

Varnamtown Board To Cooperate With State Septic Tank Testing

BY SUSAN USHER

Varnamtown aldermen Monday night pledged the town's support of state efforts to identify sources polluting the Lockwood Folly River and to clean up the river.

Members agreed to ask for cooperation from its residents with a state study of "suspect" septic tanks along waterways that empty into the river. The action was requested by Annie Smigiel, president of Save Our Shellfish, a conservation group concerned about the future of the river and its shellfishing resources. She was among a group of county residents to meet with state officials in Raleigh last Thursday.

Pinkerton, Republicans elected from Districts 1 and 3.

State officials present included Ernest Carl, deputy secretary of Natural Resources and Community Development, representatives of the Division of Health Services Shellfish Sanitation Branch, Division of Environmental Management and Division of Marine Fisheries, along with Jerry Lewis of Shallotte, a member of the Environmental Management Commission.

The Raleigh session was a follow up to a meeting held in late October at the county government center. State officials outlined plans for two studies to collect data that can serve as a basis for drawing conclusions about the river and for recommending steps to help rectify its problem.

After results are tabulated the group will meet again in early March, with all county commissioners invited to attend, said Holden.

Starting in January the staff of the

N.C. Division of Shellfish Sanitation will begin testing some septic tanks along and near the estuary. They will flush dye into toilets connected to septic tanks suspected of failure or leakage into a waterway that drains into the river. Septic tank effluent is a source of fecal coliform bacteria, an indicator used to detect the presence of pollution.

At Holden's specific request, the division will also check tanks in the Holden Beach area.

Lockwood Folly will also be included in tests conducted by the Division of Environmental Management for pesticide residues.

Watershed Under Study
The chemical testing is part of a second study that has already begun. The state Division of Environmental Management is evaluating fecal coliform levels and other possible contaminants in the Green Swamp and adjacent areas.

Sparsely populated, the pocosin swamp is home to much of the coun-

ty's game population as well as to pine plantations with extensive drainage ditching. Farmlands edge much of its border. Forestry, agriculture and urban development are all activities with resultant runoff that could contribute to the river's pollution.

Part of the swamp drains into Waccamaw River, part into Lockwood Folly River. Diverting additional runoff to the Waccamaw watershed was one possible action suggested Thursday, should the swamp be identified as a major contributor of fecal coliform bacteria. The Waccamaw River drains into Horry County, S.C.

The DEM study includes the entire watershed, or area that drains into Lockwood Folly River.

In October, state officials unveiled tentative plans for the studies and development of a plan of action for state and local agencies interested in helping rectify the problem. At that time, the river had been closed to shellfishing since late August

because of a high coliform bacteria count.

Thursday's meeting went one step further, local participants said.

"It was very frank, blunt and to the point. This is the first time they came out with specifics," said District 1 Commissioner Kelly Holden. During his campaign Holden, a farmer and businessman, described the river as a top priority for the county. "They said, 'These are the things we're going to do and these are the things you're going to have to do.'"

"Especially zoning," said Holden. "It will be a higher priority than in the past."

Unincorporated areas of the county are not zoned. With zoning, the county could regulate land uses that might be contributing to pollution in the river.

Setback ordinances, for instance, could be used to control development close to waterways that drain into the river.

In their election campaigns both

Holden and Pinkerton advocated limited zoning—in the more heavily populated coastal area as opposed to rural areas.

However, Holden said county residents in the past have held many misconceptions about zoning, which contributed to the negative responses at a public hearing on the subject.

"It's a slow process," he continued. "I think I'm going to propose that the planning department begin a public education program on zoning so that the public will know what's going on."

If agreed to by other commissioners, the program might include educational meetings in each district, he said.

Commissioners Pinkerton and Holden also met Friday morning with other state officials to "establish a line of communication" between county and state governments.

Pedestrian Dies After Being Struck On U.S. 17

A Bolivia girl was struck and killed Dec. 5 after she dashed into the path of a car on U.S. 17, according to Highway Patrol spokesperson Ruby Oakley.

