

Shallotte Board Approves Repairs To Sewer Spray Irrigation System

BY SUSAN USHER
Shallotte employees got the go-ahead Monday night to begin making improvements the state says must be made to maintain the town's current sewage treatment capacity.

"We're making up for operational deficiencies over a five-year period," consulting engineer Finley Boney advised the board. "We did not maintain that spray site."

Boney said the improvements to the spray irrigation fields could cost as much as \$81,000 if done by a contractor, but that town employees could probably make them for half that sum.

The board approved the project on a 4-1 vote, with Alderman Roney Cheers objecting that money shouldn't be spent until "the town knows what it is doing."

In making the motion, Alderman Wilton Harrelson suggested, "We don't really have a choice, so let's stop quibbling over it and get it done."

The N.C. Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources directed the town to not only commit to making the improvements, but to provide by next Monday a timetable for their completion. Otherwise, said Boney, the town could lose 15 percent to 20 percent of its permitted wastewater treatment capacity of 206,000 gallons per day.

"We need that 206,000. If we lose it we cannot consider taking on additional developments," he said. The town currently pumps 130,000 gallons to 140,000 gallons of wastewater a day (67 percent of capacity). That leaves the town approximately 25,000 gallons per day (gpd) available for extending service to additional users before reaching 80 percent of the plant's total treatment capacity. When Shallotte reaches that point, he said, it must begin expanding the plant "or go to a moratorium" on sewer extensions.

Making the repairs will only preserve the plant's existing capacity,

not increase it or lessen the cost of future expansion, something the town is considering to meet anticipated demand for service.

The town plans to replace 200 sprinkler heads at \$30 each, cap another 100 sprinklers below ground at a cost of \$50 each, add 3,000 linear feet of irrigation lines with sprinklers, build swales, shallow grassed ditches, to improve drainage in low-lying areas, and install better screens on the sprinklers that will reduce the volume of solids sprayed with the treated effluent.

Environmental management officials found several problems with the treatment system on two recent inspection visits. These include ponding of water in low areas of the irrigation fields, sprinklers that are not working in some areas and are of the wrong size in other areas. Because of clogging, small sprinkler heads intended to reduce the irrigation flow to one-half inch per week in areas of poor soil had been replaced with larger sprinkler heads that have pumped up to 1.75 inches of water into those areas.

While the town would like to see the state approve a demonstration project for a treatment alternative, the state is recommending the high water areas not be used to accept treated wastewater and that the town either reduce its permitted flow volume or repair and expand the spray irrigation system.

To meet future demands on the system, the town is considering buying up to 200 acres of timberland near the existing treatment site for additional spray irrigation fields. By adding the fields, installing force mains north of the U.S. 17 bypass, building two booster pump stations and another lagoon, the town could double the plant's treatment capacity at a cost of between \$700,000 and \$1 million. Installing a gravity collection system in the new development area instead of a pumping system could double the cost or better, Boney estimated.

Other concerns raised Monday regarding the sewer system related to the \$3,000 to \$5,000 monthly cost of replacing sewer pumps, the need to identify and replace faulty septic tanks through which stormwater runoff is entering the sewer system, and the possibility of moving to a gravity collection system in new areas of development. The town used a system of force mains when the original system was installed because substantial federal and state money was available for that type of system and not the other.

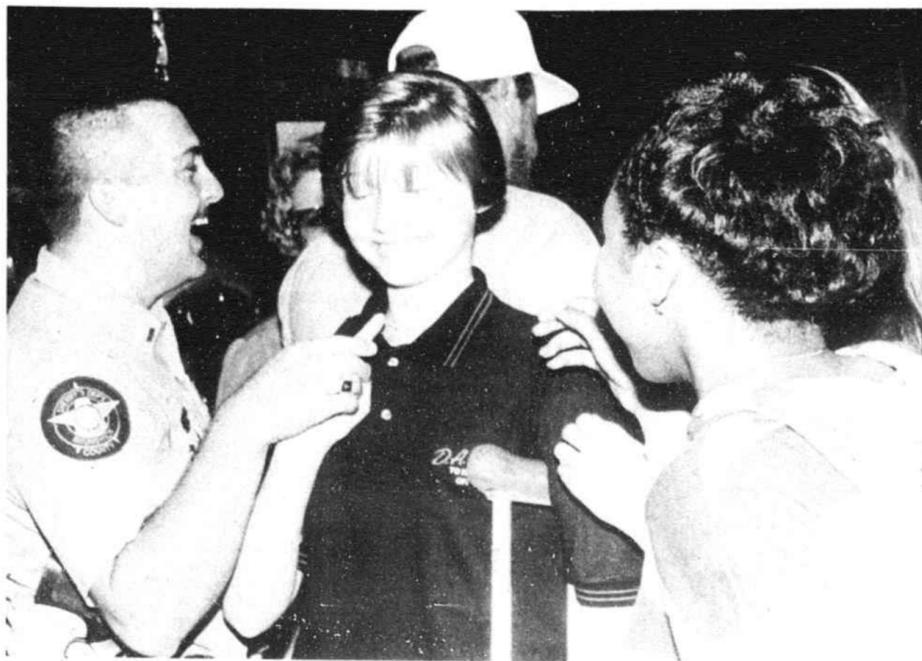
In other business, aldermen:

Met briefly in executive session to receive "advice" of an unspecified nature from town attorney Mark Lewis.

