

A Cleaner Calabash?

That's the goal of two new ordinances which target dilapidated structures and overgrown vacant lots in this southwestern corner of the county. Page 3-A.

Off To Fast Start

Efforts to finance a nature center at Ocean Isle Beach get off to a fast start with several large donations, including \$25,000 from Brunswick Commissioners. Page 6-B.

TEDs A Real Drag?

U. S. Coast Guardsmen aren't enforcing the TEDs law while feds take a longer look at the turtle rescue device fishermen say costs them shrimp and nets. Page 10-B.

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Man Pleads Guilty In Drug Case

A New Hampshire man last week admitted his involvement in a 1983 marijuana smuggling conspiracy near Ocean Isle Beach.

Christopher James McCauley, 40, of Hillsboro, N.H., pleaded guilty July 10 in Brunswick County Superior Court to conspiracy to traffic in more than 10,000 pounds of marijuana, according to the clerk of court's office.

Judge Thomas W. Ross continued McCauley's sentencing until a future term of Superior Court. The defendant's plea transcript indicates that sentencing was delayed to allow him to continue assisting the state, as part of a plea arrangement.

McCauley faces a mandatory minimum prison sentence of 35 years in prison and a \$200,000 fine on the conspiracy to traffic charge. Under state law, a lesser sentence may be imposed if the sentencing judge finds that McCauley has provided "substantial assistance" to investigators.

The charge against McCauley stemmed from a May 1983 drug raid at Lakewood Estates on Ocean Isle Beach Road. Federal, state and local lawmen seized more than 14,000 pounds of marijuana and arrested five persons in the raid.

According to court records, McCauley was indicted in the case by a Brunswick County grand jury in March 1986. However, he was a fugitive until late 1987, when he was located in New Hampshire.

McCauley surrendered himself to Brunswick County authorities in January 1988. He was released from custody on a \$130,000 bond. Judge Ross last week ordered that the same bond remain in effect while McCauley awaits sentencing.



Hut, Hut, Hike!

With little brother Roddy in hot pursuit, Russell Roscoe appears to be looking for a receiver "downfield," as the boys play football in the surf at Ocean Isle Beach Sunday afternoon. The youngsters were visiting the South Brunswick Islands with their family from Cheraw, S.C.

STAFF PHOTO BY RAHN ADAMS

Calabash Security S&L Branch Robbed Again

BY DOUG RUTTER

Federal and local lawmen Tuesday night were continuing to investigate an armed robbery of the Calabash branch of Security Savings & Loan which occurred earlier that afternoon—the second armed robbery at the branch in the past four weeks.

Brunswick County Sheriff John C. Davis said the robbery occurred at about 4:20 p.m. Tuesday when a man entered the building, showed what appeared to be a .45-caliber handgun and demanded money from a teller.

After receiving an undetermined amount of cash, Davis said the robber left the building on foot and ran into the woods toward Marsh Harbour Golf Links. The robber was still at large Tuesday night at 9 p.m.

Sheriff Davis said tellers described the robber as a white male, approximately 40 years old, with short blond hair and no facial hair. The sheriff said the robber is between 5-feet-5 and 5-feet-9 with a stocky build.

Brunswick County Sheriff's Det. Lindsay Walton said three tellers were the only people inside the building at the time of the robbery. He said nobody was injured.

Immediately after the robbery, Davis said about a half dozen officers with the sheriff's department searched for the robber in the woods behind the financial institution but found nobody.

Assisting with the search effort, which was called off at about 7 p.m., were officers with the state Division of Marine Fisheries, state Highway Patrol and the Wilmington Police K-9 squad.

Roadblocks were set up at the South Carolina state line on N.C. 179 and at the intersections of U.S. 17 and Calabash Road and U.S. 17 and Thomasboro Road, said Davis.

In the wake of the second robbery of the branch in the past four weeks, Security Savings & Loan managing officer A. G. Trunnell said Tuesday he plans to take measures that will hopefully prevent future robberies.

Although he would not reveal any specific plans, Trunnell said, "We're definitely going to beef up surveillance and give this branch a lot more protection in that respect."

The manager admitted that the branch is somewhat vulnerable because it is located so close to the South Carolina state line, Calabash River and Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway. He said there is nothing more county lawmen can do to protect the financial institution.

The last robbery at the S&L branch occurred on June 20, also a Tuesday, when an armed white male carrying a handgun entered the building and demanded money. He was also reported to have run into the woods behind the building, and the crime occurred at approximately the same hour as this week's robbery.