Ms. Oakley said the fatal mishap occurred last Tuesday at 6:30 p.m., about 2.2 miles south of Bolivia, when LaShonia Nichole Smith, 14, was hit by a 1984 Volvo driven by Elbert Nolan Galloway, 36, of Shallotte.

Galloway was traveling south on U.S. 17 when the girl ran in front of his car from the right shoulder of the road, Ms. Oakley said. Trooper R.V. West filed no charges in the accident.

Brunswick County Coroner Greg White said the girl was taken by rescue squad ambulance to The Brunswick Hospital near Supply, where she was dead on arrival.

Galloway was not injured, Ms. Oakley said. Damage to the car was estimated at \$600.

According to Ms. Oakley, the Highway Patrol was notified last week that a Brunswick County man died in August about a month after he was injured in a two-car wreck near Navassa.

The victim—Ernest Chapman Ed-

dins, 75, of Leland—died Aug. 9 at New Hanover Memorial Hospital, Ms. Oakley said.

Eddins had suffered incapacitating injuries July 1 when his 1980 Chevrolet struck a 1982 Buick at the intersection of Mt. Misery Road and Cedar Hill Road. Ms. Oakley said the other driver—Doris James Best, 33, also of Leland—was charged with a yield violation in the wreck.

Sixteen persons have died this year in traffic accidents on Brunswick County roadways, Ms. Oakley reported. She said last year's highway death toll was 20.

Manager Stops—

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said. "He listened to his commissioners."

According to Ms. Hahn, the district park fund balances at the end of November were: Lockwood Folly, \$12,159; Northwest, no funds; Shallotte, \$41,171; Smithville, \$36,967; Town Creek, \$42,000; and Waccamaw, \$37,646.



STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

Mobile Home Burns

Shallotte VFD Chief Tim Carter checks out the bottom of this unoccupied mobile home which was partially burned last Friday afternoon at Worthmore Homes Sales Center in Shallotte. Owner Bill Spivey said in-

sulation underneath the used trailer caught fire while a hitch was being welded to the front. He said he had planned to use the trailer for storage space.

Chappell Explains Secret Session

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gram about the post.

When asked if he would accept the county job if it were offered, Bellamy said, "That is a decision that we'd have to evaluate at that time, because I would not want my employment to be perceived as a political juggling act. My application will stand on its merits. I don't want to go in as a political football."

Recommendation Made

While Chappell would not comment specifically on the closed-door discussion of the inspections job, he readily admitted that he had personally recommended Bellamy to Ingram and Smith prior to the commissioners' meeting.

"I feel like he (Bellamy) was one of the qualified applicants for the position," Chappell explained, adding that he knew the final decision on the hiring was for Ingram and Smith to make. "As a commissioner, you can make a recommendation, but you might not get your way."

Last Thursday, Smith also said, "I've been told to hire the most qualified person for the job. . . Now how you get to who's the most qualified, that gets to be a job then."

The county manager said it is "not uncommon" for commissioners, whether here and in other counties he has worked, to intervene in hirings.

"It's not all that unusual, but generally they don't get involved in anything below the (hiring of) depart-

ment heads," Smith said, admitting that when commissioners get involved in employment matters, it does "put additional pressure on everybody."

'Investigation' Noted

According to Chappell, a main purpose of the Dec. 5 executive session was to discuss a personnel-related investigation that is "bottlenecked right now."

"The reason I asked for it (executive session) was potential problems with employees," Chappell said. Without going into further detail, he said one matter was "very severe to me, and I think some action needs to be taken."

Both Smith and Rabon indicated that Chappell possibly was referring to an SBI investigation that involves a current county employee. Neither man would say if the SBI probe was discussed by commissioners last week, although Smith said a legal question involving personnel and a "threat of suits" was mentioned.

Brunswick County Sheriff John C. Davis said a county personnel matter was referred to the 13th District Attorney's office through the sheriff's department some time ago. The investigation was initiated by county administration, he added. District Attorney Michael Easley confirmed Monday he was awaiting a report from the SBI on a matter that involves a county employee.

None of the officials interviewed by the Beacon would reveal further details of any investigation involving county personnel.

