



(Photo by Kenny Hewett)

A "VOLUNTEERS IN PUBLIC SCHOOLS" program is now underway at Southport Primary School. Mrs. Judy Graybeal (right) assists first grade teacher Miss Janet Hobbs with

storytelling. The first graders are learning of the Mayflower trip to America. The project is sponsored by the Junior Woman's Club of Southport.

'Shoddy Work' Cited In City Public Work

By BILL ALLEN
Staff Writer

Southport aldermen expressed deep concern about the "shoddy work" being done on the public works improvement project here during the regular monthly board meeting Thursday night.

Bud Davis of Henry Von Oesen Company of Wilmington, consulting engineers on the water, sewer and storm drainage project, was instructed to confer with the contractors to see what can be done. A special meeting might have to be held to consider Davis' findings.

"We want concrete assurances (that the work will be done correctly) or we will blow the whistle," Mayor E.B. Tomlinson, Jr., told Davis. "The people of Southport have put up with enough inconvenience."

Mayor Tomlinson said Southport residents were "highly displeased" with the work being done. "They are ready to wash their hands of it," he stated.

Davis told the board that most of the problems have

resulted because Pierce Ditching Company of Florence, S.C., which holds two major and one sub-contract on the projects, is having financial difficulties.

He said Pierce has the contracts for both the water and storm drainage projects. In addition, Pierce obtained the sub-contract for the sewer lines from Hilco, the prime contractor on the sewer project.

"Pierce Ditching has financial difficulties," Davis

reported. "How much, we don't know."

Davis said that the deadline for the completion of the sewer contract expired October 15. The contract is in default and subject to a \$50 a day penalty.

The completion date for the water and storm drainage projects has been extended from August 16 until December 14 because of several change orders.

Under terms of the contract, City Manager Alvin

Kornegay, Jr., can't make payments to Pierce Ditching because he has received liens on the company, Davis reported. He is holding back \$50,000 at the present time.

"Pierce says they can't put more workers on the job until they are paid," Davis pointed out. "We can't pay them until they accomplish certain work progress and satisfy the liens."

Davis said the city has two alternatives because of the current dilemma concerning the public works project.

"You can continue the present course and press for action," Davis reported. "The work should be finished in four months this way."

"Or you can declare the contract in default and call in the bonding company," he continued. "This takes time and could delay the completion date five or six months."

When questioned by Mayor Tomlinson, Davis recommended that the city follow the first alternative and work with the contractors rather than calling in the bonding company.

"If the bonding company is called in, it will take an extra two months to finish the job," he stated. "The bonding company could continue having Pierce do the work."

City Attorney E.J. Prevatte said that he would recommend that the board follow the recommendation of the engineer on the project.

Prevatte told the board that he had talked to the contractors on the telephone prior to the meeting. He said the contractors planned to contact Davis on Friday.

The city attorney said he informed the contractors that the city was "greatly disappointed with the job. I told them that we were going to protect ourselves."

Mayor Tomlinson told Davis that he was more concerned with the overall project work than when it would be completed.

Alderman Pierce Horne pointed out that the contractors have not completed the work in any one section of town, Davis said he agreed.

Davis said Hilco has completed 72 percent of their

Southport-Oak Island Organization Created

A Southport - Oak Island Chamber of Commerce was organized Saturday night by representatives of both communities "to actively promote the general welfare and future well-being of the people and businesses of the entire area."

John Barbee, who lives at Caswell Beach and manages a real estate and insurance business in Southport, will serve as president of the organization for the first six months. J.A. Francis, principal of Southport Middle School, is vice-president; Ed Harper, news editor of The State Port Pilot, is treasurer; and Coastal Services Realtor Brookie Napier is secretary. Other directors are Long Beach Mayor - Elect Hal Crain, Oak Island contractor Ted Wood and Mann's Dept. Store manager D.V. Jones.

