

Shallotte Plans To Get Tough On Unpaid Water, Tax Bills

BY DOUG RUTTER

No more Mr. Nice Guy. Shallotte is getting tough with people who don't pay their town taxes or water bills in a timely manner.

Aldermen agreed at their meeting Tuesday night to start dipping into bank accounts, taking wages or foreclosing on property owners who don't pay their taxes on time.

"There's no reason we shouldn't have a higher rate of collection," Alderman Carson Durham said. Shallotte collected 93.5 percent of its taxes last fiscal year.

Durham and board member Bill Allen recently met with tax collector Sandy Hewett to discuss ways of collecting approximately \$27,000 in taxes that haven't been paid over the past 10 years.

The town will continue sending letters to people who don't pay their taxes by the January deadline.

Property owners who can't afford to pay their entire tax bill at one time will be allowed to set up a monthly payment schedule with the town, as long as the payment is high enough so the bill is paid by the end of the year.

Durham said Tuesday that several property owners have agreed to make monthly payments on their tax bills in the past, but very few have kept their word.

From now on, anyone who signs up for monthly payments and misses two of those payments will not be let off the hook. The town will take money from the owner's bank account, garnish wages or foreclose to collect the taxes.

"There may be a situation where we won't cut the water off. We're not going to be cold-hearted about it."

—Alderman Carson Durham

"Sandy's called people. She's written people. The town staff has worked hard on this," Durham said. "The board needs to back them up and let people know we support them on this."

Also Tuesday, the town board endorsed a similar policy for overdue water and sewer bills whereby water service will be cut off if two monthly payments are missed.

"It's the only way we can collect some of this money," said Allen, noting that there are six property owners who owe the town approximately \$2,400 in overdue water bills.

If the town disconnects the water service, residents will have to pay all outstanding bills plus a \$25 fee to get the service restored.

"There may be a situation where we won't cut the water off," Durham said. "We're not going to be cold-hearted about it."

Property Rezoned

Following the recommendation of the Shallotte Planning Board, aldermen voted Tuesday to rezone approximately 1.5 acres of land on Shallotte Avenue from R-10 (residential) to Highway Business.

A portion of the property owned by Beatrice Mintz was already zoned Highway Business. The land is located at 4740 Shallotte Avenue.

Town aldermen will hold a public hearing Tuesday, March 1, at 7:15 p.m. on the proposed annexation of 10 lots in Briarwood Estates. The planning board voted at its Feb. 8 meeting to recommend annexation of the lots.

Also Tuesday night, aldermen voted to re-appoint Rebecca Hawes and Tony Maglione to the planning board. Their terms will expire Feb. 4, 1996.

Workshop Planned

A pay plan for town employees and expansion of the sewer system will be among the issues discussed when aldermen meet for a workshop on Friday, Feb. 25, at 9:30 a.m.

Town board members will discuss the salary schedule with Rose Ann Mack, management services director with the Cape Fear Council of Governments.

Aldermen also plan to review proposals from engineering firms that are interested in designing expansion of the sewer system. Each proposal will be received by the town no later than Feb. 21.



STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC CARLSON

Helping Children Ride Safely

Thirteen-month-old Meagan Gilbert and her mother, Frida Gilbert (right) of Ocean Isle Beach work with Health Educator Jan Reichenbach on the proper way to use child safety seats. The Brunswick County Health Department has purchased 44 safety seats and will rent them to parents for \$15 for the first three years of their child's life; \$5 of that is a security deposit, and the remaining \$10 is to cover parts and repairs. The seats were bought with grant funds from the Injury Prevention Section of the N.C. Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources in conjunction with the Governor's Highway Safety Program. To get a seat, and information about child passenger safety, call or visit the health department. Feb. 13-19 is Child Passenger Safety Awareness Week in North Carolina, according to a proclamation by Gov. Jim Hunt.

Lawyer Drops Suit Against Schaack, Claims Response Proves His Case

BY ERIC CARLSON

Claiming he has been "vindicated," local attorney Benedict Del Re last week dropped his lawsuit against Calabash after the town filed a response in which it admitted to several of the more serious allegations raised against former building inspector and now Commissioner Edward Schaack.

"I charged him with putting his hand in my pocket," said Del Re. "To me that's a conflict of interest. Apparently to him it's not."

Del Re refused to disclose details of the settlement and would not say whether any money changed hands.

