Sewer Authority Plan Draws Fire At Sunset Beach

(Continued From Page 1-A)

Opponents of the authority disagreed on nearly every point with consulting engineers from Powell Associates, hired by Sunset Beach and Calabash to construct a "selected plan" to implement a wastewater program for the towns.

The plan includes construction of a wastewater collection and treatment facility and stormwater management system plus formation of a 'public management entity" to monitor, inspect and repair systems not connected to the system.

The engineers have estimated the cost of a sewer system at \$25 to \$30 million to serve residents from the state line to the easterly limits of the Sunset Beach extraterritorial jurisdiction and from the oceanfront to U.S. 17.

James E. Merkel, one of those allowed in from outdoors to speak, said "I have seen nothing to suggest a need for sewers on Sunset Beach, It has never been demonstrated to

However, just prior to the meet-

James Billups distributed copies of a ten-page "Status Report on Wastewater Collection & Treatment Programs" for the two towns. The report outlines the process of implementing a sewer system and presents evidence of pollution it says 'should be sufficient to convince the most cynical observer that on-site septic systems are not the answer for treating sewage on the island of Sunset Beach.

The Powell report says town water consumption records indicate that about 35 percent of homes on the island of Sunset Beach use more water than the 7,200 gallons per month an average working septic tank system can treat.

"The amount by which actual consumption exceeds this amount is up to 18,000 gallons per month. Therefore, many of the systems are receiving wastewater at a rate of two to three times the design capacity.

"Assuming the septic systems are operating as designed, which is an idealistic situation, then the overloading results in inadequately treat-

ing, engineers Joseph Tombro and ed wastes which go directly to the groundwater, and potentially to the adjacent estuaries.

> Two proponents of the authority expressed concerns about septic tank efficiency and about a pending state crackdown on malfunctioning or outdated systems.

> Sea Trail Plantation partner Miller Pope, who also owns a motel and rental properties at Ocean Isle, said, "You can't compare a rental house to the house you live in. Renters will take the grease they cook in and pour it right down your drain. During the winter, the grease can clog your drain lines and make a septic system useless."

> Contractor Tom Pope said, "I challenge you to get yourselves informed about septic tanks. In two or three years, we'll be drowning, swimming, in sewage. When the state regulators get hold of you, you're going to be down here on your hands and knees begging for a sewer system.

> Opponent Judy Van Winkle questioned whether pollution testing

around Sunset Beach had been conducted only during the summer when rental cottages are occupied to capacity.

Engineer Tombro replied, "It makes no difference. If you have these constituents in your water at any time of the year, you damned sure better be scared. The problem doesn't go away."

Opponents argued that no authority should be formed until after a referendum is held on the sewer system and that an authority would allow the towns to "circumvent the will of the people."

Outspoken opponent Sue Weddle charged, "Word in the community is that your minds are already made up, that this meeting is a farce. Even though there's a clear consensus in this room, you have no intention to

Engineers and council argued that an authority is the only viable vehicle for the two towns to seek grants and loans; that only through an authority can the towns learn whether adequate funds can be raised to construct a system; and that the authority will not be "activated" until it has funds to spend.

Opponents expressed fears that an authority could abuse its power. Merkel referred to his experience as a property owner in Chapel Hill, saying such authorities are "beholden to nobody," and said a similar board there "took 2,000 acres in the country, built an administrative palace and decided to spend \$350,000 to build a recreational facility that has nothing to do with water or sewer."

"We're not sewer experts," Scrantom countered. "We're trying to do what's best for the community in our opinion. Some won't agree, and some will. I think you people are scared of the word 'authority.' If it gets to be a bureaucracy, we'll just

Mayor Pro Tem Ed Gore said, "I share your concerns about a possible bureaucracy" and that those concerns "will be considered in the establishment of the authority. Our job is to bring this entity to the people to do the job and operate at the lowest rates possible."

Gore was accused by opponents of having a vested interest in the sewer project because he is a partner in Sea Trail Corporation, which needs a central sewer system in order to expand.

Mayor Barber refuted a statement made two weeks ago at a meeting of the Sunset Beach Taxpayers Association alleging that Sea Trail's principals were influencing the board to construct a taxpayer-funded sewer

Barber said Sea Trail "will get a sewer system one way or another, whether it's public or private. We asked them to hold off on their plans until the town decided what it was going to do."

