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THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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Progress seen in Perquimans voting change

HERTFORD — County commissioners are one step closer to developing a system that will change the way officials are elected in Perquimans County.

The house counting process in Perquimans County to gather information to be used to formulate a new proposed voting system has been completed, county commissioners were told last week.

Charles Skinner Jr. said the work of putting houses on a map with a designation to show whether a black or white family resides there has been completed and the information has been forwarded to the Rural Development Institute in Greenville and attorney Michael Crowell.

Crowell, a private attorney who has represented or advised more than 25 counties involved in voting rights issues, has been retained by Perquimans County commissioners.

Questions were raised about the county's at-large voting system with residency requirements for candidates by the local chapter of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. NAACP attorney Ronald Penny of Elizabeth City said the present voting system does not allow for single-shot or block voting and has the effect of preventing minorities from being elected.

The NAACP threatened a lawsuit against the county after commissioners appointed Durward Reed to a vacant seat on the board of commissioners last January. NAACP representatives had requested that a minority be appointed to the vacant seat.

Penny told commissioners that voting statistics in Perquimans County and in many other counties show that white residents vote for white candidates. With blacks comprising approximately 38 percent of the county population, a black candidate is unable to win an election under the present at-large voting system, Penny said, adding that a black has not been elected for a Perquimans County office in this century.

Crowell has said that in the eastern portion of North Carolina, most counties are or have been involved with changes in at-large voting systems, and most of the time this is a result of a lawsuit or threat of a lawsuit. Though Crowell said only a handful of such suits have gone through litigation, no government has successfully defended an at-large election system such as exists in Perquimans County.

In Northeastern North Carolina, at-large election systems have been changed in Elizabeth City and Pasquotank County, and Chowan County has proposed a new district voting system and is waiting for approval from the U.S. Justice Department.

Penny told commissioners last May that alternatives to the present system include a district voting system in which only residents in a district vote for a candidate from that district, a total at-large system in which there is no residency requirements for candidates, or some combination of those two systems.

A district voting system would allow blacks to elect a candidate from a black majority district. The U.S. Justice Department, which must approve any change in the voting system, requires that at least one district have a black majority population of at least 60 percent. Also, the Justice Department requires that populations within all voting districts be close to equal.

A total at-large system would allow all black voters to line up behind one candidate while the white vote is split among the other candidates, thus allowing a minority to be elected. This does not happen in an at-large system with residency requirements for candidates because voters cast ballots for each vacant seat on the board instead of voting for just one candidate.

Commissioners conducted the house counting process because existing township boundaries could not be used under a district voting system because none of the townships has a black majority population.

Thanksgiving deadlines

Due to Thanksgiving Holidays, The Perquimans Weekly will have an early deadline for advertising and news copy.

Advertising deadline will be Thursday at 5 p.m. and news copy deadline will be Friday at 3 p.m.



Perquimans County Superintendent of Schools Dr. Mary Jo White addressed an assembly of students and staff Monday at Perquimans Middle School in observance of American Education Week.

National Education Week opens in ceremony at Middle School

To kick off National Education Week (Nov. 13-17), Dr. Mary Jo Martin, Superintendent of Perquimans County Schools, presented a program to students at Perquimans Middle School on Monday.

Martin spoke on the theme

"America's Schools...Invest in Your Future." She told students, "education in the vehicle you need to get you where you want to go." Reminding students to keep a good attitude, wear a smile, question, dream and plan for your future.

Martin was welcomed by Adrian Frierson, Vice-President

of the PMS Student Council and introduced by Deana White, President of the Student Council. Prior to her talk, Mr. Charles Skinner, a representative of Woodmen of the World, presented the student body with two flags, one of the United States and the second, a North Carolina flag.

Hertford gets planning grant for waterfront

A long-range plan for development along the Hertford waterfront will be developed thanks to state grant funds that have been awarded to the town.

Mayor Bill Cox announced at this week's town council meeting that the town has been awarded grant funding from the Coastal Area Management Agency for waterfront planning.

Cox said the state will provide \$6,700 to be matched by \$1,650 from the town and \$1,650 from in-kind services, such as work by town employees on the planning project.

Cox said a public hearing will be held before the planning process is completed.

Sewer plant

Work is almost completed on the expansion of the town's wastewater treatment plant. Cox said the final inspection of the plant by state officials is set for Tuesday, Nov. 22.

The cost of the project was \$582,000, and the local share of the funding came from a \$200,000 general obligation bond approved by voters last fall and \$97,000 in funds from retained earnings in the sewer system fund. The remaining funds are provided by a grant from the Environmental Protection Agency.

Police department

Council members discussed two matters concerning police activities; the need to have two police officers on duty on Friday and Saturday nights, and the need to have a provision established that would require that officers not be held liable if damage is done to a car door that is being unlocked by police at

the request of the car owner.

Council members asked that Police Chief Marshall Merritt schedule two officers to work on Friday and Saturday nights instead of having two officers on duty during other nights of the week. Merritt agreed to adjust the schedules to accommodate the request.

Also, Merritt reported that officers were called on 60 times to unlock car doors during October. Council members asked the town attorney to bring a proposed ordinance before the board that would state that the officer could not be held liable if a car is damaged while an officer is unlocking it for the owner.

