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THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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"News from Next Door"

35 cents

Town seeks relief

Hertford asks judge for new trial or to set aside ruling in Harris condemnation case

CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

The Town of Hertford has asked a superior court judge to order a new trial or set aside a jury's ruling that the town owes additional money for land taken five years ago by condemnation.

Town Manager John Christensen said council members met with their attorney, Tony Hornthal of Hornthal, Riley, Ellis and Maland in Elizabeth City, last Wednesday night to hear what options the town has following the results of the June 9 jury verdict.

A jury ruled the town must pay just compensation of \$333,170 to landowners Jessie and Elizabeth Harris for 2.32 acres of land obtained in 2003 through condemnation by the town for its water plant expansion and for damages to the value of the 7.16 acres left in the parcel which was not taken by the town.

The town also has to pay interest and legal fees.

"We estimate the figure to be about \$465,000 with interest and legal fees added," Christensen said.

Council members authorized Christensen to contact the state's Local Government Commission to see if there are any restrictions regarding using town funds should the town have to pay.

"We are preparing for the eventuality of the worst case scenario," he added.

Even though the town is facing paying out nearly a half million dollars that's not included in its proposed 2008-09 budget, Christensen says the town will not make a budget amendment now or change the proposed tax rate as a result of the verdict.

"At this point, there is no rate impact," he added. "We will try to meet the demands without impacting the citizens by using reserves and other project funds."

The town paid the landowner \$49,500 at fair market value five years ago for the land based on an appraisal presented by Greg Bourne of Kill Devil Hills, Christensen explained. Since it was a partial taking of the land, the town offered the landowner additional funds totaling \$87,000 for any damage that might result to the acreage left behind during the condemnation process. The landowner disagreed with the compensation offer and took the town to court instead.

LICK IT BEFORE



it drips!

THERE'S NOTHING BETTER THAN a cone of cold ice cream on a hot day, and Woodard's Pharmacy is famous for its generous dips. Downtown Hertford businesses offers relaxing benches and even rocking chairs, and invite folks sit a spell while enjoying a visit.

Perquimans Weekly photo by CATHY WILSON

Hertford adopts budget

CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

Hertford Town Council adopted a \$5.9 million budget Monday night, giving town taxpayers an effective 8 cents increase in the real estate tax rate. In addition, water and sewer rates increased.

Following a public hearing during which several people complained about the increase in water and sewer rates, no one spoke in opposition to the higher tax rate of 35 cents. While the tax rate is down 14 cents from last year's rate, the recent revaluation of town property effectively increases the taxpayer's tax rate by 8 cents per \$100 valuation.

Water rates will increase to \$21.05 for a basic charge plus \$4.75 per 1,000 gallons. Sewer rates will cost \$28.35 for the basic charge and \$7.90 per 1,000 gallons used.

Council members Carlton Davenport, JoAnn Morris and Mayor Sid Eley voted in favor of the budget while Ann White and Horace Reid voted against it.

The budget figures will go into effect July 1.

Winfall Town Clerk Sharon Gordon, a resident of Hertford, took council to task over what she believes was a lack of prior planning over the past 10 years on a plan to pay for the new water plant and improvements to wastewater plant. Payments for the 20-40-year loans to fund those projects start in the 2008-09 budget, causing the increase in water and sewer rates to town customers.

"When you contracted these projects back in 1998, you knew the payments would be coming due. You could have gradually increased water and sewer charges each year so it wouldn't just slap you in the face," she said. "My bill went from \$31 to \$61 overnight because you didn't have a 10-year plan."

Eley explained that the town always tried to keep rate increases to a bare minimum over the years.

"I'm pretty sure people would have complained if we raised it when we didn't need to," he added.

Positive budget remarks came from Eley, who said the town's healthy fund balance was due to the frugality of Town Manager John Christensen.

"We have built up a fund balance we can be proud of," Eley said. "We're doing more with less people."

Get ready for the 4th of July!

CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

It's going to be a flag-waving day in Hertford on the 4th of July.

