

THE MAN WHO STARTED the ball rolling for moving the county seat from Southport, Rep. Allen Ward of Longwood, was present Monday evening when county commissioners heard that the Brown-Knox site was suitable for location of the proposed county office complex. Ward argued that the Canal Wood site near Supply should be compared with the Bolivia area site that the county commissioners have selected.

Payment Made For County Complex Site

By BILL ALLEN
Staff Writer

The Brunswick County Board of Commissioners voted to finalize the purchase of the Brown - Knox site for the new county courthouse-office complex on a split decision during a special meeting Monday evening.

The action was taken after Project Manager John Boudreaux of LBC&W, the architectural and engineering firm, gave the land a clean bill of health following tests made at the site.

"In summary, our research classified the building site in three categories: 'moderate,' 68 percent or 111 acres; 'possible,' 15 percent of 24 acres; and 'poor,' 17 percent of 28 acres," Boudreaux reported to the board.

"We find that more than sufficient land is available

within the tract which is suitable for construction using conventional means," he stated.

During the question - and - answer session following the report, both Rep. Allen Ward and Brunswick County Memorial Hospital Authority Chairman Mason Anderson urged the board to have tests made at the Canal Wood site.

Commissioner W.T. Russ, Jr., made a motion to authorize LBC&W to make tests on other sites that have been considered for the location of the courthouse-office building complex. The motion appeared to die before Chairman Steve Varnam, Jr., seconded it.

Commissioner Franky Thomas asked for a roll - call vote and the motion was defeated 3 to 2, the same majority that selected the Brown - Knox site in the first place about two months ago.

Commissioners Willie Sloan, Ira Butler, Jr., and Thomas voted in opposition to having tests made at other sites, while Russ and Chairman Varnam were in favor.

Butler made the motion to complete the purchase of the Brown - Knox site and Thomas seconded it. However, no one called for a vote on the motion until County Attorney James Prevatte, Jr., spoke up later in the meeting.

Prevatte said the board should vote on the motion especially since he said he needed "instructions" to determine his course of action. A voice vote was taken, and it was approved 3 to 2 with Chairman Varnam and Russ still in opposition.

Boudreaux said in his report that the purpose of the study made by LBC&W who to evaluate the suitability of

the 163.2 - acre Brown - Knox site as it relates to structures, utilities and site improvements required for the long - range needs of county citizens. (See related story in this edition of The Pilot).

Boudreaux said no soil borings, topographic survey, test wells and percolation tests were made during the study because they are not typically done prior to purchase and would be of "inordinate expense" to the county in testing the site.

Willie Ward of Ash, Capt. Durbar Larson of Long Beach and others questioned Boudreaux in detail about why the soil borings and percolation tests were not made. He said the tests will be made after purchase because of the "inordinate expense" to the county.