Former Deputy Indicted On Sexual Abuse Charges

BY RAHN ADAMS

A former Brunswick County Sheriff's Department officer was charged with child sexual abuse Monday following an SBI investigation.

William A. Rivenbark, 34, of Sunset Harbor, was among 22 individuals indicted on various charges Monday by a Brunswick County grand jury, according to the Brunswick County Clerk of Court's office.

Indictments show Rivenbark was charged with committing a sexual offense and taking indecent liberties with a minor. The incidents allegedly occurred June 1 and Nov. 7, involving a female under 16 years of age.

District Attorney Michael Easley said Tuesday that the alleged offenses were reported to his office by the victim's mother. Easley requested the outside investigation because the suspect was then employed by the sheriff's department.

According to Sheriff John C. Davis, Rivenbark resigned his post as sergeant for "health reasons" on Dec. 7 when the SBI investigation began.

Davis said Rivenbark served with the sheriff's department for eight years as a deputy, detective and sergeant in the uniform division. "He was a good officer, and he did his job well with no problems," the sheriff said.

Sentencing Delayed

Rivenbark is the second member of the sheriff's department member to be charged with child sex abuse this year. In July, former deputy Gregory Lee Wood, 28, of Route 6, Shallotte, pleaded no contest to taking indecent liberties with a minor.

Wood resigned in May shortly before he was indicted in connection with an alleged offense earlier that month involving a seven-year-old boy at Ocean View Baptist Church in Seaside. The defendant was ordered to undergo a diagnostic evaluation before sentencing.

According to Easley, Superior Court Judge Carlton Fellers Monday ordered Wood to undergo a second assessment, as requested by the DA's office. Easley said an evaluation Wood received at Dorothea Dix Hospital in Raleigh was "absolutely

useless" for sentencing purposes because it made no recommendations.

The district attorney said he expects the second assessment to be completed by the Jan. 3 term of Brunswick County Superior Court. The evaluation will be done at a facility in Jacksonville.

Other Indictments

According to the Brunswick County Clerk of Court's office, other individuals indicted Monday by the grand jury included:

- Dewey Lee Robinson, obtaining property by false pretense, rape, two counts of crime against nature, five counts of felonious incest and six counts of taking indecent liberties with a minor.

- Joe Murvin, two counts of rape, two counts of sexual offense.

- Wayne Moore, felonious breaking, entering and larceny.

- Conroy P. Barnes, three counts of felonious breaking, entering and larceny.

- James P. Bland, three counts of felonious breaking, entering and larceny.

- Burt C. Bailey, three counts of felonious breaking, entering and larceny.

- Michael S. Williams, three counts of felonious breaking, entering and larceny.

- Marc Dalton Causey, embezzlement.

- Robert Marie Whicker, controlled substance violation.

- John H. Bates Jr., controlled substance violation.

- Leonard Alvis Johnson, controlled substance violation.

- Harry Gordon Bennett, controlled substance violation.

- William Rick Bennett, controlled substance violation.

- Winfred Clark Harkey, controlled substance violation.

- Jerry Burckhalter, armed robbery and kidnapping.

- Michael Glenn Everhart, bigamy.

- Roy Robert Fowler Jr., breaking and entering.

- William S. Faircloth, manslaughter.

- Marston Wayne Patterson, breaking and entering.

- Charlene E. O'Neal, arson.
- Ronnie Eley Ballard, controlled substance violation.

UOB Reverses Position On Dropping Road From SAD 5

BY RAHN ADAMS

Brunswick County's Utility Operations Board changed its mind Monday night.

The board reversed an earlier position and decided not to recommend removal of a private road from a water line installation project in the county's Special Assessment District 5 near Seaside.

The action followed a 1½-hour executive session during Monday night's 2¼-hour regular meeting in Bolivia. The secret session was requested by UOB staff members to discuss easement acquisition and "existing and proposed contractual relations."

UOB members Robert Nubel, Ed Gore, Alphonza Roach, D.V. Jones, Ernest McGee and non-voting member Commissioner Frankie Rabon attended the meeting. Acting Chairman Jimmy Oldham and Morris Crouch were absent.

