

The Perquimans Weekly

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Hertford, North Carolina 27944

Bridge hour cuts could hurt tourism

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Two Hertford residents hope they're not swimming upstream in their efforts to stop the U.S. Coast Guard from effectively shutting off the bay by curtailing drawbridge operation across the Perquimans River.

Hertford boat owner and town councilman Carlton Davenport and Daneker Marine Services owner Dan Daneker have written a letter to the U.S. Coast Guard stating their objections to the proposed drawbridge schedule which cuts the hours of operation. The request was endorsed by two other boat owners, as well as the Chamber of Commerce and the Perquimans County Restoration Association.

Hertford's designation as a heritage tourism pilot community may impact use of the drawbridge, Davenport and Daneker stated. They stated that plans being developed at present will increase bridge utilization in months that may not bring much marine traffic at present.

"Several of the planned events, developments and attractions involve utilization of the bridge and waterfront upstream of the bridge to attract yachts to visit the town," the letter states. "Upstream of the bridge is the only public waterfront access in the town. Such limited bridge openings during the fall, winter and spring months will have a negative impact on the planned tourism development and expansion."

The letter adds that the proposed decrease in bridge operation hours comes at a time when larger boats are becoming more prevalent.

In addition, the request states that there are presently seven boats in Hertford that require the bridge to open for passage throughout the year.

Daneker's business depends on access to the N.C. Wildlife Department boat launching ramps upstream of the bridge. Needs increase during the winter, the letter states.

The possibility of the decreased operation hours leading to the ultimate dismantling of the historic bridge was also covered in the letter.

"We are also concerned that once such a limited bridge opening schedule is enforced the next step by NCDOT would be to close the bridge permanently, remove the historic steel truss and make the bridge a fixed span," the letter states. "This was done to the railroad bridge one mile upstream thus closing 16 miles of navigable waterfront property in this reach of the Perquimans River."

In addition to expanding the proposed bridge operation schedule, Davenport and Daneker said they will request that NCDOT install a marine VHF radio in the bridge tender's office for monitoring channels 13 and 16.

Both the chamber and PCRA cited the importance of the river to heritage tourism as reasons the groups endorse the request.

Wreck claims life of Hertford man

U.S. 17, Wynn Fork intersection problem area

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

An elderly Hertford man died last Monday after spinning across U.S. Highway 17 in yet another accident at the intersection of U.S. 17 and Wynn Fork Road.

According to Hertford Police Chief Dale Vanscoy, Lemuel Alexander Boone, 72, of 211 Wynn Fork Court was pronounced dead at Chowan Hospital, where he was transported after the accident.

The accident happened around 9:50 a.m. Boone was traveling east on Wynn Fork

Road when he stopped at the intersection of U.S. 17. He proceeded across the southbound lanes, went into the median area and was struck as he attempted to cross the northbound lanes, Vanscoy said.

Boone pulled his 1987 Pontiac into the path of a 1996 Chevrolet pick-up operated by Donald Jackson Riddick, 50, of Route 5, Box 24, Hertford. Riddick was traveling north on U.S. 17 when he hit Boone's vehicle. The Pontiac spun 180 degrees, took down two stop signs and came to rest in the ditch on the east side of U.S. 17 facing south.

Riddick's vehicle proceeded through the intersection and came to rest in the median between the north and southbound lanes.

Riddick suffered minor

injuries in the accident. Vanscoy said Riddick's air bag deployed upon impact and probably saved him from more serious injuries. The entire front end of his vehicle was damaged, Vanscoy said.

Riddick was traveling approximately 50 miles per hour when the accident occurred. The speed limit at the intersection is 55. Vanscoy said no citations were issued and no charges are anticipated at this time.

In an ugly twist of fate, officers were investigating another accident at the intersection when Boone's family returned from his funeral.

On Friday at 3:40 p.m., Karen Melinda Gallop, 35, of Rt. 1, Box 538, Creecy's Lane, pulled her 1997 Dodge into the path of a 1984 Oldsmobile oper-

ated by Cecil Wood Davis, 58, of Roper.

As Gallop attempted to cross the northbound lanes, she was struck by Davis. Davis' vehicle glanced off the Gallop vehicle and struck both stop signs, spun 360 degrees and ended up in a ditch facing south. Gallop's vehicle spun and wound up on the inside lane of the northbound lanes.

Davis' estimated speed at the time of impact was 45.

No one was cited; however, Gallop was found at fault.

Vanscoy said local officials recognized the danger at the intersection quite a while ago, and began petitioning the state for help. Until that help arrives, Vanscoy said people should enter the intersection with caution and choose alternate routes when possible.

Residents want action on U.S. 17

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Her voice cracking, the granddaughter of the man who died last week in an accident at the intersection of Wynn Fork Road and U.S. 17 Bypass asked the Hertford Town Council to take some action about the dangerous intersection.

Regina Boone, a senior at Perquimans High School, and her friend Shanita Bailey, a resident of Dogwood Mobile Home Park, told council that action needs to be taken to curtail accidents at the intersection. Bailey, whose home is yards from the intersection, said that three accidents in the past three weeks show the need for improving the intersection.

"We are having problems on 17 and we realize it," Mayor John Beers told the teens.

Councilman Carlton Davenport told the two that the town has written to the state to request a reduced speed limit in the area. He said the intersection is too dark and in a curve, which makes it hard to negotiate.

