

Town Crier

Board room acoustics get some fine-tuning

It sounds as if the acoustical system in the commissioners' room at Morrisville Town Hall still needs some fine-tuning despite recent efforts to upgrade the sound quality.

"I never noticed it," said Director of Community Development Mike Allway, "but several members of the audience had made complaints about having difficulty in hearing commissioners when they spoke. Folks now and then would say it was a problem hearing, especially challenging when the heating and cooling systems were on."

The original sound system was installed when the Town Hall was built in 1992. It consisted of four microphones hidden behind the dais. Jerry Lovelace, owner of Creative Acoustics in Raleigh, said he installed the original system strictly as per directions of a consultant. "He wanted them to be unobtrusive, placed so they wouldn't be seen," Lovelace explains, adding that he hadn't been told of any complaints over the years until recently when he got a call from town officials.

Allway told commissioners at the Feb. 12 board meeting that attempts were made to fine-tune the system and to increase the sound level, but one person in the audience at that meeting found difficulty in hearing, and now and then would request the commissioners to speak louder or repeat what they had said.

Lovelace says a type microphone called PZM had been originally installed to meet the unobtrusive look sought by the consultant. "These are flat in shape, but apparently, I'm told, they picked up the sounds from speakers in the ceiling and gave off a feedback that added to the problem."

Lovelace says four new microphones have been installed on a trial basis as a possible replacement for the original equipment. "My son went out and did the job, using individual microphones, each on a thin podium that stands in front of the commissioners. This microphone system seems to be the answer to the problem," he said. But Lovelace feels that a fifth microphone is needed in a room of that size and will discuss the need with officials.

The five microphones would cost the town about \$2,000, according to an estimate by Town Manager Bill Cobey.

Morrisville will soon have a new burster?

Town Finance Officer Julia Whitt Powell described it as a piece of office equipment used in processing a variety of forms, such as water bills and checks, when she recommended purchasing it for \$3,325.60.

When the matter came up at the Feb. 12 meeting of the Board of Commissioners, Commissioner Mark Silver-Smith said he was not in favor of the purchase, calling it a capital expense that was not needed. He noted that one employee was on a leave of absence. "Maybe we should hire someone or find out when she is coming back," he said. "We really don't need this item."

Town Manager Bill Cobey explained that the employee will return March 4, but that he has encouraged looking into machines to do the work so "we won't have to hire people." He said the burster would save about a day of work each month tearing bills apart, in effect freeing up personnel to do other work.

Said Cobey: "I think it's a good

management move."

But Silver-Smith didn't. "I don't think the timing is correct," he answered, adding it seemed to him that Cobey was about to leave office and was rewarding others with equipment like this.

Commissioner C.T. Moore said he felt that without the machine, people would be working double duty. "They deserve it (the machine)," he commented.

What concerned Commissioner Leavy Barbee was the lack of knowledge about the machine. He said he wished he would have known about it before being asked to vote. "It creates things like this...nays and yays," he said, adding he had to know more about it to vote intelligently.

Cobey said he had gotten the recommendation for purchase from the finance department. "I thought it had enough merit to bring to the board," he said.

The purchase was approved by a 3-2 vote, with Commissioners Silver-Smith and Barbee voting against it.

Batter up!

The Morrisville Community Center will have a new pitching machine ready for the start of this year's baseball season, thanks to the Board of Commissioners' authorization to purchase a machine for \$1,449. Community Center Director T. Allan Carroll says it's going to make a difference in play this year.

"We're getting it for our Rookie League which covers 9 and 10-year-olds," Carroll said. He expects about 200 players to be in the league this year.

Carroll said a lot of practice time is wasted in that league because players have to wait until strikes are thrown. "This way, the machine is accurate on each pitch and the youngsters get more bat-

ting and fielding opportunities in practice," he points out.

The machine is portable with a battery pack and will be used at practices at Shiloh Park. The baseball program also includes a league for 5 to 8-year-olds and Little League for 11 and 12.

Carroll said practice will start the week of March 25 for players 9, 10, 11 and 12, with league play beginning the week of April 15. April 19 is the starting date for practice for 5, 6, 7 and 8-year-olds, with play starting May 20. Players can sign up for the season until March 4 at the Community Center on Morrisville Parkway. There is a \$15 fee for residents and \$25 for non-residents.

Carroll said that horseshoe leagues also will be held at Shiloh Park this year, dates for which have not been announced. Fees will be \$20 for Morrisville residents and \$30 for non-residents for singles play, and \$30 for residents, \$40 non-residents for doubles.

