

TAX NOTICES COMING

Varnamtown Petitioners Support New Boat Ramp

BY DOUG RUTTER

Most Varnamtown residents apparently support a plan for the town to fund a new boat ramp on Lockwood Folly River, but town officials say they haven't decided whether they'll do it or not.

Mayor Judy Galloway said at Monday's town meeting that she has received a petition with 87 signatures supporting improvements to the crumbling ramp at Varnamtown Landing.

Last month, however, several residents who live near the landing told the town board that a new launch would draw more boaters to the waterfront and add to existing parking problems.

Residents said trucks and boat trailers parked beside the road block driveways and prevent mail carriers from delivering mail. Town officials reported Monday night they think they have a solution to the parking woes.

Alderman Ada McDonald said landowner Nicky Varnam has agreed to lease to the town some of his property beside Varnamtown Road to provide a parking area for boat ramp users.

McDonald said the property is 192 feet long and 50 feet wide and would accommodate 19 vehicles with boat trailers and another three or four cars. The land is on the east side of the street near Varnam's fish house.

"The idea of the public parking is so people will park in the spaces instead of the side of the road," McDonald explained.

Town officials are considering replacing the existing ramp because it is in poor condition and people damage their boats when they use it. Proposed in its place is a steel-reinforced concrete ramp costing an estimated \$21,780.

The ramp is located on property owned by Nicky Varnam, Junior Thompson and Blondell Robinson. They have agreed to lease the land to the town at little cost. Two of the owners won't lease the area for more than 15 years.

A design accepted last month from the Varnamtown Planning Board proposes a ramp 77 feet long and 41 feet wide, stretching from a bulkhead at Varnam's business to a walkway on the other side.

Mayor Galloway told the 20 resi-

dents at Monday night's meeting that the planning board is still working out details on the proposal.

"It's still in the works and we're still thinking about it," she said. "As far as the parking, I think that's squared away."

Mayor Pro Tem Ennis Swain and former mayor Tracie Varnum both commended Nicky Varnam for offering the land for parking. "I think it's most gracious and more than expected," Swain said. "If there's parking provided I think that's one of the key issues."

Asked if the new ramp built could be built for less than \$21,780, Mayor Galloway said the dollar-figure is only a rough estimate.

"We really don't know what it's going to cost," she said. "They want something that's going to be sturdy and last. There's no use building it and in five years it be gone."

If town officials decide to build the ramp, they will need a Coastal Area Management Act permit first. Aldermen plan to check with state officials and find out which type of permit they would need and how long it would take to get it.

In any event, Mayor Galloway said the town couldn't start building a new ramp until next fiscal year, which begins July 1. The town doesn't have money in this year's budget for a boat ramp.

"It's still in the works and we're still thinking about it. . . As far as the parking, I think that's squared away."

—Judy Galloway, Mayor of Varnamtown

Tax Notices Coming

Townpeople who still haven't paid their town taxes from 1989, 1990 or 1991 will soon be receiving a not-so-friendly reminder in the mail.

Aldermen voted Monday to send second notices to the 15 property owners who owe town taxes for one or more of the three previous years.

"I know some that I don't believe have ever paid any taxes," Swain said. "We'll try this and hope it brings results."

Tax bills and two newspaper advertisements have brought in most of the taxes, but the town is still short \$191.74 for the years 1989-91.

The unpaid amount doesn't include the 1992 town taxes that were due in January. The town received nearly \$2,500 in taxes in November and December.

Monday that the town has more than \$60,000 in the bank.

"It's the principle of the thing," Mayor Galloway said.

Other Business

In other business Monday, aldermen:

- Voted to pay MAC Construction for the paving of the town hall parking lot as soon as the work is approved by the building and grounds committee. The paving will cost about \$7,650.
- Tentatively approved the permit

form that will be used to enforce the town's manufactured home ordinance.

■ Appointed board member Will Mumford as the community's liaison on state legislative issues.

Correction

A story in the Feb. 4 issue of the Beacon incorrectly stated the date of the Sunset Beach Town Council's public hearing on the town's land use plan update.

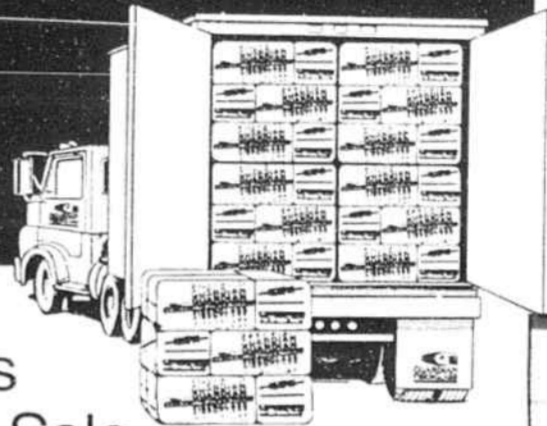
The hearing will be March 15 at 7 p.m. in the town hall.

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