

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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Park site is in use

Long-awaited construction of a portion of Hertford's waterfront park has been completed after a three year tangle in red tape.

Site B, which consists of boat ramps and docking facilities, was completed last week. And although still under the contractors, area residents have already begun to enjoy the facility.

The old wooden boat ramp has given way to two, double concrete ramps with a total accommodation of four trailers. Three wooden piers made of treated timber, each measuring four feet, eight inches wide, have been erected in place of the former dock.

Work yet to be completed at the site is the resurfacing of the parking area, located directly behind the Municipal Building. Designed to accommodate 12 vehicles and trailers, the lot will be graded with four inches of compacted gravel.

Total cost of Site B, according to Hertford Mayor and City Manager Bill Cox, is \$45,297.80.

The total estimated budget for the completion of the entire waterfront park is \$208,000, which also includes construction within an area designated as 'Site A,' — some 4.7 acres located behind the recreation department's

building on Grubb Street.

And because construction costs have greatly increased since the park was conceived in February of 1977, many of the original plans have been discarded in order to fall within the projected budget.

The revised waterfront park plans include the elimination of bulk heading, a boat basin, and a multi-purpose court from Site A. It is anticipated that this portion of the park will include picnic tables and shelters, as well as public restroom facilities and a walkway.

Site B was scaled down to provide docking capacity equal to the previously existing facilities.

But work on Site A still lags because, according to Cox, there has been a reluctance on the part of contractors to bid on the work.

In an effort to discern just why no bids have been submitted, Cox met with several contractors last week.

"I talked to three contractors as to why we haven't received bids," said Cox, "and all three agreed that there were too many small segments of the contract."

Six areas of work are presently incorporated within one contract: site grading and preparation; picnic shelters;

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Loading up

Tommy Manning loads up his boat on Hertford's new boat ramp after a day on the Perquimans River with Ann Winslow and Patsie Cahoon.

ARPDC board member backs reorganization

A proposal by a member of the Albemarle Regional Planning and Development Commission executive board Thursday night advocated a restructuring of that organization's board so that only elected officials of the member governments would be eligible to serve.

R.S. Monds, Jr. of Hertford advocated the reorganization. Monds, a former chairman of the board, announced his resignation from the board at the same time.

"Tonight is my last night," said Monds. "I'm not an elected official."

Monds said the organization is currently "down in the mire," and needs to extract itself. He said he could not understand why public criticism of the organization has surfaced recently in area newspapers.

"When I was chairman you always heard so and so about such and such, but nobody came to the chairman or the director with it. There was no chance to refute it," Monds said.

Because of what they called lack of services and poor leadership, Camden County has pulled out of ARPDC, and Pasquotank has given notice that it will pull out in two years.

But Camden was in attendance Thursday night, and its representatives promised to reconsider their decision within 30 days.

Monds encouraged every member government to stay in the organization, and again stated that the size of the executive board should be reduced from its current membership of some 60 persons.

"Every county should keep

its membership," said Monds. "It's a potential good organization, but it'll never fly with the number of people on this board now."

One member, however, said that if the meetings would be conducted according to parliamentary procedure, there would be no problem in dispensing with the business of ARPDC.

"We should follow Robert's Rules of Order throughout the entire meeting. Parliamentary procedure has got to be imposed by the chairman," he said.

But when Monds finished his comments he received a round of applause from board members, and Macon Johnson, of the currently disaffected Camden County Board of Commissioners, jumped up to give Monds his full support.

"I concur wholeheartedly with him," said Johnson. "Unless elected officials take the responsibility...the point is, what does a (non-elected board member) have to lose if he makes the wrong decision?"

In other business, board chairman Donald Byran announced that ARPDC executive director Robert Whitley had submitted a letter of resignation, and would be accepting employment in Raleigh as of July 1 with the Division of Community Employment.

A regional aging plan for 1980-81 was approved, but later reconsidered so that the board could award the contract for providing meals for the elderly to Brown's Catering of Elizabeth City rather than to Washington County.

Brown's had bid \$2.08 per meal, to \$2.07 from the

Washington County Department of Social Services, but it was decided that since Washington County was utilizing public facilities to prepare the meals, this might be unfair competition with free enterprise.

The plan also includes \$35,000 for an addition to the Perquimans County Senior Center, but is contingent on approval by the state.

In another matter, board approved an application for a grant to study the impact of oil spills on the Albemarle region for some \$38,000, as well as a grant application that would train five per cent of the population of the Albemarle Region, or 3,870 people, in CPR techniques.

A summer job program for youths was approved that will provide more than 400 eight week jobs for disadvantaged youths in the area at a cost of some \$398,000.

