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Local Council faces island decision

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By PHIL MURRAY
Staff Writer

NEWPORT NEWS — New Port Island has reached a crossroads. The proposed 406-acre island for port facilities survived an initial environmental study released Wednesday, but only by moving the island's location and making the project more expensive.

New City Council must decide whether to continue funding an extensive consultants' report needed to apply for various permits that would allow construction of the controversial island port.

Within two months, city staff members will ask council to come up with at least \$100,000 to keep the consultants at work.

The city already has paid the consultants \$175,000 and has a contract with them worth a total of \$245,000.

City Council will have to weigh its options very carefully, said Stephen Huxley, the city's assistant development director who is coordinating the island project. "A lot will happen between now and the end of the year."

One of the most critical elements in whether the city decides to continue with the island efforts will be the position taken by the Virginia Port Authority, a state agency that oversees port facilities in Hampton Roads.

The port authority has identified New Port Island as a possible site for a major expansion of state port facilities in about 10

years, Port officials, however, so far have not committed themselves to any of the sites.

Newport News has continued paying for studies hoping that the port authority would assume sponsorship of the project.

"We are going to need the full support of the VPA and the governor," said councilman Joseph Ritchie. "We still have a lot left to do."

An environmental study released Wednesday found that an island located in Hampton Roads off Newport News Point likely would harm oyster and clam populations. But the study went on to say that preliminary tests showed moving the location farther offshore to a spot that straddles the Newport

News and Hampton line would have less impact on the shellfish.

The new location would require building a trestle about a mile longer than originally planned in order to connect the island with rail yards and interstate highways at downtown Newport News. The new location also would require a longer access channel from the main shipping channel and would need more fill material to build up the island, which would be in deeper waters.

Port authority estimates put the cost of New Port Island at \$104 million. The longer trestle could add \$8 million to \$10 million to the cost at today's prices.

J. Robert Bray, executive vice president of the port authority, said he would like to see the island project move forward. ■ See Island, Page C4



Possible drowning
Dave Iddings of the York County Fire Department holds Sniffer, an air scent rescue dog, on a boat in Waller Mill Reservoir on Thursday. They were looking for the body of a person believed drowned, but the search was called off after eight hours. A man calling for help had been seen in the water that morning. See the story on Page C3.

Rope marks, fuel found on victims

By RAY BETZNER
Staff Writer

NOFOLK — Rope marks and petroleum fuel were on the bodies of two young women found dead almost a month ago on the Colonial Parkway. A special agent for the FBI said Thursday that rope marks were found around the necks of Rebecca Ann Dowaki, 21, a College of William and Mary student, and Catherine Marian Thomas, 27, a Norfolk stockbroker. The two women were found Oct. 12 in a 1980 Honda Accord owned by Mr. Thomas, which had been driven or pushed off the parkway near the York River.

Agent Jack Wagner would not speculate if the women were strangled with the rope before their throats were slit from ear to ear. He said the rope apparently was used by the assailant or assailants. Petroleum fluid also was found on their bodies and on the car's interior, Wagner said. He refused comment when asked if the petroleum was set fire.

The FBI is still waiting for the results of forensic tests done on the two bodies, although Wagner would not speculate on when those results would be released. Until those results are available, Wagner said he would not be able to say when or where the two women were killed, or the exact cause of death.

The two were last seen together Oct. 9 on the W&M campus. Mr. Dowaki, who had a computer background, agreed off the college computer system about 9:25 p.m. That was the last record of the two until their bodies were found three days later.

Wagner repeated an earlier belief that the murders were not connected with the college. Their bodies were clothed when found and money remained in their wallets. No motive has been given for the killings.

Earlier news reports that said Mr. Dowaki called her mother Oct. 10 may be inaccurate, Wagner said. "We have strong feelings the conversation did take place, but we can't establish that it was the 10th," he said.

Wagner said the York River has been dragged for evidence, but would not comment when asked if a wagon or rope was pulled from the river. The FBI released new photographs Thursday, hoping that different pictures of the two would stimulate the memory of someone who may have seen the women. Mr. Thomas was a redhead, whose hair was slightly longer than that shown in the latest photograph. Wagner said the picture of Mr. Dowaki, who had dark, curly hair, was a good likeness taken during the summer.

Wagner said the two women were friends and "we think we have established" how they met, but he refused to elaborate. Meanwhile, psychologists working at the FBI headquarters in Quantico were being fed information to come up with a profile of killer or killers. Wagner said the psychological profiles have been completed. ■ See Deaths, Page C3

Firms battle for downtown study contract

By DOUGLAS ASHLEY
Staff Writer

NEWPORT NEWS — For 3½ hours Thursday, most City Council members listened to eager consulting firms make their pitches for a \$53,000 contract to conduct a marketing study for downtown renovation plans.

