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THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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Crime doesn't pay police expenses

Tight budget won't include new officer

MARGARET FISHER

Gene Boyce had been hearing other residents tell him about break-ins, thefts and safety concerns occurring around town. But when it happened to him,

he decided to do something about it.

He voiced his concerns about growing crime at the Hertford town council meeting in May.

"Something has got to change before someone is killed," Boyce told councilors. "What is important to me is the safety of our town."

Someone cut the bolt on his barn door and stole some of the contents inside it on a Thursday in April.

Boyce reported the incident to Hertford Police Department.

When Boyce discovered, by an anonymous phone call of a witness, where his stolen goods allegedly were located, he went to the police department to tell them. In fact, Boyce saw his lawnmower sitting in someone's yard. But he found that police had no record of the report he had given over the phone the evening before. He filed another

report.

On the following Monday, an officer called him and thought he had found some of the stolen items. But it turned out that they weren't Boyce's items. The lawnmower was long gone, as well. When he drove by a second time, it had been moved out of sight.

In a week, police had a warrant out on a suspect, but the goods were never found. Boyce lost more

than \$1,000 in tools, lawnmower and outdoor table set.

A man followed Boyce's wife into their backyard as she was mowing, told her he was hungry and asked her if he could mow her lawn. A similar experience happened to other neighbors, Boyce said.

Boyce related to councilors a number of crimes that have occurred recently, including thefts from cars parked downtown, larceny

reports and attempted break-ins.

To find out whether police are visible throughout the town, Boyce set out for 10 nights in a row to locate where officers patrol. Between 9 p.m. and 2 a.m., Boyce drove downtown, across the causeway and around the Food Lion area. He never saw a police officer, he said.

"Visibility is a deterrent," Boyce said. "If there

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US 17 first corridor for committee

MARGARET FISHER

The town of Hertford recently held a public open house to generate ideas for developing the area around U.S. Highway 17 and Harvey Point Road.

The U.S. 17 Corridor is one of a number of corridors that have been designated for study by the Hertford Corridor Project Committee. The committee is looking at land use, transportation and future development potential for thoroughfare corridors and gateways into Hertford.

The committee's goal is to develop a plan to protect and improve the appearance of the roadways through Hertford and into the Historic District. The physical attractiveness, signage and inviting nature are being evaluated.

"There are lots of corridors," said Town Manager John Christensen. "Each one has its own characteristics. We feel (U.S. Highway 17) is probably the most important one. We feel it's a major gateway — a major corridor of the city limits."

The first phase within the town limits and its extraterritorial jurisdiction includes the area from Castleton Creek south to U.S. Highway 17 and includes Church Street, Ballhack Road and Edenton Road Street. It also extends from the highway south to the Commerce Centre and includes Harvey Point Road and Wynne Fork Road.

The U.S. 17 Corridor merits a higher standard of zoning, or overlay zoning, Christensen said. Certain businesses that are allowed in C-2 zoning would not be attractive and inviting to outsiders or consistent with the town's look, he said.

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WONDERFUL WEEKEND



Garden halts erosion

A recently-constructed rain garden at a county office building got tested with a downpour the next day — and passed, according to Marjorie Rayburn, Water quality Agent with N.C. Cooperative Extension.

The garden was built by a group of volunteers associated with Cooperative Extension's Water Quality Stewards program at the Albemarle Commission

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Volunteers with the N.C. Cooperative Extension construct a rain garden at the county office on Church Street Extended, commonly known as the Albemarle Commission Building. Hard work digging and planting (top) resulted in a garden that served its purpose when the next rain came (bottom): The garden collected water that had been eroding soil, allowing it to be absorbed by the soil and plant materials introduced in the project.



Hertford holds budget line

MARGARET FISHER

Residents won't have to worry about tax or fee increases at the beginning of the next fiscal year, say Hertford town council members.

"There will be no tax or fee increases if we just keep on doing what we're doing," said Hertford Mayor Sid Eley.

Councilors met to discuss the budget for the second time a week ago and plan to approve the budget at the June 12 town council meeting after a public hearing.

Councilor Ann White asked Town Manager John Christensen to review the budget when they met the week earlier at a work session. As it stood, the budget was short \$46,990 in the water and sewer departments and \$23,679 in the electric department. General departments had a surplus of \$9,816. Christensen said that he would look at the budget again and see what could be tightened up.

"The public is seeing too many increases," White said. The town is expecting an increase of water and sewer fees possibly by the end of the year after environmental permits are obtained and construction costs are figured. Councilors said they didn't want to raise rates twice within a short period of time.

At the second budget meeting, Christensen told councilors that the budget was lean. However, he shifted funds from capital outlay to make up for the shortage in the water and sewer funds and from fund balance, or savings account, for the electric shortage. The surplus was placed in a contingency.

The decrease in capital funds is backed by a separate account — meaning that if an emergency requiring capital funds was to happen next year, there would still be money available, Christensen said.

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Graduation is June 10

In 10 days, another class of high school seniors will officially become alumni of PCHS.

Graduation is set for Saturday, June 10 at 10 a.m. at Memorial Field, when 127 are expected to earn diplomas. The class will be led by valedictorian Patrick Parr and salutatorian LaReina Jordan. Parr is the son of Mr. and Mrs. Ron Parr. Jordan is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Quinton L. Jordan.

Speakers will be the top five seniors by academic rank, Parr, Jordan, Rachel Newbern, Brittany Davenport and Matthew Perry.

During the ceremonies, there will be a tribute to Shakim Walrren (1987-2005), a classmate who lost his life in a tragic drive-by shooting last year. His seat will don a graduation cap and gown with a white rose lying on top. His mother will accept his diploma.

Special music will be presented by selected members of the class of 2006 under the direction of Lynwood Winslow.

Diplomas will be awarded by School Board Chair Helen Shaw.

In the event of inclement weather on Saturday, graduation will be held on Sunday, June 11 at 3 p.m. If inclement weather continues on Sunday, each graduate will receive four tickets and the ceremonies will be moved inside.



Patrick Parr



LaReina Jordan

Town receives grant for walkway planning

MARGARET FISHER

The N.C. Department of Transportation awarded a \$20,000 grant to the town of Hertford for the development of a comprehensive pedestrian plan.

The town approved Historic Hertford Inc's request for a \$5,000 match, which along with the grant, will provide the funds to hire a consultant to create a plan for sidewalks and walkways throughout the town limits.

The planning grant initiative is jointly sponsored the NCDOT's Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation and Transportation Planning Branch. Funds came from a special allocation approved by the General Assembly in 2003 and federal funds.

NCDOT has awarded 50 municipalities for comprehensive bicycle and pedestrian plans since 2004, including 12 municipalities this month. Towns submitted

requests for funds for either bicycle or pedestrian planning. The 12 municipalities were selected out of 38 towns based on equitable distribution in three regions of the state and both urban and rural areas.

The town has six months to select a consultant and will receive technical assistance from the Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation, said David Bender, planning program manager.

"The Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant Initiative offers a comprehensive transportation plan, as well as provides an implementation tool and awareness of bicycle and pedestrian needs," Bender said.

The plan will include creating pedestrian-friendly environments, short term and long range goals, safety considerations, integration with other communities and transportation modes, estimated costs and raising community awareness. The plan will con-

sider current plans, such as the Blueway/Greenway trails and Highway 17 Corridor plans. It will also

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WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
High: 84, Low: 67
MOSTLY SUNNY

FRIDAY
High: 79, Low: 65
SCATTERED T'STORMS

SATURDAY
High: 86, Low: 64
FEW SHOWERS