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Lady Pirates earn share of AAC title, A7

"News from Next Door"

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2020

\$1.00

## Town Council OKs Travel Policy, Lifts Spending Freeze

BY MILES LAYTON  
 Editor

Hertford Town Council approved a litany of items intended to improve local government that includes revisions to the town hall's travel policy, adopting an ethics

policy and lifting the spending moratorium.

Town's travel policy has been under fire in recent months after council members traveled to conferences at various locales last year. Perquimans Weekly filed a public records request that

showed how thousands of taxpayers dollars were spent on a trip to a conference in San Antonio.

During November's municipal election, citizens sought reform from the newly elected Town Council that campaigned on integrity, transpar-

ency and truth.

Approved at Thursday's council meeting, the travel policy provides more clarity and accountability.

"The updated policy aims to improve the transparency and consistency with which Council travel is requested,

estimated, approved, performed and expensed," said Mayor Pro Tem Ashley Hodges, who drafted the revised policy. "The previous policy was adequate for regional trips to perhaps Raleigh

See COUNCIL, A2



BROWN

HODGES

## PQ Couple Stranded in Cambodia

BY MILES LAYTON  
 Editor

A Perquimans County couple are passengers aboard the Westerdam, a Pacific cruise ship that is in limbo because one its passengers has been confirmed as having the coronavirus.

So as to preserve the Hertford couple's privacy, the Perquimans Weekly has chosen not to print their names at this time. To date, these folks have tested negative nor exhibited any symptoms of coronavirus while their ship is quarantined in Cambodia, according to a prominent source.

Source said the couple's cruise ship had been escorted by war ships from Vietnam and Thailand for fear it was being contaminated by the coronavirus. Cambodia allowed the ship to dock, but one passenger, who had recently visited Malaysia, has been confirmed as sick.

When the Westerdam set sail from Hong Kong on Feb. 1 for a 14-day cruise, the Holland America Line cruise ship was carrying 1,455 passengers and 802 crew members.

According to the New York Times, the cruise ship docked in Kaohsiung, Taiwan, on Feb. 4, but then soon ran into trouble.

With the eyes of the world on Yokohama, Japan, where the virus was spreading among passengers and crew members trapped on another cruise ship, the Diamond Princess, ports on the Westerdam's itinerary began denying it entry.

Taipei, Taiwan, said no. So did ports in Japan, the Philippines, Thailand and the United States territory of Guam, according to local news reports and passengers onboard.

New York Times reports that as of Sunday, 233 passengers and 747 crew members were still on the ship docked at Sihanoukville, Cambodia, Holland America said.

After Malaysia's announcement that a passenger was infected, the remaining passengers and crew members were restricted to the ship, and buses that had been scheduled to transport them remained parked nearby.

Malaysia said it would not allow any more passengers from another cruise ship to transit the country after an 83-year-old American woman from the MS Westerdam tested positive for the virus. She was among 145 passengers who flew from Cambodia to Malaysia on Friday. Her husband also had symptoms but tested negative.

The Westerdam was turned away from four ports around Asia before Cambodia allowed it to dock in Sihanoukville late last week.

Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Wan Azizah Wan Ismail said that her country would bar cruise ships that came from or transit any Chinese ports from



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Tariq Small, a Hertford native and U.S. Army Reservist, is making the world a better place starting with his hometown. He's formed 2-5 Youth, a non-profit organization that's "giving the youth something to do" in Hertford. Photo shows Small handing out chips and sandwiches to families during a recent Saturday morning.

## Hertford native forms nonprofit for youth

BY MILES LAYTON  
 Editor

Tariq Small is making the world a better place, starting with his hometown.

Small has formed 2-5 Youth, a non-profit organization that's "giving the youth something to do" in Hertford.

"Coming back home and seeing things get worse has inspired me to form this group," he said. "I feel like our youth need serious help, not only financially, but morally and emotionally. I feel like our kids are losing respect for not only themselves but also for the community. And having to deal with some of the same issues growing up, I plan on making a difference starting with the community."

Perquimans born and raised, Small, 21, grew up on King Street in Section 8 housing.

"I faced a lot of adversity trying to be a good and focused young black male," he said. "But with strict parents and a bunch helpful support from my family, I was able to rise above some of the problems living in Section 8 brings."

