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ARPDC drops five grand in land use failure

By MIKE McLAUGHLIN
The Albemarle Regional Planning and Development Commission is apparently some \$5,000 in the hole after botching three land use plan updates that were to have been completed in June.

ARPDC executive director Robert Whitley said that the organization would only be paid for work actually completed on the plans, and that its compensation would not match up to its expenditures.

"The figure is not a great figure...something we can live with. I don't think it will exceed \$5,000, if that much," said Whitley.

A number of factors contributed to ARPDC's failure to complete the updates, Whitley said, including the unexpected departure of lead planner Larry Chilton.

He said that had he known Chilton was leaving, he probably would not have signed contracts to update the Coastal Area Management Act land use plans in Gates, Chowan and Perquimans Counties.

"Had I known that Larry Chilton, our lead planner, would be gone, I would have had reservations about signing them," said Whitley.

But information gleaned from the files of ARPDC shows that Chilton's letter of resignation was received over a month before Whitley signed the contract for Perquimans County, and nearly two months before signing contracts for Gates and Chowan.

Chilton's letter of resignation was submitted

Sept. 11, 1979 and his last day of work was Oct. 19, 1979.

The Perquimans update was signed on October 15, and the Gates and Chowan contracts were signed on Nov. 5.

In addition, Chilton's credentials were apparently used to secure contracts that ARPDC would otherwise not have been able to receive.

"This is why CRC (the Coastal Resources Commission) authorized us to sign, based on Larry Chilton's being here," said Whitley.

Questioned again on the same point Whitley said he signed the contracts "based upon the qualifications of

regional planner Larry Chilton."

But Chilton's exit left the land use updates in the hands of Dan Tew, a planner who, according to the CRC, was unqualified to handle the detailed up-date task.

At the time of Chilton's resignation, ARPDC advertised for another planner, but received no applications, said Whitley. Six months later, another planner was hired, but by this time, ARPDC was so far behind on the plans that the Coastal Resources Commission recommended that its contracts be cancelled.

Tew's position, which depended on contract money for financing, was abolished, and he has since found work on the planning staff of the city of Raleigh.

And ARPDC appears to be out of the land use planning update business for now. Asked if ARPDC would attempt to secure more contracts in that area, Whitley responded, "Not in land use updates as such. We simply do not have the financial reserves to hire a planner whose total compensation depends on contracts we secure."

Resigning?

Not now says director

Another resignation was tendered at the Albemarle Regional Planning and Development Commission office in Hertford last week, and as of press time on Tuesday, executive director Robert Whitley was denying speculation that his own resignation might be next.

Asked on Tuesday morning if he was considering resigning, Whitley said, "Not at this point in time. I don't think resigning right now would accomplish anything."

He said there are still a great many objectives he would like to see accomplished in the region through ARPDC.

Whitley's leadership

capabilities have come under fire in recent weeks, leading to public speculation last week that he would be replaced by Hertford resident Tim Brinn.

Aging administrator Rebecca Rhodes resigned from the organization two weeks ago, citing poor leadership on the part of its director. This past Friday, Aging secretary Karen Bunch followed Ms. Rhodes' lead and resigned.

In comments to the press following her resignation, Ms. Rhodes said that a majority of ARPDC's staff members signed a list of grievances against Whitley which she said he had failed to address.

In an interview last week,

Whitley said that he feels most of the disaffection at ARPDC stems from a new salary schedule.

"Some employees did not fall within the range they thought they should," said Whitley. "They thought I should intervene."

But Whitley said he had had a professional organization prepare and submit the plan to the ARPDC personnel committee (consisting of ARPDC board members) and he did not feel it was his responsibility to step in.

As a result of the protest, though, Whitley said he has asked the state personnel

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Town budget up \$200,000

A budget of some \$1.7 million, representing an increase of approximately \$200,000 over last year's town budget, has been tentatively set and accepted by the Hertford Town Council for the coming fiscal year.

The board met in executive session last Monday to finalize the budget draft.

Most of the \$200,000 increase results from the Electric Fund, which totals \$979,770, a \$191,970 jump over last year's Electric Fund budget of \$787,800.

Hertford Mayor and City Manager Bill Cox said that the \$191,970 increase in the Electric Fund reflected Veeco's "ever-increasing prices," and that last year's Electric Fund was "under-budgeted."

The 1980-81 Electric Fund is comprised of interest — \$2,000, a department of Miscellaneous Revenue of \$939,770, (which Cox said is accrued from electric charges

and usage); reconnection fees of \$3,000; and electric revenue of the Wynne Fork housing of \$35,000.

Expenditures generating from the Electric Fund include salaries and wages — \$39,000; an operating expense of \$6,000; utilities of \$500, maintenance and repair of equipment and vehicles — \$4,000; departmental materials and supplies — \$25,000; capital outlay equipment — \$181,300; and contribution to debt service fund (water and sewer bonds) — \$31,970. The largest expenditure included in the Electric Fund is electricity for resale — \$689,000.

