

The Perquimans Weekly

35¢

Vol. 66, No. 50 The only newspaper for and about Perquimans County people Hertford, North Carolina 27944

PCEDC changes by-laws

Board split on move to allow Nixon to remain on commission

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

The Perquimans County Commissioners voted 4-2 Monday to change the by-laws of the Perquimans County Economic Development Commission to allow Mack Nixon to remain on that board. PCEDC chair Chris Lane asked the county commissioners on behalf of the PCEDC membership to amend the PCEDC by-laws. Lane said Nixon has spent many hours working on the development of the commerce center and has been a valuable member of the PCEDC. Lane added that the PCEDC members feel the commerce center development is at a critical stage, and that Nixon's continued membership would be beneficial to the county.

Lane said the by-laws call for two county commissioners and one citizen at large in the membership mix. PCEDC requested that the by-laws be amended to allow one county commissioner and two citizens at large to sit on the board, and that Nixon be appointed to fill the additional at-large slot. She said in addition to allowing Nixon to remain on the commission, the change would also create more community involvement in the PCEDC.

Both Nixon and commissioner Charles Ward were on the PCEDC board as county commissioner representatives. But Nixon lost his commissioner's seat in the November general election to Ben Hobbs. Without a by-law change, Nixon was no longer eligible to sit on the PCEDC unless the citizen at large representative resigned.

Commissioners Bert Hayes and Ben Hobbs objected to the amendment. Hayes said PCEDC held an illegal closed meeting to discuss the issue. But County Manager Paul Gregory said the issue fell under personnel, and could therefore be discussed in closed session.

Hayes still held that it was an illegal meeting because the discussion was to change the by-laws and therefore should have been held in open session. He cited passages of the state's open meetings statutes to support his argument. He added that Nixon's value to the PCEDC was no greater than anyone else's.

Hayes said he wanted to take politicians off the PCEDC at the beginning of his (Hayes') term, but the commissioners wouldn't approve his suggestion.

He called the move "collusion," adding, "It just stinks. We have all the resources we need."

Hobbs said while he agreed that Nixon was a valuable PCEDC member, he was skeptical of changing the by-laws because of dissatisfaction over the election outcome.

On a motion made by Archie Miller and seconded by Shirley Yates, the amendment and appointment were approved 4-2 with Hayes and Hobbs casting dissenting votes.

Bethel residents fight mobile home park

Commissioners may not be able to stop development

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Citing land devaluation and environmental concerns, over a dozen residents in the Bethel community asked Perquimans County Commissioners to halt development of a mobile home park at the intersection of U.S. 17 South and N.C. 37 known locally as the 5-mile Y.

Willis Proctor was the first to speak against the 32-lot mobile home park being developed by Phillip Harrington. Proctor said a mobile home park was not desirable in the community. He said the development would devalue surrounding properties.

Proctor said the condition of the property between Food Lion and other mobile home parks could show commissioners what can happen if they allow the development to proceed.

He also asked the commissioners if they would have considered allowing a mobile home park to be put on the 9.22 acres they approved for a purchase option in the commerce center earlier in the meeting.

"I'm not real happy about it," Dan King told the commissioners about his reaction to the development.

King said the park would make property in the area hard to sell. He also stated that he had concerns about the environmental impact of the development. King said he thinks there will be too many

septic tanks, which may cause leeching and lead to damage to the environment. He added that water may back up in the area due to a ditch being filled in.

If the county does approve the park, King asked that commissioners make sure that all regulations are followed to the letter and that no variances be allowed.

"I'm entirely against the park," he said in closing his remarks.

Community resident Jeff Proctor also cited concerns about the number of septic tanks in the development. He said land owners often have problems obtaining septic tank approval from the health department for a single-family dwelling. He said he did not understand how the development could be approved for 32

lots, each with separate septic tanks.

Brant Wise spoke on behalf of the developer. He said the Army Corp of Engineers and other agencies had determined that there are not wetlands on the site. He said that the ditch work was done by NCDOT, not the developer.

