

Commissioners Jump From Fire Into 'Frying Pan' Water Fight

BY RAHN ADAMS

Preoccupied for the past two weeks with putting out flames of controversy over their hiring of a new county manager, Brunswick County Commissioners got back into a familiar groove Monday night, as the main topic of discussion was the need for county water service at Shallotte Point—an area within Frying Pan precinct.

While scattered remarks were made about the board's aborted hiring attempt (see related story), the lengthy public comments portion of Monday's 1 1/4-hour regular meeting Monday in Bolivia was dominated by questions from at least six Shallotte Point residents who wanted to know whether or not the county intends to run water lines into their community located between the Shallotte River and Saucepan Creek.

Over the past five years, Shallotte Point residents have tangled with commissioners periodically over the absence of county water service in the area, which is said to have more than 1,000 households. Residents there say groundwater is in short supply and of poor quality. Property owner R.C. Eaton told commissioners Monday that some Shallotte Point wells are "contaminated."

Last fall, after members of a group called Shallotte

Point After Water Now (SPAWN) attended several board meetings to request water service, commissioners instructed Public Utilities Director Jerry Webb to obtain cost estimates of serving the area through the county's special assessment district program.

Also, an effort to incorporate Shallotte Point began last November. However, the community's incorporation steering committee disbanded after a disagreement in December. Spokesperson Joyce Land told the *Beacon* that she and her neighbors addressed the county board Monday to help them decide whether or not to renew work on incorporation.

Webb said he did not complete his cost studies last fall after he, County Attorney David Clegg and Commissioner Kelly Holden met with Shallotte Point resident Rozell Hewett in Shallotte to discuss various means for the area to obtain water service, including incorporation, privatization and formation of either a special assessment district or sanitary district.

The utility director said he had assumed that Hewett represented the community's "ad hoc committee." Webb also noted that Hewett had indicated he planned to seek information from the Farmers Home Administration on financing formation of a sanitary district.

Hewett was a member of the Shallotte Point incorporation committee. However, fellow member Robert Hoff told Webb Monday, "Mr. Rozell Hewett, an esteemed gentleman, is only one person in Shallotte Point... It may have been an ad hoc committee (that Hewett represented), but the major committee that was formed was studying incorporation."

Responding to Hoff and other residents, Webb assured them that he intends to complete his cost analyses and present at least two alternatives for commissioners to consider during 1990-91 budget work. He indicated he will submit proposals to serve Shallotte Point either as a special assessment district project or as part of a county capital improvements project.

Commission Chairman Pinkerton said commissioners probably will not have a definitive answer on Shallotte Point water service sooner than May, when the board generally begins holding budget workshops.

In other business at Monday's commissioners meeting, the board:

—Appointed Ginger Sugrue of Shallotte to fill the unexpired three-year term of John Frink on the Southeastern Mental Health Board. Frink resigned after being reappointed to the board Feb. 5.

—Approved a final draft of the county's shoreline access plan, as recommended by the county planning board and Wilmington landscape architect Howard Capps.

—Awarded a certificate of appreciation to county Emergency Management Coordinator Cecil Logan for heading up the rescue of a lost girl in the Green Swamp earlier this month.

—Authorized nine mosquito control water management projects, including the Cheers and Williamson projects in Shallotte Township; Metz project in Lockwood Folly Township; Wilson and Smith projects in Waccamaw Township; Canton, Murrell, Willets and Sloan projects in Town Creek Township.

—Approved the Brunswick County Public Housing Authority's annual contributions contract.

—Were brought up to date on activities of the Marine Crescent by its new director, Michael Bradley.

—Heard a report on Brunswick County Public Schools' current membership figures by Superintendent John Kaufhold.

—Voted to designate the county landfill as the county's official automobile tire disposal site and to move a tire slicer from the county bus garage to the landfill.

Local Murder Trial Begins

Testimony began Tuesday in the trial of two local men accused of beating a Southport area man to death last June, according to the Brunswick County Clerk of Court's office.

