

BOARD OF ALDERMEN GIVE OK TO INDOOR FIRING RANGE: PAGE 4

PASS CHRISTIAN

GAZEBO  GAZETTEA Weekly Newspaper for Residents and Friends of Pass Christian, Mississippi
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Oysters A Plenty!

Harbor Busy Again As Season Re-opens

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources reopened local oyster reefs this week after heavy rains in late November and December shut down the season for more than a month.

Pass Christian Harbor Master Willie Davis said on Wednesday that there were about 160 oyster boats working, and the oysters were plentiful and good-sized.

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*There are oysters a-plenty at the Pass Harbor.
Photo by Ron Daley, 2009*

Happy Holidays From Pass Christian!



There were plenty of chances to see Santa in Pass Christian last month — including at the Pass Christian Yacht Club, where Santa arrived by water, of course!

Photo by Jim Schmitt.

See Santa at the library, Mrs. Claus and her favorite elf, and more holiday stories on pages 14 & 15.

Commission Considers Downtown Initiatives

The Planning Commission will hold a workshop and a public hearing next week on a program that will begin to put in place the framework for some of the ideas envisioned for downtown Pass Christian by urban planner Andres Duany.

The program that will be discussed next week is one of three initiatives that the commission will consider; all three are intended to jumpstart development in the downtown by allowing businesses to open more quickly and less expensively than the current codes allow.

The proposed program that the Planning Commission will open to public discussion next week, called the “Mid-Term Transitional Zoning Proposal,” will ease certain requirements in T-5 zones in the downtown — essentially, the most urban, commercial areas of the city — to make it less expensive

(Continued on page 3)

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PASS CHRISTIAN NEWS BRIEFS

Police Make Arrests In Timber Ridge Burglaries

Pass Christian Police this week arrested two young men accused of burglarizing vehicles as they drove a golf cart throughout the Timber Ridge neighborhood.

On Jan. 3 at around 1:30 a.m., police responded to a call in the area of Fernwood Drive complaining that two men on a golf cart were driving around the neighborhood checking vehicle doors.

When an officer approached the men, they allegedly ditched the golf cart and ran into a wooded area, leaving stolen items on the cart, said Police Investigator James Stewart.

Both men were later picked up on the beach and were charged with one felony

count of grand larceny and eight felony counts of burglary of an auto. They were taken to the Harrison County Adult Detention Center. Jacob Willard Ricau, 18, was placed on a \$55,000 bond, and Dillan Thomas Fayette, also 18, was placed on a \$70,000 bond pending a hearing. Further charges are pending, Pass police said. Ricau is a resident of Baton Rouge and Fayette lives in Pass Christian.

Police Seek Information In Christmas Eve Crimes

Pass Christian police are seeking information about two crimes that took place on Christmas Eve.

In the first incident, the priest at Our Mother of Mercy Church was robbed in the rectory of the church. According to Pass Christian Police Investigator Michael Lally, a man knocked on the

door of the rectory at about 9:30 p.m. on Christmas Eve. Fr. Bartholomew Endslow, the 88-year-old long-time priest of Our Mother of Mercy Church, opened the door to greet who he thought was a parishioner. Investigator Lally said the man pushed Fr. Endslow against a wall, threatened him and took money out of his wallet. The suspect is described as a tall black male, wearing dark clothing. Fr. Endslow suffered some scrapes and cuts but is doing fine, Investigator Lally said.

Also on Christmas Eve, there was a burglary at Keel Lumber on Fleitas Avenue. Someone smashed through the front door and stole a small amount of money and a few power tools, Investigator Lally said.

Anyone with information about either of these crimes is asked to call the police department at 452-3301.

(Continued from page 1)

"Everybody is in good spirits," he said. "They're happy to be back working."

He estimates that between the boats and the associated businesses, such as the processing and packing plants, the re-opening of the oyster reefs has put some 2,000 people back to work.