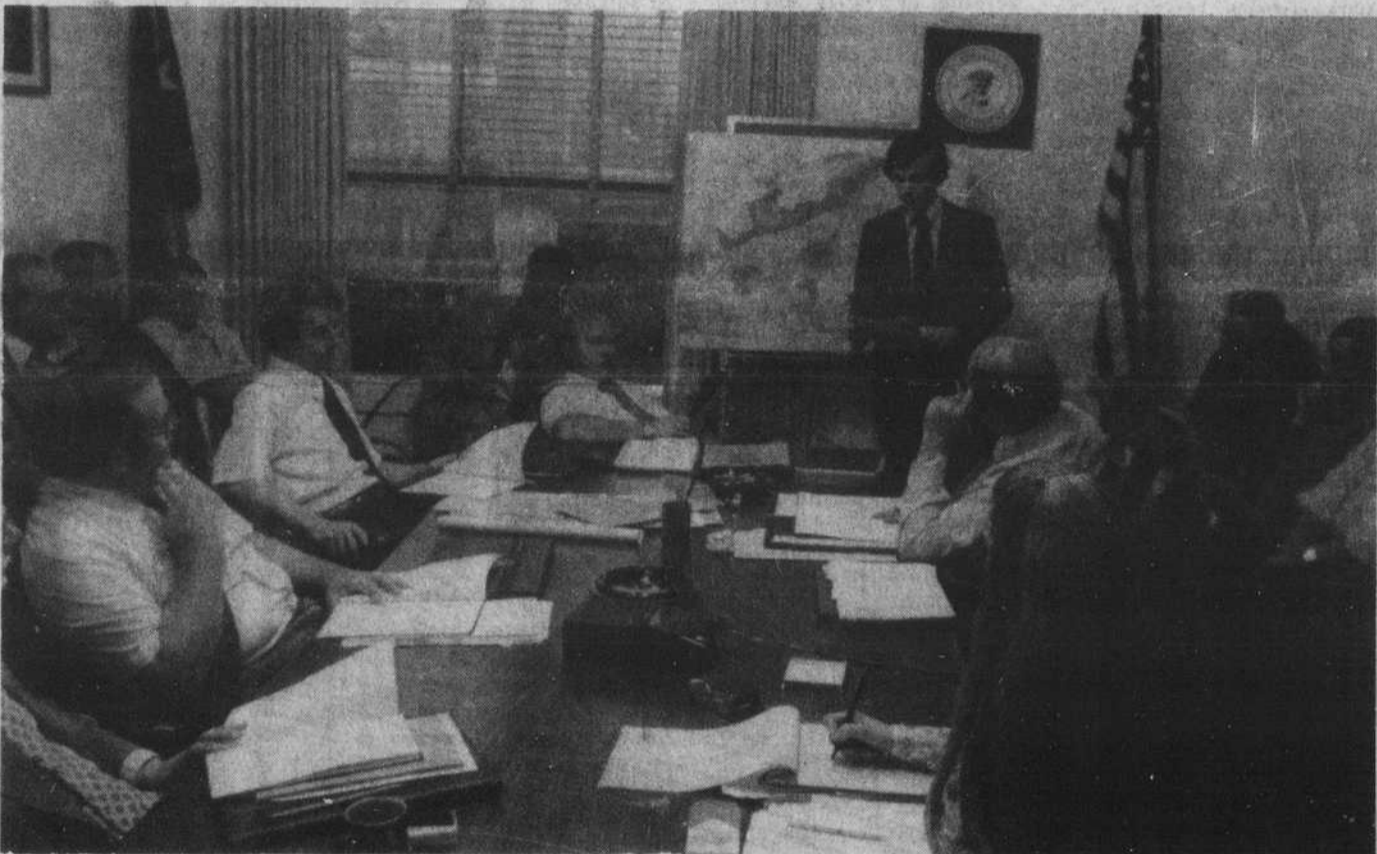
Several county residents questioned the price the county was paying for the

land. They said the county was paying \$195,780 for the 163.2 - acre Brown - Knox site while the 199 - acre Canal Wood tract has been offered for \$149,250. The two sites are located about four miles apart on Highway 17.

Others at the meeting said the price for the Brown - Knox site was not high considering the fact that the county paid \$110,318.75 for the 33 - acre Brunswick County Memorial Hospital property about two years ago before inflation sent land values, based on the recent revaluation, sky high.

Rep. Ward urged the board to have the Canal Wood site tested. "I would like to make this request that you do compare the site with the Canal Wood site," Rep. Ward told the board. "That way you can tell which is the best site and buy the cheapest and best"

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HEARING ABOUT THE BROWN-KNOX site from LBC&W Project Engineer John Boudreaux are members of the county Board of Commissioners and a packed roomful of interested spectators. Boudreaux told commissioners the Brown-Knox site would be suitable for construction of a "dynamic county complex."

Higher Tobacco Prices Predicted By Manager

By BILL ALLEN
Staff Writer

Tobacco prices should be higher this year because the Brunswick County allotment has been reduced, Manager Ralph Price of the Agriculture Stabilization and Conservation Service (ASCS) office in Shallotte has predicted.

The number of pounds of tobacco to be planted this year has been reduced about 1,196,000 while the average support level has been increased 13.5 percent.

"I think our farmers are well-pleased with the change since they hope it will increase both the market prices and their profit margins," Price stated. "The change will guarantee that good tobacco will sell for higher than the average 1975 prices."

The federal government has set the 1976 effective quota in Brunswick County in 1976 at 6,715,230 pounds. "Our farmers will be growing a lot less tobacco by a long shot," he pointed out.

Last year, the effective tobacco quota in the county was 8,058,481 pounds. County farmers sold a total of 7,124,085 pounds in 1975, according to marketing report cards.

"The county quota has been reduced for two reasons," Price stated. "The national tobacco allotment was reduced 15 percent by the government. In addition, the pounds farmers sold in excess of their quota in 1975 were reduced from the

allotment. Under law, farmers can sell 10 percent over their quota and have it subtracted from next year's allotment. "It is a borrowing process," Price explained.

But the ASCS manager said the 13.5-percent increase in the average support level will make it higher than the 1975 market average. It is estimated that the approximate 12-cent increase will make the support rate \$1.05.5 this year.

