

NEW BOARD MEMBERS TAKE OFFICE

Calabash Council Hopes To Fill Vacancies

BY DOUG RUTTER

Calabash town council began an effort to fill several vacancies in town government Monday, including one seat on the board.

Following last week's resignation of Councilwoman Pati Lewellyn and the town's official acceptance of her resignation Monday, the four-member town board agreed to delay actions of the board of adjustments and appointment of the town water committee until a fifth member can be chosen.

Lewellyn was re-elected to a second term on Nov. 3 with 34 write-in votes, but decided not to serve, citing business and personal reasons.

Mayor Doug Simmons asked the four council members to consider nominees for the position, which may be filled during the Dec. 28 meeting.

Simmons also asked the board to consider appointees to the town planning and zoning board, which currently only has three members and is lacking two regular members and two alternates.

The current members are Chairman John Johnson, Betty Wiedmaier and Bob Crocker.

New board member Joel Landis High said council should carefully consider the planning board appointments because of its importance to the town's growth.

"I think the planning board is going to be very important now," he said. "There are a lot of projects now going on within a mile of here that I think the planning board should look into. It would help us tax-base wise to bring these into the town."

Marsh Harbour Yacht Club representative Bob Hersch said the primary developers of the club are interested in annexation and that the property on N.C. 179 is within the extrajurisdictional jurisdiction of Calabash.

Request Delayed

Also Monday, new board members Ronnie Pittman, Keith Hardee and High said they would address in detail at the Dec. 28 meeting the questions of Village Green residents Paul Schasney and Randy Spooner concerning their positions on a town water system and their reactions and explanations of published reports of consistent delinquent tax payments.

Despite statements that they would think the questions over before answering the townspeople, Hardee and High both said they were in favor of town water.

High said that both he and Hardee had made previous unsuccessful attempts to acquire a town water system in the 1970s but were unsuccessful. "My personal feelings on water haven't changed," he said. "Calabash needs water to survive."

Hardee added, "I'm 100 percent for water."

Concerning reports of delinquent payment of town taxes, Hardee



INCOMING COUNCIL MEMBERS (from left) Ronnie Pittman, Joel Landis High and Keith Hardee take the oath of office Monday along with returning board member Sonia Stevens (right) as Town Clerk Janet Thomas prepares for Monday's meeting.

STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

replied, "As far as I'm concerned, I didn't know my taxes weren't paid, and it's kind of embarrassing." Hardee had previously stated that his wife handled the payment of taxes.

He added that in his estimation, tax records should not be reported by the press "unless they have a good reason."

High said he stood behind previous statements concerning his tax-paying history. "I am not ashamed about what I said to nobody."

When previously asked about his late tax payments for the last nine years, High said, "They've got to understand that most of the people down here work seasonally. When I get the city tax bill, I can't pay it until I get the money." He also said his wife takes care of paying taxes.

Pittman did not respond to either question.

Other Business

In other business Monday, Simmons:

•Reported that no action was taken during a 30-minute executive session called to discuss a legal matter. Town Attorney Mike Ramos requested the closed session.

•Informed council that neither he or Town Clerk Janet Thomas had heard whether the state had approved the water engineering plans for phase one of the town water system which includes water line extensions to Ivey High Road, Oak Street and part of Nance Street.

•Informed council that despite previous reports that state Rep. E. David Redwine and Senator R.C. Soles might be able to secure \$100,000

in funds for the town water system, the two had written letters to Simmons during the summer reporting that the proposed funding had not been accepted during the budgeting process, but that they would both continue their efforts to obtain the money.

•Told council that he had not received any word from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers since the middle of summer concerning a proposed dredging project in the Calabash River.

He said a Corps representative had discovered a suitable spoil site at Colkins Neck, between the river and the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway, but he had not reported back since July.

•Informed council of a request by the Calabash V.F.W. to move its annual Turkey Shoot operation in future years from its current site on N.C. 179 to a site behind its building.

Council members said the move would not present any problems

unless the Turkey Shoot was too close to any residences.

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