

Emotional Residents Ask State To Torch Pet Crematory Permit

BY TERRY POPE

It was about a 100 against three. Residents of Town Creek and Winnabow spoke out against a pet crematorium proposed for their community during a state public hearing in Bolivia Tuesday night.

Ron Currie, animal control supervisor for New Hanover County, defended his application for a state air quality control permit filed with the N.C. Division of Environmental Management in February.

Southeastern Pet Cremation plans to operate a propane gas incinerator used to cremate animals at a site on Town Creek Road about two miles west of U.S. 17.

More than a dozen residents spoke against the permit, telling four members of the DEM staff that they do not want the crematorium in their neighborhood during an emotional 90-minute forum.

DEM Regional Supervisor Roy Davis said all opportunities to comment ended at the conclusion of Tuesday's public hearing.

"I will now make a recommendation to the director," Davis said, giving no indication when that decision will be made.

Pamela Wall, who lives less than 500 feet from the proposed incinerator, said she alerted the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department of a "suspicious vehicle" on the

road, a truck she said was registered to Currie.

Members of the audience gasped after Ms. Wall said she watched a deputy dig up a poodle that had just been buried on the crematorium site.

"I know it's not against the law to bury animals," stated Ms. Wall.

She held an 8-by-10 portrait of her young daughter as she spoke against the incinerator.

"I would be hesitant of eating vegetables from our garden if this is allowed," she said.

Currie and two others defended the per-

mit. William Shell of Wilmington, Currie's attorney, and Steve Talley of Industrial Equipment Engineering of Orlando, Fla., the maker of the incinerator unit that Currie plans to purchase, spoke in favor of the permit.

"I am interested in this as a second job," Currie said. "I'm the type of person that likes to do something that I believe in."

Currie said a pet incinerator can help reduce waste in area landfills. The unit he plans to purchase is the smallest unit made, he stated, and would be a self-contained unit, meaning there would be no runoff to threaten surrounding wetlands.

The incinerator would be housed in a 16-foot by 20-foot building that resembles a garage, he stated. Currie told the audience that he would be the only person transporting animals to the site. He brought a small container to the hearing that contained the ash remains of his 65-pound dog.

A similar incinerator is in operation in Wilmington across the street from UNC-Wilmington Chancellor James Leutze's house, said Talley. His company has 19 units now operating in North Carolina.

"It is stipulated on the permit that it would be used for pets only," Talley said. (See EMOTIONAL, Page 2-A)

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Suspect Charged

Brunswick County sheriff's detectives have arrested a suspect they believe robbed a Longwood store April 13.

Wilton Edwards, 38, of Dublin, was arrested last week and charged with robbery with a dangerous weapon, according to Lt. Donnell Marlowe.

Edwards turned himself in to the Bladen County Sheriff's Department last Tuesday evening, Marlowe said.

Brunswick County Sheriff John Carr Davis transported Edwards to the Brunswick County Jail where he was placed under \$50,000 bond. He was still being held in jail Monday morning, said Marlowe.

Edwards is accused of entering Smith's Produce on N.C. 904 in Longwood with a sawed-off shotgun around 2 p.m. and robbing a clerk of around \$400.

According to Marlowe, Edwards allegedly entered the store once and asked the clerk if she had any roses for sale. When the victim said she did not, the suspect allegedly left and returned about a minute later with a shotgun.

The warrant filed states Edwards is accused of assault "consisting of having in his possession and threatening the use of a sawed off shotgun."

Marlowe stated that the suspect allegedly held the shotgun on the clerk and demanded that she open the cash register. He also allegedly threatened to kill her, the report states.

Polling Place May Be Moving

A request to move the Woodburn precinct polling place from the Navassa Town Hall to the Leland Town Hall will get a closer look next week.

The Brunswick County Board of Elections met briefly Tuesday morning to discuss a resolution forwarded to the board by the town of Leland.

Leland's resolution asks that the Woodburn precinct be moved to a more central location.

Leland officials have offered the use of the Leland Town Hall for elections, said Lynda Britt, Brunswick County supervisor of elections.

Leland's Town Hall is located on Village Road in Woodburn.

Board of elections members agreed to take a tour of the Leland Town Hall Monday morning, April 29, before reaching a decision.



