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PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

35 cents

Board will not move to reroute US 17

SUSAN R. HARRIS

The Town of Hertford did not approve a motion to request that the N.C. Department of Transportation reroute U.S. Highway 17 Business in regular session Monday night.

The proposed change would have moved the south end of Highway 17 Business from its present Edenton Road Street/Dobbs Street route to South Church Street.

The change was a component of a strategic plan approved earlier by the town to try to bring visitors

to the area into the downtown business district. Those who formulated the plan said that the Church Street route would be more direct and attractive, and would create a more commercial corridor into town.

Mayor Sid Eley even pointed out on a map that the town had sought grant funds and installed a sidewalk down Church Street Extended as a component of the plan.

However, board members, even some on council when the strategic plan was approved, said they did not think Highway 17 should be rerouted.

Councilman Marvin Hunter said he saw no need to change the route, contending that as it is, it runs through the historic district.

Fellow councilman Carlton Davenport said he feared moving the route would take away incentives to repair buildings along the existing route.

Councilman Horace Reid had a completely different angle on the move: It could take even longer to get Edenton Road Street paved if the change is made, he contended.

Reid said that although state transportation offi-

cial attended council's March meeting and said making the change would have no impact on funding, he still believed that changing the south portion of the present U.S. 17 from a primary to a secondary road would take away its priority. Reid said history supports his opinion.

Both Eley and Town Manager John Christensen said that U.S. Highway 17 is on the needed paving list submitted to the DOT every time the town requests paving.

Historic Hertford, Inc. Manager Wendy Jewett said the strategic plan,

including rerouting U.S. 17, was proposed in an effort to get traffic down Church Street to keep local businesses viable.

She said that from her office in the Visitors Center on Market Street, she hears visitors say that they took the U.S. 17 Business exit onto Edenton Road Street and then missed the Dobbs Street turn.

"They kind of get lost," Jewett said. "They don't even realize we've got a downtown."

"...We can't afford to lose people downtown," she added. "We're looking for the quickest way to get peo-

ple downtown."

Jewett added that rerouting U.S. 17 would also mean less traffic would come by the high school, which could be important in the future as plans call for part of the high school's facilities to be built across Edenton Road Street.

Although there was a motion made and seconded to move U.S. 17, it was defeated on a 2-3 vote.

The question came before the board last month; however, it was tabled as councillors Carlton Davenport and Anne White were not present.

Keel building work get HTC extension

Lassiter has until July to make building habitable

SUSAN R. HARRIS

The Keel building on the corner of Edenton Road and Grubb streets escaped demolition one more time Monday night.

Hertford Town Council voted unanimously to give owner Randy Lassiter another chance to make the building habitable.

Lassiter purchased the Keel building in , saving it from demolition at that point in time. The town had already taken ownership of the building from the Keel family, and had begun cleaning out its contents. Town Manager John Christensen said about 75 tons of debris had been removed from the building by the town, and had paid almost \$50 per ton for its disposal.

Lassiter then purchased the building from the town in April 1999, paying \$1 plus the back taxes. He was given six months to get the exterior closed in and vandal-proofed, and one year to renovate. Lassiter did do some work in the building, but did not get it completed per the agreement.

The town continued to negotiate with Lassiter on the building until 2003. On Feb. 26 of that year, the county building inspector, at the request of the town, inspected the building and noted its deficiencies.

The building inspector, town attorney Ike McRee and Lassiter discussed the project during a hearing on Aug. 21, 2003. An agreement was reached that Lassiter would bring the building up to state code within 90 days.

Lassiter did apply for a building permit, which he received, and he once again began working on the deteriorating structure.

But in September, Hurricane Isabel struck, and the building sustained even more damage from the force of the storm.

Christensen said Lassiter spoke with him

and asked that the town give him more time to renovate the building in light of the additional damage caused by the hurricane.

Council voted on Feb. 9, 2004 to issue an order of demolition for the building. Lassiter was notified of the decision.

Lassiter came to the council's March meeting to request additional time, but with only three members in attendance, council opted to table the request until April.

Monday night, Lassiter appeared before council again. He said that in light of damage to the building during the storm, he has opted to take down the second story of the building and create a one-story structure. He has worked on the building over the past few weeks, and said with two more Saturdays of work, he expects to have the second floor bricks taken down and ready to haul away.

