

Judge to rule on affordable housing dispute

Evergreen decision expected this week

By RITCHIE E. STARNES
Editor

The town of Edenton will learn this week whether councilors erred when they denied a builder the opportunity to build an affordable housing complex.

An attorney for Evergreen Construction argued Friday afternoon in Pasquotank County's

Superior Court that Edenton's Town Council ignored the N.C. Fair Housing Act when it denied the builder a conditional use permit to pave the way for garden apartments for the economically challenged. The town's attorney Hood Ellis countered that Edenton leaders rejected Evergreen's request because its appraiser failed to provide data that supported his conclusion that Edenton lacked adequate affordable, multi-family dwellings. Town officials argue that Edenton has

ample rental housing.

Evergreen's attorney William J. Brian Jr. told Judge Cy Grant that instead of deciding whether to grant the builder a conditional use permit on legitimate land use ordinances, the town based its decision on prejudice against affordable housing.

"All they focused on was the type of people who would live there, not its use," Brian said.

He continued that the State Fair Housing Act prohibits land use decisions based on residents'

income.

"You're supposed to be making decisions based on land use, not who's going to live there," Brian added.

But, Ellis argued that it was Evergreen's appraiser Paul Cumo of Coastal Carolina Group who interjected the need for more affordable housing when he issued his opinion that Evergreen's project would not adversely impact surrounding properties. Cumo did so without documentation to support his claims,

Ellis added. And because of the Council's diligent research, town leaders challenged Cumo's findings, he continued.

"Where's the beef?" Ellis said. "He (Cumo) didn't give us any methodology as to how he arrived at his opinions. He probably had the credentials, but he didn't do anything. He just gave his opinion."

Evergreen sought a conditional use permit in hopes of

See RULING, 2A

Herald wins 5 NC Press awards

Honors include first, second, third

From Staff Reports

The Chowan Herald collected five editorial awards at the 2012 North Carolina Press Association News Editorial and Photojournalism Contest award ceremony held in Chapel Hill, Thursday.

The Herald's big brother in The Daily Advance won 10 awards, including second place for General Excellence. The Perquimans Weekly also won three awards at the annual banquet held at the George Watts Hill Alumni Center on the campus of the University of North Carolina.

In the division that includes community newspapers with circulations between 3,500-10,000, the Chowan Herald took home one first place, two second place, and two third place finishes. Two of the awards for education reporting were presented to Herald Editor Ritchie Starnes.

Judges awarded Starnes first place for his Sept. 12 story "NAACP Demands Firings for Discrimination." The judges called the story "Comprehensive, objective coverage that covered both sides of the issue. Well researched and written."

For his Sept. 5 story "J.A. Holmes' Principal Sets Expectations," Starnes earned a third place award. Judges called the article a "well written feature."

The Edenton editor also garnered a runner-up award for feature writing in a December 2011 story dubbed "Train House," about a Christmas tradition in Eure. Judges wrote, "The secret to this story was getting the reader in close to the details. A nicely paced read."

The Daily Advance
See AWARDS, 2A



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HISTORY IN BLACK AND WHITE



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

This undated photo shows what downtown commerce looked like around the turn of the 20th century when horse and buggy was still the primary mode of transportation.

Aged photos reveal town's past

Images go back more than a century

By RITCHIE E. STARNES
Editor

If a photo is worth 1,000 words, think of the number of memories it stirs.

In what can only be described as a serendipitous discovery, PNC Bank officials here recently stumbled on a photo album in a locked cabinet within the downtown branch's vault. Inside lay a treasure trove of faded black and white images more than a century old. Most of the photos accompanied brief summaries, apparent recollections from old timers with keen memories, many since deceased, or at least handed-down knowledge of the town's colorful history.

And this fortuitous find arrives as the town launches the 300th anniversary of its founding.

"With the 300th, it was perfect timing," said Deborah Lee, PNC branch manager. "Whoever did it (album) tried to find out as much as they possibly could," she added about the unknown author of the collection.

"I wish I knew who did it so I could give them credit. They obviously did their homework," she added.

A need for more vault space to accommodate safety deposit boxes prompted the removal of items, including the small cabinet. Before then, not much consideration had been given to the contents inside. Once unlatched, they discovered items not perused for years. Along with the album of old photos of a past Edenton, there were photos of previous banking events, Lee said.

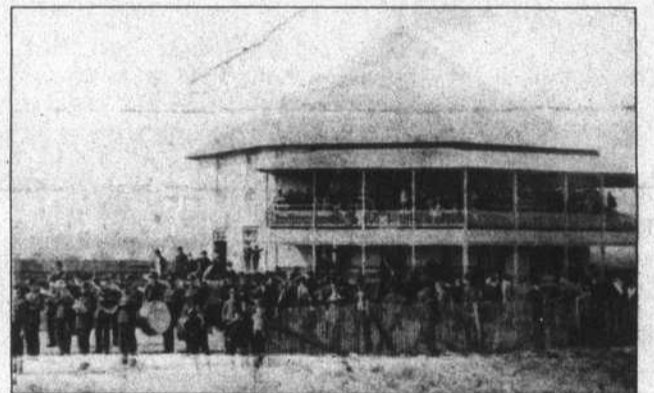
"My thinking is that there was a banker who was a historian," Lee said. "PNC is really inter-

ested in the legacy of all its banks."

Also inside lay a file full of every receipt and correspondence about the 1911 construction of the Bank of Edenton, which now serves as Town Hall. Construction of the former bank cost just under \$14,000. PNC donated the building to the town in 1971, Lee said.

But, it's the yellowed photographs that captivate the casual observer. So much that some think the images could go a long way at generating attention for the 300th anniversary. If nothing else, the photos can help integrate locals, especially those reared here, into the celebration.

"I think it enhances everything that we're trying to do, not just about the colonial period, but over the last 300 years," said Gregg Nathan, executive director of the Edenton



A crowd gathers at the county's first exhibit hall and grandstand at Hicks Field where horse racing was held.



The Bay View Hotel stands where the later built Hinton Hotel was erected, which next served as the headquarters for Chowan County.

See PHOTOS, 3A

Curtain falls on Edenton Little Theater



FILE PHOTO

Jennifer Fenner (left), Carolyn Pastorek and Ernie Wahlers rehearse Edenton Little Theater's "Key Lime Pie." It was the final production for the now disbanded acting troupe.

Lack of younger actors befalls group

By REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writer

The Edenton Little Theater is no more.

On March 19 the remaining members and officers of the organization that had entertained the community for decades reluctantly made the decision to disband.

Bruce King, who had served as the nonprofit's president for the past 10 years, said the decision was a sad one, but necessary.

"We just feel that there is no longer a need for people to spend six weeks (working on) on a play

that may or may not be successful," King said.

King said that most of those involved in the ELT at the end were at an age where they needed to be able to pass the responsibility for the organization on to a new generation. But, he said, there was not sufficient interest among younger residents of the community for that to happen.

"It's not a happy decision," King said of disbanding the group. "But you do what you have to do."

King said that the group got its start in the 1940s and had experienced a series of ebbs and flows. ELT was popular during the 1960s, for example, and then became big again

during the 1980s, he said.

King recalled that musicals were a big draw for the organization during the 1990s. Productions included "Arsenic and Old Lace," "Guys and Dolls, South Pacific" and the hugely popular "My Fair Lady."

Over the years since then, though, the acting troupe has struggled to get enough volunteers to mount other large productions, King said.

Carolyn Pastorek, who directed some of the ELT's more recent productions, said that the small number of people in the community willing to act in plays led her to focus on one-act plays that only

See THEATER, 3A

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