"It's not money I wanted," he said. "What I wanted was an admission. They offered me a settlement. I accepted it. As far as I'm concerned, it's settled."

Calabash Town Attorney Michael Ramos is out of the country on vacation this week and could not be reached for comment Tuesday.

In the lawsuit he filed last May, Del Re charged that Schaack, as building inspector, engaged in "a pattern of harassment" in his enforcement of building codes at a group of shops Del Re owns in the Calabash extra-territorial district.

Del Re's lawsuit accused Schaack of "offering his services for money" as an engineering consultant to design a parking lot layout "that would be suitable for the town and would be passed." It said Schaack "stated that his hourly rate would be \$30 per hour."

The town's response, filed by Ramos on Jan. 31, ad-

mits that Schaack is an engineering consultant and that he told Del Re "that he could try and devise a plan for the plaintiff's property which would meet the aforementioned regulations and code requirements, but that he did not know if such a plan was physically possible."

Schaack further advised Del Re "that his hourly rate for engineering consulting work is \$35 per hour," the response said. It alleges that Del Re then "inquired of the defendant Schaack regarding a 'trade off' of legal work in exchange for engineering consulting work by the defendant Schaack."

Del Re's legal action further charged that Schaack required Del Re to install handicap ramps at his law office that would comply with federal handicap access laws. Del Re claimed that he measured the "newly installed" ramps at Calabash Town Hall and found that "based upon the specification provided (to him) by Schaack, the town's ramp did not comply with the law."

The town's response admits that the handicap ramp at the town hall "does not completely comply with the state and federal regulations and guideline governing said ramps." It also states that Schaack notified the town of the non-conformity.

Del Re said that the fact that Schaack is no longer the town building inspector and "no longer has any say over my property" makes the legal action "kind of moot." He said he did not feel threatened by Schaack's new position as an elected official.

"So what if he's a commissioner?" Del Re said. "That does not bother me."

Rhodes: Death Threat Made Against Employee

BY ERIC CARLSON

A dissatisfied permit applicant threatened to kill a Brunswick County employee last December, Health Director Michael Rhodes told the board of health Monday night.

Rhodes refused to reveal details about the incident, saying the matter had been referred to the county attorney, the sheriff's department, the district attorney's office and N.C. Attorney General Mike Easley.

"Eight weeks ago we had an incident where an employee of the health department had his life threatened," Rhodes said during his monthly report to the board. "An individual had a problem with how something had been handled. That individual called here and made threatening remarks about the employee, saying if the employee came back to the property they would kill them."

"It was clear as that," Rhodes said.

He said the matter is still being investigated and that he wanted to make board members aware of the incident before they heard about it elsewhere.

Health Board Chairman Patrick Newton said Rhodes had informed him last week about what happened. Newton said he agreed with the director "that the actions taken up to this point have been adequate and concurred with what he is pursuing."

There was no discussion or further comment about the incident at the meeting. Afterwards, Rhodes and Newton said it was a personnel matter and they could say no more about it.

Other Business

For the second time in as many meetings, Holden Beach septic system installer Clayton Robinson addressed the board to complain about the environmental health section's handling of his recent permit for a septic system in the Riverside II subdivision.

At the earlier meeting, Robinson was told that the board "could not change what happened with the permit" and said the decision would have to be appealed to state regulators.

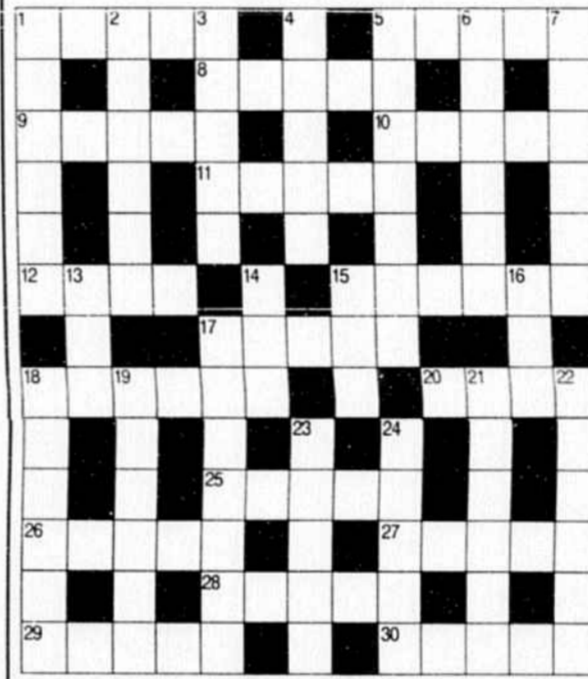
The board did not vote to change its position Monday night despite Bruce Quaintance's request that the matter be reconsidered. It was suggested that Robinson meet with County Attorney Michael Ramos to discuss the matter.

