

GREEN BOX SITES TO DWINDLE

Residents Question If Garbage Contract Actually Saves Money

BY TERRY POPE

Brunswick County will reduce the number of green box trash disposal sites across the county from around 50 to just 13 under a contract with a private hauler.

Some citizens attending Monday's Brunswick County Commissioners' meeting questioned if the county's estimated \$400,000 a year in savings is really a savings after all.

Commissioners voted last month to contract its garbage collection and recycling service out to private industry under a five-year agreement worth \$561,082 per year to Waste Industries Inc. of Raleigh.

Using its own employees and equipment, the county budgeted more than \$800,000 a year to haul trash and did not have a permanent recycling program in place.

The number of green box sites would dwindle anyway, even under county control, said County Engineer Robert Tucker, as the county moves toward larger and fewer convenience stations that also serve as recycling centers.

"We are paying for services, and we're not going to get them," said Franklin Randolph of Bolivia.

He said there may be some garbage dumped on the Brunswick County Government Center grounds when residents discover that their local green boxes have been removed and that the nearest trash dump is miles away.

"You're claiming you are saving," said Randolph. "It looks good on the outside, but tear it apart and look on the inside. It's a sham."

Tucker said the bid accepted from Waste Industries was based on collecting garbage from the county's current 50-plus green box sites.

"As other sites close down, we will save even more money," said Tucker.

As leases for the current green box sites expire, the county will choose not to renew them. Three convenience stations will be built this year—on N.C. 904 at Seaside; on N.C. 211 near Supply and at Winnabow. Waste Industries must also operate at least 10 recycling stations.

Randolph said the county may be in trouble when the five-year contract expires and the county must renegotiate or seek new bids.

Waste Industries submitted the lowest of three bids in December, with an proposal of \$497,482 for solid waste collection and \$63,600 for recycling. Other bids were \$821,886 from Waste Management of Wilmington and \$1,141,336 from Chambers of Conway, S.C.

District 3 Commissioner Gene Pinkerton said he has talked with towns that use Waste Industries and said that "they are very happy with the service they are getting."

Both Long Beach and Southport have contracts with Waste Industries.

"Five years from now if we do have a problem we could go back to competitive bids," said Pinkerton.

If the county is forced back into the trash collection business it would have to buy new trucks and equipment, Randolph noted. The county will auction its existing equipment before Waste Industries begins service, perhaps within 60 days.

"We'd have to buy the equipment that we'd be buying anyway," said Pinkerton, who voted along with Kelly Holden and Jerry Jones to accept the contract. Commissioners Frankie Rabon and Donald Shaw voted



BOLIVIA RESIDENT Franklin Randolph makes a point about the county's trash disposal contract before Commissioners Jerry Jones (left) and Gene Pinkerton Monday.

no. Pinkerton said he was concerned about the estimated 15 employees affected by the move but felt reassured the company was willing to give those people an opportunity to work for Waste Industries. The company must hire the county's employees affected by the move for a 90-day probationary period.

"I've always supported the employment of our Brunswick County people," said Pinkerton. "Even the employees that are affected should be glad that we made a decision that's going to help the county."

The yearly savings represents about 1 1/3 cents per \$100 in valuation on residents' property tax bills, said Holden.

'Very Nice' Weather Ahead

Residents of the South Brunswick Islands should experience mild, "very nice" weather in the next week, meteorologist Jackson Canady said Tuesday.

He expects temperature readings slightly above average and rainfall remaining near normal for this time of year.

Temperatures should reach the low 60s during the day and the low 40s at night, he said, and he estimated only a half-inch of rainfall.

"We're in for a period of relatively normal weather; not really warm, and not really cold," Canady said. "For the time being, this should pro-

tect us from any major outbreaks of cold, winter weather."

For the period of Dec. 31 through Jan. 6, Canady recorded a maximum high temperature of 67 degrees on Jan. 1, and a minimum evening low temperature of 39 degrees, also on Jan. 1.

The daytime average temperature was 60 degrees, and the evening average temperature was 44 degrees, making for a daily average of 52 degrees.

Canady said this reading is six degrees above average for this time of year.

He recorded 1.2 inches of rainfall at his Shallotte Point home.

Shallotte Wants Supermarket Owner To Fix Trash Problem

BY DORI COSGROVE GURGANUS

Shallotte town officials will once again let Wilson's Supermarket know their dissatisfaction with the litter around its store.

In their regular meeting Tuesday night, aldermen voted to send a letter to Alan Wilson of Wilson's Supermarket, notifying him that the management of the Shallotte store in Coastal Plaza on Main Street should clean up the debris left around the dumpster on its property.

This latest letter will be the second such communication within the past year.