Wise added that Harrington has followed all requirements of the mobile home park ordinance created by the county in 1987, which he said are more stringent than subdivision regulations.

The district health department approved the development after review, setting the one-acre lot sizes required for septic tank permits, he said. Wise also said that the developer has secured all permits required and followed all ordinances for approval of the

development. Wise added that without zoning, there is nothing to stop "this type of development."

According to County Manager Paul Gregory, Harrington has worked with the county planning board for the past several months on the project. He said the planning board has followed all regulations in the mobile home park ordinance in its deliberations. Per regulation, Harrington will be required to put in county water, septic tanks, paved streets, street lights, parking pads and fire hydrants. In addition a 10-foot buffer zone of green planting will be required around the development. The requirements are much stricter than subdivision regulations, according to county officials.

Please see PARK, page 12

HOLIDAY PARADE



Piney Woods Friends Meeting earned first place in the church/civic category in Saturday's Christmas parade with their float "Christmas in the Pines."



The PCHS Marching Pirates got parade-watchers in the holiday spirit with rousing arrangements of Christmas melodies.

Parade ushers in holiday season

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Hundreds of little eyes were all aglow Saturday, as Santa himself rode through the streets of Hertford during the annual Perquimans County Christmas parade.

Themed "A Carolina Christmas," the holiday affair stretched out for a mile through the streets.

"We were real pleased with the parade," said Chamber Executive Director Sandra Smith. "I think we had wonderful participation this year. One of our volunteers had said the parade was over a mile-long this year. We feel everyone worked together to help make this one of our best parades ever. We hope next

year will be even better."

The Chamber sponsored the parade. Smith said a legion of volunteers worked throughout the afternoon.

First place float in the church/civics category went to Piney Woods Friends Meeting. Bagley Swamp Wesleyan took second place.

In the school division, Beacon Academy claimed first place. Albemarle School was named second.

Ford Motor Company was first place business float.

Marching unit trophies went to the Christmas Angels and Northeastern High School Band. The Perquimans County High School band does not compete in the parade, but rather performs as a holiday



Beacon Academy claimed first place in the school category in the Christmas parade. Parents, students and staff have created winners for the past several years.

gift of appreciation to the community for their support

throughout the year. Grand marshalls for this

year's parade were Rep. and Mrs. Bill Owens.

First purchase option approved for commerce park

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

The Perquimans County Commissioners approved the first purchase option for land at the Perquimans Commerce Centre Monday.

County Economic Development Director Robert Baker presented the commissioners with an option to purchase 9.22 acres of land on the river side of the development at a cost of \$110,000 to Shore-

Flyte. The tract includes about 200 feet of waterfront property.

Shore-Flyte is an established marine repair industry. Baker said the owner anticipates an initial investment of \$2 million. About 25 jobs will be available at start-up, with a possibility of growing to a workforce of around 50.

"The project meets every goal that we've been interested in," Baker said. He said the business will provide job creation and an expanded tax

base. In addition, it should be a catalyst for center development.

He said there are specific requirements written into the contract that the prospective owner must meet or the county can exercise its mandatory buy-back clause and recoup the property.

Baker said he has been working with the client for 20 months.

In other business, the commissioners:

- approved a request from the school board to use state capital funds of \$226,715 for roof work at Perquimans High School;

- approved the \$60,400 low bid submitted by Court One in Raleigh to build the new tennis courts;

- voted to expand the planning board to add a minority and a female;

- approved paying Rescue Squad volunteers by the hour to answer emergency calls;

- created four permanent part-time EMS positions;

- placed a moratorium on the expansion and construction of adult entertainment businesses for one year;

- formed a nominating committee composed of Charles Ward, Bert Hayes and Evelyn Stubbins to make nominations for board appointments;

- accepted a bid of \$376.51 for a county-owned 1990 Ford Ranger with no motor.