On a motion by Gore, the board voted 4-1 to reinstate the private road in the SAD 5 project, with McGee casting the only opposing vote.

SAD 5 includes Ocean Pine Acres, Pine Acres and several large private

tracts on the mainland side of N.C. 179. The reinstated road is an unnamed dead-end, private street adjacent to Pine Acres.

Based on UOB recommendations that followed an SAD 5 public hearing last spring, county commissioners awarded an \$82,725 contract to W&S Underground Inc. of Florence, S.C., for the project.

In November, the UOB voted unanimously to recommend to commissioners that the private road be dropped from the SAD 5 project as requested by several property owners who appeared before the board. The owners said the road should be left out because only one permanent residence and three summer homes were located on it.

However, following Monday's meeting, Gore explained that the UOB reversed the November decision after discussing legal considerations involved in the proposed change. He said "it just wasn't advisable" for the county to "buy back" that part of the project, based on the terms of the county's contract with W&S Underground.

Earlier in the meeting, the UOB

took no action on other property owners' requests for relief from assessments in SAD 2 (an area between Brick Landing Plantation and Bent Tree Plantation) and SAD 5.

New Rates Approved

In other action the utility board approved recommendations for new assessment rates to be used in SAD 1 (north Holden Beach) and SAD 2.

The new rates are required after commissioners voted in October to delete a 10 percent administrative fee from the total project costs. Also, adjustments were made in instances where property owners showed that their assessment notices were in error.

If approved by commissioners, the new rates will be \$5.98 per frontage foot in SAD 1 and \$6.03 per frontage foot in SAD 2. The old rates were \$6.64 in SAD 1 and \$6.51 in SAD 2.

A second public hearing that will be held on the SAD 1 assessment roll has not yet been scheduled. Commissioners pledged in October to give the SAD 1 property owners additional time to comment on their assessments and to notify them of the hearing by certified mail.

County Gets First Flakes

A storm system that skirted the North Carolina coast Monday night lightly dusted the Brunswick County area with its first snow of the season.

The storm, which developed off the east coast of Florida, moved far enough offshore on a northeasterly track to result in only a trace of snowfall in the South Brunswick Islands, according to Shallotte Point meteorologist Jackson Canady.

The weather outlook for the next several days in the Shallotte area calls for seasonable rainfall but below-normal temperatures, Canady said.

Temperatures through the weekend should range from the mid 30s at night to the mid 50s during the day. Rain should measure about one-half inch.

For the period of Dec. 6 through 12, the daily average temperature locally was 44 degrees, which Canady said was about four degrees below normal.

The daily average high temperature was 56 degrees, and the daily average low temperature was 32 degrees.

The maximum high temperature during the period was 68 degrees, occurring on Dec. 8. The minimum low temperature was 24 degrees, occurring on Dec. 12.

Canady measured .07 of an inch of rain during the seven-day period.

By-Pass

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at no charge by private developer(s), for an estimated project cost of \$5.9 million.

Under construction in the county are an \$877,000 replacement bridge on S.R. 1333 over Juniper Creek and a \$200,000 improvement of S.R. 1472 west of the U.S. 74-76 interchange at Leland, with installation of a signal at the intersection of S.R. 1472 and S.R. 1435-S.R. 1437.

TIP List

Also listed in the program are the following projects:

- Replacement bridges on S.R. 1411 over Town Creek and branch of Town Creek, \$595,000, once design is completed in FY89, construction is to begin. The bridges should be completed during FY91.

- Replacement bridge on S.R. 1521 over Rice's Creek, \$260,000, design underway, with construction to begin in late FY92, completion by end of FY93.

- Replacement bridge on S.R. 1333 over Juniper Creek, \$877,000, under construction.

- Replacement of bridges on S.R. 1340 over Juniper Creek and overflow, \$522,000, planning to begin in FY93, construction in late FY95.

- Replacement of three bridges, on N.C. 130 over Waccamaw River, \$672,000; bridge on N.C. 130 over Wet Ash Swamp, \$322,000; and on N.C. 211 over Royal Oak Swamp, \$545,000, with planning to begin in FY94, construction in late FY96.

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