Tabled consideration of a proposal from JOBS Coordinator Ginger DeBerry for the town to serve as a work experience site, to which a welfare recipient might be assigned to learn the tasks related to a particular under the direction of a town employee, at no cost to the town. A "work fare" type program, JOBS (Job Opportunities and Basic Skills Training Program) tries to help clients get off welfare and become more self-sufficient by providing education and job training. Benefit payments can be reduced for eligible clients who don't participate. Aldermen want a chance to review the contract before making a decision.

Heard that the police department is participating in "Cash For Kids," a Food Folks program in which money for children's programming can be raised by supporters turning in grocery store receipts. The officers will use the money in their Explorer program.

Set a public hearing for July 6 at 7:30 p.m. on a request for a taxi cab franchise received from Gordon Gray. A non-exclusive one-year franchise was issued in May to another party, Johnnie Moody.



STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER

Something To Celebrate

Amanda Scoggins had her suspicions, but didn't catch on to a surprise pizza party given June 1 by Pizza Hut in Shallotte and arranged by her good friend and cousin, Lt. Ronald Hewett of the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department (above left). The celebration reunited the Shallotte Middle School seventh grader, gravely injured March 19 when her school bus was struck in the rear by a logging truck, with fellow bus passengers and driver Mattie Bryant, and others who played a part in their rescue and recovery. These included the Rev. Douglas Huff of Oak Island Baptist Church and Brunswick County Schools Supt. Ralph J. Johnston.

Rules Expanded For Lot Cleanup

BY DOUG RUTTER

Holden Beach property owners who move houses off the beachfront now face stricter regulations when it comes to cleaning up the lots.

Town commissioners voted Monday night to revise an ordinance and require beachfront homeowners to rebuild sand dunes on their lots when buildings are destroyed or relocated.

In doing so, the board added to a rule that already mandated the removal of all concrete, pilings, septic tanks, walkways, decks and erosion-control structures such as sandbags and bulkheads.

"This is really a strengthening of this particular subsection," Mayor Wally Ausley explained. "We'd like to have it so that's done at the time of removal of the house."

Town officials passed the original ordinance earlier this year in response to several cases in which bulkheads and other debris were left on oceanfront lots after erosion-threatened cottages were removed.

The revised ordinance will require an owner to rebuild a sand dune at least as big as the one that existed before the house was removed or one that is comparable to the dune on neighboring lots.

The dune also must be grassed or seeded to prevent the wind from blowing away the soil or sand.

Under the regulation, property owners have 30 days from the time they are notified by the town to remove pilings, septic systems and other materials and rebuild the dune.

Commissioner David Sandifer supported the rules, but said giving the owner 30 days to clean up the lot

could create problems. Some people might not do the work if the property can no longer be used.

"I think this ordinance is necessary, and I support it. I just don't know if it has enough teeth," Sandifer said.

Nominations Made

Commissioners will appoint three people to the Holden Beach Planning and Zoning Board and one to the Board of Adjustment at their June 23 meeting.

On Monday, commissioners re-nominated planner Ted Rivenbark for another three-year term as a regular member. Alternates Johnny Craig and Jim Lowell also were re-nominated for one-year terms.

Dave Gibson was re-nominated to serve on the board of adjustment. Also nominated was Martin Feldt.

More nominations for both boards will be accepted prior to the appointments in two weeks.

Grant Awarded
Holden Beach has been awarded a state grant that would help pay for an update of the town zoning regulations.

But commissioners aren't sure if they'll accept the money. To receive the \$4,020 grant, the town would have to spend \$990 and provide another \$990 in in-kind services.

Commissioners asked the planning board to interview consultants who are interested in the project and then make a recommendation.

In other business Monday, the town board took no action after meeting for 45 minutes in executive session to discuss "legal and personnel" matters.

Shallotte Considering Same 47-Cent Property Tax Rate

BY SUSAN USHER
Shallotte residents will get to comment next Tuesday night, June 15, on a \$1.27 million budget that once again proposes no change in tax rate, but reflects a proposed water rate increase by Brunswick County.

The hearing will begin at 7:30 p.m. at the town hall. Aldermen will meet 7:30 p.m. Monday, June 14, at town hall for a work session, reviewing the budget, line item by line item, and suggesting possible changes.

The budget is built on a tax base of \$60 million, a tax rate of 47 cents per \$100 valuation, and a collection rate of 95 percent, said Town Clerk Mary Eta Hewett, and includes raises for all town employees.

The owner of a \$100,000 home would pay \$470 in town property taxes.

The overall budget includes a general operating fund of \$715,335 and a water/sewer fund of \$563,475.

Anticipated property tax collections of \$268,234 would be the single largest source of revenue for general operations. The second-largest source is sales tax collections at \$117,000. The town also proposes carrying over into the 1993-94 budget a surplus of \$41,476.

The largest single expenditure would be the police department's \$269,819 budget. Other items include \$12,000, governing body (salaries for mayor and aldermen, and professional services); \$1,000 each for elections and recreation; \$6,185 for planning and zoning; \$17,200 for public buildings; \$52,358 for the fire department, including a \$20,708 truck payment; \$33,859, inspection; \$46,000, sani-

tation (contract with Chambers of South Carolina); \$8,200, finance (audit); and \$10,000 contingency.

The \$123,412 for administration includes \$2,000 contributions to the South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce and to the Shallotte Volunteer Rescue Squad and \$250 to the Brunswick County Chapter of the North Carolina Symphony Society.

The water and sewer budget includes sewer equipment maintenance and repairs of \$75,000 and \$46,000 for capital outlay improvements to the sewer system, \$98,000 for water purchases from the county, payments on water and sewer bonds, and a \$95,956 capital reserve fund toward future upgrading of the sewer system.

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