

Council...from Page 1

document revoked the inter-governmental agreement.

The Waites, who are in the process of building a home in Hiwassee, attended that Tuesday, Dec. 2, to deliver one of three listed presentations in the presentations and comments portion of the meeting. The Waites were slated to go last in that section, and were to present their "support of a 5-acre requirement for Recreational Vehicles."

"I guess our purpose for being here today is to speak with the council concerning their opinion and possible decision to sanction or support a reduction in the requirement for RV park and trailer establishments," said Noel Waite. "Currently, they're at 5 acres, and I think the motion may be presented later on for your decision and vote to reduce it to .6 of an acre."

In his comments, Noel Waite was referring to item 7 from the Dec. 2 meeting agenda, under the motions and resolutions portion of the meeting, which put to vote a "Resolution Ratifying the Hiwassee 2010 Comprehensive Planning Ordinance and actions taken pursuant thereto."

"Now, that may not be formalized, but that's what's going to happen, because somebody has purchased some property, and that's their plan, is to turn it into an RV park," alleged Noel Waite. "And it's right on Highway 76 and Highway 75, at the intersection beside McDonald's. Now, we don't see that as a viable situation in as much as I don't see how that presents more income to the city in terms of taxes."

"In fact, it will probably do the opposite. It's going to lower people's property values in due time, and I just don't see it and don't understand the reason why the City Council would support that."

The property referred to by Noel Waite is located adjacent to the land on which the Waites have begun building their home.

Prior to the Waites' presentation, Mayor Mathis asked City Attorney Stephanie McConnell to define ratify in light of item 7 on the agenda.

"Ratifying it simply means that you are confirming that it's still the law of the land, the law of the city," said McConnell. "The reason we were doing that is because there were a couple of members on the current City Council who weren't on that City Council, and we wanted to give them the opportunity to express their support of that particular ordinance."

"But ratifying simply means that you're just confirming something that already exists. And it's not a very difficult concept and it should have been pretty self-explanatory, but I think that the terms have gotten confused here lately. But that's what it means, and that's what you're all going to be doing later on in your meeting."

Noel Waite passed out copies of Section 1-11-3 of the 2010 Comprehensive Planning Ordinance to City Council members during his presentation.

"Our purpose today is to urge you to look at paperwork that was presented to us as your authority to proceed with this," said Noel Waite to the council. "And having been a public works director and a contract manager for some 30 years, I do not understand this language."

The language in question falls under the heading "REPEAL OF CONFLICTING ORDINANCES," and reads as follows:

"All ordinances and resolutions and parts thereof in conflict herewith are repealed in the extent necessary to give this ordinance full force and effect, except that any ordinances or resolutions repealed by this provision shall not limit or impair the city's authority to enforce such ordinances or resolutions to the extent that violations thereof occurred prior to repeal."

"This has been accepted and signed off by yourselves on the council," said Noel Waite. "This does not make any changes. I've had outside council - in fact, two outside councils look at this. And they say this is standard kind of language, which I'm used to, with ordinances and with contracts, whereby you say if there is a conflict within a schedule, then there's an order of priority. Here, we're talking about conflicts. What is the conflict we're talking about? There's non-specifics in this particular document."

"I'm going to let our attorney address it, because you mentioned talking to two attorneys," said Stancil at this point during Noel Waite's presentation.

"I've explained to you guys on numerous occasions what's going on here, and I've explained the law to you, and you all know what that is," said McConnell. "I have explained it numerous times."

Noel Waite asked McConnell to explain it to those in attendance, stating, "the citizens of Hiwassee would like to hear."

"That language repealed the prior planning ordinance in total," said McConnell of the document passed out by Noel Waite.

"No, it doesn't," Noel Waite said. "If you would like to read it, it doesn't repeal anything."

"I understand what it says, Mr. Waite," said McConnell. "I understand what it says, and I understand what it means, and I understand what it was intended to do. And I'm going to give the council my opinion, which is, it repealed the prior planning ordinance in its entirety, because it was an ordinance in whole - we repealed the entire ordinance in whole with the Comprehensive Planning Ordinance."

Noel Waite asked for clarification on where the document said repeal.

"I'm not going to have a legal debate with you today," said McConnell. "If you want to have your attorneys contact me, have them contact me. My opinion is that the language you just presented repealed the Towns County Subdivision Ordinance in its entirety. That's my opinion."

Before the Waites' allotted time was up, Noel Waite asked that he be shown "one document, one sentence that says it repeals the whole thing," stating further that "it says it repeals any conflicts - what we would like to know is, what are the conflicts?"

Noel Waite was informed that he had used his time, at which point he concluded his presentation to allow Jan Waite to make her presentation.

It was at this point in the meeting that some confusion arose regarding the Council Rules for Conduct.

