

Duplin Times

PROGRESS SENTINEL

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Warsaw Wants More Bids On Property

A five-year effort to sell a former town hall appeared successfully closed last week on Monday night, but Tuesday town officials decided to re-advertise the property for a possible upset bid.

The property includes a white cinder-block building, erected as a town hall, across the street from Clark Shopping Center.

Frank Steed, a town board member, bid \$18,000 for the property but said he had been bidding on a larger tract than the town was advertising. The town owns a tract about 130 feet wide and 400 feet deep. It advertised for sale a portion of the tract with 130 feet street frontage and 150 feet depth. Steed said he wanted a depth of 185 feet.

Steed left the board room while the discussion and vote on the sale took place.

Walter P. West, a board member and real estate agent, said he thinks the value of the land alone should be more than \$20,000 because of its downtown

location.

The board has been trying to sell the property for five years. It received a bid of \$12,000 in February 1980.

Before the bids were opened, Steed told town clerk Alfred Herring that he would bid on a 130- by 185-foot tract. Herring advised the board of Steed's intention prior to the bid opening.

Board member Walter Foster said it is a no-win situation. "Frank is a town board member, and we're going to be talked about if we sell it to him and it's been sitting there for five years."

"It's an eyesore and getting sorer," Foster added. "We either need to repair or demolish the thing. We surely don't need it. If we do sell it to him (Steed), it'll get on the tax books."

Following the session, Steed said, "It seems too high without the additional 35 feet. You need parking for any type of business nowadays."

When asked after the

meeting if he believes the sale is valid, Herring answered, "Yes, we have sold the property."

But Tuesday afternoon, Herring said he had talked with Steed and the town would re-advertise the property, including the additional 35 feet depth that Steed wanted to buy.

In other action Monday night, the board:

- Accepted the offer of J. Dail Purvis of Clinton to spread an antileak compound on the Neighborhood facilities building roof for \$3,612.91 to stop leaking. It had offers of \$15,000 and \$11,000 to install a new roof.
- Accepted the low bid of \$785 from Whaley Dozing and Loading Co. of Goldsboro to demolish the Willie Smith house if a renewal project was accepted. Smith has been relocated in a mobile home.
- Scheduled a public hearing at 7:30 p.m. April 12 on the question of permitting pool tables in a restricted business area.



LOG TRUCK DEMOLISHED - A front tire blew out, the truck swerved to the left across the center line, went off the road, and crashed into a large ditch culvert, hit a utility pole, and went into a parked trailer. Dust sparks and logs flew every which-way. The truck and load of logs finally came to a stop in a field beside A&B Milling Company. The cab of the truck is no longer recognizable as such. The driver, Elbert Ray Holmes of Route 2,

Pink Hill, with an injured leg, bruises and scratches was pulled from the mangled wreckage miraculously still alive. The accident occurred east of Warsaw on Highway 24-50 at 8:30 a.m. March 11. The investigating trooper was Randy Hammonds, who stated the damage estimates included \$25,000 to the truck, \$300 to the utility pole, and \$1,000 to the second trailer. No citation was issued. Holmes was taken to Duplin

Smith Named Chairman Of BOE Judge Joins Duplin Elections Board

Douglas Judge of Kenansville was sworn in as a Democratic member of the Duplin County Board of Elections last week after his appointment by the State Board of Elections.



Susie G. Smith

After the ceremony, the board elected Susie G. Smith

of Albertson, the other Democratic member, as chairman, and Derl Walker, Republican member, as secretary.

The county Democratic Party executive committee had attempted to name Judge chairman of the county elections board following the resignation of Claude Hepler of Wallace as chairman last month.

The appointment was called invalid by state elections director Alex K. Brock, who said only the state board can appoint members to the county board of elections.

Following the procedure outlined by Brock, the county party committee last week recommended Judge and Larry Bostic of Beulaville as county election board nominees to state Democratic Party Chairman Russell Walker of Asheboro.

Judge and Bostic were the leading vote-getters in the committee's abortive at-

tempt to name the chairman. Walker recommended Judge to the State Board of Elections, which made the appointment.

Duplin Clerk of Court John A. Johnson conducted the swearing-in ceremony.

Mrs. Smith, 70, has been a board member for five years. She is a part-time enumerator for the N.C. and U.S. departments of agriculture.

Walker, a businessman from Smith's Township, was named to the board in 1981.

Judge is director of evening programs at James Sprunt Technical College and a former Kenansville mayor.

R-Hill Gym Appears Doomed

The days of the old Rose Hill gymnasium appear numbered.

The town board last week agreed to re-advertise for bids to remove or demolish the building following the failure of an effort to save the structure by some local residents.

The 50-year-old wooden structure has been unused for several years and has become a dilapidated eyesore, according to board members.

The former Rose Hill school site, across the street from the gym, has been turned into a recreational park. Rose Hill students attend Rose-Hill-Magnolia School, Charity School and Wallace-Rose Hill High School, all outside of the

town limits. Teen-agers go to Wallace and adults to Magnolia for community sports activities.

The cost of repairing the structure was estimated at \$5,000 to \$10,000 by the Save Our Gym Committee.

"The risk appears too great for our group to take," the group said in a letter to the town board.