The dumpster, said Mayor Sarah Tripp, belongs to Maxway, a department store which rents space on Wilson's property. She said that Wilson's is still responsible for the condition of the property regardless of ownership of the dumpster.

Mayor Tripp said that she had received "numerous complaints" about the excessive amounts of garbage sitting on the back lot of the property. She added that she believed that the garbage was "not necessarily from Maxway," and that it seemed to her that passersby were dropping off their garbage at the site.

Mayor Tripp had asked the managers of the store to clean up the debris a few weeks ago, she said, but reported that the cleaning job was not to her satisfaction.

"I won't say they're not working at cleaning it up, but when I was there the other day, it sure made me wonder," she said of the condition of the lot.

In addition to the letter, the aldermen agreed to ask Public Works Director Albert Hughes to assign two workers to clean up any scattered garbage that may lie in the public right-of-way.

If the town made the effort to clean up to the property limits of the Wilson's store, the mayor said, perhaps their request would have stronger impact.

Committee Appointments

Aldermen elected David Gause to succeed Paul Wayne Reeves as mayor pro tem and also

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—Mayor Sarah Tripp

made appointments to several boards.

Reeves was reappointed to represent the town on the Cape Fear Council of Governments, with Alderman Roney Cheers as alternate.

Reeves said he desired to continue working with the COG, citing that more funding and programs have become available to Shallotte since the town has had a COG representative.

Francis Stone was named, at Reeves' recommendation, to replace former Alderman Jody Simmons on the Sunnyside School Committee. That membership also includes Aldermen Wilton Harrelson and Reeves, Randy Sullivan, Lena Mae Causey, Mark Lewis, Kelly Holden, David Batten and Bobby Lewis.

The group will work in the future, Reeves said, to look into obtaining historical landmark status for the building. The town would then receive government funding for its upkeep, he said, as well as tax exempt status for tax deductible donations from the public.

If the former Shallotte one-room school house can attain historical landmark status, "it's there forever and a day," said Reeves.

The privilege license committee was dissolved by the aldermen, due to it no longer being needed, said Mayor Tripp. The committee had formerly included the mayor, Reeves, and Town Clerk Mary Etta Hewett.

Insurance Changed

Aldermen voted to change the insurance carri-

er for a municipal employee for the remainder of his employment.

Roland Varnam, a town employee, recently turned 65 years old, Ms. Hewett said, and was not allowed to continue his current insurance coverage if he should retire because he also collects Medicare payments.

The Town of Shallotte currently pays Varnam's premium of \$168.39 per month to Principal Mutual. Ms. Hewett said she had found identical coverage with Blue Cross/Blue Shield for only \$111.30 per month. Blue Cross would allow Varnam to assume continued coverage after retirement while receiving Medicare payments.

Ms. Hewett said that Varnam has estimated he will retire in another year or so. Alderman Gause said that if the action would save the town money and help Varnam, that he fully supported the move.

Other Business

In other business, aldermen:

■ Postponed appointment of new Planning Board members until the aldermen's Feb. 4 meeting. Planning Board members H.A. Stanaland Jr., Conrad Pigott and Davis Milligan will continue their terms until action is taken at that meeting.

■ Referred an extraterritorial jurisdiction zoning request from Dwight Flanagan to the Planning Board.

■ Tabled proposed amendment of the town ordinance concerning dry cleaning and laundry establishments until discussing the matter again with town attorney Mark Lewis.

■ Granted permanent employee status to Sterling Singletary of the Maintenance Department and Keith Croom of the Police Department.

■ Directed Hughes to check on availability of grants to fund recycling projects in Shallotte from the Office of Waste Reduction in the N.C. Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources in Raleigh.

DOT Board To Meet Here

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The two-day meeting in May will include tours, a dinner, business meeting sessions, a fashion show and the cocktail party.

"We want them to see what we've got to offer here," said Ms. Odom.

At the Sunset Beach meeting Monday night, board members Ed Gore, Julia Thomas and Cheri Cheek voted to grant the chamber's request, while Bud Scramton and Mary Katherine Griffith opposed the contribution.

Mrs. Cheek, who also is a member of the chamber board, said she feels it will help the community for DOT officials to see what road improvements are needed in Brunswick County.

"I hate to feel bribed into making this decision," Mrs. Cheek said, adding that she thinks the party is "a little expensive."

Gore saw the meeting as "an opportunity to get them here and get their ear."

Scramton and Mrs. Griffith argued that such expenditures would be better spent on education.

"I have a world map that won't stay rolled down in my classroom," said Mrs. Griffith, a social studies teacher at Waccamaw Elementary School. "I have to stand there and hold it down."

She also said that when education personnel go on trips, they eat at fast-food establishments and don't have the privilege of cocktail parties.

