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County approves \$150,000 for Shelby water line

By BEN LEDBETTER
Staff Writer

During a Monday morning meeting with representatives of the three county water providers present, the Cleveland County Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to give \$150,000 toward a 36-inch water line to go from the Broad River to the city of Shelby treatment plant.

Last week during its regular meeting, the Shelby City Council approved the first steps toward construction of the line.

The water line was included in a study a Forest City engineering firm made for the county.

The plan, from a study from Forest City engineering firm Odom and Associates, valued at \$14 million has three parts:

- A Broad River connection to Shelby's water treatment plant and a pumping station for \$8 million;
- Recommended interconnects throughout the county for \$3 million;
- Upgrading the Kings Mountain water plant for \$3 million.

To fund the study, Kings Mountain would contribute \$2 million; Cleveland County \$5.9 million; the Cleveland County Sanitary District \$2.25 million; Boiling Springs \$350,000; and Shelby \$3.5 million.

While cities would have other options for raising the revenue for this plan, Cleveland County officials said raising property taxes would be their way to raise money for the plan.

The Cleveland County Sanitary District approved a contribution of \$500,000 toward the line at a special meeting last week.

Shelby Mayor Mike Philbeck said in Monday's discussion that he hoped the county would work with him on the project.

"I hope that we won't get bogged down in other issues that will serve to divide us," he said.

Philbeck said Shelby has employers where a lot of Cleveland County residents work.

"We also realize about economic development and we also want to help our neighbors," Kings Mountain Mayor Rick Murphrey said.

Twice during the meeting Murphrey said Kings Mountain had water to sell and that fell on questions from other leaders about what would happen if Moss Lake, the city's water source, dried up. Another issue that was mentioned by Shelby and county leaders was how could water be taken from Moss Lake to Shelby and the northern part of the county.

The issue of a county-wide tax to provide Shelby with water was something Philbeck said discuss

See County, 2A

Apartment complex delayed

By BEN LEDBETTER
Staff Writer

The apartment complex scheduled to be built near Kings Mountain Intermediate School will be delayed.

Wray Plonk, who owns part of the land, said the construction company, Eagan Construction of Mooresville, was applying for a state tax credit and was turned down.

"We had hoped they would be grading by this point in time," Plonk said.

Eagan would develop, build and manage the apartments. The company manages approximately 150 complexes containing 9,000 units. The complex was also slated to have a bike path, clubhouse and a playground.

Rent for the apartments was expected to be between \$400 to \$600.

Construction was scheduled to start earlier this year.

The complex would also be near the Kings Mountain branch of the Life Enrichment Center.

City leaders have also made plans to develop the Kings Mountain Boulevard area.

Even though the company was turned down for the credit, Plonk said he expects the complex to still be built.

"It's just an obstruction in the road we need to either move, go around, cross over, what have you," he said.

Representatives from Eagan Construction did not return phone calls from The Herald seeking comment.

David Beam, who applied for a rezoning

See Complex, 3A

WORK OF ART



BEN LEDBETTER / THE HERALD
Jeanette Hardee touches up part of the mural she painted at Grace United Methodist Church.

Murals at Grace Methodist bring Bible stories to life

By BEN LEDBETTER
Staff Writer

Jeanette Hardee never thought the mural she started painting would span most of the upstairs at Kings Mountain's Grace United Methodist Church.

With their kids being in the same scout troop, Hardee met Grace pastor Dale Swofford and that led to Swofford asking her if she knew of an artist.

"We talked about a lot of things we used to do," Hardee said. "He came to me one day and asked if I knew an artist. I said, 'What do you need?' He said he wanted some mural work done and I did some years ago."

Hardee showed Swofford her work samples and he showed it to his church's board. After it approved the project Swofford told her what he wanted from the mural and she started to paint.

Spending between five to 10 hours a week on painting, Hardee started in April and recently finished.