Council did not recommend limiting any of the authority's statutory powers, which include owning and acquiring property, constructing water and sewerage systems, entering into contracts, applying for grants, issuing revenue bonds, establishing rates, imposing special assessments and condemnation.

Shell Point Mother, Daughters Face Felony Purse Theft, Forgery Charges

A joint effort Tuesday by county and Shallotte law enforcement officers resulted in the arrest of three Shell Point area women on felony charges of forgery, uttering and larceny, according to Det. Tom Hunter of the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department.

Hunter said Gwendolyn Tipton Payne, 18; her mother, Stephanie Tipton; and sister, Letha Tipton King, were arrested about 2 p.m. and were being held in lieu of \$2,000 bond each Tuesday evening.

The three had been reported to police after an elderly Calabash woman's purse was taken from a shopping cart at a Shallotte grocery store about 1 p.m. Tuesday, Hunter said. The purse was found at the store, but credit cards, cash and checks were missing, he said. One of the missing checks was cashed for \$1,000 shortly thereafter at a nearby bank, he added.

More wintry weather is in the

Shallotte Point meteorologist

forecast for the South Brunswick

Jackson Canady says the outlook

calls for continued below normal

temperatures coupled with above

"It looks like we're in a pattern

Canady expects temperatures to

for a while, at least the next week to

range from the mid-30s at night into

the mid-50s during the daytime,

average precipitation.

10 days," he said

All three women were charged by the Shallotte Police Department in the Shallotte incident. In addition, Payne was charged Brunswick County Sheriff's Department in a Nov. 30 case in which a checkbook and credit cards were reported stolen from another woman's purse left on the counter of a Seaside shop.

In that case, Hunter said, a check for \$800 was cashed at another local

Hunter, Brunswick Deputy Patty Hewett and Shallotte Police Chief Rodney Gause were discussing the case Tuesday when Hunter spotted the car the suspects were reported to be driving near Gray Bridge and Shell Point roads. Hunter said credit cards belonging to the Seaside victim, a checkbook belonging to the Shallotte victim and \$1,061 in cash were recovered

County in a search of the women's car.

with at least three-quarters of an

ed a high of 60 degrees on both Dec.

1 and 2, and a nighttime low of 27

For the period Dec. 1-7 he record-

A daily average high of 55 de-

grees combined with a nightly aver-

age low of 35 degrees for a 45-de-

grees daily average temperature.

that's about 4 degrees below aver-

Canady recorded .6 inch of rain-

Brady also suggested that the town should investigate the possibility of contracting with the Grand Strand Water and Sewer Authority in South Carolina to provide sewer service to those portions of Calabash, mostly in the downtown restaurant district, that are not served by Carolina Blythe.

(Continued From Page 1-A)

But Tombro said the Myrtle Beach authority already has committed to provide service to enough areas in South Carolina to exhaust its treatment capacity.

Another Carolina Shores resident said, "People in District 2 are not against providing sewer to areas of

Calabash Vote Seals Sewer Authority Calabash that don't have it. We just don't understand why we have to join with Sunset Beach to do it. Why can't we do it ourselves?"

Jim Billups of Powell Associates said it would require \$1.8 million in 'up front costs" to serve most of the downtown business area. Those customers would end up paying more than twice as much per gallon of sewage output than they would if the Sunset Beach is included in the sys-

"There is an economy of scale at work," Billups said. "The larger your customer base, the lower the cost per customer.

"We had the option of excluding Carolina Shores from the system plans," he said. "But we learned that

you were looking at a rate increase and felt it was our task to represent the town as a whole. We felt it was in the best interest of Carolina Shores to include it if we would provide service for less than Carolina Blythe will when it is sold or increases its rates.'

Coleman Burnett, general manager of Carolina Blythe, confirmed last week that the company is for sale and will seek a substantial rate increase if a buyer is not found by early next year. He also said a new owner of the system could be expected to raise rates even more.

After the meeting, Calabash Mayor Doug Simmons said he was pleased by the board's action. "I think we did the right thing,"

controversial issue on the horizon.