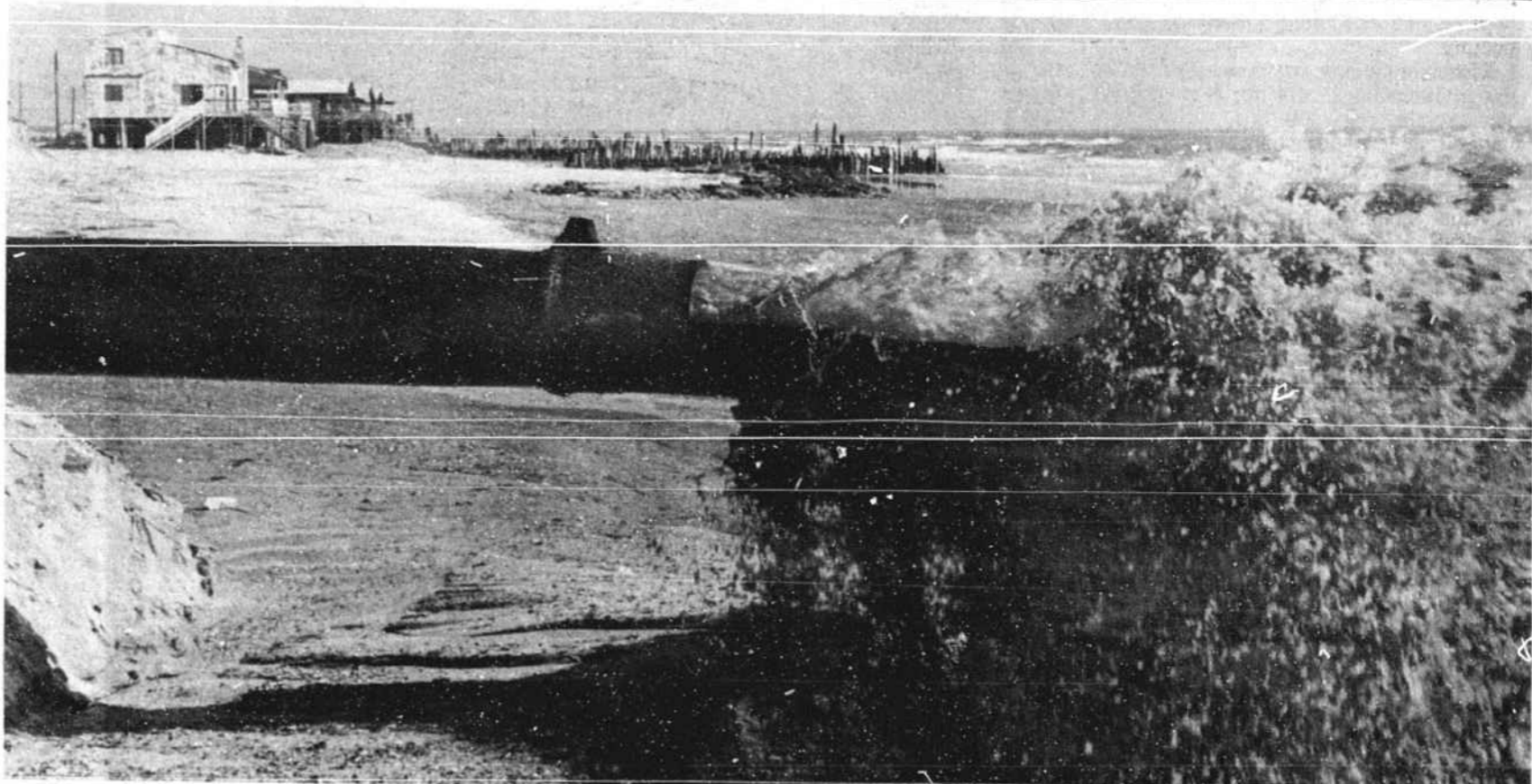
Ronny Paul Ballard and Jave Ronald McCowan, both of Smith Mobile Home Park off N.C. 211 near Southport, were charged with second-degree murder, in connection with the June 10, 1989, death of Earl James Pigg Jr. The victim also lived in the mobile home park.

Jury selection began Monday afternoon and concluded Tuesday morning in Brunswick County Superior Court. Judge Giles R. Clark was presiding.

According to the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department, the death followed a brawl that began outside Pigg's residence and involved the victim and Ballard. Ballard allegedly struck Pigg in the face with a stick and with a wooden two-by-four during the fight.

The struggle ended inside Ballard's mobile home when McCowan allegedly struck Pigg in the back of the head with a two-by-four, authorities said. Pigg was dead on arrival at Doshier Memorial Hospital, Southport.

The maximum penalty for second-degree murder is 50 years in prison and a fine. The presumptive prison term is 15 years.



STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

Building The Beach

Sandy material dredged from the Shallotte Inlet crossing rushes out the end of a metal pipe placed on the Ocean Isle Beach strand at Shallotte Boulevard. As part of a federally-funded dredging project, Cottrell Engineering Corp. of Chesapeake, Va., started dumping about 30,000 cubic yards of sand on the east end of Ocean Isle last week and expected to finish this week. Earlier this year, the dredging company deposited sand dredged from Lockwood Folly Inlet on the western end of Long Beach.

Board Bows

(Continued From Page 1-A)

growth and development... Salary and benefits are negotiable." Applications will be received through April 9.

When asked why he considered the matter to be an emergency that could not wait until Monday's regular meeting to be handled, Pinkerton told the *Beacon* Friday, "If you knew the pressure on my head, you'd probably understand it better."

Holden indicated that much of the pressure on Pinkerton came from local Republican Party officials including GOP Chairman Malcolm Grissett. Holden, Pinkerton and Rabon are Republicans; Beasley and Ludlum are Democrats.

