

ALDERMEN
FROM PAGE 1

“It could solve a problem that we’ve had a fair number of citizens complain about,” Gist said. The idea is also appealing, Gist said, because of the potential for the state to pick up the tab, and because if the design isn’t working it can be undone easily.

“It’s just paint,” she said. “If we were going in and rebuilding stuff, that would be different.”

In other action Tuesday night, the board approved a set of legislative priorities, including new requirements being pushed by the state League of Municipalities for counties that change their sales-tax distributions. Municipal leaders in Orange County have kept a wary eye on the county’s budget plans ever since the possibility was raised last year that the county might change its sales-tax distribution formula to help fill its budget gap. Carrboro Town Manager Steve Stewart said the town could see as much as \$1 million in sales-tax revenue dry up as a result.

The league, which lobbies legislators on behalf of its member towns and cities, wants the state to require counties to hold a public hearing before implementing a change in the distributions. It would also prevent the changes from taking effect for a year and require them to be phased in over four years.

And since February marks the end of a number of terms on the town’s advisory boards, Tuesday night’s meeting was also marked by a slew of appointments and reappointments. They include:

- Board of Adjustment — Sriv Navaratnam;
- Planning Board — Damon Seils, Michael Rodgers, John Killeen and Susan Poulton;
- Appearance Commission — Tom Wiltberger;
- Transportation Advisory Board — Heidi Perry, Kurt Stolke and Terra Curtis;
- Recreation & Parks Commission — Jonah Garson, Gini Bell and Jaimee Watts;
- Human Services Commission — Seth Maid and Earleen Burch;
- Economic Sustainability Commission — Terri Turner, Brian Russell and Christopher Stephenson;
- Environmental Advisory Board — Dana Stidham, Nina Butler and Bruce Sinclair;
- Northern Transition Area Advisory Committee — Jay Bryan; and
- Arts Committee — Steph Russ and Laura Korch.

HITT
FROM PAGE 1

At times, Hitt struggled to stay on his birding agenda, and more than once had to resist the urge to hike through an Arizona canyon or stop at a local eatery, in his pursuit of the next bird.

Hitt first became fond of birding as a twenty-something backpacker on a trip through the desert in Texas. A fellow hiker handed him a pair of binoculars and told him to see what he could see, and that was it.

“I kind of got hooked,” he said. A number of years later, Hitt found himself spending less time birding and more time working — eventually as president of Whole Foods — and about 15 years passed before he was able to get back to birding. A few years ago, Hitt had the idea to do a Big Year, and off he went.

During the first six months of last year, Hitt spent a mere 20 nights at home. In 2010 he drove more than 65,000 miles and flew more than 80,000. He walked 332 miles, took 23 boat trips and spent about \$40,000.

But for the first half of the year, Hitt, trying to stay true to his slow-birding mantra, chose not to chase birds. That is to say, when a rare bahama mockingbird turned up in Florida in May, Hitt didn’t make the trip, nor did he travel to Texas when a roadside hawk was spotted. Instead, he focused on being in optimal locations.

“If you’re going to see as many birds as possible, you’ve got to figure out where they’re going to be,” Hitt said. Southeast Arizona, the Texas Valley south of Houston and Southern Florida “are the three meccas” for birding.

By July, the birder had 632 species under his belt and was well on his way to a Big Year. The second half of his year was a bit more challenging, but the longest period of time Hitt passed without seeing a bird was still only about a week.

“The birds are going to be on their own schedule and then show up when they show up,” he said.

So during the latter half of 2010, Hitt decided to chase the rare birds that showed up across the country — a rare taiga bean goose from Asia in Southern California, a Cuban peewee in Florida, an orange-billed nightingale thrush in South Dakota and so on. Those chases were often exhausting; in a single 48-hour period, Hitt traveled to San Francisco, Florida and Arizona.

Hitt’s wife accompanied him on some of his trips last year, he said, “but birding is a full-time job.”

On many trips, Hitt arrived at his destination late at night, only to wake a few hours later hoping to catch an early-morning glance of a rare bird.

He spent many a morning on 5 a.m. stakeouts, waiting for birds that sometimes didn’t show up for hours.

But Hitt rarely was unsuccessful on his birding excursions, and he had only one failed attempt at



Chris Hitt spotted three greater flamingos in the Everglades in August as part of his “Big Year.” PHOTO BY CHRIS HITT

seeing a particular bird last year. Returning from a trip to Italy in November, he heard about an ivory gull in California, but missed seeing that bird by six hours.

“The only bird I ever really missed all year was because I wasn’t here,” he said. He wasn’t frustrated by the miss, though. There were other birds he could have seen if he’d chosen to chase for the first half of the year, which would have brought his total to 709.

“I’ve seen some birders tearing their hair out because they can’t find a bird,” he said.

But for Hitt, stressing about a missed bird would have defeated the purpose.

“I set out to have fun, and I did,” he said. “I loved the year. I’m glad it’s over. “I met a lot of great people. I saw a lot of old friends,” he said. “It was a travel adventure with a focus on birding.”

Now back at his home outside Carrboro, Hitt likes to bird around waterfowl impoundments off N.C. 54 and at the Mason Farm Biological Reserve. Winter is a slower time of year for birding, but it’s not about how many birds he spots.

“I just love being outside,” Hitt said. Besides, “there are always birds to look at.”

REDISTRIC
FROM PAGE 1

Board members Mike Kelley, Jamezetta Bedford and Mia Burroughs voted against the plan.

“Certainly all of the prior students at Morris Grove were redistricted to Morris Grove,” Bedford said, adding that students at Morris Grove have continuously met federal achievement guidelines. “Moving them I don’t see as much of a hazard as others do.”