Newton appointed members Don Warren, Dr. Brad Kerr and Quaintance to the environmental health committee. Warren, Benny Ludlum and Maliston Stanley were named to the budget committee. Arthur Knox, Dr. Jeffrey Mintz and Quaintance will sit on the personnel committee, while Joey Galloway, Stanley and Mintz were appointed to the personal health committee.

Newton removed Patricia Newton from her previous committee appointment and did not name her to another post.

The board adjourned to a closed session requested by a former health department employee who asked to discuss "a personnel matter" in private.

BEACON WEEKLY CROSSWORD



CLUES ACROSS

1. Revolt
5. Slope
8. Very select
9. Russian drink
10. Scold
11. Quiver
12. Lantern
15. Church meeting room
17. Eros
18. Signal fire
20. Lofty
25. Concerning
26. Hand digit
27. Eject
28. Fatuous
29. Cereal
30. Arrogant

CLUES DOWN

1. Disclose
2. Uproar
3. Tenure
4. Parish priest
5. Withdrew
6. Descend
7. Score
13. Master card
14. Paragram
15. Compete
16. Tease
17. Live together
18. Confer
19. Charge
21. Blue dye
22. Stopped
23. Regional
24. Precipitous

(Answers are on Page 6-C)

Suspect In Leland Murder Is Arrested In Tennessee

BY ERIC CARLSON

Acting on information uncovered by Brunswick County Sheriff's detectives, police in Tennessee have arrested a Mexican migrant laborer accused of brutally beating another Mexican man to death at his Leland trailer last month.

Jose Hilario Barron, 25, of Corona, Mexico, is being held without bond in Brunswick County Jail Monday on a charge of murder in the death of Estaban Sanchez. Police say a roommate found Sanchez's body, his face beaten beyond recognition, in the front yard of his mobile home on Green Loop Road early Jan. 30.

Authorities have also released the name of another Mexican whose throat was slashed with a razor knife, allegedly by his female roommate, Feb. 6 at a mobile home they shared in Leland. A grand jury Monday indicted 34-year-old Lillie Darlene Dorsey for murder in the death of Nazario Hernandez Martinez.

Efforts to notify Martinez's relatives in Mexico have been unsuccessful, investigating Detective Larry Joyner said Monday. The two murders are not thought to be related.

Barron, who is a legal alien, was apprehended last Thursday in Hamblen County, Tenn., about 40 miles northeast of Knoxville, ac-



BARRON

Mason said. "He (Barron) is known to be a bully of sorts and to carry a gun. They say he has quite a temper," said Mason. "We believe he went there to commit a first-degree burglary."

It appears that Sanchez awoke while Barron was inside and the two got into a fight, Mason said. The altercation moved through several rooms of the trailer and eventually outside, where Sanchez was beaten to death with fists and a piece of wood from a coffee table.

The next morning, Barron is believed to have left the county with other Mexican migrant laborers who were travelling to Tennessee to begin work with a construction company. Mason said the company, which had once employed and later fired Barron, was helpful in locating his whereabouts.

After interviewing numerous potential witnesses, with help in translation from Wilmington Police Officer Ivan Castillo, Mason said he was able to piece together enough evidence to obtain a warrant for Barron's arrest last Tuesday. Also assisting in the investigation were Brunswick detectives Ken Messer, Tom Hunter and John Ingram and State Bureau of Investigation Agent Mike Garrett.

Barron made a first appearance in Brunswick County District Court Monday.

cording to Detective Steve Mason. The suspect waived extradition and was transported to Brunswick County Friday.

During a week of extensive interviews following Sanchez's murder, investigators learned that he had spent Saturday evening in his trailer drinking with roommates until he "passed out drunk" at about 9 p.m., Mason said. The group broke up and went to other trailers in the area to watch a boxing match.

A short time later, Barron is believed to have returned to Sanchez's trailer "to liberate him of his funds,"

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