Beached Buggy

This 1962 Ford Futura was removed from the Holden Beach strand Tuesday morning after spending more than four days on the beach. Holden Beach Police Officer William Case said the vehicle was found near the east end of the beach last Thursday night. The owner of the car was fined \$25 for driving on the strand. He paid another \$25 for a permit that was required to tow the vehicle off the beach. Police refused to provide the owner's name.

STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

Holden Beach To Block Off Hazard At Pavilion

BY DOUG RUTTER

Holden Beach officials plan to erect fences to keep people away from dangerous cliffs that have formed this month on both sides of the bulkhead at Surfside Pavilion.

Commissioners voted 4-1 Tuesday to put up six-foot-high chain link fences to keep residents and visitors from falling from the top of the sandy cliffs to the beach and injuring themselves.

Since a storm in late March, waves have eroded sand on both sides of the seawall that protects the oceanfront pavilion. Water has swirled around the bulkhead, forcing the town to close the southern ends of Holden Street and Ferry Road and beach walkways near those streets.

At a special meeting with the pavilion owners Tuesday morning, town board members agreed to put up fences that will extend from the seawall north along the pavilion side property lines and run across the streets.

Commissioner Gay Atkins cast the only vote against erecting the fences. She suggested a wooden fence instead of chain link, and also urged the town board to find out how much it would cost before approving the work.

But other town officials said the cost wasn't as important as getting the fence up and minimizing the chance of somebody suing the town.

"A liability suit against the town's going to cost a lot more than any fence," said Commissioner Judy Bryan.

"We probably need a plan for now and the future. It's very dangerous the way it is right now."

—Mayor John Tandy
On pavilion seawall

Town Attorney Kenneth Campbell said the town always will have liability, but the fences should help lessen the chance of legal trouble. "You're doing what you can," he told the board.

Mayor John Tandy suggested, "We probably need a plan for now and the future. It's very dangerous the way it is right now."

Brothers Alan and Lyn Holden, who own the property, said they paid about \$60,000 for the cement bulkhead several years ago. The town chipped in \$8,000 to help pay for the section of seawall that protects the streets.

Also Tuesday, commissioners authorized Interim Town Manager Diane Clark to work with the owners to remove concrete and other debris from the strand next to the bulkhead.

(See PAVILION, Page 2-A)

Shallotte Bypass May Be Two Lanes At First

BY DOUG RUTTER

The flow of traffic on parts of the U.S. 17 Shallotte bypass may be restricted to one lane in each direction when it opens next month.

That's the latest word from N.C. Department of Transportation officials, who still expect the long-awaited route to be open to cars and trucks before Memorial Day weekend.

Allen Pope, assistant resident engineer for the project with the state DOT, said the bypass will open to traffic before the last weekend in May even though the paving contractor may not be completely finished.

Pope said there's a "good possibility" that the contractor won't lay down the final one-inch layer of asphalt on the bypass until after the route is open to motorists.

That means the four-lane bypass could be reduced to two lanes of traffic in areas that are still being paved. Pope said there could be one northbound lane and one southbound lane in certain areas for the first month.

Pope said the paving contractor—Propst Construction—has until June 20 to complete the project. If it isn't done by then, the state could levy fines of \$2,500 per day.

The assistant resident engineer said the state contract with Propst doesn't allow for major traffic shifts between Memorial Day and Labor Day. But he said there are no fines tied to that clause in the contract.

"We're planning to make ar-

rangements if they're not completely through to get traffic on the bypass before Memorial Day," Pope said Tuesday.

As of April 15, Pope said the contractor had finished 85 percent of the work. "We're pretty much on schedule as far as the whole project is concerned," he said.

Meanwhile, Pope said most of the construction work on U.S. 17 between Supply and Winnabow is on schedule or ahead of schedule.

The state Department of Transportation is in the process of widening the two-lane highway to a four-lane divided highway from Winnabow to the South Carolina state line.

Pope said the section between Supply and Bolivia might be finished before its Sept. 1 completion date.

Grading work on the Bolivia bypass also should be finished by September, he said, and the paving contract probably will be awarded in June.

Work on the section of highway between Winnabow and Bolivia is about 9 percent behind schedule. Pope said the contractor got behind at the start of the year because of rainy weather.

Construction hasn't started on the section of highway between Shallotte and Supply or on the two sections south of Shallotte.

Pope said the state is finishing buying property for the wider road and having buildings and utilities relocated.

