

# THE CHOWAN HERALD

Vol. LXXIII, No. 24

Wednesday, June 14, 2006

Single Copies: 50¢

## Biggs says Planning Board nixes rezoning request for development

### he won't vote for tax hike

BY SEAN JACKSON  
The Chowan Herald

At least one Edenton town councilman said Monday night that he would not vote to approve a tax increase recommended in Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton's proposed fiscal year 2006/07 budget.



Biggs

"I'm not going to vote for a tax hike of any sort," Councilman Steve Biggs said during Monday's Finance Committee meeting.

Knighton has proposed a hike of 1.26 cents above the rate needed to generate revenues equal to the current rate. That rate, 43 cents per \$100 of property value, would have had to drop to 27.74 cents after property values increased due to a recent land revaluation. However, Knighton has called for a new rate, which would become effective July 1, of 29 cents in her \$3.9 million budget.

"A lot of people are going to pay a lot more taxes this year because their property (values) went up," Biggs said.

Follow finance panel members Willis Privott, Phyllis Britton and Jerry Parks did not state any opposition to Knighton's proposed tax hike.

Privott and Parks said the proposed increase is needed for the town to continue to provide the services it currently gives to residents. And Privott said that the 1.26-cent hike would offset the need to impose a potential 4-cent hike in the future, if council backed off smaller increases like the one

See BIGGS On Page A3

Miller casts lone vote in favor of granting rezoning bid, says there is 'real need for this type of housing'

BY EARLINE WHITE  
The Chowan Herald

Among the newest proposed subdivisions, Silver Companies: Active Adult Communities, reached a bump in the road during Monday's Planning Board meeting when the conditional use rezoning request failed to receive a recommendation from the Planning Board by a 5-to-1 vote.

This was the second time that the developers of the community went before the Board. Following the initial meeting in May, Planning Board members asked the

developers of the subdivision for more information, in particular information on the traffic impact and the possibility of public rather than private streets and an ungated rather than gated community. Following the presentation Monday night and public comment, the Board went into deliberation, which resulted in the failing vote.

The conditional use rezoning request was to change the area bordered by Pembroke Creek, West Queen, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Ave., and Boswell Street from R-A (residential-agriculture) to R-5 (high density residential) and CN (neighborhood commercial). Because of the negative recommendation on the conditional use rezoning the next step - a vote for a conditional use permit - became a moot point.

Board member Craig Miller

cast the lone vote in favor of the subdivision. "I think there is a need (for this type of housing in this community)," Miller said Thursday. "I understand there are concerns such as gates and I think this can be worked on over time. I am for controlled growth, and I think we need to look into a continuum of health care. A lot of our citizens are retirement-age so we need to consider looking into assisted and independent living communities."

Board member Carolyn Burns voted against the rezoning because of her concerns about the possible traffic problems that may result. "I feel that it (the community) is too high density for the location and there would be traffic problems with the (traffic) outlets established on the map," Burns said. "I also feel that our sewage and water system would

be put under stress, even though future plans are to increase the capacities. The gated part does not bother me although it did bother others. I think it (the community/rezoning) needs more consideration, thought and planning."

Steve Lane, also a Planning Board member shared concerns over the health, safety and welfare of the public if the rezoning were to take place. Lane felt that rezoning the area to R-5 would be too high a density (for the area) and not compatible with what we see in town. Lane added that the strain on the water quality and quantity was also a factor in his decision to vote against the rezoning.

The recommendation from the Planning Board will go before the Town Council within the next few months and a public hearing

on the applications will be likely held in September after the results of the hydrogeological study is complete, Town Manager Anne Marie Knighton said in an email to *The Chowan Herald* on Friday.

"The Town Council recognizes that in order for the Town's water treatment system to be able to adequately serve 600 additional residential units, we will have to expand our capacity," Knighton said. "The hydrogeological study will evaluate the feasibility of us being able to add additional wells to our system and draw water from the aquifer that is suitable for our treatment process. We have to be careful about salt-water intrusion, as high chlorides mean a whole new treatment process that will be very, very expensive (reverse osmosis)."

## '06... Over and Out



Sean Jackson/The Chowan Herald

At far right, Kyle Belton begins to celebrate graduating from John A. Holmes High School Friday night even before the ceremony began.

### One hundred forty-seven seniors turn tassels on graduation day

BY SEAN JACKSON  
The Chowan Herald

For Ashley Simons and Heather Pippins, Friday night's graduation from John A. Holmes High School was another chapter in their long friendship. For Shenika Privott, it was big step towards the culinary world.