Electricity

After Councilman Jesse Harris told commissioners that Elizabeth City and Edenton were saving up to \$120,000 a month by using new peak generation systems, council members agreed that the town should investigate the possibility of reaching an agreement to allow Hertford to also benefit from the peak generation systems.

Cox said he is investigating the possibility. "I don't think we can afford a generator, but maybe we could tie into their systems," Harris said.

Condemnation

Council members instructed attorney Walter Edwards to proceed with the condemnation of the "Buck" house in Market Street.

Note of thanks

Council members passed a resolution in appreciation for the years of service turned in by Gina Jepson, managing editor of the Perquimans Weekly newspaper who recently resigned.

Pirates look toward game with Camden

Top Jamesville 39-0 in playoff

Perquimans County will try to keep its playoff momentum flowing Friday night when the 7-4 Pirates face Camden County in the second round of the 1-A state football playoffs.

After dominating the Jamesville Bullets 39-0 last Friday, head coach Spencer White believes his team can play with the best of them.

"It all comes down to our kids playing up to their capabilities," White said. "I've felt all along we can play with the teams like Bath if we play up to our potential."

White won't have to worry about Bath, following their 30-33 upset loss to the Bruins. Camden, playing on the road against the top-ranked 1-A team in the state, took control of the game early and never had to look back.

While Camden remains formidable, White also has a few aces up his sleeve, specifically a strong rushing game and a tough defensive team.

Against Jamesville, the Pirate rushers had little difficulty grinding out the tough yards. Tyvoice Coston (15 carries for 115 yards and two touchdowns) and Michael Jordan (16 carries for 123 yards) led an

assault that netted 355 total yards rushing.

The Pirate defense, meanwhile, allowed the Bullets only 66 total yards offense, recovering two fumbles and intercepting one pass.

Camden got the ball rolling on its initial series, driving some 63 yards for their first score, the only one they would really need for the game. Tyvoice Coston rambled 45 yards for the first touchdown. Perquimans missed a two-point conversion and the Pirates led, 6-0.

On its next possession, Perquimans bullied its way for a second score as Darnell Mallory punched in from the 5-yard line. Perquimans again missed a two-point conversion and the score was 12-0.

Tyvoice Coston truly put the game away in the second quarter with his second score. Starting out on a left sweep, Coston literally carried four defenders into the end zone, showing exactly how overmatched the smaller Bullets were. Jevone Coston scored on a two-point conversion and the score was 20-0.

In the second half, Perquimans picked up where it had left off. A 70-yard, 12-play drive ended when



Jevone Coston picks up yardage against Jamesville during last week's first round playoff game.

quarterback Derrick Rogers threw an 11-yard touchdown pass to Jojo Parker. The two-point conversion

attempt failed and the score stood at 26-0. Jevone Coston and Scottie Mitch-

ell culminated the game with touchdown runs of 10 and six yards, respectively.

Perquimans rescue squad hones skills in drill

The first call went out at 7:30 p.m. that a two-car accident had occurred on Ballhack Road in Perquimans County.

Within four minutes, the first ambulance arrived at the scene discovering six victims.

Although the situation was treated seriously, luckily, it wasn't a life or death situation as the Perquimans County Rescue Squad staged their first major disaster drill, November 7th.

Perquimans County Rescue Squad member Kay Boyce, who coordinated the drill, wrote a scenario that depicted four teenagers in vehicle number one returning home from a party where alcohol was involved. They were traveling at a high rate of speed when the driver loses control, crossing the center line hitting a second car head-on.

The first vehicle continues on overturning in a field. Vehicle num-

ber two is off the highway on the shoulder, and burning. When the rescue squad arrives, one victim (driver) in the vehicle one is DOA. The other three victims have serious injuries, and all are pinned in the vehicle.

In the second vehicle, one victim has 2nd and 3rd degree burns to 50 percent of the body while the other victim, an infant, is DOA, after being thrown from the vehicle.

Five vehicles responded to the scene including two ambulances, two fire engines, and a heavy rescue crash truck. Along with the rescue vehicles, a highway patrolman and a Perquimans County Deputy Sheriff, responded to maintain crowd control, which had also been incorporated into the drill by Mrs. Boyce.

When the situation was assessed, it was all business for the rescue and fire personnel as their performance was being evaluated by an out-of-town EMT team.

The 10 EMT personnel that responded, immediately began life



Rescue workers on the job.

saving procedures for victims. When the fire department arrived, they began immediate steps to extinguish the burning vehicle along with attempting to free the trapped victims in vehicle one.

With one hour of arriving at the scene, all victims, including the

DOA infant, were transported to Chowan Hospital, with the first ambulance arriving at 8:26 p.m.

Mrs. Boyce, who was at the scene noted, "This is our first major disaster drill, but we hope to do it on a routine basis. We can see there is a need. We have a lot of new people," Mrs. Boyce said.

Hertford Horizons schedule meeting; on issues Nov. 30

The HERTFORD HORIZONS Steering Committee invites the public to attend a meeting regarding their three major areas of activity: Downtown Business and Commerce, Industrial Development and Perquimans River Quality.

The meeting will be held Nov. 30 (this meeting was previously scheduled for Oct. 19) at 7:30 p.m. at the Perquimans County Courthouse. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss progress in the three areas listed above. There will be a display of drawings of the Downtown Revitalization proposal which is a part of the Downtown Business and Commerce Committee.