The seven directors were chosen Saturday night by the 25 to 30 persons who met at Security Savings and Loan Association in Southport for the organizational meeting. The Board of Directors elected its own officers at a meeting Tuesday morning.

The first general meeting of the organization is scheduled for Dec. 15, a Monday night, at Oak Island Country Club beginning at 7:30. The Board of Directors will have compiled in-

formation relative to a Chamber of Commerce for discussion by those present.

First, however, members of the Board of Directors are distributing brief questionnaires to prospective members. A copy of the questionnaire is printed on page 4 in this issue of The State Port Pilot.

"This initial work is a volunteer effort," reminded Barbee, "and inevitable we are going to miss someone who would become one of the most active and dedicated members. So please don't let the fact that we may inad-

vertently miss contacting someone keep that person from participating.

"We are working under a hurried schedule, as we have much work to do before the Dec. 15 meeting," Barbee noted.

Barbee said Tuesday that special thanks should be extended to Reid Page of Pinehurst, "who has developed a great interest in this area," for helping get the Chamber of Commerce idea off the ground.

Among the responsibilities of the Board of Directors prior to the Dec. 15 meeting

will be the gathering and discussing of bylaws and other information from Chambers of Commerce throughout the state; distributing and collecting the questionnaires to see what merchants and professionals want and expect from the Chamber; and gathering information about means of financing operation of the Chamber of Commerce.

The Board noted Tuesday morning the creation of a downtown Southport merchants group, and saw no (Continued on page 2)

School Board Ready To Start On Garage

By ED HARPER
News Editor

Board of Education members are anxious to begin work on the school bus maintenance garage, it was noted Monday night, regardless of the controversy over site selection for the new county office complex.

Chairman Wilbur Earl

Rabon said during talks with three architectural - engineering firms that if court action delays the purchase of the Brown - Knox site for the new county offices he would recommend that the Board of Education buy land of its own and start construction. Members Barbara Yount and Franklin Ran-

dolph previously have expressed the same feeling.

The board heard from three firms Monday night interested in the contract for the school bus maintenance garage, as well as future work for the Board of Education that would include central offices. Among the firms represented was LBC&W of Columbia, S.C., which earlier in the day signed a contract with the county for work on the county office complex.

"You're looking at the workers," said LBC&W representative Dennis Day, who promised individual attention to the project by himself and Executive Director John Boudreaux, who also was present. Citing experience in school design, Boudreaux said, however, that all situations are unique. Being here for the county project, he noted, would assure LBC&W's attention to the school construction work.

During the conversation, Boudreaux referred to a letter addressed to the county Board of Commissioners that "explained" the firm's connection to the Watergate scandal, reported in last week's edition of The Pilot. (See related story, this issue, concerning the reply by LBC&W.)

Also referred to during the discussion was the plan to analyze both the Brown-Knox and Canal Woods sites for possible location of the county offices, and presumably the Board of Education offices as well.

Boudreaux told the board members present - Bill Sue was absent because of his wife's illness - that by testing both sites a comparison would make the decision easier. He cited the value of work done by Soil Conservationist Maynard Owens.

Boudreaux was told Tuesday by County Board Chairman Franky Thomas, however, that the firm was not to examine the Canal Woods site because it would "tend to further confuse the issue" over the site selection. Thomas said either site would accommodate the complex, but the decision had been made for the Brown - Knox tract. (See two related stories, this Pilot issue.)

Other presentations Monday night were by the Charlotte firm of Biberstein, Bowles, Meacham and Reed, and the Wilmington engineering firm of Henry Von Oesen and Associates. "Sometimes you need an engineer in lieu of an architect," said Woody Rouse

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Thomas Says Site Issue Is 'Settled'

County commissioners have selected the Brown - Knox site near Bolivia for the new county office complex, and Chairman Franky Thomas said Tuesday he considered debate about other sites a "dead issue."

"As far as I'm concerned it's settled now," Thomas told The Pilot on Tuesday. His remarks followed reports of a Monday night Board of Education meeting in which LBC&W official John Boudreaux indicated Soil analyses would be made at both the Brown-Knox and Canal Woods sites.

