

## Council members respond to comments about vote

BY REBECCA BUNCH  
Staff Writer

The four town council members who voted against the sale of the Northeast Commission building say they stand behind their choice even though some of the comments they've heard from citizens have been less than kind.

Councilman Elton Bond said he has been stopped in the grocery store by citizens who have told him he made the wrong choice. But he said he hasn't been bombarded with harassing phone calls

at home as has been the case with another councilman, Bob Quinn.

"I have run across some people in the grocery store who said I was wrong," Bond said. "But no one has been calling me at home. The ones who have talked to me said they were disturbed by the way I voted."

But Bond said he has taken the comments in stride.

"It's part of the job," he said. "Sometimes people are pleased with the way I vote and sometimes they are not. That's just life."

Councilwoman Norma Simp-

son, who works at a local doctor's office, said she has had people trying to talk with her at her workplace and shared the piece of advice she gives them about her vote against the sale.

"I tell them, if ya'll have any comments come to the next council meeting and give your comments there," she said.

Simpson said she was aware many in town did not approve of the way she voted.

"I can feel the tension when I go out in public," she said. "I have had some people that have been

supportive, that have told me I'm doing a good job. But I know others feel differently."

Simpson said she could tell some people were trying to avoid her since the sale vote but said it would not cause her to vote against what she believed was right.

"As long as I'm on the town council, I'm going to vote the way I believe," she said.

Simpson added that as always when she faced troubled times, she has turned to her faith for comfort.

"I've prayed more this time than I've ever prayed before," she said. "And it has given me strength."

Councilman Steve Biggs said while he'd heard some negative comments about the vote he was taking it in stride. He said that he saw it as a plus that so many people were passionate about the issue of whether the building should be sold to Raleigh businessman John Glover for the establishment of a brew pub on the downtown waterfront.

See VOTE, 2A



STAFF PHOTO BY REGGIE PONDER

Celebrating the new ownership of the Edenton Steamers are (l-r) Mayor Roland Vaughan; Billy Bass, former Steamers Board of Directors president; Steamers General Manager Tyler Russell; Coastal Plain League Commissioner Justin Sellers; and new owners Frank Burke and Georgia Rhodin.

## EDENTON STEAMERS SEE GOOD TIMES AHEAD

BY REGGIE PONDER  
Editor

A veteran minor league owner has bought the Edenton Steamers, which won the Coastal Plain League's Pettitt Cup last season but had struggled financially over the past year or so.

At a press conference Thursday afternoon in the Edenton Town Council Chambers, Steamers

General Manager Tyler Russell announced that the community organization that previously owned the Steamers had agreed to sell the team to Frank Burke and Georgia Rhodin.

Russell remains as general manager.

Burke owned the Chattanooga Lookouts for two decades.

"He knows baseball inside and out," Russell told the crowd gath-

ered in the Council Chambers.

For Burke, it's all about staying involved in the game he loves.

"There is no better way to retard the growing up process than to be involved in the game of baseball," Burke said.

Burke said that no matter whose name was listed as owner, the community still owns the Steamers.

"This team is not leaving Edenton. Period," Burke said. "I don't

believe in moving teams."

Burke thanked the people of the town and county and all the volunteers who have done so much for the Steamers. Everyone's help is still needed, he said.

"It's our intention to be good stewards," Burke said.

That stewardship promises some good things for fans. For instance,

See STEAMERS, 3A

## Manager: Town not authorized to regulate billboards

BY REGGIE PONDER  
Editor

Facing a public outcry about a controversial billboard on U.S. 17 Business north of town, Edenton town officials say the municipality has no authority to regulate the billboard's content.

Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton said this week that the town does not have the authority to regulate billboards on state highways.

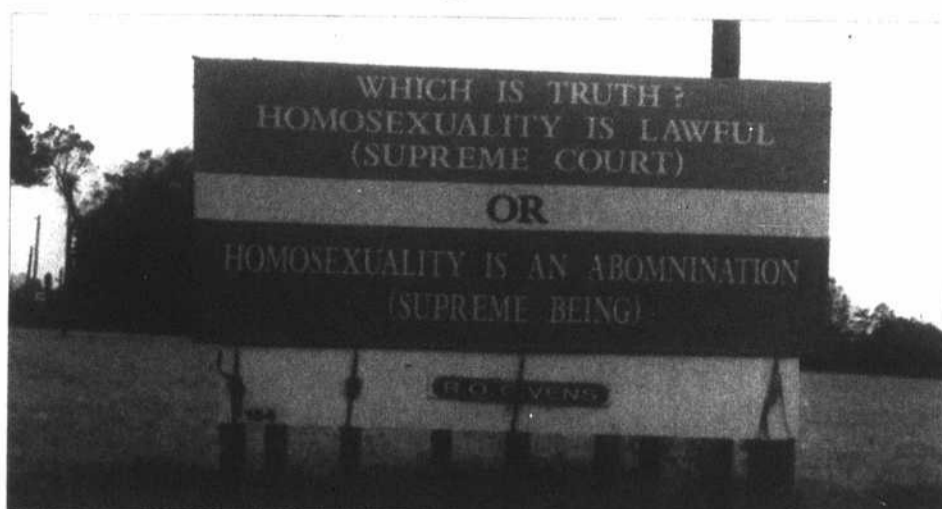
Under state law, Knighton said, responsibility for regulating billboards on

state and federal highways is assigned to the N.C. Department of Transportation. And DOT's authority over billboards is relegated to matters such as size and maintenance rather than matters of content, according to Knighton.

"It really is a freedom of speech issue, a First Amendment issue," Knighton said.

The billboard in question is located within the town's Extra-territorial Jurisdiction on U.S. 17 Business. It alludes to the Supreme Court's ruling last summer on gay marriage and includes the sentence "Homosexuality is an abomination," which is attributed to "Supreme Being."

In addition to sparking a number of letters to the



STAFF PHOTO BY REGGIE PONDER

Edenton town officials say the municipality has no authority to regulate the content of the controversial billboard on U.S. 17 Business.

editor of the Chowan Herald taking issue with the billboard's message, the billboard controversy also had led some people to call

town officials asking that the town take action to remove the message or somehow block it from public view.

Knighton said she had received calls from people

See BILLBOARD, 3A

## Charges follow in wake of fights

From staff reports

The Chowan County Sheriff's Office had a beefed-up presence on the campus of John A. Holmes High School on April 27 following a series of fights on campus last week.

In addition, there was an incident in which shots were fired in the Oakum Street area behind the high school as a middle school track meet was winding down on the evening of April 26, but school officials and law enforcement do not believe there was any connection between the incidents.

Michelle Maddox, public information officer for the Edenton-Chowan Schools, said a fight at the school

See FIGHTS, 3A

## Tyner man critical after being shot

From staff reports

A 23-year-old Tyner man is in critical condition at a Virginia hospital after being shot in Elizabeth City this weekend.

Shawquin Privott was discovered wounded early Sunday morning in a car near the Fairfield Inn and Suites after a Pasquotank County sheriff's deputy stopped a person who was driving erratically, police said. No arrests have been made in the case and a probe is continuing, police said.

Police at approximately 2 a.m. had started responding to a report of gunfire heard in the area of the Arena sports bar downtown. Police learned that Privott was shot as the driver of the vehicle he was in was leaving the Elks Lodge along Herrington Road. Police learned that Privott and others in the vehicle were looking for a hospital at the time the deputy made the traffic stop.

Privott was taken to Sentara Albemarle Medical Center before being airlifted to Sentara Norfolk General Hospital. A Sentara spokesman confirmed Privott's condition on Monday.



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