No decision was made on the contract. But council members left reassured that a market analysis would help them chart a more navigable course for revitalization efforts in the city's lower section.

"This is due. We need an analysis of the market conditions and what may or may not apply" to the city's Newport Centre redevelopment plan, Councilman Joseph C. Ritchie said.

Four of several firms that had bid on the proposed contract made their presentations to council and city staff during an informal morning session at City Hall. Vice Mayor Jerome Hoggie did not attend the meeting.

Mayor Jesse M. Ratley said afterward the hoped council members could decide on which firm should conduct the study before Dec. 18, when they will meet again for a work session to review the Newport Centre plan. Mrs. Ratley also left open the possibility of additional meetings by council.

"I think they were all good presentations," Mrs. Ratley said. "And all seemed to agree that waterfront development is attractive."

The four firms vying for the contract are: Plan-Tec, an 11-year-old economic and consulting firm with headquarters in Jacksonville, Fla.; Land Design-Research, a 20-year-old consulting firm specializing in planning design and development economics and based in Columbia, Md.; Economics Research Associates, a 26-year-old firm in Virginia, Va.; and Halcyon Ltd., a 10-year-old marketing, management and development consulting firm from Washington.

■ See Renovation, Page C4

Judge refuses bond for abduction suspect

By STEVEN WINGFIELD

BLE OF WIGHT — Despite a tearful plea bond was refused Thursday for a Smithfield man accused of abducting and trying to kill a female jogger just before dawn Oct. 31.

Kenneth Carl Salyers wept after General District Judge Robert Edwards ordered him to remain in the Suffolk Jail without bond. Pleading with the judge to reconsider, Salyers, a father of three, said he would lose his job at Newport News Shipbuilding if he were not released soon.

A magistrate remanded him to jail without bond after his arrest Oct. 31, and Edwards said that decision was proper, based on the seriousness of the charges against him.

Salyers, 27, of the 300 block of Main Street, is charged with abduction, attempted murder and maiming of Judith Spencer. Mrs. Spencer was pulled into a car as she was running on Jericho Road in Smithfield, cut with a knife and, after she escaped from the car, beaten with a crowbar as her 5-month-old child lay.

Mrs. Spencer, a 5-foot-1, 38-year-old Smithfield resident who lives only a block from Salyers, at a few feet behind him in the 6-foot-1, 250-pound man pleaded with the judge to set a bond. Mrs. Spencer had a blackened eye, and the stab wounds were on her neck. ■ See Bond, Page C8

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TNCC dean apparently cleared of serious wrongdoing

By DONALD LOEFF
Staff Writer

HAMPTON — A recent state audit of the dean of student services at Thomas Nelson Community College found no evidence of misappropriation of student activity money.

The special review, which was released Thursday to members of the State Board for Community Colleges, included some suggestions for improvement in the students services department and some mild reprimands of some of the policies of Thomas C. Barrett, TNCC's dean of student services.

Although most of the suggestions in the report apply specifically to complaints made by TNCC student leaders about Barrett, the review apparently clears Barrett of any serious wrongdoing.

"With the exception of the suggestions and recommendations in the report, it appears that the concerns were of a personal nature rather than a breakdown in controls," the report said.

The audit was conducted last month to investigate allegations against Barrett made by several current and former student leaders at TNCC.

The report was prepared by an auditor from the Virginia Community College System of five in Richmond, who was

report on state audit

called in by the former acting president, Donald E. Puyser.

The students alleged that Barrett had pushed through expense vouchers for activities sponsored by the Student Government Association without the signature of the association president.

The students — current and former officers in the association and editors of the campus newspaper — also said that Barrett had been unresponsive and antagonistic toward students in

recent years and that he gives preferential treatment to the TNCC karate club, of which he is the sponsor and adviser.

To prepare the report, the auditor talked with current and former student leaders, administrators and faculty who are involved in student activities, and looked at student services records dating from July 1984.

The report calls for Barrett to resign as sponsor of the karate club, saying his position is a conflict of interest.

It also recommends enforcing or changing some TNCC and state policies, including many that student leaders say Barrett had violated.

For example, the report says many books that were bought by TNCC clubs with money budgeted by the library were not checked out by the library sys-

tem. Most of those books were purchased by Barrett and the karate club.

The report suggests that books bought with library funds should be checked in the library.

It also suggests that most payments for student services purchased by Barrett should be made directly to the vendor, rather than reimbursed to Barrett.

In some cases pointed out by students, it was Barrett who was being reimbursed for purchases.

New TNCC President Robert G. Temple Jr. said he has called for a "full staff review" of the report.

TNCC staff will look at each suggestion in the report and make a recommendation to Temple, he said.

"On the whole, the report indicated to me that we are not doing it as well as we could. We're not doing it as well as we could. We're not doing it as well as we could." ■ See TNCC, Page C4