Commissioners Willie Sloan and Ira Butler, Jr., said Monday they saw no point in testing the Canal

Wood site near Supply because the Brown-Knox site had been chosen 3-2 by the board. Thomas said Tuesday he talked with Boudreaux that morning and told the LBC&W official he saw no reason to test the Canal Wood site.

"If the owner of that property wants a test made then he'll have to pay for it," Thomas said Tuesday. He said he told Boudreaux that if the commissioners wanted a second test they would inform the architect-engineer firm in writing.

Thomas also issued a statement Tuesday that noted either site could be used for construction (See related story, this Pilot issue.)

Chairman Explains Preference Of Site

Chairman Franky Thomas announced this week that he still favors the Brown-Knox site over the Canal Woods property for the Brunswick County courthouse complex.

"The Canal Wood tract is a fine tract of land but, in my opinion, not superior to the Brown-Knox site," Chairman Thomas said in a written statement.

Chairman Thomas had said he was willing to consider both sites when he was grilled about his choice of the Brown-Knox site during a meeting in Shallotte on October 27. He said he was releasing the statement to explain why he supported the Brown-Knox site.

Advantages of the Brown-Knox site, he said, are that it is a 156-acre tract of land, "large enough for present and future growth," has soils suitable for construction, is

suitable for landscaping with little upkeep for grounds, Bolivia has a water system that he agreed to lay a line to the county complex to furnish water, and is located close to the demographical and geographical center of the county.

The disadvantages of the site are that it has no secondary road bordering the property, it is not easy to drain and it costs \$450 an acre more, the chairman said.

He said the advantages of the Canal Woods site is that it has 199 acres, "which is large enough for present and future growth," it has a secondary road on the back side and has suitable soils for construction.

Chairman Thomas said the main disadvantage of the Canal Woods site is the fact that the property has a power line right-of-way through it.

"No construction is allowed under these lines," he pointed out. "These lines could not be buried because construction could not be built over them. It would cost at least \$40,000 to \$50,000 to move them."

In addition, he said the sandy soils on the property would make landscaping and yard upkeep more costly, and a water system to serve the complex would cost about \$100,000.

Chairman Thomas said that both tracts are suitable in his opinion. "I can certainly see why different people could have different choices," he pointed out.

"I would like to go one step further, if I might, and question the sincerity of those that attacked the commissioners at the meeting in Shallotte about our decision. Those there questioned the

Leland Lady, Deceased, Donates Land To County

A former Leland woman who received old age assistance payments has donated land to Brunswick County because of the help she obtained.

County Attorney James Prevatte, Jr., told commissioners during their monthly meeting Monday that he received a letter saying that the late Agnes Skipper wanted to give the county 1.53 acres of land on Williams Street in Leland.

Phillip W. Skipper said in the letter that his mother wanted to give the county the property to help re-pay the county for the old age assistance payments she received from the Department of Social Services.

"It is refreshing to see someone who wants to pay their own way," Chairman Franky Thomas stated. Other commissioners said they agreed.

Commissioners decided to give the land, valued at \$5,580 on the tax books to the county Recreation Department to establish a park in the Leland area. They indicated that they would name it "The Agnes Skipper Park" in honor of Mrs. Skipper.

Board members instructed County Manager Don Flowers, Jr., to write a letter to Skipper thanking him for the donation made by his mother.

In other business, the board voted unanimously to pur-

chase the N.C. Equipment Company "heavy duty" backhoe upon the recommendation of Water Management and Mosquito Control Director L.D. "Tink" Benton.

Commissioners expressed concern, however, because the "broad" specifications allowed companies to offer both heavy- and light-weight backhoe equipment to the county. The result, it was noted was that prices ranged between \$60,000 and \$48,862.88.

"There seems to be some irregularity, or rather question, about the way the bid package was written," Commissioner Steve Var-

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