Simons and Pippins, both 18, said the end of their high school days was a bit sad.

"It's gone by so fast," said Pippins, who was one of the 147 seniors who graduated here Friday night in front of

a large crowd at the Aces Athletic Complex.

"We're, like, best friends," Simons and Pippins chimed together when asked how well they knew each other as they waited in the school's cafeteria before heading out to the ceremony.

"Definitely sisters," Pippins added.

Both plan to major in elementary education. Simons will head to Elizabeth City State University in the fall, while Pippins plans to attend East Carolina University in Greenville.

"We'll probably call each other every day, every night," Pippins said.

Privott, however, was looking forward to the chance to exit Chowan County in the fall. The 17-year-old will enroll at Johnson & Wales University in Charlotte. She wants to become a chef after graduating from the culinary school. Privott was the first Holmes student to graduate from a culinary course offered by the College of The Albemarle's Chowan County campus.

See GRADUATES Page A3

## Former Holmes teacher arrested for solicitation

BY SEAN JACKSON  
The Chowan Herald

A former John A. Holmes High School science teacher was arrested Tuesday morning on charges of soliciting a minor.

Thomas Leroy Longnecker, 60, of 601 N. Broad St., Apt. 4, Edenton, was led out of the Chowan County Magistrate's Office in handcuffs by Edenton police Det. Sgt. Rhonda Copeland and Det. Aaron Davidson. Dressed in a light-blue dress shirt and dark slacks, Longnecker was taken to his residence at the former Habit Motel where Animal Control officials were waiting to take away his three cats, Copeland said.



Sean Jackson/The Chowan Herald

Police conducted an undercover operation early Sunday morning, with undercover agents posing as 15-year-old girls, Davidson said. "He took the bait," Davidson added.

Longnecker turned himself in Tuesday on two charges of first degree sexual exploitation of a minor. He was jailed under a \$100,000 secured bond set by Magistrate Carlton Jackson. His next court appearance is June 20.

See TEACHER On Page A3

## Commissioners approve bid to buy old White Oak site

BY SEAN JACKSON  
The Chowan Herald

A Pasquotank County real estate developer's bid to buy the old White Oak School in Rocky Hock was approved by the Chowan County Board of Commissioners on June 5.

Rick White's offer to buy the school, which closed in the spring of 1998, was for \$68,560, Chowan special projects coordinator Peter Rascoe told commissioners last week.

"I think we got a fair price," Commissioner Jimmy Alligood said. The most recent value given for the property was around \$58,000, Rascoe

said.

The former elementary school sits on 9.5 acres on Dillard's Mill Road. Its entire heating and cooling system — including an old boiler — will have to be removed, Rascoe said. And then White will have to substantially improve the structure.

"It will cost a lot to renovate that structure," Rascoe said. "He will buy as-is, no warranties."

Rascoe said White has indicated it would take approximately 24 months for him to renovate the site for rental units.

The county received roughly

12 bids for the property, Rascoe said last week. The bids were advertised in newspapers in Raleigh and Norfolk, Va.

"I don't know what else we could have done," Rascoe said, adding that many area developers were notified of the sale of the property, including some in Chowan County.

The former elementary school served young students in Chowan prior to the opening of the new White Oak School in the fall of 1998 at the intersection of N.C. Highway 32 and Sandy Ridge Road.



Contributed

An aerial view of the former White Oak Elementary School site on Dillard's Mill Road.

### INSIDE

- Calendar ..... C2
- Church ..... C7, 8
- Classifieds ..... D1-4
- Editorials ..... A6
- Obituaries ..... C6
- School ..... A4
- Society ..... C3
- Sports ..... B1-4

### Contact us

Call 482-4418



©2006 The Chowan Herald  
All Rights Reserved

**8TH ANNUAL EDENTON MUSIC & WATER FESTIVAL**  
**WATERFRONT PARK, EDENTON ON SATURDAY, JUNE 17TH**  
 Canoe/Kayak & Sunfish Racing • Paddling Demos • Guided Paddle Tours  
 Lumbee Tribe of North Carolina • US Coast Guard Search & Rescue Demo  
 PLUS Music to entertain you • "Ocracoke Opry" at Swain Auditorium (ticketed event)  
**ALL DAY ECO-EXHIBITS • ROCK CLIMBING WALL**  
 Bring a lawn chair or blanket. Food and drink from Local Scout Troops & regional vendors.  
 The Fun Starts at 8:30 am  
 Brought to you by **WESTERN-LP**