

Long Beach Voters To Trim Long Candidate List In Primary

BY DOUG RUITER

Long Beach voters will trim the long list of candidates for mayor and commissioner when they go to the polls Tuesday in the county's only primary election.

Seven of the 13 candidates returned questionnaires to *The Brunswick Beacon* that were mailed to all municipal candidates in early August.

Candidates pinpointed fiscal responsibility and a second bridge to Oak Island as two of the top priorities town officials will have to address over the next few years.

Voters in the Oct. 8 primary will eliminate from the running one of three mayoral candidates and four of the 10 candidates seeking election to three available commissioner seats.

Polls at the Long Beach Recreation Center will be open from 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. The primary will set up a Nov. 5 general election with two candidates for mayor and six candidates for commissioner.

In the mayor's race, incumbent Johnny Vereen faces opposition from Mike Oxford and Joan Altman as he seeks a fourth straight two-year term as mayor.

Commissioners Jean Gray and David Drummond are seeking reelection to their second four-year terms. Challengers for town board are William Easley, Bobbie Larrison, James Somers, Carlton "Gene" Frazier, Horace Collier, Gregg Potter, David Durr and William "Hobe" Millard.

Mayoral candidate Joan P. Altman believes taxes and quality of life are the most important issues. Long Beach officials will have to face over the next two years.



ALTMAN

"The mayor should address the need to balance town expenses with town income and eliminate raiding the fund balance to fund recurring town expenses," she said.

Mrs. Altman, who made an unsuccessful run for town board two years ago, also says the mayor should support maintenance of property values by promoting a residential beach atmosphere and protecting the environment.

"This includes a commitment to long-term planning for improved town facilities and a sanitary sewer system," she said.

The self-employed building contractor received a bachelor's degree in biology from the University of Virginia and currently serves on the Long Beach Planning Board.

Mrs. Altman said she is seeking the mayor's office "because Long Beach needs positive, effective leadership and representation as the town faces the challenges of growth and increased development."

She thinks she is the most qualified candidate because she is dedicated to fiscal responsibility and long-term planning. "I have attended nearly every town meeting for the past seven years and I am well aware of the issues affecting Long Beach."

Mrs. Altman was secretary of the Brunswick County Literacy Council for 1989-90 and secretary of the Cape Fear River Rowing Club from 1989 to 1991.

The other two mayoral candidates did not return their questionnaires.

Vereen was first elected to the Long Beach Board of Commissioners in 1981 and was elected mayor four years later. He was re-elected in 1987 and 1989.

Oxford lost to Vereen by 10 votes in the 1987 mayor's race.

Horace Collier, a self-employed general contractor, said financial stability is one of the most important issues the town board will face over the next four years.

"The town may be faced with the questions of large capital expenditures in the future such as sewer and beach renourishment," he said.

"I feel there is the need for thorough investigation and planning to determine whether such large obligations could easily be met by the town and its citizens while maintaining adequate reserves of town funds."

Collier said development and implementation of the town's thoroughfare plan is another top issue. "I feel this has been a low priority item and needs to be addressed to ensure public safety in our town."

The candidate said he supports controlled growth with an emphasis on single-family development in order to protect the environment and prevent the possibility of over-de-

velopment. Collier graduated from Southport High School in 1971 and attended the University of North Carolina at Wilmington.

He is seeking election because he feels the town is facing major decisions that will affect it now and in the future.

"I want to represent all the citizens of Long Beach to help ensure that the town makes the proper decisions to protect the lifestyle and quality of life of the citizens, as well as prepare for our future," he said.

Collier, who has lived at Long Beach more than 25 years, said he's seen it develop from a population of less than 100 to 3,800.

"I've lived with the choices the town has made, both good and bad, over the years. Therefore, I fully understand the impact and long-reaching effects of any choices the town may make now and in the future."

Collier serves on the Long Beach Emergency Preparedness Damage Assessment Team, was a member of the town's erosion control committee in 1988 and served on the town planning board from 1983 to 1985.

He was honorably discharged from the U.S. Coast Guard and has been active with the Boy Scouts of America as a Cub Scout pack committee chairman and Boy Scout troop committee secretary.

Collier, who has three children, has coached youth baseball for four years and managed his own business for 19 years.

Incumbent Commissioner David Drummond said a proposed sewer system, a second bridge to the island and taxes will be the three most important issues he would face over the next four years if re-elected.



