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Oak Island Merger Discussed, But No Action Agreement Consolidation Will Come Eventually

By BILL ALLEN

Long Beach and Yaupon Beach commissioners discussed the consolidation of Oak Island but took no action during a special joint session Tuesday night at Jones' Restaurant.

Yaupon Beach Mayor C.E. Murphy and Long Beach Mayor E.W. Morgan said they could not say if they would call a meeting of their boards to discuss and vote on the matter. They indicated they would wait to see if any of their board members requested meetings.

Long Beach City Manager Frank Kivett, who first proposed that the joint session be held, said he hoped the two mayors will initiate action toward allowing the citizens to vote on the question, whether the time table is one year or five years in the future.

Kivett, who was asked to serve as moderator at the joint session, called on the two boards to ask the General Assembly to adopt a bill to allow the citizens of the two towns to vote on the question of

consolidation.

Members of both boards indicated they believed that the two towns would consolidate "eventually." But questions were raised about why the rush to do it now.

"I don't want to see a political or railroad job done on us before November," declared Yaupon Beach Commissioner Bill Smalley. "Why are we rushing now?"

Mayor Morgan announced at the start of the meeting that the Long Beach board was holding an informal session with the Yaupon Beach commissioners. He said his board planned to take no vote during the meeting.

Mayor Murphy said the Yaupon Beach board was holding a formal meeting since the law had been followed in calling the session.

Smalley said he believed Yaupon Beach was holding an illegal meeting since the town attorney was not present. He said the minutes require that an attorney be present at all meetings. "I am cer-

tain that this Yaupon Beach meeting is illegal," he declared.

After a brief discussion with other commissioners, Mayor Murphy announced that Yaupon Beach had decided to hold an informal meeting and would take no vote.

Kivett said he suggested that the joint meeting be held to discuss whether the two boards should ask the General Assembly to approve a local bill allowing citizens to vote on consolidation.

He said the boards needed to act since all local bills must be introduced in the General Assembly before the first of April. He said a draft of the bill could be studied and approved before it is introduced.

"We want the bill to reflect what the boards feel when the citizens vote on it," Kivett pointed out. "We want the boards to have time to hold separate and joint meetings to inform the public before the draft bill is approved."

Kivett said he believed a majority of voters in

both towns should be required for consolidation. "If Long Beach, for example, is 90 percent for it and Yaupon Beach is 90 percent opposed to it, the consolidation should not be approved," he added.

If the consolidation is approved, Kivett said a second election will have to be held to elect members to the new board.

Mayor Murphy said he felt the people should be given a chance to vote on consolidation.

Commissioner Virginia Christenbury of Long Beach said the only question she had was why the rush all the sudden.

Commissioner Marvin Watson of Yaupon Beach said he favored allowing the people to vote. "Basically, I am in favor of merger," he stated.

Commissioner Nancy Leggett of Long Beach also said she was "basically for merger."

Commissioner Gib Barbee of Yaupon Beach said he had not made up his mind. "I think it (consolidation) will happen, but I don't know when it

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County Pays Surf 'n Turf Meal Ticket

Two Brunswick County board of elections employees ate "high on the hog" at taxpayers' expense during a recent state meeting in Charlotte. The Pilot learned this week.

Mrs. Linda Babson, executive secretary, and Mrs. Lois Baccarny, office secretary, spent a total of \$59.38 for four meals each during the two-day meeting. They had steak and lobster once.

Mrs. Babson and Mrs. Baccarny attended at two-day Board of Elections Executive Secretary meeting in Charlotte January 16 and 17. They spent a total of \$148.38 in tax money during the two days.

The total includes \$50.04 in travel at 12 cents per mile, \$39 for motel rooms and \$59.38 for meals.

Mrs. Babson and Mrs. Baccarny spent \$16.79 to eat a prime rib dinner in Charlotte January 16. Their breakfast the next day cost \$5.31 and their lunch \$9.08.

They went to the Driftwood Steak House and had steak and lobster that night. Two Cokes ran the cost of the meal to \$27.40, which included a \$2 tip.

County officials said they were "shocked" when they saw the expense report Mrs. Babson and Mrs. Baccarny turned over to the county.

They said it was not typical of the expense reports received from other county employees. They call it the "worst one" they have seen in terms of county tax money spent on food.



A REMARKABLE VIEW from the air is the discharge canal from the Carolina Power and Light Co. nuclear power plant at Southport in the vicinity of the Intracoastal Waterway. Water from the area at the bottom of the photo is funneled underneath the Waterway, which crosses just below the center of the photo. The water then "resurfaces" in the keyhole - looking area, then is channeled towards Caswell Beach (top) for discharge into the Atlantic Ocean.

Folly Tickets Now Available

Tickets for the "Follies of '75" are now on sale.

The musical variety show, with local talent, is in rehearsal by the Southport Woman's Club. It will be staged Friday, Feb. 21, at the Community Building at 8 o'clock.

Tickets are \$1.50 for adults and 75 cents for children. "It is urgent that they be purchased before Thursday, Feb. 20, because there is limited seating capacity and it may be necessary to have a second performance Saturday evening, the 22nd," said a club spokesman.

Mrs. E.G. Hollowell, whose telephone number is 457-5820, is in charge of ticket sales. Tickets also may be obtained from any member of the Southport Woman's Club.

Listing Starts March 3 With Higher Values Set

Brunswick County residents will list real and personal property for 1975 ad valorem taxes between March 3 and April 2, County Tax Supervisor Charles Mills announced Tuesday.