"We'll be advertising for bids on the building for the third time," Mayor Ben Harrell said. Bids are to be opened at the board's April 13 meeting.

The board had called for bids to be opened at its Jan. 12 meeting. However, a Save Our Gym group, consisting of Jack Frederick, Larry Price, Donnie Butler and Ben Mathis, appeared before the

board to ask for time to study the structure to determine if the group could save it for community sports and other activities.

Frederick said the group had 350 signatures on a petition asking to have the building opened for such activities.

At that meeting, Harrell and Commissioner Keith Hinson estimated renovation of the structure would cost \$15,000 to \$20,000.

The board had received four bids for demolishing the structure, but did not open them. It gave the Save the Gym group 60 days to see what it could do, asking for it to report at last Tuesday's meeting.

Meanwhile, the board had county building inspector El-

wood Sanderson check the structure. Sanderson reported that water and termite damage is extensive. The roof is in poor condition and leakage has caused rotting of joists, rafters and studs. Termites have severely damaged some sills. The main sill on the front side of the building was destroyed.

Following the reading of the report by Harrell, board members agreed repair costs would be prohibitive.

Only one bid for the building was received following the first advertisement late last year, town clerk C.T. Fussell said. The board issued its second set of advertisements in December for the January opening.

Frequent rains during January and February have

delayed work on the water and sewer project in the Yellowcutter section of northern Rose Hill, setting it behind schedule. Lute T.L. Kwong, engineer for L.E. Wooten and Co., consulting engineers of Raleigh, told the board.

The contract deadline is May 9. Kwong said 65 percent of the scheduled work time has passed and only 30 percent of the work has been completed. Much of the delay can be made up in the next few weeks if weather remains dry, the engineer said.

The fate of the town's long-planned sewage treatment plant remains uncertain, Harrell said, noting the town has received no word about possible funding for months.

Harrell said the town's share of the cost was approved in a bond referendum, but he fears the nearly \$400,000 authorized bond issue will not be sufficient because of inflation if the project is delayed much longer.

Jaycees Sponsor Meet The Candidates

The Kenansville Jaycees announce a "meet the candidates" night on Thursday, March 25 at 7:30 p.m. Can-

didates for sheriff of Duplin County in the upcoming election will be featured. This will allow citizens of

Duplin County an opportunity to meet the candidates for sheriff.

This event will take place

in the Superior Court Room, in the Duplin County Courthouse. This will give citizens a chance to meet the can-

didates for sheriff in a political race that is shaping up to be a hotly contested election

Board Approves Albertson Water System

The first official step toward a community water system in Albertson area came Monday when the Duplin County Board of Commissioners established

Dr. Raman To Speak To Magnolia Methodist Women

Dr. E. J. Raman will be the guest speaker on Thursday night, March 18, at 8 p.m. at the regular meeting of the Magnolia United Methodist Women's meeting. Dr. Raman is the director of the Mental Health Department for Duplin and Sampson counties. Anyone who would like to hear Dr. Raman is welcome to attend the meeting to be held at the Magnolia United Methodist Church Fellowship hall.

an Albertson Township Water and Sewer District.

At a hearing called by the commissioners, 35 township residents indicated by a show of hands their desire to go ahead with formation of the district, an initial step toward a water system.

The hearing was requested at the board's Feb. 1 meeting by Wiley Cannady of Albertson.

The Albertson Ruritan Club has signed up 275 potential water customers. It received 17 rejections, and another 107 respondents said they were uncertain about the idea. About 399 families or businesses would be potential customers.

Albertson Township is in the northeastern corner of the county. It has a population of 1,381 people and no incorporated towns. The 1980 census showed its population increased 4.6 percent in the preceding decade.

Much of the township is on a sandy ridge where many residents find it difficult and expensive to obtain water in

adequate quantity or quality.

Bob Pittman of Rivers & Associates, consulting engineers of Greenville, estimated the cost of an adequate water project at \$1,742,971. It would require 47 miles of pipe, two 300-gallons-per-minute wells and one 150,000-gallon, elevated storage tank. The estimated cost included 35 fire hydrants.

Pittman said the feasibility of the project depends on numerous variables, including construction costs, interest rates, available grants and maximum rates users would be willing to pay.

Pittman said Bob Parks of the state Farmers Home Administration had told him that under past regulations, such a district might become eligible for a loan of \$1,190 per user. On the basis of 300 users, that would amount to \$357,000.

The district could become eligible for an FmHA grant of 57 percent of the cost, or \$995,334, Pittman said. It

also might become eligible for 25 percent of the cost or \$390,537 from the state clean water bond fund, he added.

Pittman said it could be two to three years before the system could be in operation.

He estimated the average water bill, including sufficient money to meet payments and operating expenses, would be \$19.74 per month, on the basis of a minimum of \$17 a month for 2,000 gallons of water.

A water and sewer district would have power to levy a property tax if costs exceed income, but that should be avoided, Pittman noted.

Jim Parker, a potential user, said "I have talked all around the area and people of the township are behind the system."

Cannady said he has lived in the township five years and is on his second well. "I'd be willing to pay \$45 or \$50 a month for water. You just don't know how downgrading and downheartening it is to shave with no water."



LARGE TURNOUT - for Albertson Water Hearing.