

# CHOWAN HERALD



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## State: County can resume softening water

BY REGGIE PONDER  
Editor

State environmental officials said Tuesday that Chowan County would be allowed to resume its water-softening process for the time being, according to County Manager Kevin Howard.

Changes are still in store for the system over the long term. But Howard said Tues-

day that state officials had told him the county would be able to resume softening the water while an assessment is conducted — a process that is expected to last at least a year.

Meanwhile, county officials will hold a meeting Tuesday night to provide information to the public about changes in the county water system.

The meeting will be held

at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, Jan. 12, in the commissioners' meeting room at the Public Safety Center on Freemason Street.

Howard told the county commissioners at their regular meeting Monday night that he wanted to hold the meeting in order to inform the public about the water system.



HOWARD

Howard said his plan is to do a 20-25 minute presentation on the current situation regarding the county water system and then field questions from the public.

State environmental regulators late last year told county officials they would have to stop softening the county's wa-

ter as long as the county continued to discharge the effluent from the treatment process into a swamp near the treatment plant. The county already had begun phasing out the softening of the water and had been scheduled to stop the softening completely by March 1. That plan is no longer effective, though, in light of the county's new arrangement with state environmental

regulators.

The meeting next week will not be a special meeting of the board of commissioners. It will be an informational meeting at which county staff will present information to the public.

But the county commissioners plan to start meeting soon to discuss how to resolve the water treatment

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## COMMUNITY WELCOMES NEW YEAR'S BABY

BY REBECCA BUNCH  
Staff Writer

Sheena Phelps of Edenton is the proud mom of the Chowan County 2016 New Year's baby.

Little Jayceon Lamar Phelps was welcomed into the world on Saturday, Jan. 2 at 2:21 a.m. at Vidant Chowan Hospital in Edenton. He weighed 9 pounds, 7 ounces and was 22.5 inches long.

In an interview on Sunday morning Phelps said her due date was actually another holiday, Christmas Eve, but that apparently baby Jayceon Lamar wasn't ready to make his appearance just then.

"I just didn't think we would go this far," she said. "It was unexpected."

Phelps said the baby is her second child. She also has a little girl, Ja'Myah Phelps, age 8, who is in third grade at D.F. Walker Elementary School.

Phelps said her little girl is thrilled to have a baby brother that she'll be able to play with.

"She walked right in here and said, 'Mom, where's my baby brother?'" Phelps said, while seated on her hospital bed holding the newest member of the family. "She's ready to take charge."

Phelps accepted several baskets of gifts traditionally presented to the New Year's baby by members of the hospital staff and local businesses.

"I love the gifts," Phelps said with a big smile. "I want to thank everyone for them."

Phelps, 26, is a graduate of John A. Holmes High School. She works for the North Carolina Department of Corrections in Tyrrell County. She is the daughter of Irene and William Phelps of Edenton.



STAFF PHOTO BY REBECCA BUNCH

Sheena Phelps of Edenton cradles her son Jayceon Lamar, who was the first baby born at Vidant Chowan Hospital in 2016. Jayceon was born on January 2, the grandson of Irene and William Phelps, also of Edenton.

## County adopts revised noise ordinance

BY REGGIE PONDER  
Editor

The Chowan County Board of Commissioners Monday adopted a revised noise ordinance intended to address concerns raised by the chief district court judge.

In a presentation to the county commissioners at their regular meeting Monday night, Sheriff Dwayne Goodwin pointed out that the ordinance had not been revised since 1992.

This past summer the Chowan Sheriff's Office issued citations under the ordinance and they were thrown out of court, Goodwin told the commissioners.

Goodwin said Chief District Court Judge Edgar Barnes had said the ordinance as it

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## Board backs request for solar farm permit

BY REBECCA BUNCH  
Staff Writer

The town planning board unanimously gave its approval Monday night to a request from Butternut Solar Farm, LLC for a conditional use permit.

The request, made by developer Heath McLaughlin, was for the creation of a 5-megawatt solar farm on land located at 115 Butternut Lane located in Edenton's one mile ETJ (extra territorial jurisdiction).

Planning Board Chair Craig Miller noted that while he and his fellow board members had given their approval the final decision on whether to grant the permit rests with the town council.

According to Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton, the council is scheduled to consider the request at an upcoming meeting.

To earn the board's approval the developer was required to prove that the project at its proposed location:

- Will not endanger the public health or safety;

- Will not injure the value of adjoining or abutting property;
- Will be in harmony with the area in which it is located; and
- Will be in conformity with the Land Use Plan, thoroughfare plan, or other plan officially adopted by the town council.



KNIGHTON

In a report written by Knighton it was noted that town staff felt the applicant's request sufficiently addressed concerns raised in previous meetings.

For example, Knighton said, "If appropriate setbacks and landscape screens are approved as conditions of the permit, then a finding that the project is in harmony with the area in which it is located can be considered."

"The town council is expected to review the pending Solar Farm Text Amendment on Jan. 12," she added. "That amendment contains a number of

*"If appropriate setbacks and landscape screens are approved as conditions of the permit, then a finding that the project is in harmony with the area in which it is located can be considered."*

Anne-Marie Knighton  
Town manager

conditions that we recommend to be included in this CUP." At present the town's Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) does not contain language pertaining to proposed solar farms."

Those recommended conditions are:

- Solar structures shall not exceed 15 feet in height
- Solar array structures, including security fencing, must meet the minimum setback

requirements for the R&A District, a 500 foot setback from an occupied residence and a 500 foot setback from the center line of a public right-of-way

• In addition to the requirements set forth in Article XIX, Screening, Landscaping and Trees requirements, the solar farm shall be screened with an opaque screen along the North Broad Street exterior side of a security fence and along the Butternut Lane exterior side of the security fence. The screen shall be from ground to the height of six feet and consist of plantings expected to be opaque in all seasons of the year and reach height maturity within 5 years.

"(The) applicant is required to submit screening plan and maintenance plan as part of the Conditional Use permitting process in accordance with Article XIX and related Town of Edenton UDO requirements," Knighton said in her report.

• Applicant will seek advice and input from Chowan

See FARM PERMIT, 4A