There was, however, some dissent over whether the Employment Security Commission or the Opportunity Improvement Council would administer the program.

Both bid the same amount, but ESC was awarded the contract based on its projection that it would serve some 100 more young people.

Board members advocating that OIC receive the contract argued that it had a better record in serving minorities.

Finally, a decision on adoption of the 1980-81 ARPDC budget was postponed for 60 days. The budget had previously been adopted at a May 15 meeting, but all action taken at that meeting was later declared null and void because no quorum was present.

Editorial page set

We are pleased to announce that beginning next week, the PERQUIMANS WEEKLY will initiate a full editorial page in the interest of better serving our readers.

We will be adding several new features, including a column by local historian Ray Winslow, a syndicated feature focusing on the Southern lifestyle, and a national cartoon that takes a humorous look at life in general.

We will continue to feature the work of our local cartoonist, Chris Kornegay, as well as both the "Looking back," and "My turn" columns.

Winslow was selected as a PERQUIMANS WEEKLY columnist because of his unprecedented expertise on the origins of our area.

We are sure that he will be able to provide insightful, interesting commentary for our readers.

"Facing South" is a feature column that bills itself as, "Voices of tradition in a changing region."

Contributions which attempt to illuminate the Southern personality are selected from submissions by writers spread across the South.

Facing South columns are in

almost every instance well written, and provide a unique insight into life on the down side of the Mason-Dixon.

In further efforts to provide a better newspaper, we will be printing the front and editorial pages of next week's PERQUIMANS WEEKLY according to a six column format.

The idea is to provide a newspaper that is better organized and easier to read. Currently, the entire paper is printed in eight columns, and our eventual goal is to shift to six columns throughout.

Mr. hog worth a little more

Pork prices have risen 10 cents in the past two weeks, leaving area buyers cautiously optimistic that a recovery is imminent for the chronically depressed hog market.

Buyers at Miller and Whedbee Livestock Companies agree that a national overabundance of hogs initially caused prices to go down, and if farmers continue to hold back on production, the price will continue to rise.

"If farmers keep holding back (on production) it will come back up," said Thurman Whedbee, of Whedbee Livestock.

"I think we've seen the worst of it," said Archie Miller of Miller Livestock.

At present, hog prices are in the vicinity of 40-cents per pound. Miller said that at that price, farmers are probably breaking even on production costs. Whedbee, however, said that 41 to 42 cents per pound is needed for the farmers to break even.

But, of course, the pork producers are in business to make money, and a break

even proposition is not particularly lucrative.

"They say they could live with 45 to 50 cents a pound," said Miller. "And that's not getting rich, that's getting by."

Prices have not been above 40 cents since December, Miller said, and for the past several months, farmers have simply had to accept their losses.

"I've got customers who for the past six months have been losing \$8,000 to \$10,000 a month raising hogs," said Whedbee. He said that even if prices continue to rise, farmers will not see a profit on their hog operations during this year.

Part of the problem is that a hog must be sold when it is between 200 and 230 lbs. or the farmer suffers a price penalty, Miller said. A producer cannot wait for an extensive period of time before selling his hogs.

Prices are set by the large western markets, where corn is more abundant, and thus, cheaper. Western farmers have not yet begun to feel the pinch of low hog prices

because their production costs are lower.

Farmers in Perquimans County, though, have been squeezed severely, some to the extent of going out of production, according to Miller.

Government predictions are that prices will continue to rise for a period, then dip, then begin to rise again, but Miller doesn't put much stock in them.

"The analysis is not very good," said Miller. "Most

Weather word maybe

As of press time on Tuesday, farmers were looking at a slight chance of rain, but a serious dry spell still threatened the Perquimans County corn crop.

There was a 10 to 20 percent chance of rain on Tuesday night and Wednesday, but partly cloudy, hot weather is expected through the weekend, according to the flight service in Elizabeth City.

Perquimans County ex-

farmers don't like the government agriculture report.

The best way for a farmer to succeed in the volatile hog market is to get the size herd he can afford to maintain and keep it.

"Get in and stay in," said Miller. "You've got to be in when the hogs are cheap to be in when the hogs are high," he said.

Both men stressed that the hog market is extremely unpredictable, and an-

icipated a dip of some kind in the near future, though not as drastic as the most recent ones.

"There are hogs out there to be moved," said Whedbee, "and when they move them the price is going to come down."

But the pork picture is undisputably brighter than it has been. "It should make these hog farmers feel a whole lot better about (the market)," said Miller of the recent spurt in prices.

tension chairman Bill Jester said some 5 percent of the corn in the county is beyond being salvageable.