The listing period in Brunswick County will be two months later than normal because of delays in obtaining work on the county-wide eight-year reappraisal from the contractor, Allied Appraisal of Cin-

cinnati, Ohio. Mills said that most residents will receive their tax listing forms shortly before March 3. Other residents might not receive their forms until later if all the work has not been processed.

Mills said the real property values on the tax listing forms, which will be mailed to taxpayers, will represent the values established in the county revaluation effective

January 1, 1975, under the general statutes.

"In accordance with the General Statutes," Mills said, "all real and personal property will be appraised or valued at its true value in money."

"Under the law," he continued, "true value is interpreted as market value and means the price established in terms of money at which the property

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No Substantial Reason Given

Firing Of Stephenson Draws Public Attention

By BILL ALLEN

A number of citizens questioned the firing of Executive Director Jackie Stephenson, whom they say has helped change the economic base of Brunswick County, during a special called meeting of the Resources Development

Commission Monday night in Southport.

Stephenson, who has served as executive director of the commission since 1969, was fired on a 5-4-3 vote during an executive session of the commission last Tuesday night.

The legality of both

meetings has been questioned since the special sessions were called without following provisions of the law. The law requires that a notice be placed in the Courthouse and registered letters be sent to members when special meetings are called.

Commission members

admitted they did not post the notices nor send the registered letters because they did not know the requirements of the law. They said they felt they were doing the right thing when they notified the press.

After voting to go into executive session last Tuesday, Luke Appling made the motion that Stephenson's services be terminated that night and he be paid for the month of February. L.H. Stanley seconded the motion.

Appling, Starley, Col. James Gordon, Odell Blanton and Ralph Frazier voted to fire Stephenson. O.W. Cleaton, J.A. Francis and William A. Babson voted in opposition. Chairman George Inman did not cast a vote.

Stephenson ask the board to give the reasons why he was being dismissed. Blanton said his reason was that he felt Stephenson did not seem to see eye-to-eye with the commission.

"I have come to the conclusion that we cannot work

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Other Areas Get Break

Power Rate Cutback Has No Local Effect

Most Brunswick County electrical customers will continue to pay the full fuel escalator charge each month although it has been rolled back 25 percent in other areas of the state.

The State Utilities Commission announced last week that for the next 60 days it would roll back fuel charges passed through to customers of the state's three major power companies.

The rollback does not apply to the estimated 25 to 40 percent of North Carolina electric customers who buy their power from municipal systems and rural co - ops. Southport and Brunswick Electrical Membership Corporation customers will not be affected by the rollback since the two systems purchase power from major companies.

The Federal Power Commission sets rates for rural co - ops and municipal systems which buy power from the major companies at wholesale rates and pass it on to customers.

Robert N. Cleveland, executive vice - president of the North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation, said the State Utilities Commission order "has no application whatever to the various municipal systems in the state or to the 28 electric cooperatives."

"The Electric Membership Corporations in the state serve about 350,000 homes, or roughly a million people, and the municipal systems probably serve just as many," Cleveland declared. "This means that about half of the state's population will

not be affected by the cutback in the fuel charge."

Businesses and industries also are not included in the rollback order.

Cleveland also pointed out that cooperatives and municipal systems will not be affected by an earlier Utilities Commission order requiring extension of the deadline for payment of power bills. The order called for delaying power cutoffs for up to 90 days.

"We anticipate no change in the cutoff period for the state's EMCs because many of them - especially those serving areas with a high concentration of transients, such as near military bases - would risk extensive loss of revenues if they extended the delinquency period," he pointed out.

But Cleveland said the cooperatives will continue the traditional policy of working with individuals on a one - to - one basis in hardship cases.

According to reports, the Utilities Commission first decided to issue the formal order rolling back the fuel adjustment charges for all customers. But the members changed their minds and decided to eliminate business firms, homes served by municipal power companies and rural cooperatives from the rollback.

Officials in Tarboro announced last week that the town was rolling back rates to customers 25 percent. But officials said the town would continue to pay the full wholesale rate to its supplier.

Executive Director J. Marshall Lancaster of ElectricCities, the parent

organization for municipally - owned power companies, said other communities are looking for ways to roll back prices for consumers. But he said he doubted many more municipal companies would be able to cut prices.

Says Collector

Utilities Pay Half Of Taxes

Utilities pay more than half the taxes collected in Brunswick County, Tax Collector Homer McKeithan told the Board of Commissioners last week.

The utilities - including CP&L - in the county pay \$2,586,854.13 of the 1974 total levy of \$5,168,330.89, according to the figures provided by McKeithan.

The report showed that corporations in Northwest pay more taxes than any other township in the county. Northwest corporations, which include DuPont, will pay \$1,415,847.50 in taxes in 1974.

Smithville beaches contribute more taxes than any other township residents in the county. They are being billed \$172,702.77 in taxes in 1974.

Shallotte Township individuals rank second at \$168,001.40. Lockwood Folly individuals third at

\$149,205.73 and Smithville individuals fourth at \$137,625.45.

A breakdown of the townships includes Northwest: \$1,415,847.50 from corporations and \$75,105.76 from individuals; Town Creek: \$52,857.43 from corporations and \$88,640.54 from individuals; Smithville: \$59,046.45 from corporations and \$137,625.45 from individuals; Smithville Beaches: \$45,722.74 from corporations and \$172,702.77 from individuals; Lockwood Folly: \$48,450.69 from corporations and \$149,205.73 from individuals; Shallotte: \$42,371.46 from corporations and \$168,001.40 from individuals; and Waccamaw: \$13,297.92 from corporations and \$40,293.29 from individuals.

In addition, the tax rolls include \$49,512.92 in late listings and \$2,792.71 in discoveries.