

The News-Journal

RAEFORD, NORTH CAROLINA

Bucks fourth
in conference

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Two new
troopers

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Covering Hoke County Like A Roof Since 1905

Volume LXXVIII Number 46

Thursday, March 5, 1987

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County commissioners OK subdivision ordinance

By Sally Jamir
News-Journal Staff Writer

Members of Hoke County Commissioners unanimously adopted the subdivision regulation approved by the Planning Board at their regular meeting Tuesday night.

The action followed a second public hearing held for the purpose of hearing residents' comments on proposed changes to the regulations.

Commissioner Tom Howell's motion to adopt the regulations set an effective date of March 4.

Prior to the 8 p.m. hearings, County Manager William (Bub) Cowan presented changes to the proposed regulations which were later accepted. Further changes were presented by Cowan regarding minor subdivision requirements.

Chairman Wyatt Upchurch said he thought these changes should go back to the Planning Board for their input. The board worked for more than a year in preparing the regulations.

County Attorney Duncan McFadyen advised the commissioners that the

subdivision ordinance could be adopted without the changes and then amended at a later date.

The general consensus of the commissioners is that procedures and standards set forth in the regulations will be a means of promoting controlled and orderly growth and development of the county. It presents requirements with which landowners must comply when subdividing land.

Upchurch said he thought the regulation will help satisfy "the need to eliminate serious problems in growth." In addition, he said that "the key to the ordinance is the variance," and commented on the capacity of the commissioners to be flexible in allowing for exceptional situations in which county residents find themselves.

"I think we've got a board that understands that," Upchurch said.

The variance section of the subdivision ordinance authorizes the Planning Board in making regulations decisions to grant variances, or departures from the ordinance, when "undue hardship may result from strict compliance."

Residents attending the public hearing expressed concern that low-

income residents would not benefit from the regulations since they could not afford to develop their land in accordance with requirements.

Upchurch said the variance provision would enable many in this situation to benefit. However, he said, there would also be those who would be hurt by it.

Commissioner Cleo Bratcher said that many land conditions in the county, such as drainage problems, will be alleviated by enforcing the subdivision ordinance.

"A lot of these problems could have been solved years ago if the ordinance was adopted then," Bratcher said.

During the meeting before the public hearing, questions were answered which had been presented by residents in the first public hearing. In addition, changes requested by county land surveyors were presented.

During the hour-long hearing, residents raised questions on areas of concern such as maintenance of streets and septic tanks, deeding land to children and the amount of land the ordinance would regulate.

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Fraud suspected

By Sally Jamir
News-Journal Staff Writer

Two Hoke County men have been indicted on several felony counts of attempting to defraud the Farmer's Home Administration and the Agricultural Stabilization and Conservation Service, according to a spokesman from the State Inspector General's Office.

Glen Parsons, special agent in criminal investigation, said Friday that James Robert Strother of Hoke County and Billie Lee Williams of Aberdeen were arrested on the morning of February 25 by FmHA agents and U.S. marshals in connection with the charges.

The two men were partners on a farm, Parsons said, and Strother was a former employee of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The indictment was handed down February 23 by a federal grand jury in Greensboro after an investigation was ordered by Robert Edmonds, U.S. Attorney for the middle judicial district of North Carolina, Parsons said.

He said Strother is charged with committing forgery to defraud FmHA of several thousand dollars in loan payments and that Williams is charged with making

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Spring in the air

Daffodils basking in the sunlight on Harris Avenue Monday remind us that spring is just around the corner. The sunny weather early in the week was a welcome relief from a rainy

weekend. Weathermen are predicting a warming trend this weekend, coupled with clear skies.

Around Town

By Sam Morris

The weather was dry last year, but 1987 is starting out just the opposite. I haven't heard how much rain fell over the weekend and I don't know how much we have received this year, but the water table for the county should be high.

The sleet hung around for over a week, but the rains over the weekend and the 70° temperature on Sunday and Monday cleared it away. Let's hope that the cold weather with its sleet and snow are over for this winter.

