

Council, Utilities Board Argue Charter Change

An attorney in the office of N. C. League of Municipalities and First District Rep. Philip P. Godwin of Gatesville have aided Edenton's Board of Public Works in gaining a temporary block to Town Council's plan to dissolve the utilities board.

Mayor John A. Mitchener, Jr., chief architect of the council plan, is president of the N. C. League.

Jesse L. Harrell, chairman of the utilities board, said Tuesday Ernest Ball of the League staff "stalled in writing the bill" and Rep. Godwin had been called on to "stall it further".

(In a letter to The Chowan Herald, dated March 23, Rep. Godwin said he would introduce the bill as requested. It had not been put in the legislative hopper at press time Wednesday).

Speaking at a joint meeting of the two elective boards suggested by Rep. Godwin, Harrell was highly critical of

council action three weeks ago to dissolve the Board of Public Works and set up a Utilities Committee on the council. He claimed he was not aware of any such action until a week after the council's "secret meeting at 7:30 in the morning."

He said Ball and Rep. Godwin were contacted in order to get the matter "stalled". He added that had not these men cooperated the joint meeting would not have been held.

After a lengthy discussion, during which the councilmen lined up solidly behind their earlier action and the five members of the utilities board voiced their opposition, Harrell said: "We'll see you in Raleigh".

In his presentation to the council he had asked that the proposed legislation be set aside for two years to allow ample time for public discussion of the merits of this bill. Harrell pro-

posed a referendum at the 1969 municipal election.

More than an hour later he said if this was not done his board would ask for a public hearing when the bill is sent to a committee in the legislature.

"We anticipated as much," said Mayor Mitchener.

In his remarks to the council, Harrell said: "I think it is a big mistake to take it upon yourselves to abandon an elected body of the town at a secret meeting. This is a reflection on you as councilmen. We are elected just like you and should be respected just as much."

He said the public should be concerned over this action and should be given a full explanation as to why it was taken.

Harrell went on to defend the utilities board, citing reasons given in council meetings for taking action to dissolve the board. He was especially critical of

wording which tended to show the board had been inefficient.

"I think you have done the town a great injustice in trying to do this in the manner in which you did it," he added.

Mayor Mitchener denied action was taken in a secret meeting. He said the council, because of convenience to members, often met in the early morning hours to discuss special matters.

J. H. Conger, Jr., Thomas C. Byrum, W. J. P. Earnhardt, Sr., and J. P. Ricks, Jr., utilities board members, supported Harrell's statements.

Councilman Luther C. Parks said he did not question the efficiency of the board but felt the entire town could be run more efficiently with a single policy-making board.

Councilman Thomas Shepard, who made the motion to dissolve the board, explained his action. He praised the work of the board but said the electric

and water department is a department of the Town of Edenton and the town is not large enough to have two policy-making boards. "One board would make for a smoother operation."

Too, he said three vacancies are occurring on the board this year and if action was going to be taken prior to filling these vacancies it had to be done now.

Councilman Leo Katkaveck compared town government to business. "No one will operate his business with two policy-making boards," he said.

Councilman J. Edwin Bufflap, who has served on the council for 30 years, noted that things are working "smoothly now but over the past 30 years there have been many unpleasant dealings" between the two boards.

A question was raised about the legality of the action, and Councilman Henry

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The Public Parade

Caught Without

Reapportionment of the North Carolina General Assembly raised many questions, one among them being the effect the creation of multi-county districts would have on the small county. This question is now being answered, and quite rapidly, as a measure to dissolve Edenton's Board of Public Works is handled like a hot potato.

Three weeks ago Edenton Town Council unanimously approved a motion to seek legislation in the General Assembly to dissolve the utilities board. Rep. Philip P. Godwin of Gatesville, who along with Rep. William Culpepper of Elizabeth City, represent the First House District, was asked to introduce the measure.

The N. C. League of Municipalities was also notified and asked to draft such a bill.

These are normal channels to follow. Members of the Board of Public Works naturally opposing such a drastic change in the local municipal structure, also contacted the League and Rep. Godwin. This was in an effort to get the matter "stalled", as was related to the council Tuesday by Jesse L. Harrell, utilities board chairman.

Over the years there has been some serious question as to who actually ran the Town of Edenton—the council or utilities board. Until recently, when the attorney general expressed the opinion that the utilities board had no business being concerned with finances of the town, there was little doubt but that the keeper of the funds called a lot of shots.

The measure to dissolve the board was a second step by Mayor John A. Mitchener's administration to provide the citizens of Edenton with a smoothly operating municipal government. He felt Edenton needed only one policy-making board, and we agree.