Some of the corn that was planted early, however, will go on and make a good crop, he said.

Most of the corn in the county hangs in the balance. A good rain in the next few days and the damage would not be that critical, Jester said. But each day becomes more crucial.

"The only thing we can do now is hope mother nature will cooperate," Jester said.

In an extreme drought, he said, the tassel of the corn plant comes out before the silk emerges. Pollin is dropped prematurely and very little pollination occurs. Production suffers.

The dry weather is also creating more nematode problems than usual in county soybean crops, Jester said.

Child abuse is a growing problem across the state

Reports of child abuse and neglect have rapidly increased throughout the state and nation over the past several years.

During the first 11 months of fiscal year 1979-80, 23,583 suspected cases of child abuse or neglect were reported to county social services departments throughout North Carolina. Of these, 9,915 were substantiated.

A total of 20,204 suspected cases were reported in fiscal year 1978-79; 8,623 of those were substantiated. The previous year, 18,626 cases were reported with 7,438 substantiated.

Perquimans County alone received a total of 8 reports, four of which were substantiated.

According to Gloria Mit-

chell, social worker within family and children's services at the Perquimans County Department of Social Services, the increase in child abuse and neglect is the result of both increased public awareness and present times.

"As the public becomes more aware of child abuse, reports increase," said Mrs. Mitchell, "but it is also a product of these stressful times, the state of the economy and so forth."

Page Shelton, supervisor of Protective Services for Children Unit, the Department of Human Resources in Raleigh, is in agreement. "We have no way of telling whether this is a result of better public awareness of the state's child abuse and neglect reporting law and more people are

reporting cases as required, or that there is an actual increase in child abuse and neglect by parents and caretakers across the state. I think it might be a combination of the two," he said, adding that the recent increases in reports of severe physical abuse could be a result of the stress caused by current economic conditions.

While incidents of child abuse may be on the rise, there are now more social services available to help families overcome the problem.

In addition, the nature of social services has changed, making such services more effective and attractive to families needing help, according to Mrs. Mitchell.

"The whole philosophy of

social services has changed — it used to be punitive in nature. Now it is based on helping families," said Mrs. Mitchell.

And the "helping" philosophy is what Mrs. Mitchell said she has totally adopted in her approach toward helping children and families involved in child abuse or neglect.

"Contrary to what a lot of people think, we do not go in and snatch kids from parents," said Mrs. Mitchell. "We consider that a last resort."

Upon receiving report of an abused or neglected child, Mrs. Mitchell said her first step is to contact the family.

"We feel that it is our responsibility to contact the parents first, before anyone

else, and tell them exactly what information we have gained," said Mrs. Mitchell.

She said at this point she would stress to the parents that the information gained was only a report, and express her concern for the family as a total unit.

The parents respond in various ways to reports of their supposed child neglect or abuse, according to Mrs. Mitchell. Sometimes parents are incredulous, but often they are hurt and angry. Whatever their response, Mrs. Mitchell feels it is important to give them a chance to respond.

Although Mrs. Mitchell said that in many cases, the parent will admit that the report is true, they often will not think that their action or attitude toward a child was wrong.

"Their values may be different, there may be a conflict of ideas regarding proper punishment. A lot of neglect is just ignorance on the parents' part," said Mrs. Mitchell.

The law defines an abused child as less than 18 years of age whose parent or other person responsible for his or her care:

- inflicts or allows to be inflicted upon the child, physical injury by other than accidental means, which causes or creates a substantial risk of death, disfigurement, or impairment of physical health;
- commits or allows the commission of any sexual act upon a child in violation of the law;
- creates or allows to be created a serious emotional

damage to the child and refuses to permit, provide for, or participate in treatment; •encourages, directs, or approves of delinquent acts involving moral turpitude committed by the child.

A "neglected child," as defined by law, is a person less than 18 years old who does not receive proper care, supervision, or discipline from his parent or guardian; or who has been abandoned; or who is not provided necessary medical care; or who lives in an environment injurious to his welfare, or who has been placed for care or adoption in violation of law.

The majority of parents will become receptive to social services once they become aware that their actions were wrong, said Mrs. Mitchell

And if they are not receptive? "Then we use the courts, which may involve removal," responded Mrs. Mitchell.

"A lot of the parents' response has to do with our approach — whether we appear as a person with a helping attitude, or with a punitive attitude," said Mrs. Mitchell.

If a family is receptive to help, social services will then try to determine the possible causes of child abuse or neglect, in an effort to eliminate the problem.

"We might refer them to counseling, help them to obtain food stamps, day care, health support — anything to eliminate the stress factors which may be causing the child abuse or neglect," said

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