

Town seeks county takeover of rec department

Representatives of the town of Hertford presented a resolution to the county commissioners Monday night that would make Perquimans County solely responsible for the funding of its recreation department.

The resolution asks that the program be continued at or above its present \$48,000 level, and pledges to continue the present administrative contribution of the town.

Currently, \$20,000 is contributed to the recreation department from the town budget, with an additional \$20,000 contributed by the county, and participant fees generating some \$8,000 per year.

The commissioners expressed reservations about accepting the

financial burden of the entire program. Commission chairman Joe Nowell told town representatives Bill Cox and T. Erie Haste Jr. that the commissioners had agreed earlier in the week not to increase the present level of county funding should the town elect to drop out of the program.

The two boards had met together in a special session on Tuesday, Dec. 9 to discuss the future of the recreation program. Following discussion with the county commissioners, the town council adjourned to the Hertford Municipal Building, where Haste made the motion to draft a resolution proposing that the town discontinue funding after the present year.

At Monday night's meeting, Haste argued that joint town-county funding amounts to double taxation for Hertford residents.

Commissioner Charles H. Ward, however, argued that the town had signed a 10 year contract committing half of the money required to staff and operate the senior center.

But despite the disagreement, both boards expressed a willingness to work together for an on-going recreation program.

"I hope that we all understand and agree that it's not if we're going to continue recreation, it's how. We certainly can't afford to let this program die," Haste said.

In another matter, Dr. Maurice Powers of Elizabeth State University, and Harold Johnson of the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries, discussed possible approaches to determining water quality in area rivers.

Powers recommended a number of tests that would gauge the health of the water. He said that samples would have to be taken on a weekly basis for about a year and estimated the cost at \$8,000.

Johnson told the board that river herring spawning studies conducted in the Perquimans River had shown it to be less productive than other area rivers.

The herring is a major link in the food chain and its absence indicates serious problems in the river, Johnson said.

"The Perquimans River was once thriving with commercial fishermen," said Johnson. "Those people didn't quit because they got tired of it," he said.

Johnson offered several theories as to the root of the problem. One was that swamplands that once drained into the upper reaches of the river have been rediverted through the Bear Swamp drainage system.

"The critters and decayed leaves" of the swamp that were a major source of food no longer find their way to the river in sufficient quantities, Johnson said.

Another problem area is an abundance of agricultural run-off, he said.

Both men agreed, however, that the

problem is extremely complex, and will not lend itself to an easy solution.

In other business, the commissioners:

- promised school board representatives that the need for additional central office space would be taken care of either at the present Edenton Road Street office or through renovation of the Blanchard Building in Hertford;
- endorsed efforts by Dare County to be included in the Tri-County District Jail, and;
- agreed to commit matching funds, if necessary, in order to receive a new walk-through ambulance that has been approved for the Perquimans County Rescue Squad.



Three hurt in crash

Three persons were injured when Joseph Aaron Heath's Chevrolet van slid out of control in a curve and crashed into a 1976 Ford Maverick driven by Robin Langley

Watson of Hertford on Harvey Point Road Friday afternoon. Heath, of Elizabeth City, and passenger Aubrey Heath of Shiloh were treated at

Albemarle Hospital and released. Mrs. Watson was transferred to Norfolk General with possible neck injuries.

Resort residents seek to block deregulation

by JACK GROVE

The N.C. Utilities Commission held a public hearing last Thursday on the question of deregulation of Holiday Island's water system. The Commission had also been asked to approve and emergency assessment of the property owners of \$10 per lot for the purpose of paying for the drilling of a new well.

Originally scheduled to be held in Raleigh last month, the hearing was postponed and moved to Elizabeth City by request of property owners.

The Holiday Island Property Owners Association made the formal request for deregulation to the commission last September. The request was based on HIPOA's status as a non-profit corporation.

A special property owners meeting was held last Sept. 14. At that meeting a measure was passed 52 to 35 for the \$10 assessment and to appropriate \$100,000 to be handed over to Perquimans County.

The \$100,000 was to be an inducement for the county to include Holiday Island in Phase II of the county water system.

The next day, Sept. 15, property owners were billed for the \$10 assessment. The new well was drilled in October.

After the special meeting, application was made to the Utilities Commission for the approval of \$10 Special Assessment and deregulation.

