

NEWS

REZONING From page 3

project is not in the best interest of the cemetery. Michele Malone opposed the proposed project. She said residents of Ebony want to preserve the tranquility of the area. She said she moved from up north to get away from congestion. She said no matter how you dress it up its like putting lipstick on a pig, it might look good but it is still a pig. She asked the members to help the residents keep the rural and agricultural atmosphere. Malone said Dollar General doesn't fit. She ended by saying Ebony is a community.

Lisa Conner also expressed opposition to the project. Her concern also is light pollution. She said light could be intrusive to surrounding property owners. Conner went on to say that Ebony has a sense of place, referring to a caring community. She objects to Dollar General's aggressive growth pattern calling it invasive. Conner closed by saying the community has two general stores and questioned if the community of approximately 400 people could sustain a new store. Conner said Bracey is only 10 miles away and that Ebony has not been identified for potential economic growth.

Wendy Nash credited Dollar General for supporting literacy. She also applauded them for saying they would use local contractors, but said she would like to see them put that in writing because that is not always the case. Nash called attention to the community's dignity likening it to "Mayberry" or Mt. Airy, N.C., referring to the popular TV show "Andy Griffith." The residents of the Ebony community are proud of the area and want it to continue being important to those that visit. She said she wants to preserve the pasture-land and agriculture.

Jessica Zubrod Wyatt opposes the Dollar General project saying the community already has two established businesses. She said if it's not broke, don't fix it referring to keeping things the way they were. John Zubrod who represents the Meherrin District on the Brunswick County Board of Supervisors spoke as a resident of Ebony and expressed opposition to

the proposed rezoning. "I am not standing here this evening trying to influence your decision as a supervisor, rather I am here as a long term resident and business owner in Ebony, having called it my home for 35 years. My daughters and now my grandbabies grew up eating Ebony General Hotdogs. I myself am partial to Melissa's BLT sandwiches and French fries. My doctor isn't, but I am. "My first issue with this rezoning proposal is safety. The intersection of Hendricks Mill Road, Robinson Ferry Road and Ebony Road is way overdue for rebuilding, however VDOT keeps putting it off due to the relocation expense with the existing businesses. The existing traffic hazards are bad enough, without adding another parking lot entrance within 75 yards of it to increase the dangers.

"My second issue is the location itself. Ebony is a very quaint and historical community, one of the nicest in Brunswick County. The landowners have done a remarkable job bringing all the buildings back to restoration status. It has taken many years of hard work and extensive funding to get where we are today. There is no junk, no debris. I cannot say the same for the other local Dollar Generals that I drive by almost every day.

"Ebony consists of a post office, a fire department, 2 logging companies, an antique store, a construction company and 2 convenience stores. It also has a beautifully restored church and cemetery located alongside the property that is in question for rezoning tonight. That cemetery has many of my friends buried there. Do we really need a store like that located close by, with it's brightly shining all

night security lights, interrupting the peaceful serenity and tranquility of those grounds? "As a businessman and elected official, I have been preaching that Brunswick is open for business. I want the increased tax base. But it still must be a planned growth, always considering the benefits and impacts to the citizens. We have a Food Lion and Family Dollar 5 miles away, a Dollar General 8 miles away, along with another 9 miles away. Is another one really warranted here in Ebony?

"Another item is that I am also concerned about are the impacts to the 2 existing convenience stores. One of them has been known as the Food Lion of Ebony as long as I have lived here, they even sell T-shirts that say so. These stores support the community in many ways. If they are unable to maintain their margins due to increased competition and thereby forced to close, where will we go to fuel our cars, get the diesel for our tractors and kerosene for our heaters? When we need a hot biscuit first thing in the morning, or lunch after a day working in the field or while taking a break from hunting, where will we eat? When we need to check game in during hunting season, where will we go? Not to the Dollar General. "I don't feel the need for a Dollar General or any other store like it to be located in downtown Ebony. Go a mile away in any direction and build as a stand alone, but do not destroy the picturesque charm, beauty and strength of this very tightly knit community by allowing this to proceed. I therefore ask for your vote this evening in denying this request for rezoning," Zubrod stated.

For more information about the proposed project call the planning office at (434) 848-0882.

Lakeland to stage 'Christmas Belles'

If yuletide cheer is on Santa's list this year, let Lakeland help with a chance to enjoy some laugh out loud humor with their Southern Fried holiday production, "Christmas Belles."

For two weekends, starting Dec. 6, Lakeland takes theatre-goers into the world of the Futrelle sisters at the Tabernacle of the Lamb Church in Fayro, Texas. It's Christmas Eve, and everyone is working hard to make the Christmas program something to remember. The trio, described by a snobbish rival as the "fertile, the flirt and the felon," faces crisis after crisis as their plans fall apart in the most humorous of ways.

Honey Raye Futrelle, played by Leanne Patrick, dreams of grandeur for the annual Christmas production and hopes to spread the Christmas Spirit throughout the town. She really needs this play to succeed, as it is her one opportunity to improve her tarnished reputation. Her plans include a celebrity guest, special effects and a live sheep in the stable - a perfect recipe for disaster.

Sister Frankie, played by Maryann Boden, who already has twins, is experiencing a late life pregnancy with another set of twins on the way - and she's overdue.

Sister Twink, portrayed by Maryann Johnson, is the mistress of mayhem, having just gotten out of jail for accidentally setting fire to the trailer park, while setting fire to her boyfriend's NASCAR memorabilia. She

is plotting revenge against her ex-boyfriend while under the watchful eye of the sheriff - only it seems he's more intent on wooing, than incarcerating her.

The drama isn't limited to the sisters Futrelle. When food poisoning hits the cast hard, it opens the door for wealthy snob Patsy Price, played by Moira Underwood, to take on a lead role, and she plans to be the highlight of the show as she tells the Christmas story.

Pastor Justin, portrayed by David Lasky, plans to present an engagement ring to Frankie's daughter during the production, and Frankie's husband, Dub, played by Butch Hartman, who is supposed to play Santa, ends up passing a kidney stone.

This is Honey Raye's first year directing, having taken over that position from Miss Geneva Musgrave, portrayed by Rhonda Garner, who directed the program for 27 years. But the best-laid plans get waylaid as circumstances take over, and Miss Geneva is more than happy to announce each catastrophe to the group as she plots her return to power. With all this chaos unfolding, is there any way the show will go on?

"Christmas Belles" is directed by Nancy Mergahan. Play dates are Dec. 6, 7, 13 and 14, at 7:30 p.m. and Dec. 15 at 2:30 p.m. Doors open 45 prior to show times. Visit lakelandcac.org for tickets and more information, or call 252-586-3124.

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