



The Union Leader

NEW HAMPSHIRE
SUNDAY NEWS

Web Edition

The Online Edition of New Hampshire's Daily Newspapers

Wednesday, Jan. 9, 2002

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Editorials - January 9, 2002

***Small, dull and dangerous:
Sign ordinances are
a blight on America***

ALL ACROSS the country, municipalities are responding to the proliferation of strip malls and their attendant roadside advertising with new zoning laws. The latest attempt to impose aesthetics by ordinance is emerging from Salem, where planners and many residents want to ban new electronic signs and halve the maximum sign size.

Just how much beauty these regulations would purchase, and at what price, is the question. It is not clear that the proposed rules would make Salem significantly more attractive. The signs affected will be in commercial districts, where citizens have complained about the commercial buildings being too ugly. Salem planners are considering regulations to force developers to construct more attractive buildings, so reducing signage will not exactly accomplish much.

Even if the regulations do improve the looks of the place, they will do so at a price. Shoppers will have a harder time finding businesses, and traffic flow and safety could be compromised. Take South Willow Street in Manchester, for example. Drivers there have to strain to read the tiny roadside ads.

Then there is the issue of government overregulation. A blanket zoning ordinance dictating sign appearance crushes creativity, stifles innovation and imposes a bland uniformity that is, honestly, just plain un-American.

Remember those great old theater marquees that used to hang in their ornate splendor over sidewalks in most American towns and cities? They were lost to municipal sign ordinances. As they broke or were removed, zoning laws prohibited their replacement. Wonder why virtually every sign in every commercial district in America is almost interchangeable with every other sign in every commercial district in America? Sign ordinances.

If Salem residents want to truly beautify their commercial districts, maybe they ought to consider encouraging creativity and individuality rather than mandating boring — not to mention potentially unsafe — conformity.



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News - January 7, 2002

Signs could be affected by proposed changes

By JANINE E. GILBERTSON
Union Leader Correspondent

SALEM — Proposed zoning changes could mean the end of electronic signs as well as restrictions on the size of signs permitted in the town's commercial areas.

Instead of allowing new businesses to display a sign up to 200 square feet, signs would be limited to half that size if a zoning article to change the maximum allowable size to 100 square feet is approved by voters.

"A 10 by 10 sign is still a decent size sign," said Ross Moldoff, Salem's planning director. "People driving by would still be able to see a sign that size."

Another zoning article would prohibit the use of electronic signs in the town's commercial districts, Moldoff said. However, businesses that use electronic signs would be grandfathered if the zoning change is adopted.

Moldoff said 16 proposed amendments to the town's zoning ordinances will be put before voters at the upcoming town meeting.

"Most of the amendments are geared toward improving the town's aesthetics," Moldoff said. "We are also looking at adding new prime wetlands and adding incentives to developers to preserve open space."

Moldoff said the proposed amendments were drafted by the planning board after results of last spring's master plan survey revealed that residents want to see higher architectural and landscaping standards imposed on new commercial developments in town.

"The survey of residents showed some strong results," Moldoff said. "They show that residents have a high degree of concern for architectural design."

Results showed 77 percent of those who responded to the 26-question survey wanted tighter architectural design requirements and 80 percent wanted higher standards for landscaping and screening. Nearly 70 percent of respondents said they wanted greater restrictions on signs.

The planning board jumped ahead and implemented these ideas into the proposed zoning changes," Moldoff said. "The survey results generated about 100 recommendations for the planning board."

Moldoff said not all of the recommendations could be acted on for this upcoming town warrant and no zoning amendments have been proposed yet to set higher standards for landscaping. But Moldoff expects to see more amendments proposed down the road to ensure future developments don't become eyesores.

"In the '60s and '70s, there were a lot of ugly buildings built," Moldoff said. "Now people want to see a more attractive strip along Route 28."