DRUMMOND

Drummond said he thinks the sewer proposal should go to a referendum. "I have seen no data that indicates that a town-wide system is needed at this point," he said.

He added that the federal government discourages sewer systems on barrier islands and the small number of septic tank failures are being corrected on an individual basis.

Drummond said he supports a second bridge to Oak Island. He said it would improve traffic flow if the island was evacuated due to a hurricane or nuclear plant incident.

The candidate also said he would continue to work on the budget and keep taxes low through fiscal responsibility.

Drummond said the tax rate has only risen 4 1/2 cents in the last four years. During that period, the town enlarged the town hall, purchased eight lots at Middleton Park, paved or resurfaced more than 100 streets, bought 28 new vehicles including \$200,000 ladder fire truck and built a bike path.

Drummond said he is seeking re-election so he can continue his plans for the last four year—primarily to represent all residents and property owners of Long Beach.

The co-founder and past president of the Long Beach Civic Association said he is the most qualified candidate because he makes decisions that are in the best interest of the majority.

"I make myself available to the residents and property owners and successfully represent their interests," he said.

A railroad working leader at Sunny Point Military Ocean Terminal, Drummond graduated from Quincy High School in Quincy, Maine. He also completed various courses at Brunswick Community College between 1984 and 1990.

Sound financial practices and a second bridge to Oak Island are two of the top priorities for commissioner candidate William D. "Bill" Easley.

The self-employed contractor said the town's fund balance was more than \$1 million two years ago and will be down to \$200,000 by November.

Easley said a second bridge would improve access to the island and allow for a smoother evacuation in the event of a hurricane or other emergency. He said he wants to keep Long Beach a family beach.

Easley is seeking the office because "we desperately need sound financial planning for the future and responsible current spending."

"I own two successful small businesses and feel that a town run as a business will remain sound and strong for the future," he said.

Easley presently serves on the Long Beach Board of Adjustment and Long Beach Planning Board, as well as on the Brunswick County Home Builders Association Board

of Directors.

The husband and father of five children served in the U.S. Army Officers Corp from 1977 to 1982.

He received a bachelor's degree in agriculture economics from N.C. State University and attended U.S. Army Officer School.

Easley has a North Carolina real estate license and contractor's license. He also has an F.A.A. airframe and power plant mechanic license and a private pilot's license.

Incumbent Commissioner Jean Gray said a responsible budget and second bridge to Oak Island are among the top issues facing the Long Beach town board over the next four years.



GRAY

She said the town board must be responsible for all the money that is spent and guard against unnecessary expenses.

A second bridge would help relieve traffic problems and help in the event of evacuation. She also supports a referendum on expansion of the recreation center.

A retired supervisor with the North Carolina Thruway Authority,

Mrs. Gray said she is seeking reelection because of her concern for all the people of Long Beach.

She said her four years of experience on the town board, knowledge of the budgeting process and the desire to make sure everyone is heard makes her the most qualified candidate for the post.

The candidate attended Cornell University at Russell Sage and Albany, N.Y., and took a two-year course in labor relations.

William "Hobe" Millard says establishing a fair method of garbage collection is one of the most important issues the town board should address in the coming term.

He said trash collection should be the same for residents and businesses, and business owners who need dumpsters because of extra volume should have to pay for them.

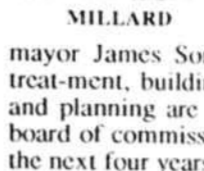
The retiree, who served as a town commissioner from 1985 to 1989, said he is seeking election because he didn't like the choice of candidates.

Millard said the town should get back to working within the budget and stop spending the fund balance.

The former commissioner supports a "reasonable and sensible" expansion of the recreation center because it is needed for everyday use.

Millard, who graduated from high school in 1937, said the fact that he is retired helps make him the most qualified candidate.

"I am retired and have lots of time to put into the job," he said. "Also, I have no personal gain in the job, but for the welfare of the town, I want only that which is right and fair for everyone."



MILLARD

Former mayor James Somers said sewage treatment, building a fund balance and planning are the top issues the board of commissioners will face in the next four years.

Somers said the town needs to address the issue of sewage immediately, not five or 10 years down the road.

He also would like to see Long Beach build up a fund balance that would "carry" the town in the event of a major hurricane like Hugo.

The self-employed general contractor served as mayor of Long Beach in the early 1980s. Somers said he is seeking election so the town will develop a budget and live within it.

"Being in business myself, I know you need to operate within the monies that you have," he said. "You can't go out and spend all of the funds without selling one short."