But as in past years, the utilities board arrived first with the most. Mr. Harrell said a League attorney "stalled" in writing the bill and Rep. Godwin "stalled" in introducing it.

Although Rep. Godwin wrote The Chowan Herald on March 23 saying he would introduce the bill, this had not been done by noon Wednesday.

"I do not intend to shirk my responsibility as a representative; however, on an issue as important as this I feel that both sides should be heard," he said. "I plan to introduce the bill by request but I want to be sure that the people of Edenton are aware of the bill and if they want to be heard, I want to give them an opportunity."

Had Rep. Godwin not "stalled," his desire to let the people be heard would probably already have been satisfied.

When, if as Mr. Harrell said, a League official and a representative of the people deliberately stall on a request of a Town Council, it is a sad state of affairs.

Some representation is better than none. Right now it appears as if those who meander along The Public Parade ain't got none.

'Ladies And Gentlemen'

Judge Elbert S. Peel, Jr., drove over from Williamston to hold a session of Superior Court in Chowan County. And it was apparent from the outset that he wasn't up on local custom.

His honor got ready to charge the Grand Jury and started out in the usual manner. "Now Ladies and Gentlemen . . ." he said. Then he noted that there weren't any women on the jury.

Again, when allowing prospective jurors to be heard on requests to be excused

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Ward Candidate In May Election

A race developed for one of three seats on Edenton Town Council this week with an announcement by Ray Ward, 210 South Oakum Street, that he will oppose incumbent Councilman Leo Katkaveck of the Second Ward.

In an announcement statement, Ward said he has attended Town Council meetings and talked with a number of people and is of the opinion that he can do a lot more for the Second Ward than is now being done.

"For a great number of years the Second Ward has been far behind the other wards in the town," he stated. "I now feel it is time for a change. I know that the people are tired of promises and now they want action. This I will strive to give them if I am elected to office."

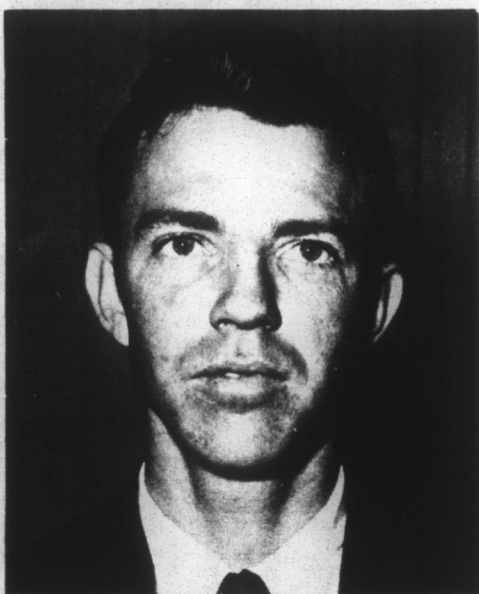
He went on to say many areas that need improvement are too numerous to name.

"I will work hard to try and improve our ward and will support the other wards of the town and help them in any way that I can."

The candidate, who is 25, is a native of Edenton, a son of Mrs. Gladys M. Ward, 104 East Church Street. He is married to the former Judy Carol Edwards of Austin, Tex.

He was educated in local schools and served four years in the U. S. Air Force. He is a graduate of Elkins Radio Institute of Electronics, Atlanta, Ga.

The Wards are members of First Christian Church.



Ray Ward

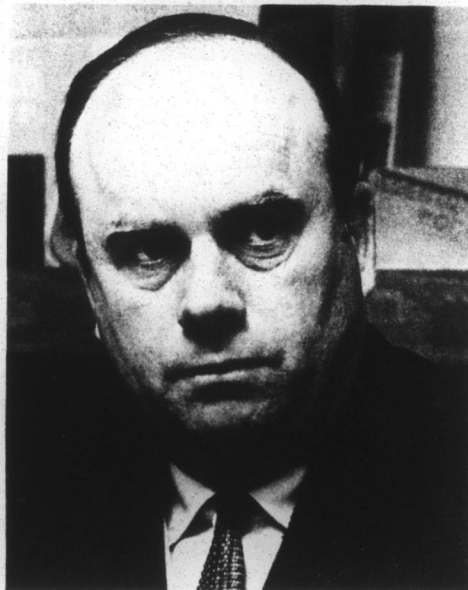
Edenton Lions To Roar April 10

Edenton Lions Club will observe its 30th anniversary April 10 with a Ladies' Night banquet at Chowan Golf & Country Club. The program will begin at 7 P. M.