The proposed zoning amendments to encourage developers to preserve open space and add new prime wetlands come at a time when less than one-quarter of Salem's land is undeveloped, compared to three-quarters in 1962.

Many of the residents who responded to the survey, which was sent to one out of every four households in Salem, have lived in town for an average of 22 years and almost all own single-family homes.

Half of those who responded to the survey said they favored the idea of town funding to buy undeveloped land for open space.

Moldoff said the planning board will hold a public hearing on the proposed zoning amendments on Jan. 14.

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Zoning proposals to be heard Jan. 15

Salem citizens will have the opportunity to hear and comment on the 16 zoning amendments that the town planning board is proposing for vote in this March's town meeting.

A public hearing will be held Jan. 15 at 7 p.m. in the Knights Meeting Room in town hall. Usually, only around four amendments to the town's zoning are proposed each year, but Salem Planning Director Ross Moldoff says the higher number this year is the result of the planning board accepting the new master plan for the town.

"The master plan was finally accepted by the planning board, and it feels that this is the first step in implementing the recommendations suggested by the master plan," Moldoff said.

After considering exchange with citizens and its own debate, the planning board will send the 16 amendments to be voted on at town meeting.

The following is a list of the proposed amendments:

1. Revise floodplain management regulations: Revise the floodplain management regulations to comply with federal standards by adding definitions requiring a special permit for floodplain areas, and requiring professional certifications.

2. New prime wetland off Oak Ridge Avenue: Designate an area located off Oak Ridge Avenue as Prime Wetland No. 27.

3. New prime wetland off Budron Avenue: Designate an area located off Budron Avenue as Prime Wetland No. 28.

4. New prime wetland off Golden Oaks Drive: Designate an area located off Golden Oaks Drive as Prime Wetland No. 29.

5. New prime wetland off Brookdale Road: Designate an area located off Brookdale Road as Prime Wetland No. 30.

6. Change Criteria for Prime Wetland Re-designations:

Adopt the New Hampshire Wetlands Bureau criteria for the re-designation of Prime Wetlands (this amendment would not change the boundary of any current prime wetland.)

7. Rezone properties off Old Coach Road: Rezone properties off Old Coach Road from rural district to residential district.

8. Rezone properties: Rezone properties on Wheeler Avenue, Birch Hill Road, Redwood Road, Iris Avenue and Wesley Lane from rural district to residential district.

9. Rezone properties: Rezone properties on Belair Lane, Connell Drive, Dandridge Avenue, Lake Street and Clifton Avenue from rural district to residential district.

10. Prohibit Electronic Signs.

11. Reduce maximum size, number and height of signs allowed in various districts.

12. Revise special exception clause in commercial-industrial districts: Revise the special exception clause in the Commercial-Industrial Districts by revising standards and separating exceptions for uses (granted by board of adjustment) and restrictions (granted by planning board).

13. Revise open space preservation ordinance: Revise the open space preservation ordinance by adding various criteria and providing incentives for preserving open space.

14. Revise senior housing overlay ordinance: To revise the senior housing overlay ordinance: To revise lot sizes and density restrictions, adding minimum standards and requiring a minimum percentage of affordable units for larger projects.

15. Re-authorize the residential growth limitation ordinance

16. Rezone property on Church Avenue: Rezone several properties on Church Avenue from residential district to commercial-industrial A district.

There is also a citizen petition up for discussion to rezone 8 Church Ave. from residential to commercial.



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1/14/02

Smaller signs proposed for prettier Route 28

♦ The Planning Board will review proposed zoning articles at 7 p.m. tomorrow at Town Hall.

By Jennifer D. Jordan
Eagle-Tribune Writer

SALEM — The quest to improve the appearance of Route 28 continues, this time with a pair of proposed zoning amendments that restrict certain kinds of signs.

One would prohibit new free-standing signs larger than 100 square feet. If the amendment were passed, new signs like the 200-square foot sign at Best Buy, the 169-square-foot sign at Home Depot and the 192-square-foot Toys R Us sign would not be permitted.