The Mississippi Department of Marine Resources said on Tuesday that Areas I "B" and II "C" Conditionally Approved Waters were open to the



Randy Forte and George the pelican at the Pass Harbor.
Photo by Ron Daley

harvest of oysters at legal sunrise on Wednesday, Jan. 6. This includes St. Joe's and Square Handkerchief

reefs and portions of Henderson Point, Pass Christian, Pass Marianne and Telegraph reefs. — GG

(Continued from page 1)

to build in those areas.

The workshop will be Monday at 6:30 p.m. and the public hearing on Wednesday at 6 p.m., both at the Hancock Bank Community Room.

Under the program, property owners or developers would be allowed to build one-story buildings, rather than the two-story structures that are currently required under the SmartCode. In addition, a 12-foot interior height minimum would be waived, and the use of some materials that are normally not allowed, such as synthetic stucco or metal siding on the sides of buildings, will be OK'd.

The program will also allow the use of multiple smaller buildings on a single parcel of land; currently, property owners are limited to at most two buildings on a parcel. This would allow, for example, an owner to put four or five smaller retail buildings on a property, connected with decks.

“Basically, it relaxes some of the rules for the T-5 zones to make it easier to put a building in the downtown area,” said Pass Christian city planner Jeff Bounds, who helped put together the framework for the proposed program.

After eight years, these buildings would have been removed, or made legal, perhaps by the addition of a second story, to make way for more permanent, more urban development.

The theory is that during the eight years, the downtown will have developed enough businesses to justify a more

The Planning Commission will meet on Monday, Jan. 11, at 6:30 p.m. in the Hancock Bank Community Room for a workshop with the Board of Aldermen to discuss the Mid-Term Transitional Zoning Proposal. The public hearing will be on Wednesday, Jan. 13 at 6 p.m. Here is the text of part of the public hearing notice, which was published in full in the Sun Herald:

NOTICE OF HEARING

Notice is hereby given that the Planning Commission of the City of Pass Christian, Mississippi, will hold a public hearing for the purpose of considering a text amendment to the Downtown Community Plan portion of the City of Pass Christian, MS, zoning code (SmartCode). The request for text change was filed by the Planning Office of the City of Pass Christian requesting to create a new overlay district called the Katrina Mid-Term Transitional Recovery Overlay District, whose purpose is to relax certain architectural, building configuration, building disposition, landscape, and special requirements standards of the zoning code within the overlay district for a period expiring on 31 December 2018.

A public hearing to consider the above request will be held in the City of Pass Christian at the Hancock Bank Community Meeting Hall at 113 Davis Avenue at 6:00 PM on Wednesday 13 January 2010. A copy of the requesting application will be available for public review at the office of the City Planner located at 203 Fleitas Avenue, Pass Christian, MS, and at the temporary City Hall, 201 Fleitas Avenue, Pass Christian, MS.

traditional downtown with two-story buildings — and the rents that can sustain this kind of larger development.

Dr. Bounds noted that this program was just the first of three initiatives, but it was the most urgent to complete because of interest from property owners.

The other two initiatives include an even more short-range program that would allow three-year permits for light retail; that is, very small retail structures to help fill in the gaps downtown, which would have to be removed after three years. Finally, the third program would allow for special pavilion-type construction south of Scenic Drive, as recommended by Duany during the downtown charettes last year. “The gen-

eral idea is to find a way to lure retailers to do business in downtown Pass Christian,” Dr. Bounds said. — GG