The forecast is for the temperatures just in the 60s and high 50s for the remainder of the week during the day. No hard freeze is forecast at night with the thermometer to be in the 30s. Now this is my kind of weather.

A few more hints on "How to Know You're Growing Older:"

1. You begin to outline enthusiasm.
2. You decide to procrastinate, but never get around to it.
3. A dripping faucet causes uncontrollable bladder urge.
4. After painting the town red, you have to take a long rest before applying a second coat.
5. You are startled the first time someone calls you old timer.

A few weeks ago Elmer Parnell, manager of the local Heilig-Meyers here, was in the office and was asking me how my retirement was going. He stated that he was considering retiring, but couldn't decide for sure because he didn't know what he would do with his time. I advised him to find a part time job and to find a hobby like fishing, golf, etc. He left the office after a few minutes and thanked me for the suggestions.

Now I understand that Elmer retired last Saturday from Heilig-Meyers. Of course, as most of you know, he and his family live in Maxton and are members of the Centre Presbyterian Church, where Elmer is an Elder. Some other facts that you may not know are as follows:

He came to Raeford in 1951 as owner and operator of Home Furniture Co. His business was located on Main Street and it operated as Home Furniture until 1970 when the business was acquired by Heilig-Meyers and Parnell became manager. He has remained as manager until his retirement last week. He has been in business in Raeford for 36 years.

Most of us who have been associated with firms in Raeford and Hoke County will always remember Elmer Parnell as a person who joined in the efforts to make this community a better place in which to live and work. His efforts were always for progress for Hoke County, even though he never lived in Raeford.

Have a good retirement, Elmer, and may it be many more fruitful years. You will be missed in Raeford.

When you read an article in a magazine or paper about the advancement of a man in his business or in a corporation, you can always know that there is a strong woman behind him. If he is mar-

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Former Raeford ESC employee charged with fraud

By Sally Jamir
News-Journal Staff Writer

A Hoke County woman and former employee of the Employment Security Commission was indicted on charges of fraud after she allegedly tried to defraud the ESC of over \$66,000, according to ESC officials.

In addition, eight Robeson County residents, identified as friends or family of the employee, were indicted for receiving falsified checks. Further charges are pending.

Debra Harvey Brady, 32, a former part-time clerk with the ESC was indicted on 18 charges of computer fraud and four counts of obtaining property by false pretenses over a six to seven month span of time.

ESC Chairman David T. Flaherty, in making the announcement last Wednesday said that a September 15 random audit of the

agency indicated "irregularities in the handling of unemployment insurance claims in the Raeford office."

Based on the audit findings, Flaherty contacted the State Bureau of Investigation (SBI), the State Auditor's Office and the Inspector General's Office at the U.S. Department of Labor.

Lisa De Maio Brewer, public information officer, said that she could not comment on "the exact procedure" used to discover the discrepancy in the records. Brewer said the ESC office had wanted to go public with this information but had been advised against doing so by the prosecuting attorney, Jean Powell, as the case was still in litigation.

Assistant District Attorney Powell said last week that essentially checks had been issued to people who were ineligible for

them at the time, namely 18 of her family and friends.

In addition, the office said Brady, of 135 Yadkin Trail, Raeford, may have diverted funds to herself in the amount of \$3,683.

According to Brewer, there was a total of \$66,804 which Brady allegedly attempted to obtain and 230 unauthorized checks discovered "during the audit and throughout the investigation."

Brewer said that \$38,467 had been sent out to individuals.

She said that ESC had taken action on checks totalling \$24,654 by stopping payment on them or by pulling them before they were mailed.

Ten of the 18 people, she said, who were not yet indicted, have received part of this \$24,654.

Authorities say Brady, whose last day with the local ESC office was September 19, has not yet been found. Powell said that Hoke

County Sheriff's Department officials had sought Brady at her last address on Yadkin Trail, but did not find her.

The department's part in the investigation leading to Brady's whereabouts would be negligible "unless she comes back here, then we'd arrest her," said Sheriff Dave Barrington.