Sheriff Davis said Tuesday the person who committed last month's armed robbery did not commit this week's crime.

He said a man suspected of the June 20 robbery is being held in a South Carolina jail in connection with

another charge and added that the descriptions of the two robbers do not match.

When asked Tuesday if the sheriff's department needs more money or personnel to boost patrolling in the Calabash area, Davis said, "You've seen what I have in my budget. I'll leave that up to the commissioners to decide."

Brunswick County Commissioners appropriated about \$1.5 million for the sheriff's department this fiscal year out of the total budget of approximately \$31.1 million.

This week's crime is the third armed robbery of a Calabash financial institution in the last 19 months.

On Dec. 15, 1987, a white male carrying a handgun and what turned out to be a fake bomb robbed the old United Carolina Bank branch on Ivey High Street in Calabash.

A suspect was arrested several months later in connection with the local robbery and robberies in several other locations in the southeastern United States.

Phil Wells of the N.C. League of Savings Institutions said Tuesday the organization is offering a cash reward of up to \$2,000 for information leading to the arrest and indictment of the person who committed Tuesday's robbery.

The same reward was offered for last month's crime. Anyone with information can contact the FBI office in Charlotte at (704)525-8497. Telephone charges may be reversed.

Board Votes To Hire Firm That County Fired In '83

BY RAHN ADAMS

Six years after it was fired by commissioners, a Raleigh architectural and engineering firm is going back to work for Brunswick County.

On a 3-2 vote Monday, Brunswick County Commissioners chose Peirson & Whitman to design a new Social Services building and jail addition for the county. The action followed an hour-long executive session requested by Commissioner Grace Beasley to discuss "independent contractors."

Commissioners Benny Ludlum and Kelly Holden opposed Commissioner Gene Pinkerton's motion to pick the company from a field of 12 firms that the board interviewed last week. There was no public discussion of the matter prior to the vote.

Peirson & Whitman was formerly employed by the county from 1972 to 1983, with two engineering contracts during that period. One contract was for upgrading of the county's Phase I water system. At the time of its dismissal the firm had the contract for design and inspection of the Phase II water system.

In April 1983, commissioners voted 4-2 to dismiss the firm after then Commissioner Chris Chappell stated that he had "lost confidence" in the firm's credibility, according to Beacon files. Ludlum—the only current commissioner on the board at that time—supported Chappell's motion to fire the company.

The firm reportedly came under fire six years ago because its cost of

water projections—arrived at in consultation with the county—had shot up drastically since the water system was first proposed.

Pinkerton told the Beacon Tuesday that during Monday's executive session, commissioners discussed "previous problems" with Peirson & Whitman but did not specifically talk about the 1983 firing. He added that Ludlum primarily was opposed to hiring the company.

"It did come up that there had been an undesirable situation between that firm and county officials," Pinkerton said. However, he added that he felt the company's pluses outweighed any previous problems.

Pinkerton pointed out that the fee Peirson & Whitman will charge was the lowest of all the firms interview-

ed last week. The Raleigh firm will charge seven percent to eight percent of the project cost, he said. The second lowest proposed fee was eight percent to 10 percent.

Immediately after Monday's meeting, Commission Chairman Frankie Rabon said he felt Peirson & Whitman was selected because its representatives gave the "best presentation" last week and due to the company's experience.

When asked if the company had previously worked for Brunswick County, Rabon said he thought that it had, but he added he was not sure of specific projects that the firm might have handled. He did note that the firm was the consulting engineer for the Leland Sanitary District.

\$5.5 MILLION BOND REFERENDUM PROPOSED

County Gives Schools Another \$647,000

BY SUSAN USHER

Two major Brunswick County county boards resolved a funding impasse Monday evening when the board of education on a 3-1 vote reluctantly accepted additional money from the county commissioners.

A week after hearing a plea from the school board for more operating funds and money for a new school, the commissioners agreed to give the school system an additional \$646,984 for current expenses—which was \$100,000 less than the school board had sought, and also proposed a bond issue to finance the new school.

Chairman Frankie Rabon's motion to grant the money followed a lengthy statement defending the county's handling of the original school system budget allocation and was adopted unanimously. Commissioner Benny Ludlum arrived late and was not present for the joint meeting.

The operating funds will be

allocated in equal payments over the next 12 months from the county's operating reserve fund. If the state funds any of the 19 positions it has cut, that portion of the money is to be refunded to the county.

At the request of several commissioners, the school board made concessions of its own over the past week, cutting \$100,000 from its budget.

