

Our Town

Long Beach

Planning board chairman Willie Williams was elected chairman of the town's land use plan update steering committee Thursday night. He will lead that group as it assesses policy for possible inclusion in the state-mandated land use plan update for 1998. Bob Fitzgerald was elected vice-chairman of the committee and Wolf Fursteneau will serve the body as public information chairman.

Next step in the land use planning process is a community meeting scheduled March 26 at the Long Beach Recreation Center. Residents and property owners will be invited to share their thoughts on land use policy with the policy-makers.

The budget-making process for the fiscal year to begin July 1 has commenced at staff level. Letters were sent this week to agencies outside municipal government which have received funding from the Town of Long Beach in the past. Any agency wishing to be considered for funding by the town in the upcoming year has until April 17 to present a proposed budget and justification.

Town Hall expansion continues. Completion is expected within two months.

Yaupon Beach

Budget preparation for the 1998-99 fiscal year is also dominating much of staff's time at Yaupon Beach Town Hall. Mayor Dot Kelly and staff are to meet shortly to develop a schedule for budget formulation this year.

Yaupon Beach will be well-represented at the Governor's Hurricane Conference to be held Monday and Tuesday at the Crystal Coast Convention Center in Morehead City. In addition to mayor Kelly, attendees include commissioner Roy Johnson, town clerk Nancy Wilson and public works director David Kelly III.

Oak Island Inn management has presented plans to the town for a 13-room expansion of that facility located on Yaupon Drive. Yaupon Beach must issue a conditional use permit to the inn owner for the expansion to go forward and that requires a public hearing which has been scheduled for 7 p.m. April 13. Those wishing to review plans for the Oak Island Inn expansion may do so at Town Hall during regular business hours.

Caswell Beach

With more than three months remaining in the current fiscal year, property tax collection for FY 1997-98 has reached 98 percent. Town officials expect nearly 100-percent collection again this year, a tradition at Caswell Beach.

As of March 9, \$188,382 of a total \$192,775 levy had been collected. Second tax notices were mailed the first week of March. The taking of tax liens on the properties of delinquent taxpayers will be advertised in April and the town attorney will send letters advising delinquent taxpayers foreclosure is imminent.

In the month of February, two construction permits for single-family homes were issued for a total valuation of just under \$350,000, building inspector Charles Britt reports. Four more permits were issued in the month for improvements of existing structures. Value of improvements was listed as \$35,450.

Police in February responded to 31 calls for service. In the month officers patrolled 4,543 miles, issuing 12 motor vehicle citations and nine written and 23 verbal warnings. One breaking and entering and larceny, one act of vandalism, one larceny of a sign and one instance of damage to a sign was reported in February.

Boiling Spring Lakes

A first Community Watch meeting will be held at 7 p.m. April 2 at City Hall.

At that meeting, participants will learn about Community Watch, help develop a Community Watch program for Boiling Spring Lakes and nominate and elect officers. The Community Watch program for the city will actually begin that night, community resources officer Scott Mason said.

Those having questions about Community Watch may contact Mason at 845-2247.

The planned 1,360-square-foot expansion of City Hall was slowed somewhat by the cold snap experienced last week. The bulk of framing has been completed by largely volunteer labor and roof trusses have been delivered. The trusses are expected to go up this week.

Street crews continue to be busy digging ditches and installing culverts to aid drainage in areas of the city hit hardest by recent torrential rains. Water levels in hardest struck areas have dropped significantly.

Southport

In February, 111 complaints were lodged with the city's animal control officer. Fifty-seven of those involved dogs, 47 involved cats and seven involved other animals. Six cases of animal cruelty were investigated, animal control officer Charles Drew reports.

The Thursday night regularly scheduled monthly meeting of the city's board of aldermen was canceled at the last minute so aldermen and city staff could attend a legislative study committee hearing in Wilmington. The topic of the night was deregulation of the electricity industry, a subject of keen interest to Southport as a member of N. C. Eastern Municipal Power Agency and its parent agency Electricities.

When aldermen reschedule the meeting two annexation requests -- one for satellite annexation of a non-contiguous parcel -- will be heard and three requests for new subdivision approvals will be heard.

Bald Head Island

Thirty volunteers participated in the village fire department's ventilation training exercise this week. The fire department this week received three calls for service. Two calls proved to be false alarms. On a third call, firefighters found an accumulation of smoke inside a residence had tripped alarms.

The village fire department urges all island homeowners to participate in the Knox Box program, which facilitates fire department entry of homes at which alarms have sounded. Those wishing more information about the Knox Box program may obtain it by calling the department at 457-4310.

Village police chief Karen King will be married to David Grasty in a 10 a.m. ceremony April 4 at the Harbor Village gazebo. The couple has invited all island residents to join in the celebration of their union.



Photo by Holly Edwards

School board chairman Glenda Browning fired the first pitch Monday as she and other officials gathered to dedicate the new softball and baseball diamonds at South Brunswick Middle School.