All existing signs would be "grandfathered" under the amendment, meaning that they would be allowed to remain, but new ones would not.

The other amendment would

prohibit new digital signs, like the ones used by Mortgage Specialists, Computer Town, Barron's Applications, Salem Co-op Bank and Sea World, which spell out flashing messages. All existing signs would be grandfathered under the amendment.

Employees at Sea World said the digital sign installed eight months ago outside the pet store is a positive addition.

"It's a good form of advertising,"

Please see **SIGNS**, Page 2



Under two new zoning amendments being proposed, free-standing signs larger than 100 square feet, like this one outside Burger King, and digital signs would be prohibited.

Continued from Page 1

said employee Tina Hardy. "The sign catches the attention of shoppers driving down the road, and it has the time and temperature, which is a service for people. We can do graphics on the sign, too."

At the same time, Hardy said she can see how some people might not want to see electronic signs everywhere.

"It's nice to have them, but if you start driving down the road and everyone has one, it could be distracting," she said.

The Planning Board will have a public hearing tomorrow at 7 p.m. at Town Hall to review the amendments, as well as a proposal to designate more land as prime wetlands, which cannot be built upon, said Planning Director Ross Moldoff.

"Prime wetlands were mapped in 1990, and the town mapped about 26 back then," Moldoff said.

Since then, several wetlands have been given to the state for the Interstate 93 widening project. In return, the state agreed to make man-made wetlands and donate badly needed playing fields to the town near Soule School.

However, several other wetland sites have been targeted as prime, and voters will get to decide if they want them make prime wetlands at March Town Meeting.

Another amendment proposes to renew the current restriction on new single family homes to 130 a year, which runs out this year.

The board will also discuss a plan to give density bonuses to developers as an incentive to keep more open space, and an amendment to require developers to make 10 percent of all future senior citizen housing "affordable."

■ **MONEY:** When to hire a tax preparer Page 19

■ **ECONOMY:** State's businesses are weathering slump Page 9

Carlos Pena gets new life with A's



NEW HAMPSHIRE

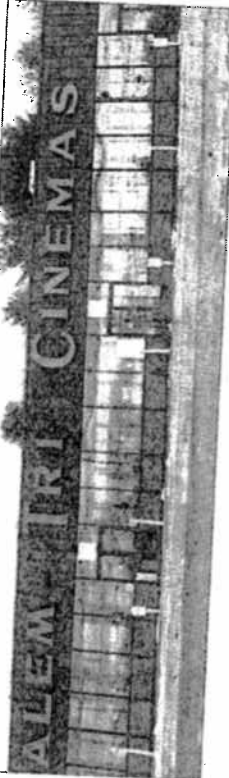
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TUESDAY
January 15, 2002
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SALEM



The Salem Tri-Cinema is still open for business, but had an empty parking lot yesterday. The cinema may soon be replaced with the baby supply retailer Babies 'R Us.

Mark Lorenz/Eagle-Tribune

Baby store eyes cinema site

♦ Plans call for the construction of a 38,000-foot Babies 'R Us store.

By James A. Kimble
Eagle-Tribune Writer

SALEM — The Salem Tri-Cinema, which occupies a prime spot of real estate

the town's planning board and the state, said Ross Moldoff, Salem's planning director.

"I wouldn't say anything is a done deal because you never know, but they're moving along through the process and they're

on Route 28, will likely close within the next year and be replaced with a Babies 'R Us store.

Plans for the nationwide baby product retailer are receiving final approvals from

Please see **CINEMA**, Page 2

**Family members of victims of the
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just about done," Moldoff said. Developers are awaiting final approval on a few minor details and a go-ahead from the state Department of Transportation since it is on state road, he added. Plans call for

A neighboring lot that now has a small white barn would become part of the parking lot. However, the store owners only plan to lease the property and have agreed to lease the barn to the back of the lot, Mold-

off said.