In an interview Sunday, Grissett confirmed that he had talked at least twice to Pinkerton after Feb. 5 about possibly rescinding Kopp's hiring and that Pinkerton initially resisted the idea.

Grissett said his position was based on a "consensus" of local Republicans who called him to complain about the apparent haste in which Kopp was hired. "This really let me know that there was a cross-section of people out there who were disenchanted with the way it was done," Grissett said, after earlier noting, "I don't have a problem with Mr. Kopp at all."

However, Grissett said the local GOP never took an official stance on the issue. "I never did call on the executive committee to come in and give me a full tally vote," he said, adding that he had offered to call for a vote if Pinkerton desired one.

The party chairman said his main concerns with the hiring were that "it very well could be a big blemish" on upcoming elections and that local residents apparently felt they had been "short-changed" by the three commissioners' earlier decision to hire Kopp without holding a formal job search.

Rabon would not comment in detail on his reversal. "I agreed with the statement that the chairman (Pinkerton) made Friday," Rabon said Monday. Adding that his decision was not influenced by Grissett, the commissioner stated, "I haven't talked with Malcolm Grissett."

Contrary to other media reports, Ms. Beasley told the *Beacon* Monday that her vote Friday was not influenced by local Democratic leaders. "No Democrat from the executive committee or (Chairman) Glen Peterson has once called Ms. Beasley (about the matter)," she said. "Whatever decision I made, I made on my own." Peterson could not be reached for comment Monday.

While Rabon said Monday he had received only "three calls" from the public about Kopp's hiring, both Pinkerton and Ms. Beasley indicated that they and members of their families received numerous telephone calls last week from irate local residents.

Echoing remarks Pinkerton made Feb. 5, Ms. Beasley said Monday she initially voted to hire Kopp because she felt that residents wanted a highly-qualified, county native to head county administration. However, she added, "Evidently the citizenry of Brunswick County didn't feel that way."

Program Topic Is Man-Made Wetlands

The use of constructed wetlands for municipal wastewater treatment will be the topic of a program next week sponsored by the Resources Development Commission for Brunswick County.

Gerald Steiner, water and waste engineering program manager with the Tennessee Valley Authority, will present the program next Tuesday, Feb. 27, at 9 a.m. in the Public Assembly Building in Bolivia.

A constructed wetland is a man-made, engineered marsh-like area that uses the physical, chemical and biological processes in nature instead of mechanical systems to treat wastewater.

In the wetlands, organisms and plants use the nutrients in the wastewater for food. The pollutants are transformed into basic elements, plant mass and compost.

Party 'Who's Who' To Join Demos For Ground-Breaking

U.S. Rep. Charles Rose and U.S. Sen. Terry Sanford are among the party dignitaries expected to join Brunswick County Democrats at the groundbreaking Saturday for a permanent party headquarters building.

The ceremony begins at 2 p.m. at the construction site north of Supply across from Brunswick Community College, said Elizabeth Dameron, with all Democrats invited to attend.

Others guests expected to participate are former Governor Jim Hunt; state Supreme Court Justice

James G. Exum Jr.; state SBI Director Robert Morgan; state Rep. Dennis Wicker of Lee County and Rep. Harry Payne of New Hanover County; and state Sen. R.C. Soles Jr. of Columbus County and Sen. Frank Block of New Hanover County.

Hotdogs, soft drinks and desserts will be served.

The prefabricated steel building with brick facade will be built by Raysand Construction at a cost of \$65,000. It should be completed by May 1.

'Spring' Temps Still Forecast

The spring-like conditions that have dominated weather in the Shallotte area over the past several weeks are expected to continue at least through the weekend, according to Shallotte Point meteorologist Jackson Canady.

Unseasonably mild temperatures and an above average rainfall level is forecast for the next several days. Temperatures should average from the mid-40s at night to the mid-60s during the day. Rainfall is expected to measure about three-quarters of an inch.

For the period of Feb. 13 through 19, the daily average temperature was 60 degrees, which Canady said was 12 degrees above normal.

The average daily high temperature was 69 degrees, and the average nightly low temperature was 50 degrees.

The maximum high temperature during the period was 77 degrees on Feb. 14. The minimum low temperature was 32 degrees on Feb. 13.

Canady measured 0.93 of an inch of rain during the seven-day period.

Area Republicans Kick Off Campaign

The Brunswick County Republican party will sponsor a campaign kick-off fund-raiser Saturday, Feb. 24, at 5 p.m. at the county party headquarters on U.S. 17 one mile north of Supply.

Besides local Republicans seeking election in 1990, Republican candidates for the 7th Congressional District seat—Fries Shaffner of Wilmington and Robert Anderson of Fayetteville, and 13th District Attorney candidate Frank Stanley of Whiteville are expected to attend.

Festivities will include a barbecue dinner, and a local band, *Crossroads*, will entertain with beach and country music.

Homemade cakes and other foods will be sold to the highest bidder. Prizes to be given away include a riding lawn mower and chain saw. Tickets cost \$30 per couple.

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