

LAME DUCK BOARD HAS BUSY AGENDA

Resignation Surprises Leland Town Council

BY TERRY POPE

Leland Councilman William Benton says a letter he plans to give to Mayor Russell Baldwin today (Thursday) will explain why he has decided to resign from the board.

Benton made his surprising announcement at the start of a busy town council meeting last Thursday, when the lame duck council voted 3-2 to establish a planning board, to adopt an interim thoroughfare plan relating to the Northern Outer Loop (Interstate 40 connector) bypass of Wilmington and to approve an employee personnel policy.

The resignation will take effect Dec. 5, when S.L. Doty is sworn in as mayor and Thomas Hyatt replaces incumbent Councilman Lynette Carlisle.

In the Nov. 5 municipal election, Doty defeated incumbent Mayor Russell Baldwin, who has been criticized for joining Benton and Carlisle in a three-member voting block to push items through the council.

"I'm not trying to be ugly," said Benton. "I'm just not at this time ready to reveal my reasons."

Benton said people have encouraged him to stay on the board. His motion asked that the council interview people interested in filling the seat.

Town Attorney Glen Peterson said interviews cannot be conducted and a replacement named until after the resignation takes effect.

"A person could conceivably change their mind," said Peterson.



THIS DESIGN by Teresa Reynolds will serve as the official seal and logo for the Town of Leland. It depicts the Brunswick River with trees along the shoreline reflected in its waters. She will receive \$25 from the town, which Ms. Reynolds requested rather than the \$50 savings bond first offered.

Following the meeting, Benton alluded to the political turmoil on the board, but stopped short of saying it was a reason for his stepping down.

"I have pondered documenting many things," said Benton, "but I'm not a person to ridicule or to strike at other people."

Ordinance Passes

An ordinance establishing a town planning board received a 3-2 vote and may be passed by a majority on second reading Nov. 21.

Councilmen George Yates and Jane Gilbert voted against the ordinance, saying they did not have time to study it.

"It's extremely inappropriate for this council to take action of this magnitude at this particular time," said Yates, whose motion to postpone the matter was defeated, 2-3.

The ordinance would establish a seven-member planning board appointed to three-year terms that

would serve at the pleasure of the council.

According to the document, planners are responsible for establishing policies for orderly development; may obtain special studies of housing, commercial or industrial facilities, parks and recreational facilities, transportation and parking needs; establish a subdivision ordinance and make recommendations to the council on new plats; prepare a zoning ordinance; and establish a board of adjustment, inspection department and economic development commission.

Yates said he didn't like the ordinance because it allows the board to receive contributions from private agencies, organizations and individuals.

Donations can be used "for special purposes or projects, subject to any specified conditions that it deems acceptable, whether or not such projects are included in the approved budget," the document states.

The ordinance is a model from the N.C. Institute of Government in Chapel Hill, said Baldwin.

"All things that are legal are not always right," replied Yates.

The town presently has an ad hoc planning committee, that may be appointed as planning board members.

"We do have a very good working group there," said Ms. Carlisle. "I don't think this council will have any problem working with them."

William E. Murrill, of Route 4, and James E. Croft, of Belvedere Drive, were appointed to the committee last week.

Road Plan Approved

Leland will submit to the N.C. Department of Transportation an in-

terim thoroughfare plan aimed at serving an anticipated increase in traffic from the Northern Outer Loop (I-40) Wilmington bypass.

If constructed, the loop will route I-40 traffic around Wilmington and into Brunswick County. The bypass will travel north of the town limits and join with U.S. 17 near Winnabow.

The plan approved by the council 3-2 last week shows a new street that would intersect with the loop and carry traffic just east of the North Brunswick High School, cross Old Fayetteville Road and form an intersection at Village Road and Baldwin Drive.

The plan will serve the needs of the Leland urban area until a Greater Wilmington Urban Area Transportation Plan is approved, the resolution states.

But not all council members were ready to approve the plan.

"It's of the magnitude that it's very much inappropriate for this board to be dealing with it," said Yates.