Third Drug Checkpoint Results In Two Arrests

Two Greensboro men were arrested Friday night after a State Highway Patrol drug dog sniffed out \$1,955 in drugs from a vehicle at a roadblock on N.C. 130 in Freeland.

According to Brunswick County Sheriff's Lt. David Crocker, it was the third road checkpoint established by the sheriff's department in cooperation with the N.C. Highway Patrol within the past several weeks.

So far, six people have been arrested while drugs such as cocaine,

hashish and marijuana have been confiscated, Crocker said.

Thomas Wesley Blackwood, 33, of Greensboro, was charged Friday with felonious possession of cocaine, possession with intent to sell and deliver marijuana, possession of drug paraphernalia and maintaining a vehicle to keep a controlled substance.

Also, Bobby Ray Murphy Jr., 34, of Greensboro, was charged with felonious possession of cocaine. (See CHECKPOINT, Page 2-A)

SUBDIVISION ORDINANCE DEBATED

Road Standards Of Top Concern Heading Into Monday's Hearing

BY TERRY POPE

It's become an argument over a few feet. Brunswick County's proposed subdivision ordinance will require that all roads in new developments be paved to state standards.

Some developers say those requirements will be too costly. They want to cut at least six feet of pavement off of the roads, from 24 feet to 18 feet.

Some have also asked that the N.C. Department of Transportation's minimum requirement of 60 feet for road right of ways in new subdivisions be trimmed as well.

But the Brunswick County Planning Board is sticking to its guns. At a special meeting Monday night, it voted to recommend that Brunswick County Commissioners approve the ordinance with DOT's standards for roads in place.

Commissioners will hold a public hearing on the proposed ordinance Monday, April 29, at 7 p.m., in the public assembly build-

ing at the government complex in Bolivia.

"With the cries that I've heard over the years, I'd like to maintain DOT standards all the way," said Thomas Dixie, planning board chairman.

Dixie said he is constantly listening to complaints from residents whose street cannot be accepted by the state for paving because the developer failed to plat a large enough right of way for DOT standards.

"It's one of the biggest concerns out there," said Brunswick County Planning Director John Harvey. "Are there conditions where we can say, you can put in a road that can never become a public street?"

When the board met last Wednesday night, it failed to reach a quorum. However, the three members that did attend agreed to listen to Surveyor Bobby Long about his concerns over DOT street requirements. Long told the board that paving to DOT standards would increase the cost of roads from around \$15 to \$35 per foot.

If all roads must be paved, then rural pro-

"Are there conditions where we can say, you can put in a road that can never become a public street?"

—John Harvey
Planning Director

jects will cease to exist, he warned. The cost of the lots will drive buyers away, said Long.

Planning board members want to eliminate gravel or dirt roads in all new subdivisions. The new ordinance will prohibit unpaved roads in all new subdivisions across the county.

"It (unpaved streets) might be all right to-

day," said Dixie, "but years down the road, when they want DOT to pave the street, they've got problems."

According to DOT guidelines, streets in subdivisions that are .2 of a mile or less can be paved to a width of 18 feet. Longer streets must be paved to a width of 24 feet.

Planning board member Alfonza Roach, who did not attend Monday's meeting, left a note with Harvey stating he agreed that all streets should be paved, but to a width of 18 feet rather than 24 feet.

Reluctantly, planning board member John Barbee agreed with the board's unanimous decision that 18 feet is too narrow.

"Unfortunately, we've got a lot of poor people in this county," Barbee said. "When you start making the developer put in 24-foot paved roads, we may be pricing those lots out of their range."

But if the streets are not paved, Barbee said, the homeowners end up ruining their cars.

"It's a catch-22 situation," he added.

Long questioned if DOT allows street designs that include split roads and trees or shrubbery within the median.

"No subdivisions are to DOT standards in this county," Long asserted.

According to Harvey, Brunswick County isn't alone in pushing for stricter subdivision requirements. An N.C. Institute of Government report says that of the state's 100 counties, approximately 75 currently have subdivision ordinances.

Harvey said that 60 to 65 of those ordinances are in force countywide.

"Like in zoning, you can do it in certain places," he added.

At a commissioners' meeting last week, Long asked that the county possibly exclude certain rural areas from the ordinance.

Harvey said that 12 counties require that all of their subdivision streets be built to public DOT standards.

"The other 63 have the option of private streets," Harvey said. "A minority have no standards on paving."