According to Powell, the eight Robeson residents indicted for receiving falsified checks in the case are Sarah Whitted, Annie G. Harvey, Margaret Harvey, Matthew Harvey, Bertha McCormick, Eugene McCormick, Gary McCormick, Renaldo McCormick and Regina McMillan.

An order for arrest has been issued for Whitted and sent to Robeson County, Powell said. The seven other defendants appeared in court Tuesday before Superior Court Judge J. Milton Read Jr. with their attorney, Bruce Hug-

gins.

They were released on unsecured \$7,500 bonds, court records say. Powell said the arraignment is scheduled for the week of March 16.

ESC Public Information Officer Laurie Green said that steps had been taken to insure that this type of incident does not happen again. Flaherty feels certain that these steps will "insure the integrity" of ESC.

A security plan has been initiated as of October 10 in which "checks can no longer be generated from the field (offices), but only through the central office."

In addition, Green said a "daily check is made of claims to preclude the payment of exorbitant amounts."

Also, an orientation video addressing security policies was completed for viewing by employees, she said.



Wastewater treatment

Hi Marziano of Black and Veatch engineering firm presents plans for the wastewater treatment plant to City Council members Monday night.

The ordinance provides for the elimination of flooding conditions in the county which result in unsafe situations for residents and property.

In further business, council members adopted a resolution requesting that the local legislative delegation seek pork barrel funding of \$50,000 to assist both city and county governments in purchasing radio equipment for the communications system.

In additional business, council members voted to draft a letter to

state Representative Danny DeVane for support of the establishment of a central utilities office in Hoke County.

The envisioned office would handle both service and billing functions.

Currently, county residents must go to other locations to arrange for utilities services.

Presently, the natural gas utility office is in Southern Pines as is the electric company. The cable television office is in Red Springs and the phone company offices are located in Fayetteville.

Public invited to day of prayer

Church Women United of Raeford invite the public to celebrate World Day of Prayer Friday in the Fellowship Hall of Raeford Presbyterian Church between 7:30 a.m. and 12:15 p.m.

Friday marks the centennial celebration of World Day of Prayer, a worldwide expression of mutual prayer and Christian unity.

Its uniqueness lies in the fact that its expression is found in local communities and its leadership in laywomen of the church.

World Day of Prayer, begun in the United States in 1887 as a day of prayer for mission, has developed into a movement in which Christians in 170 countries and regions of the world gather each year to observe a common day of prayer.

The same theme and worship service is shared and translated into hundreds of languages and dialects. In many countries, the event serves as a catalyst for women to come together as they work to bring about changes in their lives.

This year's theme is "Come and Rejoice."

City Council reviews plans to upgrade treatment plant

By Sally Jamir
News-Journal Staff Writer

Members of the City Council reviewed plans for improvements at the wastewater treatment plant at their regular meeting Monday night.

The council plans to go ahead with the installation of a grit chamber and grease removal facility for the plant after a study is conducted to determine which chamber will be most beneficial to the operation.

Hi Marziano, engineer with the firm of Black and Veatch, gave council members a presentation reviewing current problems with the plant and steps the firm has taken to solve the problems.

Marziano said in his presentation that the grit chamber project would cost \$240,000 which includes the study and installation of the chamber and related construction services.

Bids for the chamber will be taken in June and a company will be chosen by the council.

Marziano referred to two other studies being conducted for the plant. One involves sludge treatment and another, industrial pre-treatment of wastes.

Council members will plan a future meeting with Black and Veatch and area industries to let them know what plans and studies are being conducted in the area of waste treatment.

Methods of sludge treatment are being considered which will "save energy, and handle sludge more effectively," Marziano said.

He said federal regulations regarding industrial pre-treatment of wastes will be enforced more in the future.

Marziano said that the firm had discovered that funds for water treatment projects were available through the Natural Resources and Community Development Department's Division of Environmental Management.

He said that if "innovative and alternative" pre-treatment designs are chosen, there is the possibility of federal sources funding 75 percent of the costs.

If any funding is given at all, 55 percent of the costs will be funded by the department.

In other business, council members set a public hearing for the revised Flood Damage Prevention Ordinance to be held at their next regular meeting on April 6.