However, the commissioners' proposal wasn't greeted with enthusiasm—not because school board members didn't want the money, but because they didn't like the way in which the compromise was reached, several members said afterwards.

"This sets education back," said member Donna Baxter, who finally made the motion to accept the funds. "I didn't like a lot of things about it. We told them about the cuts as soon as we found out about it."

Robert Slockett said one reason he voted against Baxter's motion was

because he felt the commissioners made it look like the school board "had held out on them."

While Rabon said the county and schools together had sufficient funds available to go forward with the next phase of the school project, Board of Education Chairman Doug Baxley said he would have liked to have seen a firm commitment of money for the project in this year's budget from sources other than state sales tax revenue, as well as full funding of the board's current expense request.

Budget Trimmed

The \$100,000 cut in the schools budget came about by trimming "a little here and a little there" throughout the budget, Business Manager Elaine Shappell said. It included \$53,000 from current expense items such as board travel expenses, and approximately \$40,000 for several non-instructional positions, including a benefits coordinator.

Last Monday, Baxley told commis-

sioners the board and staff had gone through its budget and cut all that it thought could be cut. Monday, he told them, "We were willing to face reality" by deferring some items it had wanted to include in this year's budget, so as to keep the extra allocation to a minimum.

Before making his motion, Rabon said the commissioners had been unfairly criticized.

The county had allocated the schools 10 percent more for 1989-90 than the year before, leaving it to the board of education to decide how the funds would be used, he said, adding that "the county commissioners never refused to fund teachers' positions."

In seeking more funds school board members had said the county allocation wasn't enough to make up for state salary increases that had to be met for local employees, a cut in state funding for 19 positions due to a

(See SCHOOLS, Page 2-A)

Developers Ask For Flexibility In State's Septic Tank Rules

BY SUSAN USHER

New septic tanks rules proposed by the state would do little to solve problems in developing small Holden Beach lots created from historical fill material, Brunswick County Health Board Chairman Ricky Parker said at a hearing Tuesday night at the county complex in Bolivia.

Other speakers questioned omission from the draft of a clause that would allow sandy soils used as fill dirt and left to weather for three to four years to be treated as though the soil had always been there.

Approximately 90 persons attended the hearing conducted by John Barkley, staff attorney for the state Commission on Health Services. It was one of three hearings set statewide this week to garner public comment before the Commission meets Aug. 9-10 in Raleigh to act on proposed major revisions in the state septic tank regulations.

Recommendations for greater flexibility in use of fill material non-conventional sewage treatment systems dominated comments of the 12 persons who spoke. Only one suggested the rules needed to be more restrictive.

Parker, who is also a septic tank contractor and developer, said one change proposed "appears to be an attempt to deal with these lots (at Holden Beach), but I don't read anything here that would do us any good."

When the state advised the county in December 1987 that it had been interpreting the regulations incorrectly, approximately 200 or more lots at Holden Beach were no longer rated suitable for septic tank use.

Most lots on the island are too small—about 50 feet by 100 feet, for use with a low pressure piping system as specified in the regulations. "It would take a lot 100 by 100 feet to do that," said Parker. "Most folks' lots at Holden Beach don't have that much space."

Brunswick County Health Director Michael Rhodes said proposals relating to fill were in some ways more stringent than before.

"We should at least be able to use fill to obtain 36-inch water table separation and have grandfathering of the site size since most of these lots were platted before 1983," he noted.

Parker also questioned proposed changes relating to general use of fill material and drainage.

The proposed rules specify that the soil wetness conditions can be modified by use of drainage only in sand and loamy sand soils, while Parker said he has used drainage in conjunction with fill systems installed in other types of soil with success.

Rhodes noted that while the rules were developed in a "more democratic" process than in the past, coastal counties were left out of several areas.

Saying that a 12-inch separation had worked well in Brunswick County over many years of use in various types of soils, he questioned requiring 18 inches of separation between the trench bottom and any soil wetness conditions when installing systems in which all or part of the nitrification trench is installed in fill material.

"If we're unable to use fill it will be very detrimental to not only Brunswick County, but to other coastal counties as well," he said.

Action on the proposed changes was delayed for some 18 months at the request of the Alliance for Balanced Coastal Management, to allow for their review and development of a position paper by economic development interests.

However speakers for several organizations represented on that ad hoc review committee said they didn't get exactly what they had agreed on.

Ken Stewart, executive director of the Alliance for Balanced Coastal (See DEVELOPERS, Page 2-A)