"We based this figure (\$689,000) on the actual cost (of purchasing electricity from Veeco for resale) through March 31 and added our estimation of the cost of use for the months of April, May, and June," said Cox.

The actual cost of purchased electricity through March 31

was \$536,817. Cox said they have estimated the cost of projected electricity used for the months of April, May, and June to be around \$153,000 and added it to the \$536,817; thus, the figure of \$689,000 was established for the 80-81 budget.

The only other significant increase in the town's 1980-81 budget is in the General Fund, which has increased \$22,000 over last year's \$500,500.

Among revenues anticipated for the General Fund are Ad-Valorem (property) taxes which will total \$75,400.

Cox said that the tax rate of 65 cents per \$100 valuation had not changed for the 1980-81 fiscal year, and that the rate was based on a total true valuation of \$11.5 million and an estimated rate of 91 percent collection which was the collection rate experienced during the 79-80 fiscal year.

The General Fund's largest revenue is the \$181,300 contributed from the Electric

Fund, a \$2,500 increase over last fiscal year's contribution.

The General Fund's expenditures include maintaining the various town departments such as street, administrative, police, fire, recreation, and inspection.

A summation of additional departments within the 1980-81 town budget are:

•Water and Sewer Fund — \$118,500, a \$6,500 increase over last year.

•Powell Bill Fund (for street repairs) — \$25,000, no change

•General Revenue Sharing — \$31,000, down \$13,000 from last year's budget

•Debt Service Fund — \$31,970, down \$1,530 from last year.

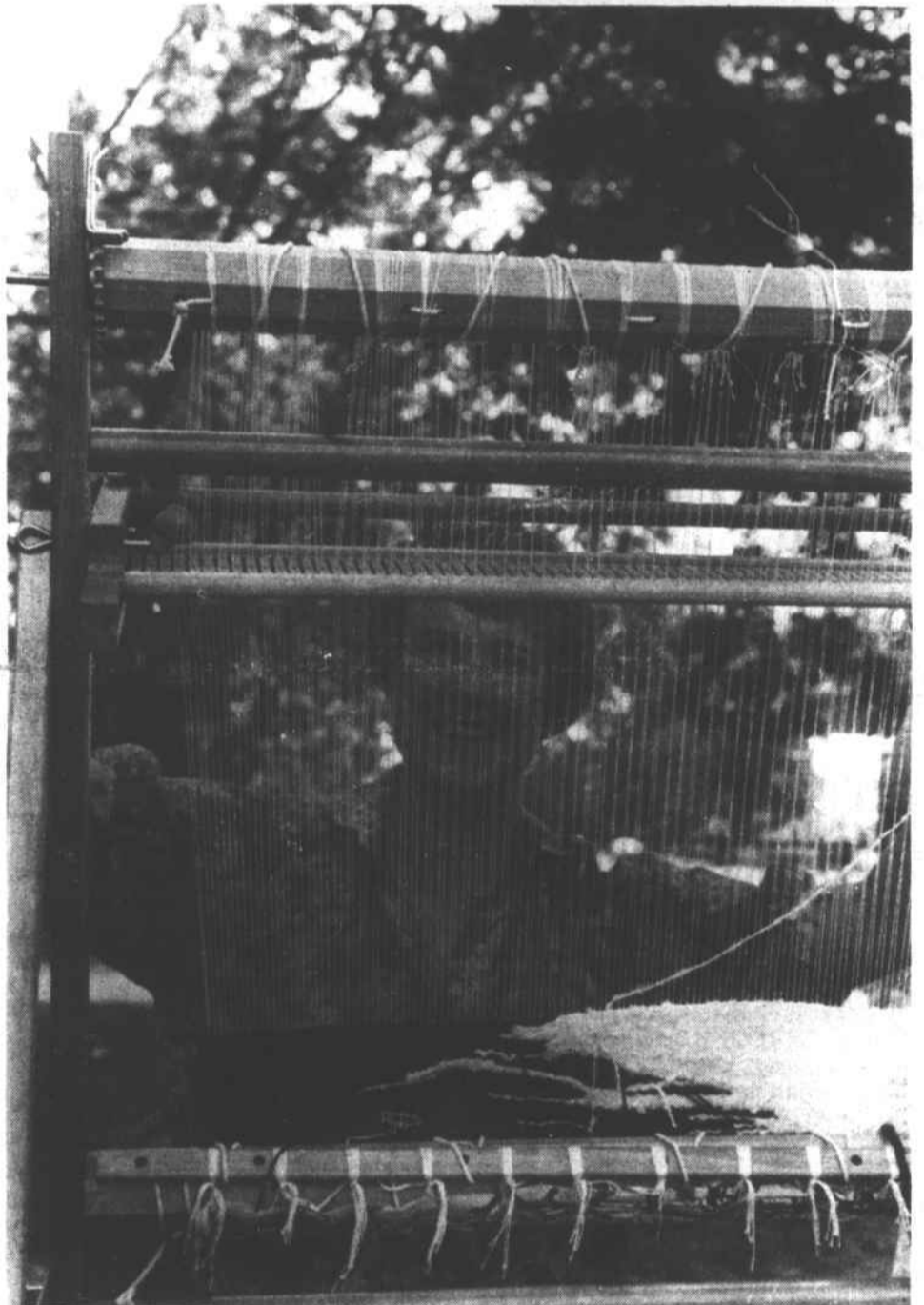
A copy of the budget is available for public inspection at the town office, located in the Municipal Building on Grubb Street in Hertford.

