

Group Wants County To Build Pro Baseball Stadium

BY ERIC CARLSON

After striking out in Wilmington recently, a group of sports promoters Monday asked the Resources Development Commission to play ball in an effort to build a minor league baseball stadium in Brunswick County.

Representatives of the Cape Fear Baseball Committee told the RDC board that Southeastern North Carolina is the largest area in the state without a professional baseball team.

They said several minor league teams will be changing home towns in the next two years due to professional baseball's updated requirements for minor league stadiums.

"If you build it, they will come," said Matt Perry, president of Sports Enterprises in Wilmington. "I know it sounds trite, but it's a fact. There is plenty of interest in bringing a team here. What they need is a place to play. Stadiums make the world of minor league baseball go 'round."

The committee asked the RDC to support the concept of having Brunswick County build a 4,000-seat stadium that Perry said would cost between \$3 million and \$3.25 million. That estimate does not include the purchase of a suitable 20- to 25-acre building site.

The facility would be leased to the baseball team for 70 to 80 days a year and would otherwise be available for concerts, local baseball tournaments, flea markets, festivals and other events, Perry said.

While the county would be unlikely to recover its investment solely through the baseball lease, the facility could be rented for other events and would create "a tremendous potential for additional development" in the area, said committee representative Timothy Keane.

The stadium and its 1,000-car parking lot could serve as an anchor for a larger recreational facility, he said. Or it could be part of a planned commercial and residential area.

Brunswick County would obtain a minor league franchise through the relocation of an existing team, Perry said. At least three Class A teams are likely to be forced to move by the 1994 season because their current

stadiums do not meet the new standards set by professional baseball.

The team most likely to move to this area would be the Spartanburg, S.C., Phillies of the South Atlantic (Sally) League, which is affiliated with the major league Philadelphia Phillies. Other Sally League teams include the Asheville Tourists, the Fayetteville Generals, the Greensboro Hornets, the Hickory Crawdads, the Charleston (S.C.) Rainbows and the Capital City Bombers of Columbia, S.C.

Perry said a professional baseball team in the Cape Fear region "could easily draw visitors from a four-county region." During the baseball season, the operation would employ about 7 to 10 full-time and 30 to 50 part-time workers.

Asked why the Wilmington City Council recently voted against building a baseball stadium, Perry said the city was in a tight financial position and felt it could not afford the investment.

"When they developed their list of priorities, this didn't make it to the top," Perry said.

Keane said a prospective team owner had offered the city "a very favorable lease arrangement" including an above-average percentage of ticket revenues. The same man may be interested in bringing the team to Brunswick County, he said.

RDC Director Thomas Monks said he had identified two suitable building sites for a baseball stadium. One would be on county-owned land near the Leland Industrial Park. The other site, preferred by both Monks and the committee, would be at the intersection of U.S. 74/76 and U.S. 17, just west of the Cape Fear River Bridge.

"I am very much interested in this idea," said RDC member Leslie Myrie. "A lot of people thought this county couldn't build a water system, but we did it. I see this plan as something of a waterline. It's also something that would benefit our kids."

The RDC board asked the committee to develop more detailed cost and revenue estimates and to make another presentation at its next meeting.

"If you build it, they will come. I know it sounds trite, but it's a fact."

—Matt Perry



STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC CARLSON

Failure To Stop

Leo Bradford Hewett, 53, of Supply leaves his pickup truck unharmed after crashing into the front porch of Ruth Hewett's home on Mt. Pisgah Road Thursday afternoon. She said she was alone eating supper when she "felt a crash that shook the whole house." According to Trooper R.L. Murray of the N.C. Highway Patrol, Mr. Hewett said he had an allergic reaction to medication and blacked out as he approached the stop sign at the east end of Empire Road. He was charged with failure to stop.

School Policy Panels Named

When the Brunswick County Board of Education looks at policy changes, much of the work will be handled by six new committees appointed by the board chairman and superintendent.

The committees are charged with researching, studying and reviewing policies and related issues and making recommendations to the administration. In turn the administration will report to the full board with its recommendations in the six areas. The committees are to meet at least once every two months, more if needed.

Committees are as follows:
 ■Personnel: Ralph Ward, personnel director, chair; board members Bill Fairley and Polly Russ, Superintendent Ralph Johnston;
 ■Student Services: Judith Babcock, director of student services, chair; board members Thurman Gause and Yvonne Bright;
 ■Facilities: Bill Turner, assistant su-

perintendent, chair; board members Polly Russ and Thurman Gause;
 ■Budget/Finance: Rudi Fallon, finance officer, chair; board members Donna Baxter and Fairley; and the superintendent;
 ■Curriculum & Instruction: Mose Lewis, assistant superintendent, chair; instructional supervisor James McAdams; school administrators Christine Hall, Bob Rhyne, Zelphia

Grissett, Bill Shoemaker, Dianna Mintz and Ed Lemon; and board member Russ;

■General Public Relations: Gloria Talley, public information/staff development officer, chair; board members Bright and Baxter; and Pam Bruton, publications specialist.

Other members may be appointed as needed to assist in the work of the committees.

SBHS JROTC Instructors Planning Retirement

Both Junior Army ROTC instructors at South Brunswick High School at Boiling Spring Lakes plan to retire this year, according to routine personnel actions handled by the Brunswick County Board of Education Monday night at Waccamaw Elementary School in Ash.

The board accepted the retirements of William F. Faught of Long Beach effective June 1, and Gerald Derr of Southport, effective retire Sept. 1.

In other action the board:

■approved the hiring of Sonia Johnson of Shallotte as art teacher at Waccamaw Elementary School; Gene Zuck of Wilmington, director of technology for the system; Leslie Beck, Calabash, special education, Union Elementary; Ginny Pridgen,

Shallotte, elementary teacher, Union Elementary; Harold Johnson, Shallotte, JTPA remediation teacher; John Pruitt, Shallotte, social studies, West Brunswick; Lynda Alley, Supply, band director, Shallotte Middle; Ghislaine Smith, Ocean Isle Beach, French teacher, South Brunswick Middle; Ruth Kuykendall, Brunswick, elementary teacher, Shallotte Middle;

■also, hiring of Tonya Pigott, Bolivia, teacher assistant, Union Elementary; Dottie Hatcher, Winnabow, cafeteria assistant, Leland Middle; Joseph White, Leland, JTPA remediation teacher assistant; Delwood Johnson, Shallotte, fuel truck operator and mechanic I, transportation department; Ellie Freeman, Ash, media assistant, Waccamaw Elementary; Curtis Freeman, Ash,

shop foreman, transportation;

■extended employment of Nona Baker, Leland, half-time academically gifted teacher, Lincoln Primary; and Judy Auman, Bolivia, Chapter I migrant education parent coordinator, Supply Elementary;

■approved a military leave of absence for Les Tubb of Wilmington, principal, South Brunswick Middle; and medical leave for Doris Gore, Ash, cafeteria assistant, Waccamaw Elementary;

■accepted the resignation of Cheryl Shew, Southport, French teacher at South Brunswick Middle; Ida Mae Johnson, Bolivia, custodian, Bolivia Elementary; and Jean Gillette, Supply, teacher assistant, Supply Elementary;

■approved eight substitute teachers.

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