At the annual property owners meeting on Oct. 19, a property owner complained that the Sept. 14 water measure was illegal. He pointed out that the HIPOA by-laws call for a two-thirds majority vote to pass a special assessment. The

vote 52-35 represented only a 59 percent majority he said. The measure was allowed to stand.

William Jeffress, General Manager at Holiday Island testified on behalf of deregulation. About 20 property owners attended in opposition.

Under questioning by HIPOA's attorney and the Public Staff of the Commission, Jeffress testified that:

In his opinion, "the Board of Governors would be amendable to letting property owners vote on water rates."

- A well had failed at Holiday Island last summer and that a back-up well was needed;
- The N.C. National Guard was called to provide a tanker to haul water from Hertford to the subdivision last summer due to a well pump failure;
- The cost of the new well drilled was \$9,700—of which \$6,400 has already been paid to the driller. \$8,970 has been collected from the special assessment and \$5,000 of the total assessment represents billings to non-users of the water system;
- The Holiday Island Water Co. has no cash surplus or reserves and no line of credit.
- Some customers of the water system were not allowed to vote on the special assessment since they had not paid their regular annual assessment;
- There are 163 residential lot water users and 462 camper lot owners on the system;
- Property owners owning multiple lots were assessed for each lot;
- Property owners unable to attend

meetings can not vote by proxy;

- Gross revenues from the water system are \$19,000 per year.

Testifying in opposition were Odie Gilstrap, former board member, Helen Moore, present board member, Karl W. Morris, Harvey B. Herring, A Stanton Brantley, Richard Bleil, and Betty Godwin, the only camping lot owner present.

Henry Payne, a member of the Public Staff of the N.C. Utilities Commission was the final witness.

Payne listed problems of the water system as:

- The capacity of one of two wells at Holiday Island is severely limited;
- The water treatment plant is not functioning properly;
- The water quality itself is poor.

He said that under the association's present by-laws there was a "distinct possibility of non-users setting rates for users." Payne recommended a by-laws amendment making each water customer a member of a water association at the development if the system were deregulated.

Payne termed the \$9,700 cost of the new well reasonable. However, concerning the \$10 assessment, he said that, as a utility, Holiday Island could not legally assess its customers without commission approval.

Utilities Commission hearing officer, W.B. Partin, called for recommended findings to be submitted to him by both sides before next Jan. 9.

Director of Social Services. Gregory cited one poignant example that took place last year. A woman called the department and wanted to donate a winter coat to some needy person.

"We carried it out to a rest home and the lady was just tickled to death to get it," said Gregory.

For many less fortunate county residents, such gestures of generosity represent the sum total of the Christmas gifts they will receive.

"They benefit from the gifts and if not for the gifts they probably wouldn't receive much," said Gregory.

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Secret giving abounds

Besides being a time for giving and receiving gifts, over-eating, and socializing, 'tis the season for thinking of those less fortunate.

And the true spirit of Christmas is alive and well and doing good deeds in Perquimans County.

Many persons who want to help but don't know who to help or just wish to remain anonymous turn to the Perquimans County Department of Social Services as a go-between.

"We usually work up a list in the office. Different church groups and organizations call on us and we give them the names or just take the stuff to them," said Paul Gregory, Perquimans County

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tivities. "They help a lot of people in the community and nobody even knows about it except that group. It just makes you feel good," said Gregory.

"They're doing good things in the community behind the scenes and they don't even want anybody to know," he said.

The Economic Improvement Council office on Hyde Park Street in Hertford will also distribute contributions among needy families.

Last year the Perquimans High School student council donated piles of toys and gifts that were distributed just before Christmas, making the day a little brighter for many families.

Fuel aid

Shortage of applicants puzzles social services

The Perquimans County Department of Social Services was expecting to be swamped, but so far applications for federal fuel assistance are trickling in.

"I'm surprised that we haven't had many non-categorical applications," said Paul Gregory, Perquimans County Social Services Director. "I don't know whether we've covered most of the people who want to apply or whether they're just waiting."

Non-categorical consists of individuals not belonging to those categories of persons already receiving certain types of aid who are being automatically processed for fuel assistance.

So far the department has received only 25 or 30 non-categorical applications from an anticipated 185 to 200.

The over-time pay requested of the

county for social services workers will apparently not be necessary.