Ms. Odom said the expense is justified because of the ways DOT projects benefit the community.

"They've been really good to us," she said of the DOT. "You can't grow the way we've been growing without increased transportation needs."

At the Shallotte meeting Tuesday night, Alderman Wilton Harrelson couldn't resist commenting on what he sees as a changing attitude toward the area.

"It's no longer a reaction of 'Where's that?' he said. "Now it's 'Let's go!'"

Ms. Odom cited improvements such as the four-laning of U.S. 17 and both the Shallotte and Bolivia bypasses as projects that help the community.

"We need to let them know that we appreciate and recognize what they're doing for us," said Mrs. Odom.

She said she would know within the next few weeks how much the DOT will be adding to their funding of the event, and would lower the amount she was asking of towns at that time.

State Board Eyes County Projects

Several odds and ends of business relating to Brunswick County are on the agenda when the North Carolina Board of Transportation meets Friday in Raleigh, including funding requests to meet cost overruns on road construction projects here.

The board will meet at 9 a.m. in the Highway Building.

The board is expected to approve:

■ An additional \$300,000 in state Trust Fund money to cover overruns on construction of the U.S. 17 bypass of Shallotte, from just west of Old Shallotte Road (S.R. 1316) to just east of Red Bug Road (S.R. 1136). Previously \$4.5 million had been approved for the project, which has been completed.

■ An additional \$175,000 to state Trust Fund money to cover overruns on construction of U.S. 17 from U.S. 17 at Bolivia to just northeast of N.C. 87 at Bell Swamp Creek, a distance of 4.23 miles. Previously \$4.5 million was approved for the project.

■ An additional \$20,000, of which three-quarters would be federal, for preliminary engineering and utilities on U.S. 17 from N.C. 211 north of Supply to N.C. 87 at Bell Swamp, a distance of 13.5 miles. Previously \$655,000 had been approved for the work.

■ Awarding of a bid for improvements to 49.23 miles of primary and secondary roads in Brunswick and New Hanover counties. Dickerson Carolina Inc. of Castle Hayne is the apparent low bidder for the work, at \$2.34 million. Work is to begin after Feb. 3 and should be completed by April 25.

■ Approval of final right of way plans along U.S. 17 south of Shallotte to the South Carolina line, for the four-laning project there.

Zoning Is Top Concern

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4-1 margin, Holden said.

Saying he has listened to the arguments for the past eight years, Sunset Beach Mayor Mason Barber agreed it's time for a countywide zoning ordinance.

Another concern to the county is solid waste control, said Richard Good of Sunset Beach.

"We need to be able to reduce it and dispose of it," said Good, "and to keep the county clean."

Cultural development is also needed in Brunswick County, sug-

gested Jack Harrison of Shallotte. Such a program needs to transcend the county library system, he added.

Joe and Ann Polanski said they just moved to Sunset Beach from Ohio last week. They found themselves Tuesday taking part in a public workshop to discuss the future of their new community.

Limiting high-rise developments is a main concern, Ms. Polanski told Harbeck.

Coastal growth issues dominated the discussion.

"As more and more land is gobbed up along the shoreline for de-

velopment," added Holden, "we need to make sure there are accesses for boaters."

Since Brunswick County is coastal, a key concern for Milton Coleman, director of the Brunswick County Cooperative Extension Program, is maintaining groundwater quality.

"It's still the major source for water," he said. "With our increase in growth, it is a concern."

The last land use plan update was drafted by the county in 1987. The N.C. Coastal Area Management Act requires an update every five years.

Vote Angers Register Of Deeds

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In per diem and travel, the board paid \$132.50 for the July 8 meeting; \$218.18 for the August 12 meeting; \$84.03 for the Oct. 14 meeting; and \$119.58 for the Nov. 12 meeting.

Also, the sheet listed \$382.13 in reimbursements for hotel and meals for Carter to attend the N.C. Register of Deeds Association Convention in Pinhurst in the fall.

There was no record of registration for Carter specifically, but registration at \$125 per person was paid for "Register of Deeds and three unnamed Deputy Register of Deeds" at the convention, the commissioners' data sheet indicated.

At \$35 per meeting plus travel, the advisory board is among the top paying appointed boards in Brunswick County.

Other county boards receiving \$35 per diem include the Department of Social Services Board, Board of Health, Planning Board

and Utility Operations Board. The Brunswick County Board of Elections receives \$50 per diem while the Keep America Beautiful Board and Parks and Recreation Board each pay \$20 per diem. Several county boards are provided no per diem.

Four of the five members on the advisory board were appointed by commissioners, with one from the Board of Realtors, one from the Board of Surveyors and one from the Brunswick County Bar Association.

A fourth member was appointed from the private sector. Robinson appointed the fifth member.

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