He said he still favors the law as

modified, but expects changes to be

if they'll let us," he said.

"We can work with these people

The board's next regular meeting

he said. "Down the lane we ought to get some good grants from doing it With both towns applying, it will make it better for both.

Hardee, a downtown restaurant owner, agreed saying, "I'm glad it passed. We really need it."

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

Established Nov. 1, 1962 Telephone 754-6890 Published Every Thursday At 4709 Main Street Shallotte, N.C. 28459

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Clegg Keeps Manager's Post After Vote (Continued From Page 1-A) provements in the county's educabelieves might arise on the board, tion system will be a top priority Shaw said implementation of the Referring to a recent study of during his term of office. He said he zoning ordinance will be the most

county government job classifications and salaries, Warren said the new board "will have to look at what changes might need to be He said the commissioners also

quests that might be expected from the new Brunswick County Board of Education. Warren said he feels it is "very

would be assessing new funding re-

unlikely" that the newly adopted county-wide zoning ordinance will be repealed.

Rabon said the zoning law "may need some fine tuning." He said imthinks people are "ready to make sacrifices" to upgrade the county school system.

"If money is what it takes, I'm ready. But I'm not yet convinced that money is what's needed," Rabon said. "If I am convinced, I'm prepared to spend it."

Despite siding with the Democrat majority in voting to defer consideration of the leash law, Shaw said he still supports the measure.

"I just wanted to give these boys a haw sai

Asked what future conflicts he

will be Dec. 21.

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

SHALLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA 28459

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Needs Assessment To Be Presented For 3-County Area

fall during the period.

inch of rainfall.

degrees on Dec. 6.

age, he said.

A presentation of the 1992 Regional Needs Assessment-a study of human service needs and the perceived quality of life in Brunswick, New Hanover and Pender counties-will be held Dec. 16 at UNC-

The meeting will take place in Cameron Hall Auditorium, Room

Information to be presented will include recent census data, focus group findings and surveys from area residents.

The assessment is a joint project of the Cape Fear United Way, the New Hanover County Department of Social Services and UNC-W.

Bird Island To Be 'Stateline' Topic

Cold, Wet Winter Here

For Week Or So Longer

The effort to protect Bird Island from development will be the lead story on the N.C. Public Television half-hour news program "Stateline,"

tonight (Thursday), a spokesman for the network said. Interviews were taped with Bird Island Preservation Society chairman Bill Ducker and others in-

"Stateline" will be rebroadcast on Sunday, Dec. 13, at 5 p.m.

N.C. Public Television is received locally on Vision Cable channel 13, Atlantic Cable 12, or non-cable channel 39.

segment will also briefly explore toon bridge should be replaced.

other Sunset Beach issues, including whether the island's one-lane pon-

volved in the effort. The ten-minute Kimberly Jo's Boutique

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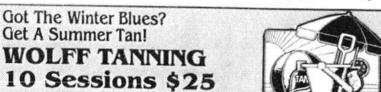
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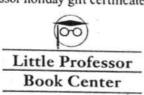


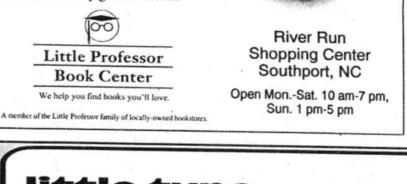
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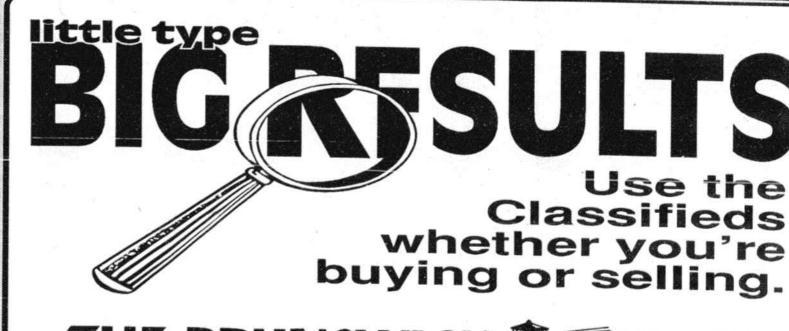
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