One project has been completed in Morrisville and another is on the drawing board for Bobbitt & Associates, a Raleigh contractor.

The firm recently completed construction of a 2,500-square-foot Amoco Food Shop convenience store at Morrisville Commons. The project developer was Steven Peddin and the architect was Lehmann, Mehler, Hirst Associates of Durham.

Bobbitt also has been awarded a contract by T. Ed Bailey and Arthur Sandman to construct a 5,100-square-foot industrial building in Cedar Fork Business Park. The building, for which Peddin is the project developer and Michael G. Huslage of Raleigh is the architect, will be occupied by Wren Handling Inc.

Board bestows key, praise upon winning school principal

Morrisville Elementary School Principal Caroline Massengill, Wake County Principal of the Year, was a guest at the Morrisville Board of Commissioners meeting Monday night and was given the town's version of a key. In this case, it was a letter opener bearing the official town seal.

Earlier this month, Mrs. Massengill announced to the local PTA that she was moving from the county's oldest multi-track year-round magnet program to the newest. She has been asked to open and run Green Elementary School as a year-round school. She said the primary reason for the move was the challenge of helping lead the transition of an existing school on a traditional calendar to a year-round multi-track schedule.

Following passage of a resolution praising her work and congratulating her selection as Teacher of the Year, the board gave the outgoing principal its best wishes in her future work and said she had brought pride to the Town of Morrisville. The board also presented her with a framed copy of the resolution.

Mrs. Massengill joined the school system in 1972 as a kindergarten teacher. In 1989 she became principal of Kingswood Elementary School, the first year-round magnet

school in the county. She is a founding member and director of the Year-Round Education Institute of North Carolina. She has been principal of Morrisville since it opened in 1991 as the first multi-track year-round school in the Wake County school system.

The framed resolution to Mrs. Massengill reads: "Whereas, the Town of Morrisville is extremely proud to have Morrisville Elementary School in its jurisdiction, and

"Whereas, Morrisville Elementary School has an outstanding Principal, Caroline Massengill, and

"Whereas, Caroline Massengill has been the one and only Principal of this wonderful school since it was opened in 1991, and

"Whereas, the Town has enjoyed working with Caroline Massengill on a number of programs, and

"Whereas, Caroline Massengill was recently chosen 'Principal of the Year' from among 100 principals in the Wake County School system.

"Now, therefore be it resolved that the Town of Morrisville hereby extends its heartiest congratulations and best wishes to Caroline Massengill on being named 'Principal of the Year.'"

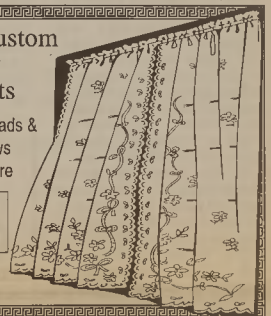
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Chamber Briefs

New directories mailed to homes, local businesses

The Morrisville Chamber of Commerce's 1996 Membership Directory is off the press.

Ray Lech, president of the chamber, said complimentary copies of the directory were mailed last week to all Morrisville households and businesses. Additional copies will be on sale in the chamber office for \$5 each.

The 40-page directory, which features a color photo of the Morrisville Town Hall on the cover, includes alphabetical and categorical listings of all chamber members. Also included is a wide variety of information on the town, including education, fire and police services, elected officials, and major projects.

The directory was produced by AlphaGraphics of Cary.

Fred Heineman was forced to cancel his last two Chamber of Commerce appearances, but the Congressman's staff has assured the chamber he won't be a no-show on March 1.

That's when Heineman is once again scheduled to address the chamber's Issues and Eggs breakfast meeting. The event is set for 7:45 a.m. at Sorrento's.

Mayor Margaret Broadwell will be the speaker at another Issues and Eggs event, this one scheduled for March 22 at the same time and place.

March's calendar also includes a Business After Hours March 13 at Morrisville's Fire Station No. 1. The networking event will take place from 5:30 to 7 p.m.

On March 13, chamber members will gather at the Deli Box at 9 a.m. for the quarterly Adopt-A-Highway cleanup program. The chamber is responsible for cleaning up a two-mile stretch of N.C. 54.

Newest members of the chamber include TheLman Eastern, Enterprise Rental Co., Distinguished Baskets and Gifts, Sunshades, Old School Construction Co., Mancino's Pizza and Grinders, Preston Optometry Center, The Lenders Financial Group, Research Triangle Park Credit Union, Eye Care Associates and U.S. Personnel.

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