

COASTAL OBSERVER

Vol. XLIII No. 2

Pawleys Island, South Carolina ~ June 20, 2024

\$1.50

SCHOOLS

Lock 'em up: District looks at cellphone policy options

BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI
COASTAL OBSERVER

The Georgetown County School District is at risk of losing its state funding if it doesn't come up with a policy that keeps students from using cellphones in schools.

A proviso in the state budget, which has not been passed and signed by the governor, bans students from having the devices during the school day.

"They're putting us over a barrel," School Board Chairman Bill Gaskins said. "We have to implement this."

Board Member Patti Hammel questioned the definition of "school day" in the proviso.

"Does that mean they're to be left off campus?" she asked. "Are we going to get some guidance into what the legislators were really saying about those kind of things?"

Hammel wondered how students involved in after-school extracurricular activities would be notified about schedule changes. And how those students would notify their parents.

Superintendent Keith Price said the school day is defined as being between the tardy bell and the dismissal bell.

The district recently formed a "cellphone policy review committee" to get feedback about possible policy changes.

One of the things the committee is looking at is whether the policy should extend beyond cellphones to smart watches, ear buds and iPads.

"Being able to provide exact examples of what is allowed and what's not allowed is what our goal is at this point," Assistant Superintendent Bethany Giles said.

The committee is also looking at options to store cellphones during instructional time, such as Yondr pouches, which have a lock on them. Students would then have to use an unlocking device to retrieve their phone. Another option would be something hanging on the wall of a classroom to store phones.

The school board will also have to decide on what types of discipline will apply to students caught with cellphones. In the district's code of conduct, there are three levels of offenses and the punishments increase with each level.

The district recently learned that legally it can not confiscate cellphones for extended periods of time.



Photos by Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

LAND USE

County runs the numbers on impact of new maps on residential density

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

Consultants are expected to provide data on what the Waccamaw Neck will look like when it's built out before a draft of the future land use plan comes up for discussion before Georgetown County Council next week.

The county is seven years behind schedule in adopting a 10-year update to the land use element of its comprehensive plan. It hired the Columbia-based firm Boudreaux last year to complete the process after years of false starts.

The Planning Commission last month adopted the update in a 4-3 vote before hundreds of Waccamaw Neck residents who opposed the revised plan because they didn't think it did enough to reduce the density of future development.

The citizens group Keep It Green analyzed the future land use maps that are part of the element and estimated that the revisions could add over 5,000



Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

Ryan Bland, center, during a public input session. He heard a lot about density.

homes to what the current maps envision.

The maps themselves don't determine what can be built. That is governed by the zoning ordinance. But the county plans to revise its zoning code this year.

Ryan Bland, a senior
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Celebrating Juneteenth

Steve Williams, a local historian, recounts the history of Magnolia Beach Club, a Black-owned resort that operated from the late 1930s to the mid-1950s, during a Juneteenth program at Holy Cross-Faith Memorial Episcopal Church. Below left, Della Prioleau sings jazz tunes from the Magnolia Beach era. At right, the Village Group Children's Singers perform spirituals. At bottom, the audience relaxes to music under the oaks. The program was sponsored by the Pawleys Island Festival of Music and Art.



Charles Swenson/Coastal Observer

A public comment period ends today on the project.

Planning staff ready to approve 46-unit townhouse development

BY CHARLES SWENSON
COASTAL OBSERVER

A townhouse development on Petigru Drive is poised to receive conceptual approval from Georgetown County planning staff.

But that could change if additional public comment is received today.

The 46-unit Sweet Grass West plan is the first to be approved since the county changed its process to eliminate site plan review by the Planning Commission and County Council for multi-family developments that already comply with existing zoning.

The staff now reviews the plans for compliance with

county regulations and makes the final decision. It also solicits public input, which has been done through a hearing before the commission.

For Sweet Grass West, the public comment period ends at 5 p.m. The staff will present its report to the commission at its 5:30 p.m. meeting. No action is required by the commission.

One group that plans to comment is Keep It Green, which has brought three lawsuits over townhouse project approvals in the Parkersville area.

"There's all kinds of opposition from the adjoining landowners," said Cindy Person, chief counsel for Keep It Green

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WACCAMAW LIBRARY | Friends book sale

Between the pages, an unusual find emerges for fundraiser

BY CHRIS SOKOLOSKI
COASTAL OBSERVER

A letter signed by Archer Huntington in 1948 is one of the silent auction items available at this year's Friends of the Waccamaw Library summer book sale.

"Archer was writing to the sister of one of the stone sculptors," said Bea Mantoni, the Friends board member who is

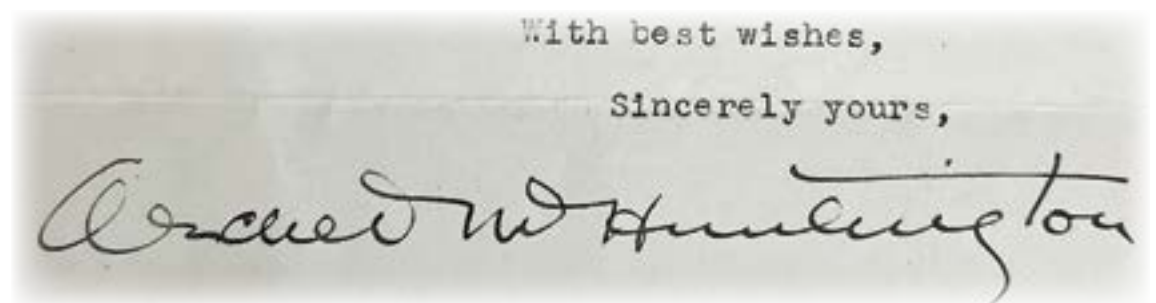
overseeing the event.

The letter, which was found in a book donated to the Friends, has been authenticated by Brookgreen Gardens staff, Mantoni added.

Huntington and his wife, the sculptor Anna Hyatt Huntington, founded Brookgreen Gardens in 1932 after buying four former rice plantations.

"He has a very distinctive

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Friends of the Waccamaw Library

The letter signed by Archer M. Huntington will be sold in a silent auction.

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