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If it happened, it's news to us



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RAEFORD & HOKE COUNTY N.C.

Wednesday, June 9, 2021

Another 600 houses debated

Residents appear before County Commission to protest development



The Bedford subdivision under construction in 2014. Now it's going to get 117 additional lots. (file photo)

No tax hike in budget (Story, page 4)

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

Residents of the eastern and western areas of the county raised questions Monday about whether Hoke has the infrastructure to support continued subdivision growth – and whether it should – as commissioners faced a large agenda of plat requests and amendments at their first meeting of the month.

By the end of the two-and-a-half-hour meeting, the board members had tabled two subdivision requests and approved six others. The commission also approved three other planning

requests and tabled one, following public hearings.

All together, the preliminary plat approval requests and preliminary plat amendment approval requests from three different applicants represented a possible 606 new homes that could break ground in Hoke. Some of the requests were amendments for subdivisions commissioners already approved this year, after the developer reworked the site plans to reduce lot sizes and add more lots to the property.

A crowd of residents from the Rockfish and Five Points communities attended the board

meeting to voice their thoughts on the growth in the county, and concerns about its effects on the school system, law enforcement, traffic safety and fire safety, as well as quality of life issues such as internet access and preserving the character of rural/agricultural communities.

Ken Gregory of the Rockfish Community Chamber of Commerce, and Hoke residents David Frump, Ellen Bradford, Robin Bush and Mike King were among the people who addressed the commissioners at length during public hearings for the subdivision requests.

After discussion and hearing from speakers, the
(See *NEW HOUSES*, page 8)



Clockwise from above: Graduates Chloe Baker and Briana Becker smile for the camera; Tawanza Woodson helps Lauren Lewis adjust her cap; Amber Douse calls seniors to the stage to accept their diplomas. (Contributed photos)



More than 300 graduates walk stage at Hoke High School

BY CATHARIN SHEPARD
Staff writer

"It's time to let your Buck pride shine," Hoke High Interim Principal Sabrina Finkbeiner told the Class of 2021, as they gathered one last time

Saturday to mark the end of their four years together.

Raz Autry Stadium was overflowing as hundreds of parents, family members and friends gathered to see off the latest Bucks grads in style, after a difficult senior

year due to the pandemic.

Assistant principal Joshua Williams offered words of encouragement as students processed into the stadium for the graduation.

"Congratulations to all the
(See *GRADUATION*, page 4)

Raeford joins area law enforcement agencies in raising officer pay

Approves budget with no tax hike

BY KEN MACDONALD

The City of Raeford reached into contingency money to keep from being left behind and having their police officers poached by higher-paying law enforcement

agencies. City Council agreed to add \$154,000 to its budget—just before adopting it Monday night at its regular meeting—to fund increases for existing and new officers.

"Ya'll are aware that the sher-

iff's department, the county, just bumped the pay for the deputies," said City Manager Dennis Baxley, as the budget came up for discussion. "We're between a rock and a hard place. We knew it was coming at some point where pay was just going to have to go up. So included in the budget is a pay increase comparable to what the

sheriff's doing to keep us competitive. Now that was a \$154,000 hit."

Baxley said Tuesday morning starting pay would go to approximately \$40,800, up from about \$36,800, and all existing officers would be re-graded to equal an approximate 15 percent increase. Hoke Sheriff Dr. Hubert

Peterkin recently asked for and received a similar increase for deputies, citing competition from surrounding counties that was leaving the office increasingly and drastically shorthanded.

The City funded the change from contingency and from its fund balance. Baxley said an
(See *CITY COUNCIL*, page 8)

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