In conjunction with the town's 250th year-long birthday celebration, Missing Mill Park will be filled with folks enjoying traditional summertime foods, picnics, children's activities ... even a watermelon seed spitting contest.

A non-motorized parade, featuring pedal and push-powered decorated tricycles, bicycles, wagons, tractors and strollers, will begin at Hertford Baptist Church at 5 p.m. and pedal to the park, where a patriotic ceremony will take place.

Spectators may watch from the tree-lined Market

and East Academy Streets, or wait for the un-motorcade at the park, while enjoying Independence Day favorites — hamburgers, hot dogs, fish, barbecue, homemade ice cream, homemade baked goods, corn-on-the-cob and watermelon.

The periauger and the paddlers will arrive at the park around 6 p.m. All boats that navigate near the park — whether powered by paddle or motor — are asked to be decorated in holiday style in honor of the day.

There will be musical entertainment, and local senior citizens will even kick up their heels with dancing entertainment.

Uncle Sam will be there and will read the Declaration of Independence.

Of course, the highlight of the day will be fireworks set off around 9 p.m. Bring

your lawn chairs or blankets to enjoy the light show.

Donations for fireworks may be sent to Fireworks Committee, 104 Carolina St., Hertford, NC 27944.

Those interested in a booth or children's activities at Missing Mill Park should call Mary White at 426-8471. Vendors will be accepted on a first-come, first-served basis. For Winfall Landing Park information, call Fred Yates at the town office, 426-5015.

Activity organizers hope the day brings flags flying all over town.

American Legion Post 126 offers some flag-flying tips.

The flag should be flown from sunrise to sunset on buildings and on stationary flagstaffs. However, it can be flown 24 hours a day if properly illuminated dur-

ing the hours of darkness.

The flag shouldn't be displayed during inclement weather except when an all-weather flag is used.

The flag shouldn't be draped over the hood, top, sides or back of a vehicle, railroad train car or boat. When displayed on a vehicle, the staff should be attached firmly to the chassis or clamped to the right fender.

No part of the flag should be used as a costume or athletic uniform. A flag patch, however, may be sewn to the uniform of military personnel, firefighters, policemen, and members of patriotic organizations.

Flag lapel pins should be worn on the left lapel near the heart.

Fly or display the American flag proudly, but do it correctly.

State Employees Credit Union opens here

CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

Members of State Employees' Credit Union can not only save money by banking and borrowing at the credit union, but can save gas as well with the opening of a new branch in Hertford.

Members don't have to drive to Edenton or Elizabeth City since the local branch opened May 5 in the Perquimans Village Shopping Center.

"We're here to serve the community," said Jonathan Crane, vice president/city executive during a ribbon cutting ceremony last week sponsored by the Perquimans Chamber of Commerce.

The credit union is a financial cooperative owned by its members that includes active and retired state employees, local gov-



A RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY was held last week at the new branch of the State Employees' Credit Union located in the Perquimans Village Shopping Center. Members of the Perquimans Chamber of Commerce welcomed the new credit union which offers a variety of banking services including low loan rates and high savings rates for credit union members.

ernment employees, North Carolina National Guard members, press organizations, and their family members or persons who

reside in their homes.

Unlike profit-oriented institutions that seek to maximize investment returns for their stockholders, SECU's

primary goal is to provide fair, convenient, low-cost services to its members by offering lower costs of borrowing, and higher yields in savings.

Crane said SECU is already involved in the community by recently presenting a scholarship to a deserving senior at Perquimans High School.

Six employees work in the local branch including Crane.

SECU is open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m.—5:30 p.m. and features a drive-thru window for convenience. Banking may also be performed through the SECU call center at 888-732-8562 or on the website at www.ncsecu.org.

Automated teller machines (Cash Points ATMs) are located around the area including one near Food Lion.

Call 426-8118.

WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
HIGH: 96 LOW: 75
ISOLATED T'STORMS

FRIDAY
HIGH: 96 LOW: 76
MOSTLY SUNNY

SATURDAY
HIGH: 94 LOW: 75
MOSTLY SUNNY

