospital Emergency Room by Shallotte Volunteer Rescue Squad.

Shelley estimated Wednesday he had lost a week's worth of work on the building with its collapse, clearing of debris and rebuilding. However, he was anticipating its completion by the end of this week.

He said he planned to "let everybody look at it that needs to and then start putting it back."

The collapse was the first construction-related accident at the golf course-residential development, he noted, which is under construction at Brick Landing on a tract overlooking the Intracoastal Waterway and Sassafras Creek.

Two Claim Interests In Seized Shopping Plaza

BY SUSAN USHER

Two parties have filed claims in U.S. Federal Court in Wilmington asserting interests in Resort Plaza, a \$1.5 million shopping center in Shallotte seized and arrested by the U.S. Marshals Service on Sept. 3 for alleged involvement in felonious drug transactions.

On Sept. 14 a claim by Elizabeth L. Willis of Shallotte was filed stating that "she is now the sole and bona fide owner" of the property and that it should be released to her.

On Sept. 11 North Carolina National Bank (NCNB), payee on a \$445,000, 10-year note from A.B. Willis III dated Oct. 20, 1986, also fil-

ed claim to interests in the property. The claim and answer, filed by NCNB attorney Richard W. Evans of Raleigh, indicates that, upon default, its note is secured by assignment of leases from all tenants of the property.

The note is identified as a loan to A.B. "Al" Willis III for construction of Resort Plaza. As of Sept. 3 the outstanding principal owed was \$420,686.

In its answer the bank, identified as a lien holder in the civil suit, seeks dismissal. It also asks the court to remit the property to its possession and/or mitigate the forfeiture to the extent that its own interests to the

property would be forfeited. The answer also asserts the bank had no knowledge of any alleged illegal activity involving either Al Willis or Resort Plaza.

A "forfeiture in rem" complaint filed Aug. 19 in federal district court in Wilmington alleges portions of the structure were used to store controlled substances, to hold drug transactions and to make telephone calls relating to drug trafficking in violation of the Controlled Substances Act.

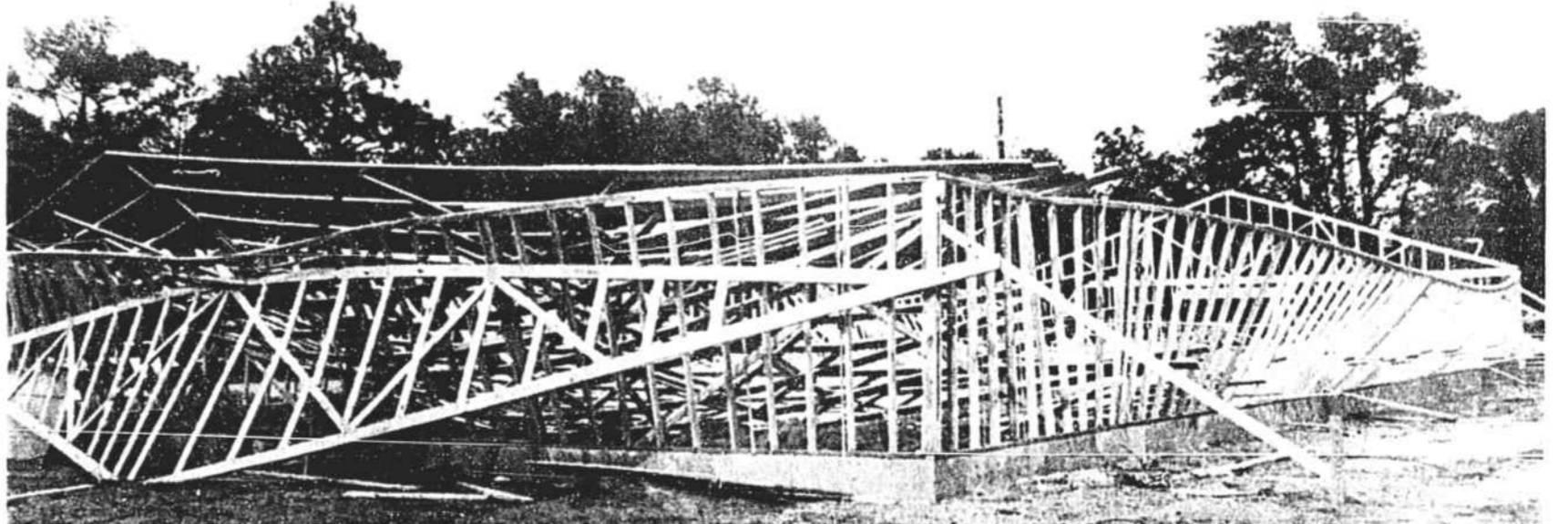
Pending the outcome of its civil suit, the marshals service has been operating as landlord of the complex, which has 23 tenants other than its

owner.

Documents relating to the seizure identify the owner as Alvin Bryan "Al" Willis III of Shallotte, who was indicted in June by a special investigative grand jury on 12 counts each of trafficking in cocaine and conspiracy to traffic. Released on \$25,000 bond, he is awaiting trial.

According to documents given on Sept. 3 to shopping center tenants by marshals, on Jan. 15, 1987, five months before his indictment, Al Willis transferred the Resort Plaza property from his name to that of his mother's, Elizabeth L. Willis.

However, District Attorney (See TWO CLAIM, Page 2-A)



THIS GOLF CART storage shed under construction at Brick Landing Plantation collapsed last Wednesday afternoon. At least two persons were hurt.