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Southport, here's your sign



City Hall officially has been moved to 1029 North Howe Street, a temporary sign (above) marking the spot. Meanwhile, the wood-framed sign at the former East Moore Street location has been removed, presumably making way for one that reads "Southport Police Department." Aldermen will continue to meet upstairs in the building, according to signage that remains.

Photos by Ed Harper



Southport

Long-time city clerk abruptly resigns

By Jason Tyson
Staff Writer



Regina Alexander

Southport's long-serving city clerk Regina Alexander, a fixture in both the halls of local government and the community, abruptly submitted her letter of resignation Friday and cleaned out her office.

The resignation, effective March 1, comes as the second significant news surrounding a Southport employee in the past two weeks. Public works director Robert Tucker, who was the city's highest-paid employee, was told

at the board of aldermen's annual retreat on January 25 by city manager Kerry McDuffie that the position was being eliminated.

McDuffie said Alexander would be on vacation between now and the effective retirement date, and that he would ask deputy city clerk Michelle Windham to take the minutes of the board's Thursday meeting.

"We can confirm that city clerk Regina Alexander did submit her letter of resignation today," McDuffie said Friday. "The decision on how to proceed with the position moving forward is up to

the board of aldermen."

An item to discuss filling the position is listed in the board's agenda packet under "other business."

Alexander had given notice to aldermen during their regular December meeting that she would be retiring at the end of 2014. The board then voted to give her a \$15,000 raise for her final year of employment.

Alexander served in the dual capacity of city clerk and interim city manager from the time Alan Thornton was asked to resign in

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Oak Island

15-bedroom cottage plan causes unrest

Public hearing scheduled next week on proposed moratorium

By Lee Hinnant
Staff Writer

Mini-hotels in residential areas. McMansions. A cancer infecting the island. These were the terms used by some residents to describe the trend of building bigger and bigger beach houses, and they pleaded with Oak Island Town Council to do something about it.

Council did just that Tuesday night, and set a public hearing for Thursday, February 20, on a proposed moratorium on construction of houses with more than six bedrooms.

"We have to stop it now. We're going to ruin this island," said resident Roger Mason. The giant houses at the beach's west end are already a problem, said Mason and some other neighbors.

They said they feared the problem would get worse if the town allows plans by a Charlotte owner for a 15-bedroom, 12-bath house at 6904 West Beach Drive.

Lawyer Eric Remington, representing a neighbor, filed an appeal to the town's building permit issued February 5 and the issue will go before the board of adjustments at an unspecified date.

"This is a growing problem in coastal North Carolina and other places on the Eastern Seaboard," Remington said. Dare and Currituck counties passed restrictions on house sizes, but only after construction of some with as many as 24 bedrooms, Remington said.

Oak Island's R-7 residential zoning is for a quiet, residential

See Concerns, page 16A

Cape Fear Badwater

Ultra-marathon natural fit for Bald Head Island

By Lee Hinnant
Staff Writer

Founders of what's been called "the world's toughest footrace" will hold their first-ever East Coast ultra-marathon March 22 at Bald Head Island, one of three races this season in the Badwater Ultra Cup.

Runners will warm up for a dozen miles around the island, then trek a total of either 50 kilometers (31 miles) or 51 miles up and down the beach to Fort Fisher. A standard marathon is slightly more than 26 miles—and usually not on sand.

Almost 80 athletes already have signed up for the event, being praised by island leaders as a natural fit for Bald Head.

"We are thrilled that they are coming," said Claude Pope, president of the Bald Head Island Chamber of Commerce. "It's a testament to the natural beauty of the island. They're trying to take races to other venues around the world. If the organizers like it, we're confident they will make Bald Head an annual stop."

Badwater Cape Fear is the first leg of the Badwater Ultra Cup, and is followed the 81-mile Badwater Salton Sea on May 5-6, then the grueling Badwater 135 on July 21-23.

Runners who complete all three full-distance events in the same calendar year will be featured on the Badwater website and covered in future editions of *Badwater* magazine. The male and female runners

See Bald Head, page 12A



Schools

More security cameras added

There will be more surveillance cameras in Brunswick County schools next year.

At its February 4 meeting, the Brunswick County Board of Education approved a contract to add 437 cameras to the school system's current surveillance system. There are 378 cameras already in place.

The contract also includes replacing the old analog DVR system with a computer-based surveillance system. This will allow video footage to be retrieved more quickly and provide easier access for first responders.

The contract was awarded to Reisenweaver Communications Inc., doing business as Call 24 Security, for \$1,155,352.

Twenty-six firms attended the pre-bid meeting on December 12, and ten submitted bids for the project. Bids ranged from \$1,155,352 to \$3,437,855. As the low bidder, Reisenweaver received the contract.

The company will complete the upgrades prior to next school year. According to Brunswick County Schools' spokesperson Jessica Swencki, this is part of the district's plan to maintain safe schools.

"That's just one piece of a carefully considered plan to enhance the safety and security of all of our buildings for our students and staff," she said.

— Renee Sloan



Princess Ball

There was plenty to smile about on Saturday during the sixth annual Communities in Schools Little Princess Ball. The popular event was held at The Brunswick Center at Southport (pictured) and the South Brunswick Island Center, with more than 350 people in attendance. More photos can be found on page 11B.

Photo by Morgan Harper

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