"I really don't think we'll need any overtime," Gregory.

Social services employees began accepting and processing fuel assistance applications on Dec. 1 and will continue right up until Jan. 15, when the first checks are expected to be mailed out by the state.

Department employees are presently hard at work processing "automatic" applications, those of Aid to Families with Dependent Children, Supplemental Security Income, and food stamps recipients.

Plans are to have those applications out of the way by Jan. 1 to be prepared in the event that a last minute rush takes place during the last two weeks that

applications may be submitted, Gregory said.

He didn't think that the shortage of applications has been caused by a reluctance among some persons to look to the government for help.

"With oil prices the way they are I don't think a person in need would be that reluctant to come in here," said Gregory.

The program will attempt to serve every eligible recipient this year, resulting in smaller checks for some. Payments are expected to start at as low as \$10 and go as high as \$200 to \$250 in Perquimans County, he said.

The trend of few walk-in applications, however, is being repeated across the entire state, and it could result in more sizeable checks for those who do apply.

Holiday shopping hours set

A long with the traditional special closings that come with the holiday season, there are some special openings scheduled this year.

The Perquimans County Chamber of Commerce is coordinating extended shopping hours in the town of Hertford to encourage area residents to shop at home.

Participating stores will be open until 9 p.m. tonight through Dec. 23 (excepting Sunday, Dec. 21). Most participants will keep regular hours on Christmas Eve, and will be closed on Christmas day, and on Dec. 26.

Hertford Hardware and P.H. Rose will be open on Dec. 26, and Woodard's

Pharmacy will offer limited drug service on that date.

Both the Hertford Town Office and the Chamber Office will close at 12 noon on Wednesday, Dec. 24, and will re-open on Monday, Dec. 29.

Perquimans County offices will be closed on Dec. 24, and will remain closed until Monday, Dec. 29, closing again for New Year's Day.

Perquimans County Public Schools will close tomorrow (Friday) and won't re-open until Jan. 5, 1981. Central office staff, however, will have a shorter holiday break, with closings set for Dec. 24, 25 and 26, as well as New Year's Day.

The Hertford Post Office will be open

on Saturday, Dec. 20, to assist town residents with last minute holiday mailings. Postmaster Henry Stokes urges those persons who have not already done so to get their holiday cards and letters in the mail.

And finally, the PERQUIMANS WEEKLY will be operating on a special holiday press schedule. Items intended for our Christmas edition (Dec. 24) should be received in our office by 5 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 19, and preferably earlier.

News and advertising for our New Year's edition must be submitted by 5 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 26.

Hertford seeks to extend its redevelopment project

The town of Hertford is in the process of applying for some \$1 million dollars in grant money with the intention of expanding rehabilitation of the King Street area.

If funded, revitalization efforts would extend the community project area to include the north side of King Street up to Hyde Park, and also, a few units on the southside of Gum Street. Hertford Mayor

and Town Manager Bill Cox described the area as "essentially the area across the street from present rehabilitation."

The King Street community project area, under redevelopment since 1977, is nearly completed, with demolition of one structure still pending.

Cox said that site work is expected to begin sometime after the first of the

year. Grading, stone work, paving, curbing and gutting work is expected to begin in early spring.

Several contractors have expressed an interest in building both apartments and single unit dwellings in the project area.

While Cox said that he felt that the town had already addressed the worst area in town, he thought that revitalization efforts should continue.

"We feel we've already worked in the most needed area, but we need to continue our work to the next most needed area," said Cox.

Although the first step of the project required the relocation of some 23 households and several condemnations, Cox said that renewal of the next area under consideration would not be that extensive.

"We don't foresee many relocations or much condemnation in the next area," said Cox.

The town is seeking grants for extending redevelopment from the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development under the Community Block Grant program, the same agency that funded the initial project.

The deadline for the grant application is Jan. 12. If funded, Cox said that redevelopment work could begin as early as next fall.

The town council is expected to hold a public hearing to explain the rehabilitation project to interested citizens at 7:30, Jan. 6, 1981, at Municipal Building, located on Grubb Street, in Hertford.



The last target

Only one Brace Street house remains to be demolished in Hertford's redevelopment project, initiated some 3 years ago in the town's King Street area.

While site work has not yet begun within the rehabilitation area, the town council is presently seeking funds to extend revitalization efforts.