

Council wrestles with Hayes development strategy

BY SEAN JACKSON
Staff Writer

The Edenton Planning Board rejected a rezoning request by Hayes Plantation's owners May 14, and Monday night the Town Council discussed the protocol of how it should handle the request in the future.

Town Attorney Charles Busby said council should only focus on if the proposed development of the historic farm tract will harm the safety, health and welfare of surrounding properties and the town. Developers have plans to erect numerous homes and several commercial districts on the 1,500-acre tract over a 50-year span.

That plan could bring thou-

sands of citizens to Chowan County and Edenton. The property is actually in the county and just east of Edenton. But the town's zoning map would need to be amended to allow for the large-scale development of the site.

Busby said council should narrow its focus during the rezoning request. Any concerns about future traffic or water/sewer issues could be handled at later discussions and public hearings, since the developers will have to come before council multiple times.

"It's not a question of aesthetics. It's not a gut question," Busby said of what council should consider during the first phase of the request. "It's (a question of) does it promote health, safety and welfare."

Busby said even if developers were to offer specifics about what they intend to do at Hayes, the rezoning process does not bind them to any set plans. The process simply allows the zoning to change from R-40 — which allows only large lot sizes — to R-5 and R-10, which contain much smaller lots, allowing for a higher density of homes.

Hayes property owner Gilliam Wood and developers previewed their proposal with council at an April meeting. The same presentation was given to the Planning Board last week, Councilman Steve Biggs said Monday.

About 15 people spoke at the May 14 planning meeting, but no opponents of the proposed development were on

hand for Monday's council session.

The Planning Board unanimously vetoed the rezoning request last week. But council can overturn that rejection, which is merely a recommendation to council.

Biggs asked Busby if he should discuss the project with developers when not in public meetings. Biggs said he had been "invited" to talk with the developers about the issue.

"I don't think that serves a useful purpose," Busby said.

Edenton-Chowan planner Elizabeth Bryant said Biggs and other town officials are not barred by state law from meeting with the developers.

Busby said the town is in full control of what is done

or not done with the site since sewage service would likely become a major factor for the success or failure of the project. With the new zoning classification, septic systems could not be used. Sewage lines would have to be installed for the smaller R-5 and R-10 zonings.

"It's not the Town of Edenton's responsibility," to install sewer lines at the proposed development, Busby said.

He also said the town could change the zoning of the site in the future if the development were to ever appear to pose a potential threat to the health, safety, and welfare of surrounding residents and properties.

Councilman Jerry Parks

said some opponents of the project — many at the May 14 meeting were from the Village Creek Subdivision, just north of Hayes — simply "don't want it to happen."

Parks suggested that council has an opportunity to make a development decision that hasn't been offered much in the past.

"We actually have an opportunity to say this is what we want Edenton to look like," he said. "I see it as an exciting opportunity, but it's been veiled in controversy, apparently."

Mayor Roland Vaughan said developer Bob Chapman has indicated it would take him and his staff a year to 18 months to develop a thorough plan for the project.

May flies bye . . .

BY EARLINE WHITE
Staff Writer

One of the many signs of an upcoming spring is the frequent showers, the longer daylight hours and the appearance of our old friends - the mayflies. This year was just like the others, though our friends did come a bit late. They came, they bred, molted on our windows, and died all within a week's span. That is the way of the Mayfly.

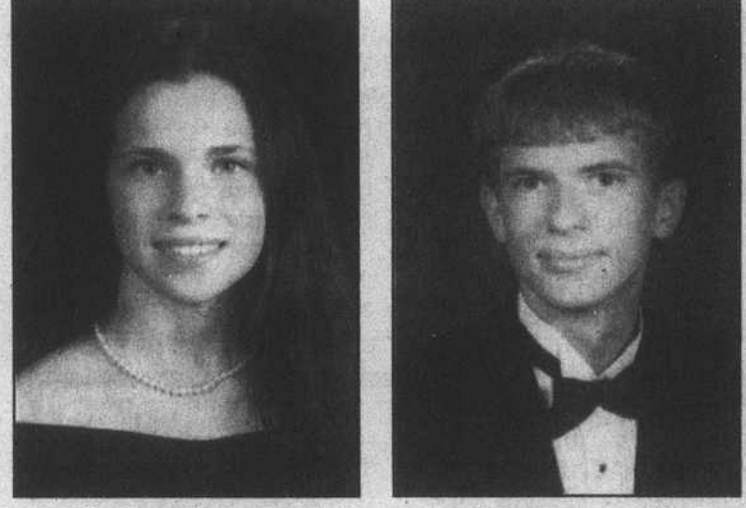
"Mayflies hatch and live for 12-24 hours in or near the water," confirmed Katy Gray, Chowan County Extension Agent. "They are adapted to aquatic life. Mayflies have transparent wings with long forked tails. There are over 600 species," Gray said after reading "Golden Guide to Insects" which she called a 'great resource'. Marjorie Rayburn, Area Specialist Extension Agent for Water Quality and Commercial Horticulture in Gates County agreed with Gray, "I don't know if they are 'worse' in Chowan County than the other counties surrounding us, but we do have a fairly high popula-