20-to-25 for murder

Youths plead guilty

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

Two Southport teenagers Monday pleaded guilty to the murder of a part-time city resident last September and were sentenced to serve between 20 and 25 years in prison.

Freeman Scott Ireland, 18, and Steven Sauls, 16, both of whom claimed residence at 313 Herring Drive -- Ireland's family home -- at the time of their arrests, offered pleas of guilty to the murder of David Morgan, 61, of Salisbury. Under terms of sentencing, they must serve at least 20 years of their sentence.

Ireland and Sauls have remained in custody in Brunswick County jail since their arrests on September 22, 1997, in Southport. City police chief Bob Gray said investigators were led to the pair when it was reported they had gone to a city pawn

shop and had asked for appraisal of certain personal effects of the deceased.

Morgan's body was found in his vacation home at 320 Lord Street on September 18, 1997, when neighbors missed seeing him. He was in Southport alone, renovating an outbuilding on his property.

Police said Morgan had been the victim of "overkill." His head had been severely bludgeoned and he had suffered multiple stab wounds to his chest and back. A ligature had been applied to Morgan's throat. He had been dead several days by the time police discovered his body.

Police and SBI investigators at the time refused to speculate on a motive for the killing. No signs of forced entry were found at the Morgan residence and police concluded the deceased had likely known his attackers. They said Ireland or Sauls, See Murder, page 8



SAULS



IRELAND

Caswell Beach

Water rates rising

By Richard Nubel
Municipal Editor

Base quarterly rate for service from a unified Caswell Beach water system will likely be \$24 per household, whether that household is on Caswell Beach Road, in The Arboretum or in an OceanGreens duplex.

Unlike past billing practices, no water at all will be passed to the customer for that base fee. Each 1,000 gallons of water will cost consumers \$2.05, under terms of a fee schedule contained in a new water ordinance to which commissioners agreed Thursday.

Commissioner Paul O'Connor will revise certain language in the ordinance this month and commissioners are expected to ratify it on April 9.

The ordinance anticipates that The Arboretum, Oak Island Beach Villas, Caswell Dunes and OceanGreens homeowners will proceed with plans to dedicate their privately owned water systems and necessary rights-of-way to the town. It also assumes Brunswick County will take over operation and maintenance of this unified system.

In addition to the \$24 base rate residents of Caswell Beach Road, The Arboretum, Caswell Dunes and OceanGreens neighborhoods will pay, the fee scheduled agreed on by commissioners Thursday calls for a \$128 monthly payment by The Arboretum Community Association, a \$1,133 monthly payment by Caswell Dunes residents and their association, a \$1,402 monthly payment from Oak Island Beach Villas residents and their association, a \$128 payment from OceanGreens Condo Association, and \$128 monthly from OceanGreens Homeowners Association.

The N. C. Baptist Assembly, Carolina Power and Light Co. and U. S. Coast Guard Station Oak Island will each pay a \$250 monthly flat fee and the user rate of \$2.05 per 1,000 gallons for water service, under the new proposal.

Struck, however, from commissioner O'Connor's initial proposal is a provision which would have allowed customers suffering line breaks to pay only what Caswell Beach pays Brunswick County for water -- \$1.81 per 1,000 gallons.

Commissioner Bill Boyd said the town should not give up its margin on sales when property owners have line breaks on their side of water meters. Commissioners Marcia Whiting and Billy Coleman agreed. Commissioner Bob Spake sided with O'Connor on the matter.

"I don't see it as something the board needs to address," Boyd said of the proposed billing reduction for water line breaks. "I see it as a pure-tee responsibility of the property owner to pay for water loss from meter to property line."

Boyd said ordinances in Yaupon Beach and Long Beach also support his position. Commissioners agreed to retain language See Caswell, page 8

Brunswick County is expected to take over operation and maintenance of the unified system

Brunswick Learning Center

Child daycare center established

By Holly Edwards
Feature Editor

A groundbreaking ceremony was held Tuesday for the Babies Learning Center, a daycare for teen parents attending Brunswick Learning Center in Southport.

Licensed child care provider Mary Seeber will operate the center in collaboration with teen family development coordinator Linda Shaddix.

Shaddix said the center will provide "attention to nurturing, bonding, developmental stages, stimulation of intellectual and emotional growth, and

behavioral management."

"It's going to be a learning experience for the children and for the parents," she said. "Babies need that stimulation to develop mentally, and the teens need to learn parenting skills and they need to assume responsibility for their children."

The modular unit is being constructed off-site and will be transported to the Brunswick Learning Center campus in about two months. Shaddix said. The center is expected to be in operation by mid-summer.

"It will be ready in time for the next school year," she said.

The North Carolina Department of Social Services provides \$396 per month per child for daycare for teen parents, Shaddix noted, so no local funding will be used to provide daycare services for teens.

The center will be licensed to serve up to 29 children ages four and under.

Major funding for the project was provided by the following organizations: NationsBank, \$50,000; First Union, \$50,000; Cape Fear Memorial Foundation, \$25,000; BellSouth, \$11,000; United Way, \$5,000; St. James Plantation, \$1,000.