Small said because streets fights and shootings occur regularly in his hometown, these factors that influenced him to make more of himself as did joining the Army and his Christian faith.

"Yes, you could say that I was influenced by the Army and going to church, but mainly my influence was seeing day to day violence and trouble in our teens," he said. "I had a chance to see places at a young age due to working and making my own money. I knew it was a better

*"Coming back home and seeing things get worse has inspired me to form this group. I feel like our youth need serious help, not only financially, but morally and emotionally."*

Tariq Small  
 Founder of 2-5 Youth



Back in the day, a dapper Tariq Small was striking a pose before attending his senior prom at Perquimans High School.

route than that life back home; that I can do more and provide more for myself and others."

Back in the day, Small was a talented Pirates' athlete who played basketball, football and track. After graduating from Perquimans High School in 2016, Small joined the U.S. Army where he continues to serve in reserves. Eventually, Small landed a good job at Thermo Fisher Scientific, a biotechnology product development company that has a manufacturing plant in Greenville.

Future is bright for this young man.

"Ten years from now, I see myself owning this 2-5 Youth as an alternate after-school program, which will teach kids the will and

drive to make something of themselves all while making an impact in their community," he said. "Also, I plan on staying military also along with attainable further education and degrees."

Small said a strong determination to improve his life is what inspired the creation of 2-5 Youth – a call to help others.

"Well, actually my life was never troublesome. I just decided at a young age that I wanted more," he said. "In order to do that, you'd have to find a route and get a way. I was very strong minded and hardworking due to seeing that staying in the neighborhood only will turn out bad due to the lack of entertainment and

such. Hence the group's slogan 2-5 Youth 'Giving the youth something to do.' I just want younger ones to get the same message I received. I will have something for them every month."

Settling into success, Small said, he wanted to do something for young people in Perquimans County – maybe show them it's possible to make a difference if you believe.

"My group's mission is to show that our youth can do better as individuals, but we also need help," he said. "Youth need more things to do, more entertainment for our children."

Group seeks three key favors from folks.

"First, we're asking for parents to take a stand in their child's future and enroll/get them involved today," Small said. "Secondly, we're asking for junior mentors – kids who still are in high school – to lead this journey, as they're some of the biggest role models amongst the community. And lastly, we're asking for sponsors and donors, to continue these rewards and prizes we have in store for our youth."

Small is looking for financial support to defray costs to host a room where he simply "wants to teach kids respect and real life lessons that they'll need

See DIFFERENCE, A3

## Make Voices Heard

BY STAFF REPORTS

As of Tuesday morning, 94 voters in Perquimans County cast their ballots during early voting for the primary election.

Early voting started Thursday, Feb. 13.

The presidential primary election is on Tuesday, March 3.

Absentee voting by mail is available. Requests for an absentee ballot must be mail by 5 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 25, at the Perquimans County Board of Elections.

One-stop early voting will be held until Saturday, Feb. 29 at the BOE office. The hours of operation are 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. Monday-Friday, and 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 29.

The county's BOE will conduct the canvass at 11 a.m. Friday, March 13.

### ROUND-UP

## Friend of the County

BY MILES LAYTON  
 Editor

A round-up of all things Perquimans County... Prayers should be offered for the **Albemarle Plantation couple** who are aboard the Westerdam, a cruise ship in the Pacific that is under quarantine. Good luck and well wishes for your safe travel home.

In other matters, **Melissa Principe-Decker** of Hertford put on a dinner free of charge, to all first responders on Saturday. She opened her home for all EMS, health care workers, firefighters, law enforcement agents and dispatchers to enjoy a dinner and to tell them all thank you.

"I did this because in our fields, we rarely get a thank you for our sacrifices, so this was my personal thank you to all," said Principe-Decker, a longtime Registered Nurse at Vidant Roanoke-Chowan Hospital.

Some good news: **Albemarle Railroad Club** may be pulling into station in Hertford. See Town Council article that starts on page A1. Model railroads are awesome, particularly Ho or N gauge train sets.

**Benjamin Franklin** said, "that guests, like fish, begin to smell after three days."

AirBnB and Short-term/whole house rentals... Heard rumblings in Hertford – residents not thrilled with these arrangements that bring "guests"

See LAYTON, A2

See CAMBODIA, A3