Town manager John Christensen presented a proposed letter from council to NCDOT's Don Connors regarding safety on U.S. 17 within the town limits. The letter acknowledges the improvements at the intersection by Captain Bob's Restaurant, but informs Connors that those changes created U-turns at the Wynn Fork intersection.

The town will ask that the speed limit be lowered to 45 mph in the town limits and that NCDOT examine the intersection for more improvements.

Hertford resident Jean Gibbs said a light is needed at the intersection. Gibbs said she does not understand NCDOT's objections to placing another traffic light on the thoroughfare. She said there are many lights on U.S. 17 in Elizabeth City and that the amount of traffic at the Wynn Fork intersection justifies a traffic light.

In earlier discussions regarding traffic hazards on U.S. 17 within the town limits, Christensen said NCDOT officials indicated an unwillingness to add a second traffic light on the highway because it is a bypass.

Another issue brought up is the 45 mph signs on U.S. 17 at present. Those signs, according to Hertford Police Chief Dale Vanscoy, are recommended speeds, not posted speed limits, and are therefore unenforceable.

Vanscoy said perhaps the letter from the town to NCDOT would get the transportation department to send a safety officer to Hertford to investigate the intersection.

SOUNDS OF THE SEASON



The PCHS band and chorus concert recently featured some of the best sounds of the holidays. School and church programs across the county are reflecting the true message of the holidays.

Garbage discussion turns stinky at HTC

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

No one denied that it is a trashy battle, but everyone can't agree on how to put a lid on the issue once and for all.

Hertford resident Don Morris once again asked the town's council to consider an amendment to the trash ordinance to limit how long trash cans can sit on the curb after pick-up day.

Morris has complained to council for several months that some town residents are leaving their garbage cans on the street for days after pick-up. He said it detracts from the looks of the town and should be dealt with by town officials. Morris said he submitted a similar ordinance passed in Arlington, Va. for review by the board.

The Market Street resident said one garbage can has been sitting in front of his property for three weeks.

But town manager John Christensen said garbage cans are not a big issue. He said surveys conducted by the town show that there is little problem with residents removing the empty containers after collection.

"This is a case of a neighbor trying to aggravate neighbors who aggravate her," Christensen said of the garbage can on Market Street that has been left in front of the house for several weeks. He characterized the problem as a Hatfield and McCoy inci-

dent.

As the discussion regarding Morris' request for an amendment and/or action on the garbage cans took an ugly turn, Hertford resident Eldon Winslow stood up and said that the town is trying to get grants for improvement, and that the garbage cans are detrimental to the looks of the town. He said the problem in Morris' neighborhood may be personal, but that the town does need to be cleaned up in order to affect change and reach the goals to promote heritage tourism.

"If we don't clean up we'll stay like we are," he said. Another concern voiced by Morris is the number of handbills attached to poles throughout the town. Morris said the town has an ordinance that does not allow attachments to utility poles, but that it is not being enforced. As an example, Morris gave council three handbills he removed from poles around town that were being used to advertise an out-of-town business.

Morris said that the signs should be removed. He added that the telephone numbers printed on the signs should be called to let people putting them up know there is an ordinance against attachments to poles.

Councilman Sid Eley said that the town should amend its garbage ordinance to include a clause on removing trash receptacles and should enforce

its ordinance on attachments to poles. He said attachments to those who must climb the poles for repair and maintenance. Eley said the numbers on the signs should be called and those who put up signs fined per the ordinance.

John Chambers asked about the status of the town's decision earlier this year to seek removal of old mobile homes on Pennsylvania Avenue. Town attorney Walter Edwards Jr. said he anticipated taking the next legal steps in that process in January.

Joe Meads, owner of Miller and Meads Mobile Home Park, asked when the town would take action on removing three mobile homes from the Phillip Lane property on Grubb Street Extended.

Mayor John Beers said letters have been sent regarding the issue.

Councilman Billy Winslow said Christensen should write Mrs. Lane and direct her to remove the mobile homes within 30 days or respond to the town.

Meads has complained several times to council regarding the mobile homes. The property is not zoned for mobile homes, but former town manager Bill Cox allowed Lane to put mobile homes on the property in which his adult children were to live for a limited time. That was several years ago, but the mobile homes remain on the property. At

present, the town's utilities records indicate that service to the homes is not listed in the name of any of the Lane children.

Carlyn Chambers asked the status of the Keel building. The commercial structure was purchased by the town several months ago and was cleaned out with inmate labor.

Initially, the town planned to demolish the building and sought bids for the work.

But Edwards said a sale of the building is under negotiation at present. He anticipated that a contract will be signed in early January, and that the purchaser will stabilize the building with 60 days thereafter.

Councilman Carlton Davenport said the town should not wait two years for the building to be restored.

Mayor pro tem Billy Winslow said that if the town can sell the building for renovation, it will save the residents the \$17,000 it will cost to tear it down.

Although Edwards mentioned no names in the discussion, local developer Randy Lassiter approached the town in an open meeting this summer indicating his interest in the property. Lassiter is the owner of Hall of Fame Square on Church Street.

Marge Ambrose questioned what would happen if someone were to be hurt on the property before a sale can be negotiated.

Winslow answered that the town would be liable.

Come to our
Open House
Friday, Dec. 18
1-4 p.m.