Lassiter added that the bricks are having to be removed by hand because the power lines outside are so low a contractor he contacted was afraid his equipment would hit the lines. He added that there should be no safety issues after two weeks.

The plans for the building call for pouring a monolithic slab and building a new truss roof system. He plans to turn the building into two apartments.

Lassiter said the demolition should be complete within 30 days and the building ready for occupancy by July. He added that he had put money into the building and now needed it to generate income.

"I apologize for my poor performance on that building," Lassiter told council. "I can assure you that I'm back on go."

Council voted to give Lassiter the time he requested, but Mayor Sid Eley told Lassiter, "I'm going to tell you if it's not done it's going to be demolished."

Lassiter purchased and renovated the former Darden Department Store building on Church Street and has purchased and improved an old gas station on Dobbs Street.

WORK ON THE WEB



The historic construction of the periauger, a Colonial era log boat, is being beamed worldwide by a webcam installed at the N.C. Maritime Museum's Watercraft Center, the site where the boat is being built. The progress of the boat's construction can be viewed at the site www.estuarylive.org.

PCRA homes tour set

Perquimans' past will be the focus May 15 and 16 when the Historic Homes Tour of Perquimans County and Spring Garden Party return.

Sponsored by the Perquimans County Restoration Association, the homes tour will feature a dozen individual properties along with a restored historic village.

Among the properties on the tour is the 1775 Creecy-Skinner-Whedbee House, reputed to be the oldest standing dwelling in Hertford.

Also on the tour will be the Temperance Hall (1851), Edmund Blount Skinner House (1845), Douglas S. Darden House (1900), Thomas S. McMullan House (1905), George Major



The Temperance Hall on Front Street is one of several buildings that will be open to the public during the biennial Historic Homes Tour of Perquimans County on May 15 and 16.

Carriage House (1900), Josiah Nicholson Jr. Store (1833), Holy Trinity Church and churchyard (1849), First Baptist Church (1897), M. James Bookseller and Newbold-White House: A Quaker Homestead (1730).

Perhaps one of the most unique stops on the tour will be Perquimans Village (1710-1840), a grouping of

buildings moved in and restored by Ben and Jackie Hobbs. The village, which is used as a private home, bed and breakfast and furniture-building enterprise, consists of the Richard Pratt House (1760), Bear Swamp House (1837), Bennetts Creek House (1750), Flat Branch House

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School partnership earns state award

An area educational partnership earned statewide recognition recently at the 2004 College Tech Prep Conference.

The CTP consortium comprised of College of The Albemarle (COA), Edenton-Chowan Schools, and Perquimans County Schools were honored with two silver-level awards—one for College Tech Prep Partnership Recognition and another for Promotion of College Tech Prep.

The College Tech Prep Partnership Recognition Award recognizes innovative approaches toward partnering with businesses and other educational institutions. It is presented to consortia that have worked well together to identify the results and benefits of a CTP partnership and followed through with implementation of activities and programs.

The award for Promotion of College Tech Prep recognizes clear and effective efforts to promote and disseminate information about CTP programs and is awarded to consortia dis-

playing the best efforts in marketing to all stakeholders.

The awards were accepted by partnership representatives from Edenton-Chowan Schools, Rob Boyce, Assistant Superintendent, and Nelle Hyatt, Director of Media & Technology; and from College of The Albemarle, Lynne Bunch, president, Lynn Hurdle-Winslow, Vice President of Corporate & Continuing Education, Althea Riddick, Vice President of Instruction, and Bob Lowney, Edenton-Chowan Campus Interim Dean. Brenda Spruill, Membership Director from the Edenton-Chowan Chamber of Commerce also attended the conference and received the awards on behalf of area business and industry.

The Edenton Chamber of Commerce Education Committee and local CTP partnership have jointly sponsored a three-part business and education summit. The summit focused on workforce development from various

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No action on zoning request

SUSAN R. HARRIS

Hertford Town Council again took no conclusive action on a zoning request.

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WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
High: 62
Low: 47
FEW SHOWERS

FRIDAY
High: 64
Low: 46
PARTLY CLOUDY

SATURDAY
High: 68
Low: 52
SUNNY