Price said the federal government took the two actions - reducing the

allotments and increasing the support prices - because a combination of a larger carryover and weaker buyer demand held the grower price average to \$1.00 per pound in 1975. The average was five cents below the 1974 record high.

"You could not say that 1975 was a bad year for county tobacco farmers, but it certainly was not as good as they expected," Price pointed out. "Farmers had to sell more tobacco for about the same amount of money or

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'Audition' Set Sunday, 2 To 4

An Open House Backers' Audition for the outdoor musical drama 'Revolution' will be held Sunday from 2 until 4 p.m. at the Southport Community Building.

Music, songs and readings from the drama, entitled "The Essence of 'Revolution!'", will be performed during the afternoon. Ethan Ayre and Lewis Hardee, Jr., co-authors of the production, along with actor Vince Knue and former Miss North Carolina Susan Griffin will perform.

The Sunday afternoon program is co-sponsored by the Southport Woman's Club and the Junior Woman's Club of Southport, which has undertaken 'Revolution!' its Community Improvement Project. Refreshments will be served.

Speed Limits Are Changed

New speed limits have been posted in the Town of Boiling Spring Lakes.

The segments of streets that are affected are:

- (1) SR 1539 (Boiling Spring Road) from Alton Lennon Drive to the eastern corporate limit at SR 1521 (Belgrave Road) - 45 mph;
- (2) Highway 87 from Fifty Lakes Drive to a point 0.3 miles north of the intersection with Boiling Spring Road - 45 mph.

Refunds For Gas Received

Brunswick County is expecting a check for \$2,474.84 in gasoline tax refund money, County Purchasing Director David Swain reported this week.

Swain said the refund from the N.C. Department of Revenue will cover gasoline purchases during the fourth quarter of 1975. The county purchased 30,935 gallons of gas during the last three months of the year.

Swain said that a government unit can receive an

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By California Psychic

Doomsday Quake Is Predicted For Area

By BILL ALLEN
Staff Writer

Will a psychic's prediction that a major earthquake will occur in the Southport-Calabash-Wilmington area on Saturday, January 17, 1976, plus or minus three days before and after that date?

Mrs. Clarissa Bernhardt, who has reportedly predicted earthquakes in the past, said the major tremor - registering eight on the ten-point Richter scale - will occur "definitely within the next 365 days, probably during the week of January 14-20 and most likely on Saturday, January 17, 1976."

Mrs. Bernhardt, who claims to be "a psychic and an earth prediction specialist," told the annual convention of the Southeastern Regional Parapsychological Assoc-

iation at Davidson College last Saturday that the date of the quake "that comes to me is Saturday, January 17, 1976, plus or minus three days before and after that date."

Many state officials have been openly skeptical since Mrs. Bernhardt's prediction was made public. A spokesman for Carolina Power & Light Company said earthquake monitoring equipment at the Brunswick nuclear plant outside Southport have produced no evidence "which would support the idea of an earthquake being imminent."

Mrs. Bernhardt has predicted that five earthquakes would occur in the Carolinas and Georgia. But she said the Southport -

Calabash - Wilmington quake would be the first and the largest of all.

Her predictions were applauded by the group of about 80 persons gathered at the convention.

However, Dr. David Stewart, a seismologist and director of the MacCarthy Geophysics Laboratory at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill who has warned about earthquakes in the Southport area, said the public should take Mrs. Bernhardt's prediction seriously.

Dr. Stewart said the predicted earthquake registering 8.0 on the Richter scale would be felt "from Cuba to Canada with scattered damage for several hundred miles."

"As a scientist, I had to do some soul-searching about whether to involve myself in this prediction," Dr. Stewart said. "I wasn't sure whether to make it public. But I thought if I lived in the Wilmington area, would I want to know. The answer was yes."

Dr. Stewart said that Mrs. Bernhardt has accurately predicted three other earthquakes that have been documented during the past 14 months although the odds against such positive guesses are at least 20 to 1.

"As a scientist, I can only look at the facts," Dr. Stewart stated. "Her record, as it now stands, is three out of three."

State, geology, civil

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Delay Effort Unsuccessful

An attempt to delay the "mandate of the people" to relocate the courthouse-office complex to central Brunswick County failed Tuesday.

A group of western Brunswick County residents was unable to find a judge who would sign a motion for a temporarily restraining order to stop the county from using the Brown-Knox site near Bolivia.

"I think this is the end of it," answered Shallotte Attorney John Hughes who had been retained by the residents, when asked if other attempts would be made to have a judge sign the order.

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Chief District Court Judge Frank Grady of Elizabethtown, who is

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