A few residents in attendance asked to be heard following Noel Waite's presentation.

"No, we only have comments for the people that are on the agenda," said McConnell.

Many members in the audience expressed their displeasure on this point, before Jan Waite asserted that it was her turn to give a presentation.

"You requested to have time together, you didn't request individually," said McConnell.

"No, that is Noel Waite, and I'm Jan Waite, and it's my turn to speak," said Jan Waite before affirming that it was her house that was being built next to the alleged RV park.

"We're going to obey the rules," said Stancil. "I know you think they don't apply to you, but you have a total of 5 minutes for both of you - you all have used six."

Jan Waite began to explain how she had posted a notice to be included on the agenda when Stancil asked Mayor Mathis if she would like to have Jan Waite removed.

"I prepared a presentation," said Jan Waite. "No - I cannot believe this."

More disruption occurred at this point in the meeting, as residents continued to express their disapproval of the implementation of the rules, which require that speakers submit a presentation request "in writing, in a timely manner, and list the topic being addressed."

"Everybody added together get 15 (minutes)," said Stancil. "That's the way it's been done for years. That's the rules and regulations of the council. That's been adopted. It's in effect. It's the same rules and regulations used by the board of education. It's a total of 15. You all have exceeded 15."

Expressing her disbelief once more over being removed from the meeting, Jan Waite agreed to leave and was followed to the exit by two Hiwassee police officers that had previously approached her to ensure her ejection.

Many residents in attendance voiced their displeasure with the decision to have Jan Waite removed, and roughly half of those in the audience left the meeting.

Noel Waite remained for the entirety of the meeting, and item 7 from the agenda passed.

All Hiwassee City Council Members but Stephen Smith, who was not present at the meeting, voted in favor of the "Resolution Ratifying the Hiwassee 2010 Comprehensive Planning Ordinance and actions taken pursuant thereto."

VFW...from Page 1

to our Nation's History and Future."

In order to compete, high school students must record their essays on either an audiocassette or a CD to be between three and five minutes, and the essay is based on both content and performance.

Smith's essay is headed to state level competition, which accepts one submission per VFW district. She will find out in mid-January if she gets the opportunity to go to Washington D.C. to compete nationally for a chance to win thousands of dollars in scholarship money.

Towns County Middle School students competed in the Patriot's Pen Essay.

Kendall Floyd won first place, which came with \$200 in prize money and a plaque.

Chase Rogers took second in the local leg of the competition, winning \$100 and a plaque.

Christian Bauer, Madalynn Thomas, Erika Spano and Emily Grace Williams also competed, and were awarded \$10 apiece.

The theme for this year's Patriot's Pen essay was "Why I Appreciate America's Veterans," and students were required to type a 300-400 word essay.

For the Teacher Awards, Towns County Schools again performed admirably within the VFW District 2, taking two of the top three honors.

VFW Post 7807 awarded Candice Thompson Elementary School Teacher of the Year, which came with \$200 in prize money and a plaque. Thompson, of Hiwassee, also won first at the district level, which means she is heading to the state level of the competition.

Gina Chambers of Towns County Middle School was se-



lected by the VFW Post 7807 as Middle School Teacher of the Year, and was awarded \$200 and a plaque. She placed third in the district competition.

"We are very proud of the students and teachers who made

entries," said Greenwald, who coordinates the contest locally. "We are one of the smallest schools in our district and were all judged by District 2 in the three contests: Voice of Democracy, Patriot's Pen and

Teachers Award."

All prize money at the local level of the competition was provided by VFW Post 7807. The Towns County Herald congratulates all participants in this year's contests.

Farewell...from Page 1

about the kids," said Phillips. "It's all about the students - this is our future, and they're what's going to be taking care of us one day."

But Phillips and Anderson couldn't have accomplished all that they have over the years without the support of area residents in electing them to office.

"I just want to thank the community for putting their faith in me and giving me the opportunity to serve," said Phillips.

Anderson has served a total of 14 years, with two of those years coming in as a replacement for a past board member who decided to run for another elected office midway through the cycle.

"It has been a great experience," said Anderson. "I've met some wonderful

friends that I would never have met before, probably, especially some of the administrators that we've brought in here. I think we've brought some good people into the community, some of the superintendents and principals that have become well accepted."

Unlike Phillips, who served the three allowed consecutive terms before necessitating a break in the cycle, Anderson could have run again but decided not to because he no longer has children in the schools.

"Basically, they're out of school, and it's time to let someone else come in," said Anderson. "Emily and I both, and the board, too, feel that the school is in great condition, and it's time for maybe some new people on the board and to give other people a voice, also."

Chamber...from Page 1

economic impact on our community, as well as an improvement to our quality of life, the citizens here. And I want to give President Cox a big thank you for all you do."