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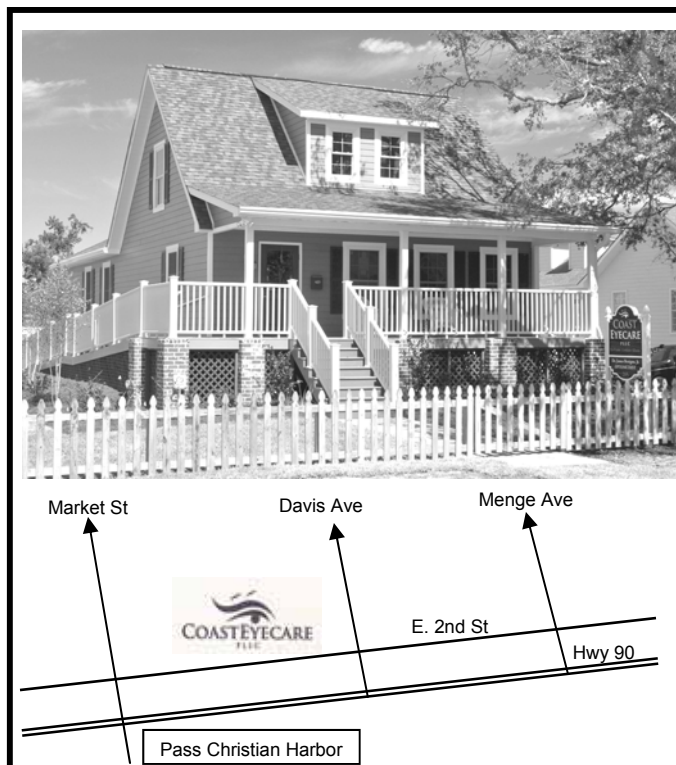
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Aldermen Give OK To Indoor Firing Range

The Pass Christian Board of Aldermen gave the all-clear to a proposed indoor firing range on North Street this week, approving the Planning Commission's recommendation that it be allowed. The range will be built according to OSHA, National Shooting Sports Foundation and other recommended guidelines, in part to allow its use by federal and state law enforcement agencies, said Roger Caplinger, the owner and a former deputy marshal.

Asked by aldermen about noise and safety issues, he said the range will have six-inch concrete walls within the existing walls, as well as armor-plated steel on the roof, a rubber-trap bullet system and HEPA-filter ventilation system, among other safety measures.

The range, which will be located at the corner of

Fleitas and North, will be open to the public. The range would be the only indoor range open to the public on the Mississippi Gulf Coast and only the second in the state of Mississippi, he said.

During a public hearing on the range's zoning in early December, neighbors spoke in favor of the proposal, even giving the idea a standing ovation, the Board was told.

In other business, the Board heard from acting city comptroller John McCormick on a number of financial issues.

Aldermen also re-appointed Alicia Ellis to the Harrison County Development Commission, term ending Oct. 31, 2013, and Earl Washington to the city Planning Commission, term expiring January 2014. The Board

also appointed Tom Phares to replace the expired term of Jack Lang. Mr. Lang was thanked for his service to the city and commission.

The Board also approved a small municipal grant agreement with the Mississippi Development Authority, for a \$100,000 grant for a new fire safety training center. The city will need to provide a match of \$21,440, which will come from fire rebate funds. The site of the training center hasn't yet been determined, since the original proposed location, at the City Barn site on North Street, will now be used by Public Works.

The Board also rescinded a program income plan for the Mississippi Power property on Second Avenue and Davis Avenue that it plans to acquire; the city has learned it won't need to provide a program income

plan to the Mississippi Development Authority ahead of time but can wait until it's ready to go forward with a plan.

The Board also discussed the status of the Dec. 31, 2009, deadline for the removal of temporary structures within the city, but agreed to postpone any recommendations on the issue until after a Planning Commission public hearing next week that could affect any decisions on this matter (see related story on page 1).

The Board also gave approval to construction details for the Murphy Oil gas station, as recommended by the city's urban planner.

The Board approved a number of pay applications, change orders and invoices.

The Board also ratified a request to purchase emer-

gency lights for the new fire department vehicles, at a cost of \$3,278, payable from state rebate money.

The Board also ratified the acceptance of a letter of resignation from Edwin (Gus) Holliman from the harbor department and agreed to advertise for a harbor patrol position.

The Board also held an administrative hearing on a property at 884 East North Street, and agreed to provide the homeowner with a written list of items that need to be corrected and a 30-day extension. The Board also heard from WPSCO about the status of its building on Clark and North, and was told that the west end of the building has been repaired and the grass cut. It is using it for limited storage and has no future plans for the property.

— *Gazebo Gazette*



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