"I would say it will be a big upgrade to the site," he said. For now, town officials say the new store could take the place of the one that was approved by the board is only a year.

Wayne Morrill, an engineer with Jones & Beach Engineers in Stratham, who has been representing the developers of the project, did not return calls from The Eagle-Tribune yesterday.

the Tri-Cinema has been in Salem at least since the 1970s, and is

owned by The National Amusements, Inc. in Dedham, Mass. The company operates more than 1,390 screens in the United States, Britain and Latin America, and owns Showcase Cinemas in Lawrence, Mass. and Lowell, Mass. and several theaters in and around Boston. Jennifer Hanson

Jennifer Hanson, a spokesperson for National Amusements in Dedham, refused to comment about the cinema. Moldoff said he did not know whether the three-screen theater on South Broadway had plans to relocate or simply close.

Babies R' Us has 150 stores nationwide and opened two new ones last year.

"We continued to push us-

in a line as related to passenger traffic where most airports reported a significant decline in passengers," Dillon said.

"We continued to push us-

locations this past year in Manchester, Conn. and South Portland, Maine. The chain began in New York in 1996 as an offshoot of the popular Toys 'R Us chain. Plans to replace the month-

Plans to replace the cinema come months after Loews Theaters opened a 20-screen cineplex just a few miles down the road at The Loop in Methuen, Mass., and shows the latest wave of changes along Rt. 28. Service Merchandise announced in January that it was going out of business, closing all five of its New Hampshire stores including the one on South Broadway.

WINDHAM

Planner miffed by McDonald's ruling

By Chris Markuns

Eagle-Tribune Writer

WINDHAM — A Superior Court judge's decision to let the Klemm brothers replace their Windham Country Store with a McDonald's restaurant may not spark an appeal from the losers, but it's already driven some residents to anger and one official to call it quits.

Judge Patricia C. Coffey ruled last week that the town's Planning Board was wrong to decide there were too many traffic problems in the plan to build a McDon-

*Please see **KLEMM**, Page 2*

Klemm: Judge reverses rejection

Continued from Page 1

aid's and Mobil On the Run gas station and convenience store in place of the country store plaza on the high-traffic corner of Route 111 and 111A, owned by state Senate President Arthur P. Klemm Jr. and his brother Thomas.

As the Klemms requested in their lawsuit, Coffey reversed the board's 4-3 June vote to reject the proposal, which came after months of acrimonious debate between the Klemms, board members and the residents group opposing the project, Citizens to Preserve Windham. The Klemms still must resolve minor architectural and signage issues with the board, but Planning Director Al Turner believes "certainly in the next month this thing could have a building permit."

While neither the town nor the Citizens to Preserve Windham have decided whether to appeal, one official has already made a choice.

"To be truthful, I'm going to resign from the board. I'm totally disappointed," said board member Walter Kolodziej, who voted against the project. "When a court can tell you what's best for a town better than the people there, I don't agree with them. I'm not going to have

anything to do with forwarding this, and I'm washing my hands of it and I'll let somebody else do it."

He said his resignation would come "in the very near future."

Citizens to Preserve Windham member Donna Morgan, who was heavily involved in both the Klemm opposition and a successful court fight against a firing range proposal in town, called this the beginning of "suburban blight" and said her disappointment in the ruling was matched only by her disappointment in Sen. Klemm.

"The people that backed him and put him into office said, 'Look, this is our hometown and this is not we want,'" said Morgan, a 22-year resident. "And again, he's willing to thumb his nose at his constituents for his almighty pocketbook."

Sen. Klemm would not respond to Morgan's comments, but said he wasn't surprised by the ruling and no decisions have been made yet.

"Obviously we were pleased at the decision and we're just going to be getting together with our advisers and going from there. We'd like to go forward and it's something we'd like to do as soon as possible," he said. "I think we followed the rules and the regulations and I guess obviously the judge agreed with us."