The annual meeting also served as a chance for the membership to meet and greet the new board members they elected to serve in 2015: Carmolita Haney of Mountain Realty, Rex Strickland of United Community Bank, Dr. Joey Arencibia of Georgia Vision Center, David Sanford of Crane Creek Vineyards and Lee Durham of



Candace Lee
Hiwassee Antique Mall.
New chamber of com-

merce officers for 2015 are: Dehler as chairman, John Allen as chairman-elect, Charles Burton as treasurer and Liz Green as secretary.

"Ladies and gentlemen, you've all been elected to positions of leadership and trust in the chamber by virtue of your leadership skills and your connections in the county," said Young Harris College President Cathy Cox. "The chamber is going to be relying on you to take strong positions to bring good business connections and businesses in the county, and

to do good things for Towns County."

Outgoing chairman Todd Turner spoke words of encouragement near the end of the meeting.

"I feel really good about where our chamber is going," said Turner. "We've got a real clear, strategic vision for next year. We're going to be focused on bringing more within the county that will help our businesses, promoting the county more and also to provide more benefits to you, the membership."

Behrens...from Page 1

on TV that I haven't been able to come to.

"Towns County just has a phenomenal program for all of that, and sometimes I think we overlook that. They're doing a great job, and kids love it, parents love it - they're just doing very good."

Dr. Behrens will also be departing his leadership role as interim superintendent at month's end, as Dr. Darren Berrong takes over starting in January as the new Towns County Superintendent of Schools.

And as Dr. Berrong leaves the middle school to take the superintendent post, former Towns County High School teacher David Turner will be coming aboard as principal at the middle school.

"The transition schedule is on time, everything is working perfectly," said Dr. Behrens. "Dr. Berrong and Mr. Turner will start the first of January. I'm very excited about the choice, and I think you all will do a great job. It's kind of rewarding to look at folks that you've worked with, and you guys are

doing a great job."

Dr. Behrens continued to express his optimism on the future of the school system in light of so much transition.

"I do want to say that the system is in excellent condition academically, athletically, and I have to say that as far as the personnel and the rest of the folks that are involved here, I have nothing but good things to say," said Dr. Behrens.

Dr. Behrens will be staying on board through March to assist Dr. Berrong in anything he may require once assuming

the title of superintendent.

And this will be the second time Dr. Behrens has said goodbye to the board of education, as he served as Towns County Schools' superintendent just prior to the arrival of Melissa Williams.

"To the board, I appreciate this opportunity to come back and work with old friends," said Dr. Behrens. "You don't get to do that very often, so thank you very much. If there's ever anything I can do in the future, please don't hesitate to call."

Pennies...from Page 1

"I could remember as a kid, I was the kid on the recipient end of someone caring and giving back," said Principal Gibson. "I grew up with nothing, I grew up poor as dirt. Seventh grade, I couldn't afford the basketball shoes. I remember a local businessman buying my shoes, and those memories I've never forgotten."

Pennies for Presents serves a dual purpose: one, it teaches children the importance of giving back, and two, it allows children to have fun doing just that.

"We had a competition, and we set them up in the lunch room, and you put pennies in,"

said Principal Gibson. "And if you put coins, silver - nickels, dimes, quarters or dollar bills, they canceled the pennies. So, it was to see who could get the most points."

Now that Christmas is almost upon us, the time has come to put Pennies for Presents to work.

On Dec. 12, class officers, four from each grade, took part in a fieldtrip to Buford, where they spent the donated money at Toys R Us and the Mall of Georgia.

"I tell you, I'm excited," said Principal Gibson. "I'm excited for our school and what we've done, and that it's giving back to this community."

The message seems to have been fully received by students in the school system, and it is hard not to be moved by the spirit of giving among Towns County's youth.

"We're not in a wealthy town," said Principal Gibson. "Specifically, if you look at the local students, not our summer vacationers - we're over 60 percent free and reduced lunch here. Assistant Principal Erica Chastain and I would sit up there at lunch and we'd see these kids put a dollar bill in or pennies here, or bring their piggy bank and empty it."

"And we sit here and look and say, that's a kid that

could easily be on this list that we need to adopt for Christmas. This kid comes from nothing - look at this kid giving back."

Towns County's Senior Class Officers for 2014 are: Angel Benedict, Kayla Davis, Carly Gilfilian and Karlie Albach.

Junior officers are: Adam Penland, Taylor Underwood, Meagan Corbin and Bailey Crawford.

Sophomore officers are: Nicholas McConnell, Kirsten Ledford, Jade Ledford and Ashley Smith.

Freshman officers are: PrChase Williams, Taralee Arrowood, Hayley Stowers and Sara Beth Hobbs.