A public hearing on the proposed budget will be held on June 9, 7 p.m., at the Municipal Building.



Artisans at work

The Spring Fling's Sunday activities were cut short as an afternoon thunder shower had the artists packing and the spectators running for cover. But sunny skies earlier in the day were enough to encourage the participation from many local artists and attendance from community members. Among those demonstrating their crafts were potter, Sonny Fletcher, (top) and weaver, Rita Collie. The Perquimans County Rescue Squad was there to take blood pressure and run a concession stand, and members of the Memory Lane Senior Citizen Club sold baked goods. The Perquimans County High School Art Club, under the direction of John Lavezzo, displayed their work. The event, originally slated for last Sunday, lost many of its performing artists due to the rescheduling. (Photos by NOEL TODD-McLAUGHLIN)



Resort water flowing smoothly

Holiday Island's water problems were squared away as of Wednesday of last week, according to general manager William Jeffress.

"We were pumping out own water as of Wednesday at 8:30 (p.m.). The weekend went

real well," Jeffress said.

A two man national guard crew arrived in Hertford Early last week, and hauled 50,000 gallons of water to the resort community on Tuesday and Wednesday.

Last weekend, Perquimans County volunteer firemen had hauled some 40,000 gallons to the resort, which was experiencing pump trouble.

But now Jeffress said the water system at Holiday

Island is working better than ever.

He said that he has spoken with two firms on the particulars of drilling a new well for the community, but no decision has been reached on whether or not to do so.

Womens' conference

A significant day for Perquimans County women

Miriam J. Dorsey, executive director of the North Carolina Council on the Status of Women, called Saturday a

"significant day for the women of Perquimans County."

It was the Albemarle area's first Governor's Conference on Leadership Development for Women, held at the Albemarle Regional Planning and Development Commission Building in Hertford where some 100 women assembled to attend the day-long event which included opening remarks from Ms. Dorsey, and six workshops led by professionals gathered from across the state.

Ms. Dorsey described the evolution of the leadership conference, which is sponsored in part by the N.C. Council on the Status of Women, as stemming from a

need to improve the status of women in North Carolina.

"Women in North Carolina make 61 cents to every \$1 earned by men," said Ms. Dorsey, "and women with a college degree earn the equivalency of a what a man with an eighth grade education receives."

She added that there were probably more married women working in North Carolina than in any other state in the nation. "This is probably due to the state's low wages — it takes two incomes to make ends meet," said Ms. Dorsey.

The council, according to Ms. Dorsey, is actively working to improve both employment opportunities and

wages for women in North Carolina. Among their efforts is the establishment of several centers across the state designed to train women in construction jobs.

"The \$5-\$7 an hour earned as a construction worker goes a lot further than the minimum wage earned by a waitress," said Ms. Dorsey, and added that such wage opportunities were especially necessary for women who were supporting a family alone.

The role of family supporter is often one that a woman is thrust into, through death of spouse or divorce. Ms. Dorsey said the council has developed

four centers across the state to help "displaced housewives" face the problems of working and managing a home and family alone.

The progress of women in N.C. rests on improving their economic status, according to Ms. Dorsey. "Until we progress economically, we're not going to progress at all."

She also cited the need for more female representation in government, both locally and on the state level.

"We are 51 percent of the population, but make up only 7 percent of elected positions," said Ms. Dorsey, adding that it was important to involve

women in government because "women approach issues from a different perspective."

Ms. Dorsey concluded by saying that improving the position of women would benefit all of society. "By improving the status of women, we'll improve the family and the entire community."

Following Ms. Dorsey's opening speech and remarks from Hertford Mayor Bill Cox and county commissioner chairman Joe Nowell, the group dispersed for morning workshops.

Morning sessions included How to Become Involved in

the Political Process, led by State Senator Rachel Gray, of High Point; How North Carolina Law Affects Women, directed by Meyressa Schoonmaker, professor of law, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem; and The Media and Public Opinion, directed by Dr. Tom Bowers, associate dean of the School of Journalism, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Afternoon workshops, which followed a buffet luncheon, were Growing Up Female, directed by Winnie Wood, recent candidate for the North Carolina Senate and College of the Albemarle instructor; Coping with Stress, led by Lueta Sellers, Perquimans

Union School counselor; and the Changing Structure of the Family, directed by Dr. E. Marie Johnson, professor of psychology at Elizabeth City State University.

The Perquimans County conference, one of several held across the state, was sponsored by the North Carolina Council on the Status of Women and the North Carolina Council of Women's Organizations in cooperation with the governor's office.

It was locally planned under the direction of Mrs. M.B. Taylor and Ellen Bowen, co-chairpersons, and the Hertford Business and Professional Women's Club.