Somers, who has been a resident for 19 years, said the time has come for commissioners to take a positive attitude and make a commitment. "I can and will do this," he said.

He graduated from high school and has 2 1/2 years of college experience. Somers was fire chief from 1976 to 1980 and has held various offices with the Brunswick County Home Builders Association, South-

port-Oak Island Chamber of Commerce, as well as the Brunswick Toastmasters, the Lions Club and Moose Lodge.

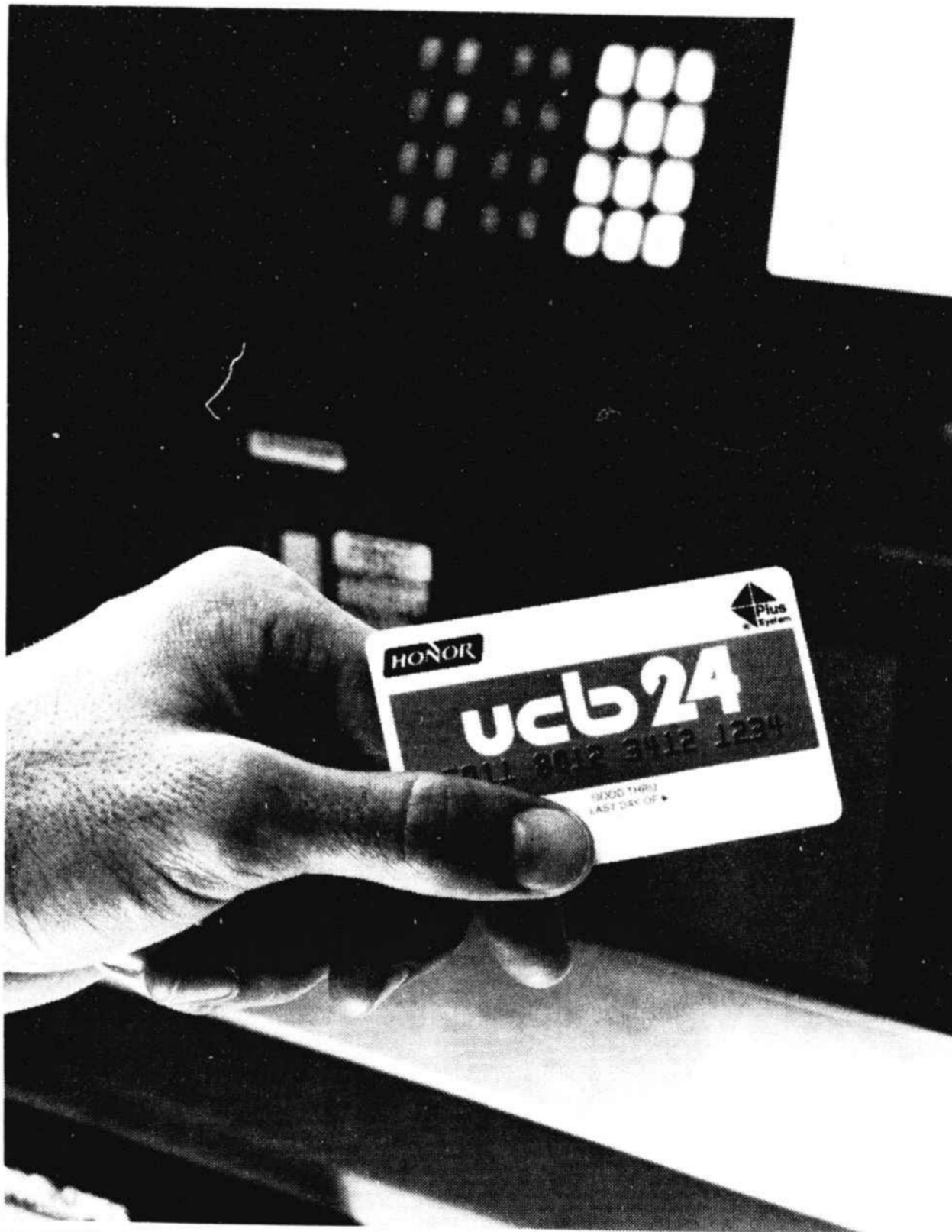
Other Candidates The four other candidates for town commissioner did not respond to the newspaper's questionnaire.

Frazier and Potter presently serve on the town planning board. Earlier this year, Mrs. Larrison defeated Vereen in the election of the Oak Island II Republican precinct chairman.



SOMERS

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