Approximately 250 Lions and wives are expected to be on hand. Local Lions are expected to be joined by club members from across District 31-J, which this year is headed by a local club member, W. H. Hollowell, Jr.

Rev. LeFon C. Vereen of Raleigh, executive secretary of the Methodist Board of Missions and a popular after-dinner speaker, will deliver the main address. He has spoken in Edenton on several occasions.

Dr. Richard Hardin, past president,



J. H. Conger, Jr.

Conger Is Given Advisory Position

J. H. Conger, Jr., 105 Pembroke Circle, has been named to a two-year term on the North Carolina Small Business Advisory Council. His appointment was announced today in Washington by Bernard L. Boutin, SBA administrator.

Boutin said, "Since becoming administrator of SBA, I have become increasingly aware of the importance of the Advisory Council, not only as a vehicle for advising and counselling me, but also in helping to get across to the small business community of America the story of the Small Business Administration."

"We at SBA have a challenge and an important job to do," Boutin said in a letter to Conger, "and with the help and guidance of you and your fellow council members, SBA can make an ever increasing impact on the social and economic well being of this nation."

Conger's Certificate of Appointment

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Society To Meet

Cancer Society volunteers from throughout Northeastern North Carolina will meet in Elizabeth City Friday night. The dinner meeting will begin at 6:30 o'clock at Holiday Inn.

Mrs. Robert W. Scott of Haw River, 1967 N. C. Division Crusade chairman, will be the speaker.

W. B. Gardner, president of the Chowan Chapter, said area folks are encouraged to attend this meeting.

Court Calendar Slashed

A mixed term of Chowan County Superior Court convened here Tuesday morning with Judge Elbert S. Peel, Jr., of Williamston, presiding.

Although the opening session was delayed by some 20 minutes due to the late arrival of the judge, once the wheels of justice began to turn the docket was moved through quite rapidly.

Eleven cases on the civil calendar were either continued or dismissed when they were called by Judge Peel.

One divorce was granted that being Mary Johnson Bond against William Turner Bond.

Four other civil cases were set for trial.

Twenty-seven cases appeared on the criminal calendar. Action was taken on 15 of them before the court recessed for the day.

In a jury trial, Joseph Wallace Goodwin, Jr., was found not guilty of speeding 60 miles per hour in a 45 mile per hour zone.

Solicitor Herbert Small accepted pleas in three other speeding cases. Emma Copeland Bunch was charged with speeding 77 miles per hour in a 55 mile zone. The state accepted a plea of guilty to traveling in excess of 55 and the defendant was ordered to pay court costs.

Malachi Parsons entered a plea of guilty to speeding 75 in a 60 zone and was fined \$15 and court costs. He had been charged with speeding 85 miles per hour.

Bruce White Taylor, also charged with speeding 85 but in a 55 mile zone, entered a plea of guilty to speeding 75 miles per hour. He was given 60 days, suspended upon payment of \$20 fine and costs.

In another traffic case, William Ras-

coe, Sr., was charged with failing to have a valid operator's license. He was given six months, suspended for three years upon payment of costs. He was ordered not to drive until he obtained a license.

Thomas Hall, charged with passing a worthless check, was given 12 months, suspended for three years upon payment of \$25 fine and costs.

Other cases called included:

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Judge Picks Dale

M. Rudolph Dale, 901 Cabarrus Street, Tuesday was sworn in as foreman of Chowan County Grand Jury. He will serve for the next six months.

Dale was chosen for the position by Judge Elbert S. Peel, Jr., of Williamston, as the March Term of Chowan County Superior Court opened.

Dale has served on the continuing jury for the past six months.

Judge Peel charged the 18-member jury that it is their duty to protect citizens from unfounded accusations.

He touched on the controversial death penalty when explaining that criminal laws of any state have been worked out over a long period of time.

Judge Peel said at one time in our history the death penalty was automatic when a person was charged with first degree murder. He said peoples attitudes change and therefore, the legislature changed the law to allow a jury to recommend mercy in such cases.

"Your duty is to impose the laws as they are, not as we want them to be," he continued. "It is our responsibility as citizens to contact our elected representatives to suggest changes which we think necessary."

Local citizens drawn to serve on the

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MR. CHAIRMAN—The Housing Committee of Edenton Chamber of Commerce is chaired by West W. Byrum, Jr. The chairman is pictured above in front of a new home in Morgan Park which is under construction. Byrum's committee is designed to assist developers as well as citizens seeking adequate housing in this rapidly growing area. He is one of 12 committee chairmen who are actively working in the chamber's behalf this year.