Burroughs said that she was confident in Estes Hills’ ability to meet the needs of the stu-

dents, adding that she felt that staff had already looked at all of the options for Morris Grove.

“We have a very qualified staff who worked through this in great detail,” Burroughs said. “I feel comfortable that they have turned over every stone.”

Under the approved plan:

- students in Winmore and Claremont I will be reassigned to Seawell Elementary School;
- new developments Claremont II and Litchfield will be reassigned to McDougle Elementary School; and
- Homestead Twins, another new development, will be reassigned to Seawell.

Rising fifth-graders in those areas will be offered the option to remain at Morris Grove, but transportation will not be provided for them.

Plans for Glenwood

The board also voted 5-2 to approve a plan to ease overcrowding at Glenwood Elementary by allocating \$100,000 for the installation of a mobile classroom and limiting the number of non-Glenwood seats in the school’s Chinese dual-language program. Under the plan, eight of 12 English-speaking slots will be reserved for Glenwood students, with the remaining four

reserved for non-Glenwood students. Eight of 12 Chinese-speaking slots will be reserved for Glenwood students, with four reserved for non-Glenwood students.

The current program does not reserve seats for Glenwood students. According to administration, the change could reduce Glenwood enrollment by 40 students over six years.

“I would love for this to be a district-wide program, as I would love for the Spanish dual-language program to be district-wide, and I think that we can go there eventually,” Hamilton said. “But I think right now my high-

est priority is to save the seed corn and make sure that we keep this program in a way that it’s sustainable and that we can build later when the economy is better.”

Board members Mike Kelley and Annetta Streater voted against the plan.

“I am a little bit disappointed that we would be moving in the wrong direction in terms of making this less of a district-wide program. I think that that’s the problem we have with the Spanish program and I think that we can hopefully avoid killing the program to save the concept of a district-wide program,” Kelley said.

OBITUARIES



Joyce Peck

Joyce Bainton Peck was born in New Haven, Conn., on Sept. 17, 1927 to Roland Herbert Bainton and Ruth Woodruff Bainton, the middle child of five siblings: Olive, Herbert (deceased), herself, Cedric and

baby Ruth (deceased). The family raised goats, chickens and organic vegetables in Woodbridge, Conn., with homemade “Heidi” murals in their basement.

Joyce completed her undergraduate studies at Smith College in Massachusetts and earned a master’s degree in education at North Adams State Teachers’ College and a master’s degree in music at UNC-CH. She taught in the voice departments at UNC-CH and Duke in an adjunct capacity. Organizations like University Women, the Chapel Hill Music Teachers’ Association, The Three Arts and the Justice and Peace Commission of the Church of Reconciliation filled her busy days most recently.

Gardening, child care and vocal pedagogy were mainstays in Joyce’s life while she was a talented vocal soloist balancing personal career options and attending to her family’s needs. As fiancées, Joyce and her husband-to-be, William Jay Peck, went to work in the German refugee camps after the Holocaust. Together, they also responded to growing Hispanic needs in a Mayan partnership, leading mission trips to Guatemala featuring 23 annual weaving sales, the profits from which support the work of indigenous people. Raised Quaker and congregational, she heartily embraced her in-laws’ Presbyterian roots by joining, with Bill, the Church of Reconciliation, a

Chapel Hill congregation committed to racial equality, in the 1960s.

Her love of the Spanish language included her appreciation of the local Tertulia group, classes with Rosa Perlmutter and film gatherings at Chicle in Carrboro. She loved donating to charities like Oxfam, CROP Walk and the Guatemalan support group of the Church of Reconciliation.

She is survived by her husband of 60 years, UNC-CH Professor Emeritus of the Department of Religious Studies Dr. William Jay Peck, of Massachusetts. They raised four children: Christopher Martin Peck (deceased), Timothy Bainton Peck, Steven Dudley Peck

(deceased) and Kathryn Melissa Peck. She enjoyed “grandmother bliss” 14 and a half years with Guatemalan adoptee Alyce Peck Whitesides, a current Chapel Hill High School freshman with wonderful parents, Tim Peck and S. Janet Whitesides.

Joyce rallied hard for six weeks with ovarian and peritoneal cancer and was surrounded by her family.

A memorial service will be held at the Church of Reconciliation on Saturday, March 5, 2011 at 2 p.m., led by Rev. Mark Davidson. In lieu of flowers, special family messages and quotes for compilation should be sent to churchrec@churchrec.org with joycepeck in the subject line.

Ruth Barbour

Ruth Ester Barbour, 77, passed away at home Friday, Feb. 4, 2011. A loving wife and mother, born Jan. 9, 1934, she is survived by her husband of 57 years, Robert Earl Barbour, of Holly Springs, N.C.; her two sons, Tony Barbour of Saxapahaw, N.C., and Jeffrey Barbour of Cape May, N.J.; and her daughter, Billie Whaley of Panama City, Fla. Ruth was also survived by two grandchildren, Donald Barbour and Jamie McWhorter; two great grandchildren, Stephanie and Cierra; and two sisters, Jean Stevens of Milton, Fla., and Mary Dzik of Keesville, N.Y.

In lieu of flowers, we ask you to give a donation to your hospice.

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CRYPTOQUOTE ANSWER: Fitness

you really have to stay in shape. My grandmother started walking five miles a day when she was sixty-seven. I don't know where the heck she is.

- Ellen DeGeneres

“Country Cookin’ Gone Cool ... Then: bait shop and juke joint. Now: crazed folk-art animals on the roof, post-graduates in the kitchen. Waiters deconstruct the War Between the States as they serve your jalapeno-cheese hush puppies and oyster-and-filet mignon scalawags. Get in line for Crook’s signature dish: Shrimp and Grits with bacon, scallions, and mushrooms.” —Travel & Leisure

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