Other Business

In other business, the council:

■ Approved a non-controversial change in its contract for giving funds to the Leland Volunteer Rescue Squad, so that donations can be used for general operating expenses.

■ Gave \$500 to Hope Harbor Home, the county's only shelter for battered women and children.

■ Approved a personnel policy on second reading, 3-2, that had been adopted on an interim basis last month.

■ Appointed Elgin Jones to the N.C. Coastal Resources Commission Advisory Council for a two-year term.

■ Accepted a \$100 donation from Richard Moore to help purchase Christmas lights for the Town Hall.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Watercolors On Exhibit

Watercolors by Wilmington artist Betty Brown are on exhibit this month at Brunswick Community College's lobby gallery. An award-winning artist, Ms. Brown is also a teacher and member of museum and guild boards at St. John's Museum of Art, Wilmington. The lobby gallery is in the ALS building at BCC's main campus north of Supply.

Varnamtown Paying Off Debt On Town Hall A Year Early

BY DORI C. GURGANUS

Varnamtown will have its town hall paid for a year ahead of schedule.

Monday night aldermen voted to use funds on hand to pay the balance due after hearing from Town Clerk Paul Vealey that the town has \$47,962.98 in the bank, with all bills paid up to date.

"We're in good shape," he said, reporting for the finance committee.

Luellen Norris suggested that the town take the opportunity to pay off the debt on the building.

Vealey agreed that it would be possible to pay the remaining "around \$11,000" due as soon as the interest payment from the bank arrives, before the board meets again Dec. 16.

The building was purchased in November 1990 with a down payment of \$30,000 from the building fund. The town financed the remaining \$21,000 with United Carolina Bank for a period of two years, which would have ended in November of 1992.

A pleased Mayor Judy Galloway said she would be glad "to have this

building paid for."

Budget Adjusted

Alderman Ennis Swain, chairman of the Finance Committee, announced that the town budget's audit as of June 30, 1991, was back from Brock, Padgett and Chandler with few problems.

Vealey read from the report that a discrepancy of \$1,258 more than the town actually had was found by the accountants in the appropriated fund balance, and the board voted to amend the budget by taking that amount out.

Mayor Galloway reported that she had purchased the new vacuum cleaner, two fire extinguishers and a replacement North Carolina flag for the town hall.

The state flag, which replaces one that was stolen from the grounds of the town hall Oct. 13, was mounted on the flagpole Monday afternoon.

Alderman John David Dawson, chairman of the Building and Grounds Committee, said that he had not yet obtained information about purchasing a security system for the town hall, but that new locks had been installed on its doors.

Swearing In Set

Mayor Galloway and the two new aldermen will be sworn in at their next meeting of the board.

Mayor Galloway was re-elected to her post and will be sworn in to serve a second term.

Aldermen-elect Faye Galloway and Tonya Robbins will take their oaths in December, will not begin their terms of office until the January meeting, the board agreed Monday night.

Ms. Galloway and Ms. Robbins will replace Mrs. Norris and Roger Robinson on the board. Neither incumbent sought re-election.

Other Business

In other business Monday evening, aldermen:

■ Heard from Vealey that the collection rate on taxes for this fiscal year to date is 95.98 percent, leaving \$207 uncollected.

■ Heard from Alderman Ada McDonald that the town has the option of including house numbers on

the parcel land maps for the county, but that this is not required. She said that she would look into the project.

■ Heard from Mayor Galloway that street name signs are ready to be installed. She asked Vealey to locate the poles for the signs. She expects the signs to be erected around January or February.

■ Asked Dawson to purchase the number "100" to display the town hall's address on the front of the building.

■ Heard from Swain that he would look into repairing a street light that isn't working.

■ Thanked Aldermen Norris and Robinson, who was absent, for serving as town aldermen. The Dec. 16 meeting will be their last as members of the board. Swain said that they had done a good job, adding, "We hate to lose them."

Mrs. Norris said she had enjoyed her time as alderman. "It's good to work for the people in your community," she said.

ATTENTION

Finders Keepers will be moving out of state officially Monday, Nov. 25, 1991. This is last notification. All layaways must be paid for in full. All consignments must be picked up by deadline date.

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