

PINE KNOLL SHORES COMMISSIONERS' MEETINGS

By Yvette Bannen

The regular Board of Commissioners' (BOC) meeting was held on March 13. Nine members of the public were in attendance. Another meeting was scheduled for March 27 (after *Shoreline* press time) to discuss the FY 2014-15 budget.

Town Manager Kramer gave his monthly report covering various ongoing projects, including the East End Stormwater project. A couple of hiccups have been encountered in the progress, but it is moving along. Both monitoring wells are working and taking readings every 12 hours.

He gave an update on the automated water meter readers and Carteret-Craven Electric Cooperative (CCEC). There will be a meeting of the full BOC and CCEC on April 24, at which time all the information regarding a proposal will be available.

Mr. Kramer met with NCDOT in February regarding the crosswalks on Highway 58, and the bottom line is that both drivers and pedestrians need to be educated regarding the use of the crosswalks. Speed reduction was not recommended but, instead, there should be more stringent enforcement of the speed limit.

On March 18 bids will be opened for Phase II of the sidewalks.

Jason Baker gave an update on the fire department accreditation process.

Finance Officer Julie Anderson discussed the sales and use tax and the current discussions by Carteret County of changing the method of distribution of that money. It was noted that when second-home owners buy things when they are here, the county gets the sales tax.

Mayor Jones reported that he joined other beach town mayors and officials at the County Commissioners' retreat held the day before to urge the county not to change the way the tax money is distributed. Currently it is based on property values, whereas the mainland communities want it distributed based on population. Because of the short notice prior to the start of the next fiscal year, nothing will change this year, but it is a situation that requires vigilance.

The changes to the Board of Adjustments ordinance were discussed and it was noted that the changes to the ordinance were mandated by legislation in 2013. The changes were approved unanimously. At a public hearing on the changes, nobody had commented.

The ordinance pertaining to the meeting schedule for the commissioners was reviewed after it was changed to have the meetings on the second and fourth Wednesdays at 6 p.m. starting in July and this was approved.

Under new business, Pine Knoll Association has requested the town's assistance in applying for a Water Resources Development Project Grant for dredging the Pine Knoll Waterway. The project is estimated to cost around \$40,000. This is a 50/50 grant with the state paying half and Pine Knoll Association paying the other half. No town funds will be used to pay for the project.

The CAMA land-use plan will be updated to include items from the strategic planning report and volunteers were recruited to serve on the committee. The names of Commissioner John Brodman, George Greene, Doug Browne and Michelle Powers from the Planning Board; Teresa Stanton-Law from the Parks and Recreation Committee; and Dominic Baccollo from the Community Appearance Commission were submitted and approved.

A resolution authorizing Pine Knoll Shores to participate in the North Carolina deferred compensation plan (NC 457) for town employees was approved. This retirement plan is similar to a 401(k), except it also covers part-time employees. There will be no match from the town and the resolution was approved.

Commissioner Edwards requested discussion about the town's rights of way to clarify the present ordinance in conjunction with the strategic plan to deal with flooding and encroachment issues. Commissioners Edwards and Fulcher, as well as a representative from the Planning Board, will tackle this subject.

A resolution authorizing a sole-source purchase without competitive bids was requested to purchase sod for the restoration of the golf course after the work is finished for the East End Stormwater Project. This is to comply with the terms of the contract and maintain standardization and compatibility with the existing conditions at the Country Club of the Crystal Coast, and it was approved.

The next regular BOC meeting will be April 10 at 6 p.m. at town hall.

Book Talk

The Childhood of Jesus by J.M. Coetzee
Viking, 2013; 277 pages

Reviewed by Ken Wilkins

Nobel Prize winners are a varied lot. J.M. Coetzee won the prize in 2003, mainly based on works written in and about South Africa. He immigrated to Australia, and since then his writing has taken a distinct turn to the weird. *The Childhood of Jesus* is no exception, and writing this review has been something I've put off. I confess to reading other reviews to help my understanding of this strange work. I had the good fortune to hear Coetzee in Raleigh several years ago, prior to the Nobel, but he was talking about animal rights, not his writing (he did, however, sign books).

For Christian Americans, this book's title might hold some attraction. By no means, though, should one be influenced by the title. Coetzee himself wanted the book published without a title, planning to reveal it only at the end of the book. Jesus Christ makes no appearance here. Indeed, no character with that name is in *The Childhood of Jesus*.

The book is set in fictional Novilla, a Spanish-speaking country located who knows where. Simon, 45, and David, 5, arrive, as does almost everyone, by boat. In the process of transport from their former lives—we get the feeling they are some sort of refugees, but from where?—their memories are “washed clean” and they are given Spanish lessons.

We meet them as they arrive. David is not Simon's son, but he “is responsible for him.” They find a place to live and Simon starts work as a stevedore. His is backbreaking toil, to say the least. We learn that Simon and David are not their original names, and their ages have likewise been assigned to them. Novilla turns out to be a passionless place, where the highest emotion is “goodwill.”

Simon and David search for David's mother (Ines), who for some reason Simon is convinced they will know when they see her. At a very strange place called La Residencia they see Ines playing tennis, and Simon is certain that their search has been successful. He convinces her to drop everything and move to the city in what seems like a slum, assuming the care of David.

David turns out to be difficult, not conforming in school as he should. Simon had become quite attached to him and remains in the middle of decisions regarding his future. David's lack of participation in school leads to a decision to send him to a reformatory, vehemently resisted by both Ines and Simon.

Coetzee has painted a picture of a dystopian society, but it lacks the underlying evil of 1984 or *Animal Farm*. We are left at the end trying to make sense of this, and perhaps that is the point: it really does not make sense. Simon, David, Ines, their dog Bolivar, and Juan (a hitchhiker they picked up) leave the city to keep David out of the reformatory. They are headed to a new city where they will present themselves at the Relocation Centre and say, “Good morning, we are new arrivals, and we are . . . looking for somewhere to stay, to start our new life.”

Maybe the truth is simply that Nobel Prize winners think differently from you and me, and that we should read novels by lesser mortals.



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