

Parks And Rec Officials Try To 'Clear The Air'

BY RAHN ADAMS

After discussing a list of concerns with parks and recreation officials, Brunswick County Commissioners last week promised to decide several matters with official board action—the issues ranging from a program to maintain local high school athletic fields to the recreation department's long-range goals.

Commissioners and the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board held a 2½-hour joint meeting Friday night in Bolivia. The purpose of the session was to "clear the air," according to recreation board member Morry Watkins.

Except for Jim Poole, the full board of commissioners was present. Recreation board members Watkins, Ouida Hewett and Bobby Brown were on hand, as were County Manager John T. Smith and Parks and Recreation Director Bobby Jones.

After recreation officials noted that there has been a "lack of communication" between the two boards, Commission Chairman Beasley agreed that commissioners should consider appointing a representative to the recreation board at the commission's April 4 meeting.

Field Maintenance

The two boards discussed but took no official action concerning a county-approved program this year that allocated \$75,000 to the recreation department for the maintenance of athletic fields at the county's three high schools.

Jones told commissioners that he has had difficulty coordinating the program because no guidelines were set to determine how the funds would be spent. There also has been confusion about whether or not the funds could be used for other aspects of the schools' athletic programs besides field maintenance.

"If it's funded next year, I hope there will be some guidelines," Jones said. "No doubt it is a very positive program."

Mrs. Hewett said the recreation board was "leaning toward" recommending a discontinuation of the program, although Jones and Watkins pointed out that they were in favor of the allocation as long as it is used only for the upkeep of athletic fields rather than for general use by the schools' athletic departments.

Jones also suggested that commis-

sioners include any funds allocated next year in the school system's budget instead of giving them to the recreation department—a suggestion that was made last year at budget time by Commissioner Benny Ludlum.

Ludlum told the boards Friday that he still felt there would be fewer problems if the school system were responsible for the funds.

Master Plan Discussed

In another matter, Ms. Beasley told the recreation board that commissioners will consider whether or not the county should authorize a \$13,000 "master plan" for parks and recreation.

According to Jones, an old master plan, which outlined the department's growth, expired in 1985. Another plan is needed for direction through the year 2000, he said.

Jones noted that the department's 1987-88 budget of \$900,000 amounts to about \$16 per person, while the statewide average is about \$22 per person. To bring Brunswick in line with the state average, the county's parks and recreation budget would have to be around \$1.12 million, he said.

In terms of needs, county residents mostly asked for swimming pools in seven public hearings held by the recreation board, Jones commented.

However, Ludlum said that other public hearings which were held in conjunction with the county's recently-adopted Coastal Area Management Act land use plan indicated that residents don't want new facilities—they just want present parks maintained.

"We've got the best swimming pool in the world, and that's the ocean," Ludlum said.

Also, Ms. Beasley said she had "mixed feelings" about the need for a master plan, noting that she feels Brunswick County has one of the best parks and recreation programs for any county its size in the state.

Who's In Charge?

During a heated discussion of the proper procedure for approving departmental purchase orders, Ludlum and Jones clashed over the commissioner's authorization last week of construction of a concession stand for the county ballfield at Supp-

Ludlum confirmed that he instructed the county's construction department to build the concession stand without consulting with Jones.

Estimating that the 16- by 20-foot structure would cost approximately \$25,000 to build, Jones noted that the expenditure would deplete the parks and recreation allotment for Ludlum's district.

Ludlum responded that he only wanted a "hot dog stand" for the park, and that it could be built for no more than \$12,000.

On the broader issue of authorizing purchases, Ms. Beasley said commissioners will consider whether or not they should continue requiring that individual commissioners co-sign all recreation department purchase orders for their respective districts.

Other Matters

Among other topics discussed at Friday's joint meeting:

- Recreation board members expressed opposition to Smith's recent proposal to move the parks and recreation offices to the newly-purchased Bolivia Plaza Shopping Center, saying they preferred that new offices be built at the county complex;

- Commissioners told the recreation board to seek grant monies to possibly move the historic Sunnyside schoolhouse from its present location in Shallotte instead of using county funds to move the building to Shallotte Township District Park as was proposed by Mrs. Hewett;

- Commissioners expressed their support of funding the county's Senior Games;

- The two boards agreed that county residents can use community buildings at no charge for non-profit purposes, although deposits can be required.



STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER

TO THE MUSIC OF "Rock Around The Clock," second-grader Ashley Cox danced into first place in the K-2 division of Waccamaw Elementary School's first talent show Monday night.

Waccamaw's First Talent Show A Hit

More than 40 acts performed to a packed gymnasium at Waccamaw Elementary School's first talent show Monday night.

Winners in the four divisions reflect the diversity of talents shared, indicated coordinator Leanne Smith. "We wanted something everybody could participate in," she added.

In K-2, winners were Ashley Cox, dance, first; Kimberly Gore, solo, second; and Ricky Babson, solo of "Jesus Loves Me," third; grades 3-5, Neal Hughes and Jamie Hewett,

first, clog dance to "Too Hip To Be Square;" Melissa Daniels, second, "I Live For Your Love," and Andrea Nance, third, a medley of "Dixie" and "God Bless America."

In the grades 6-8 division, winners were Patricia Hughes, "Stand By Me," first; Tarsha Griffin, second, "The Greatest Love," and Patrick Hughes and Jimmy Grissett, instrumental of "La Bamba."

Taking first in the group division was the group, "The Best Made Of Friends," dancing to "How Ya Like Me Now?"

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