

Health Board Wants To Add New Septic Tank Permit Fee

BY TERRY POPE

Brunswick County may join the list of counties that charge homeowners for septic tank permits. Presently, the Brunswick County Health Department charges \$35 for a site evaluation, but the actual permits are free. The health board voted Monday to ask county commissioners to increase the evaluation fee from \$35 to \$50 for residential lots and to begin charging residents \$30 when they obtain a permit. The increases would add \$103,000 to the department's 1991-92 proposed environmental health budget, said Health Director Michael Rhodes. It would also cut \$45,000 in tax revenues from the budget, allow the department to purchase three vehicles that had been cut and make the department more self-sufficient, Rhodes said. According to a departmental study, it costs an estimated \$77 to do a residential site evaluation. The health board's environmental health subcom-

mittee met June 4 to study fee increases. board members voted unanimously Monday to ask commissioners to revise the department's budget to reflect the changes. "The person who is using the services should pay for it," said Chairman Bill Rabon. "It's basically for the homeowner or land buyer, rather than for the developer. It keeps the site evaluation fee from getting out of hand." Rhodes noted that other counties charge for both a soil evaluation and a fee for when the homeowner or property owner obtains the actual permit. Such permit fees include: Beaufort, \$25; Carteret, \$20; Craven and Currituck, \$30; New Hanover and Pender, \$40. The subcommittee's two options have been forwarded to County Manager David Clegg and county commissioners. Option I, a plan the health board favors, includes an increase in the site evaluation fee from \$35 to \$50 and the \$30 charge for permits. Option II, which would increase the environmental health budget by \$47,890, includes the site evaluation

fee increase but would not charge for permits. Both options would increase the cost for site evaluations for multi-family units from \$35 to \$50 and commercial fees as follows: less than 480 gallons per day, from \$50 to \$70; 480 to 3,000 gallons per day, from \$100 to \$150; and more than 3,000 gallons per day, from \$150 to \$215. Mobile home sewer system relocation or reconnection fees would increase from \$10 to \$15 under both plans. Other departmental fees will also increase. Both options include a sliding fee scale for the adult health clinic, which is expected to generate \$8,000 in revenue. The clinic would start charging patients on a sliding scale based on income and family size. Other fee increases include: flu shots, from \$3 to \$4; tuberculosis x-rays, from \$23.72 to \$25.62; water samples, from \$10 to \$15; impoundment of dogs and cats, up \$5 and \$7 respectively; and adoption of dogs and cats, up \$5 each.

In the proposed county budget, commissioners had recommended an increase in the site evaluation fee from \$35 to \$40. In other business Monday, Rabon reported that the personnel committee had met to discuss Rhodes' evaluation conducted by board members. "Overall, it was a very good evaluation and very easily done," said Rabon. Rhodes had scored either fully satisfactory or above average on all areas of the evaluation form, Rabon said. It was the board's first evaluation of the director in four years. Rabon said Rhodes had set some goals for himself that he would like to accomplish this year. The personnel committee will meet in six months to review his progress, said Rabon. The board also met for about 30 minutes in executive session to discuss personnel but took no action upon returning to open session.

Calabash Eyeing Healthy Tax Cut

(Continued From Page 1-A)
Related Story Page 12-A

right," said Commissioner Jon Sanborn, who serves on the finance committee and conducted most of the meeting last week. With a tax rate of eight cents, property valuation of \$88.25 million and 97 percent collection rate, the town expects to collect \$68,484 in taxes. Tom Medeiros, who lives in Carolina Shores and owns a furniture store in Calabash's extrajurisdictional area, was the only person to question the proposed tax cut. He suggested the town keep the tax rate at 15 cents to raise the money needed to buy land for a recycling center, start up a police department and fund other projects. "I can't even believe you're considering a tax cut with all of the needs we have," Medeiros said. Besides tax dollars, town officials expect to receive \$220,050 from the state next fiscal year, including \$135,000 in local option sales tax, \$46,000 in Powell Bill money and \$32,000 in utility franchise tax. However, Sanborn said the money from Raleigh may be reduced due to the state budget crisis. "We're looking at the possibility of some strange things happening up

there in terms of the money that the state gives us," he said. The proposed budget includes \$149,157 for sanitation. More than half of the money—\$78,407—has been set aside for the purchase of land. Anderson said officials have looked at several pieces of property in and around town and most cost about \$20,000 per acre. He said board members think five acres of land would be enough for a trash dump and recycling center and a larger town hall and police station in the future. On Tuesday, commissioners approved a new lease with the Carolina Shores Property Owners Association for the Persimmon Road dump site. The new lease runs through June 30, 1995. For the coming fiscal year, the method of trash pickup will not be changed. Curbside pickup will continue in District I, and Carolina Shores residents will take their trash to the dump site. Commissioners have proposed \$20,000 for mowing and maintaining ditches along side the streets. Town officials plan to mow the ditches six times next fiscal year, from the edge of the pavement to the bottom of the ditch.

Carolina Shores resident Paul Martin has been circulating a petition seeking the signatures of people who want the town to mow both sides of the ditches. Commissioner Ray Card said drain pipes, water meters and electrical boxes have been built into the ditch banks in some areas and could be damaged by large lawn mowers. "When those guys drop those blades, they really aren't looking what's ahead of them," he said. Town officials discussed ditch mowing again at Tuesday night's meeting, but reached no consensus. Card is expected to check on the cost of mowing both sides of the ditches before a final decision is made. The proposed budget also includes \$13,500 for planning and zoning. Commissioner Stu Thorn said money has been included in the fund for a quarterly newsletter to keep residents informed. The N.C. League of Municipalities has recommended towns wait until the end of June to adopt their budgets because state officials haven't yet decided how much money will be distributed to local governments. Commissioners indicated Tuesday night that they would adopt the budget at their June 25 meeting.



STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER

It's Habit-Forming

Fishing can be habit-forming; just ask Mark Smith (foreground) and David Danford of Village Road. The two boys find time to fish in the pond at Brierwood Estates "just about every day," Danford said. On this particular afternoon, their luck was not too good. They caught one tiny brim and lost a cork.

Annexation Support Is Heard

(Continued From Page 1-A)

had in the past." The two areas were first considered for annexation by the town in 1989. Both meet statutory requirements for annexation. The town already provides water service to both areas. Annexation would mean extension of other town services—garbage collection, police protection, street lighting and street maintenance, and mosquito control. Fire and rescue services, which are not offered by the town, would continue to be provided by Sunset Beach Volunteer

Fire Department and Calabash Volunteer EMS. Both units receive annual contributions from the town. The town does not provide sewer but is studying the feasibility of building a system in the future. It would eventually serve the entire town, even if built in stages. According to an annexation study, the town anticipates that net revenues the first year of \$12,826 from Sugar Sands, a patio home development in Sea Trail, and \$44,177 from Oyster Bay Colony. Of that, \$10,345 and \$15,432 respectively is expected to come from property tax

collections at 16.7 cents per \$100 valuation. Oyster Bay Colony has vacation units expected to generate at least \$25,000 in accommodations tax revenue. Expenses of approximately \$9,000 would include solid waste collection, at nearly \$7,000; mosquito control, \$930; street lighting, \$550; streets, \$320, with no additional costs expected for police protection or town administration. The annexations would be the latest in a series. The town recently annexed a strip of land connecting the town to a shopping area at Seaside, and is considering annexation of Oyster Point I and another section of Sea Trail.

Town Creek Awaits Crematory News

BY TERRY POPE

Town Creek residents are still awaiting word on whether the state will allow a pet crematory to be built in their neighborhood. It's been nearly two months since the N.C. Division of Environmental Management held a public hearing in Bolivia on an air quality permit application filed by Southeastern Pet Cremation and its owner, Ron Currie. Currie, animal control supervisor for New Hanover County, wants to operate a propane gas incinerator to cremate animals at the Town Creek site. About 100 angry and emotional residents told DEM officials in April that they do not want the facility built near their homes. However, no decision has yet been made on the permit, said DEM Spokesman Jim Sheppard on Monday. "The bottom line is, we're holding that decision in abeyance until we get some additional maps from the applicant," said Sheppard. DEM officials have ruled as inaccurate maps showing the proposed construction site for the 16-foot by 20-foot building that will house the incinerator.

Sheppard said DEM officials first learned that the maps were incorrect at the public hearing. He said he doesn't think Currie has a deadline for turning new maps in. "If he wants to build, it's probably in his best interest to act quickly," said Sheppard. Pamela Wall, who lives less than 500 feet from the proposed incinerator, told DEM officials at the public hearing that the map filed with Currie's application shows a 1,500-foot radius of the Town Creek site. "Half of the roads that are actually there are not even on the map," she said. Steve Wall, who owns property adjacent to the proposed crematory site, also pointed out to DEM officials that there were discrepancies in the map Currie had filed. Wall said the map showed the proposed incinerator site as located between property he owns and property that his brother owns. It is impossible for the proposed incinerator to be located where it is noted on the map, Steve Wall said. The air quality permit section of

DEM has determined that Southeastern Pet Cremation's permit could be approved. The public hearing was held to find out if any new information would have an impact on DEM's decision. Currie said the incinerator unit he plans to use would be the smallest unit made, capable of burning a maximum of 75 pounds of animals per hour at 1,800 degrees. Such a unit would meet all requirements of state air pollution regulations, said Laura Butler, assistant in charge of DEM's air permit branch.

Food Workers Targeted For Testing

(Continued From Page 1-A)

tests are done by the state for free. If tested by a private physician, HIV tests are \$28.75 and tests for syphilis are \$14, said Davis. Food workers would be charged a reasonable fee to obtain a health card, "in the neighborhood of \$10," said Davis. Prior to 1972, when health cards were required, only establishments that were permitted and inspected by the health department had to obtain tests for their employees, said Rhodes. Rhodes said there are questions regarding the "legal aspects of get-

ting an HIV positive person and what to do with them." Health board members also questioned if roadside vendors, fishermen who catch and sell their products or employees of private clubs would have to obtain cards. Davis said he wanted the testing done "across the board." "It would show people that we're trying to do something to curtail this horrible epidemic floating around that we don't know much about," said Davis. Health Board Chairman Bill Rabon called the plan a "good idea."

Scattered Rains In Local Forecast

A little rain may be in the outlook for the South Brunswick Islands area over the next few days, along with near-normal temperatures. Shallotte Point meteorologist Jackson Canady said he expects temperatures to average in the mid 60s at night ranging into the mid 80s during the daytime, with about a half-inch of rainfall. "I don't see any major changes in the weather in terms of widespread rainfall," he cautioned. "It looks like it is going to be hit and miss, fairly scattered." For the period June 4 through 10, he recorded a maximum high of 95 degrees on June 4 and a minimum low of 56 degrees on June 7, 8 and 9. A daily average high of 84 degrees combined with a nightly average low of 60 degrees for a daily average temperature of 72 degrees, which Canady said was about 2 degrees below average.

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