And while she was painting, church members got excited about the project

"Once I got started I just couldn't stop."

Jeanette Hardy
Muralist



which led Swofford to seal off the room Hardee was using.

"It got to where he had to put a sign on each room and seal it off as I was working in there so that kids and people would not go walking in and get into the paint. Because it's a mess when you're doing stuff like that," she said.

The size of the painting was something neither Swofford nor Hardee expected from the start.

"I don't know if he really expected it to

See Murals, 3A

KM opposes sharing cost of water line

By BEN LEDBETTER
Staff Writer

Kings Mountain City Council held the line when talks turned to the county water proposal during Tuesday's meeting at City Hall.

Council unanimously approved giving City Manager Jimmy Maney, who has been negotiating with the county, authority to:

- Oppose any county tax increase
- Offer any excess water for sale
- If taxed, to insist the city be able to use its part of the money for further water projects
- Ask that Kings Mountain be taken out of the taxing district for a new water tax.

Maney, Mayor Rick Murphrey, Councilman Howard Shipp, Dean Spears, Gene White and Rick Moore participated in Monday's Cleveland County Board of Commissioners meeting where the board approved \$150,000 to go for a 36-inch water line from the Broad River to Shelby's treatment plant.

County Commissioners asked Kings Mountain to review the plan with the full council and get back to them.

Shelby and county leaders said the line would benefit the whole county.

Not so, according to Kings Mountain city officials.

During Tuesday's discussion White read from a statement that said Monday's meeting was long in generalities and short on specifics. He said if the county won't negotiate on the proposal, then Kings Mountain should be excluded from the tax.

Other councilmen agreed with White.

"I agree with Gene on this," Spears said. "He served it up pretty good." Councilman Jim Guyton said if he knew this would happen that he would not have wanted to sell Shelby water earlier.

Citizens also spoke on water-related issues during Tuesday's citizen recognition portion of the meeting.

Mary Young, who lives near Hillway Drive, said she needs water because her well is going dry.

"I need water down through there," she said. "It needs to come down through there."

Murphrey said the city would review her request.

Other citizens spoke out against the county water proposal and the proposed second lake.

In other business, council rejected a proposed annexation study 4-3 which would look at areas west of town on U.S. Highway 74 Business.

City Planning Director Steve Killian said one reason to study the area is because the city has water and sewer service extended throughout the area.

See Water, 2A

KINGS MOUNTAIN PEOPLE

Love of people, nature must for state park superintendent

By BEN LEDBETTER
Staff Writer

Park Superintendent Joe Sox has spent the past 18 years at Crowders Mountain State Park between Gastonia and Kings Mountain.

And while he is not a native of the area, he has been treated like one.

A love of nature and working with people have kept him in his current vocation.

"To do this job you have to possess those qualities," he said.

With two budget crises, various state and local governmental enti-

ties have had to make do with fewer things.

The park has also been impacted. It usually has five rangers on staff and currently is functioning with three.

A possible fourth one may also be on the way. Sox also performs ranger duties.

"If you're down three permanent staff members, that's obviously going to have an effect on the amount of work you can get done," he said. "In the area of ranger responsibilities, it's impacted interpretation and education

See Park, 3A



BEN LEDBETTER / HERALD
Joe Sox has spent 18 years as superintendent of Crowders Mountain State Park

DSS checks complaint against Summit Place

By BEN LEDBETTER
Staff Writer

The Cleveland County Department of Social Services is investigating a complaint filed about a former resident of Summit Place, an assisted living center in Kings Mountain.

According to Cleveland DSS Social Work Supervisor Tela McSwain, the complaint came to her attention about two months ago.

McSwain is still waiting on medical records and said she expects the investigation to last another two to three weeks.

"The main thing we're looking into right now is a care issue for a former resident," she said.

The incident was isolated and not an ongoing problem, she said.

She would not confirm the name of the former resident of the assisted living facility.

See DSS, 2A



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