Mayflies coat the window of a downtown Edenton business. They are a familiar sight in our community this time of year.

tion because of our proximity to the water." Mating of mayflies occurs around dusk or dawn. Eggs may be laid while the female is in flight skimming across the water or below the surface among the vegetation. The egg hatches into a nymph, or baby mayfly.

See MAYFLIES Page 8-A



Erin Christina Potocki Valedictorian
Eric Anthony Sliva Salutatorian

Holmes seniors graduate Friday

More than 160 John A. Holmes High School seniors are expected to graduate May 28, to become, with the turn of a tassel, the Class of 2005.

Rehearsal for the ceremony is scheduled for 9 a.m. on the 28th, and is required in order to participate in the evening Commencement. Seniors will receive four tickets each at the Friday rehearsal.

The Commencement Ceremony is scheduled for 7 p.m. at the Athletic Complex. Graduating students must report to the Holmes Commons by 6 p.m.

If it's raining on Friday evening, the Commencement Ceremony will be rescheduled to 10 a.m. on Saturday. Graduating seniors should meet in the Commons at 9 a.m.

If it's still raining on Saturday morning, Commencement will move to Swain Auditorium at 10 a.m. The Swain auditorium will open to the public at 9 a.m. Guests must have tickets to enter the auditorium. Guests should park in the courthouse lot or in city lots; all Swain parking spaces

See GRADUATE Page 3-A

Memorial Day Service planned

Several events saluting veterans are planned in Chowan County over the next week. The first is a World War II Memorial Dedication planned for Saturday, May 29. Edward G. Bond Post 40 of the American Legion Post 40 for



Town workers deal with a damage tree twisted in power lines on N. Broad St. Monday morning.

Gusty wind, rain cause outages

BY SEAN JACKSON
Staff Writer

Gusty winds from a Sunday-evening storm knocked out power in several parts of Edenton.

The storm littered streets and yards with limbs and

leaves, while heavy rains covered roadways.

"Our system had pockets of outages," Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton said.

Areas south of town at Cape Colony and near Northeastern

See DAMAGE On Page 3-A

OLF battle heats up as lawsuits, words fly

Last in a series

BY SEAN JACKSON
Staff Writer

Battle lines have been drawn in the OLF debate, and some state and federal politicians are staying out of the line of fire.

Some elected leaders have openly joined the opponents, while others have either said little publicly or have been accused of quietly siding with supporters of the U.S. Navy's plans to build an outlying landing field in Washington and Beaufort counties.



This vehicle reading "No Farms, No Jobs, No OLF" sums up criticism of the proposed field: all the noise, none of the benefits, they say, will be coming to Washington County and surrounding communities.

Roper Mayor Bunny Sanders is tired of such hedging by political leaders. Specifically, she wants Gov. Mike Easley to come out against the OLF, which will consume more than 30,000 acres of prime farmland in Washington and Beaufort counties.

"The state should join the lawsuit," she said, referring to legal action OLF opponents and nature conservationists have taken against the Navy.

She said Easley and other state officials "have a responsibility to protect the lives and property" of all North Carolinians, including those east of I-

95.

"And, by God, I don't see them doing that," Sanders said during an interview last month.

"They have left us on our own to fight the battle."

Beyond the local level, both U.S. Rep. Frank Ballance, D-N.C., and state Sen. Marc Basnight, a Manteo Democrat, have led the charge against the OLF since the Navy's Sept. 10 announcement that Washington County would house the airfield for the new Super Hornet fighter jets.

See OLF On Page 8-A

INSIDE THIS WEEK

Hurricane season nears1-C

Local teen rides atop horsing world9-A

Preschoolers visit fish hatchery 5-C

Cycle Speedway on the go 1-B