The board's narrow majority based its rejection primarily on traffic issues, citing concerns about pedestrian safety and vehicle flow both in the parking lot and around the already cramped intersection. But since the town's traffic consultant — the Klemms and Citizens also hired traffic experts — eventually signed off on the amended plan, Coffey determined the board could not reject it on that basis.

"The town acted unreasonably by disregarding its own expert's conclusions and denying plaintiffs' applications based on their unfounded apprehension of (back-ups) and congestion," Coffey wrote.

Turner translated the ruling simply: "Once you hire a consultant and the consultant says the issue has been taken care of the safety issue is no longer there, the town has no choice but to approve it."

By losing the lawsuit, the town has also lost valuable leverage over the project, according to Selectman and planning board member Margaret Crisler, one of the three to vote against rejecting the plan. With the reversal, the Klemms can go ahead with the traffic design as proposed, meaning the town can't even insist on changes to mitigate impacts it's worried about.

"We may not even see the plan again to impose further conditions or have further input into the plan," said Crisler. "When you deny a plan and don't have a strong case in court, the down side is the board loses input into the final design."

But both Kolodziej and Morgan believe the problem was in Coffey's reasoning, not the town's case.

"Regardless of what the court says, it's still flawed," Kolodziej said. "It's not a good site plan."

THE LOTTERY

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Payouts/any order

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First 3 digits \$112

Last 3 digits \$112

Previous numbers

Jan. 13 6956 Jan. 10 5473

Jan. 12 9466 Jan. 9 3246

Jan. 11 1434 Jan. 8 7264

Megabucks

Jan. 12 14-18-27-35-36-38

Jan. 9 1-19-21-40-41-42

Mass Cash

Jan. 11 3-6-13-28-31

Jan. 8 17-19-21-23-25

Mass Millions

Jan. 14 9-16-19-30-32-40

Bonus number 27

Jan. 10 6-7-18-27-29-45

Bonus number 4

The Big Game

Jan. 11 4-5-21-24-38

Big Money Ball: 21

Jan. 8 14-17-25-32-46ss

Big Money Ball: 30

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Tri-State Numbers

Jan. 14 938 and 8658

Tri-State WinCash

Jan. 11 9-13-19-26-27-35

Jan. 8 6-10-11-23-24-31

New Hampshire Rolldown

Jan. 12 11-24-28-39-48

Jan. 10 24-36-38-42-50

Tri-State Megabucks

Jan. 12 6-9-10-25-26-32

Bonus number: 7

Jan. 9 10-16-25-27-30-32

Bonus number: 15

Powerball

Jan. 12 13-41-19-22-47

Powerball: 5

Power Play: 3

Jan. 9 7-39-40-42-43

Powerball: 4

Power Play: 5

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Sign proposal draws businesses' criticism

Salem business leaders say that to deny them large, stand-out signage is to deny them business, but Salem

by
**ADAM
BARONE**
Staff Writer

planners say those signs are too big and flashy and they want them to be smaller and less flashy in the future.

This March, the town's citizens will get to decide which side they agree with.

The planning board has sent to the ballot with blessings two amendments to the town's zoning code that would

prohibit additional electronic reader boards, the marquee-type signs that flash or scroll promotional messages to motorists and passers-by, from being constructed. The plan would also decrease the allowable sign size from 200 square feet to 100 square feet on signs in rights of way and limit exterior walls signs to 100 square feet instead of their current no-limit status.

Planning Director Ross Moldoff says the moves are both about safety and aesthetics. The reader boards,

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THE SALEM OBSERVER • January 24, 2002

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Moldoff said, while unpleasant to look at, can also be unsafe by distracting drivers' attention from the roads. He also said that 100 square feet is more than enough sign space to get a business' message out.

If passed, the amendments would satisfy another tenet of his Master Plan for the town, which the planning board approved in November.

The idea has its detractors, however.

Greater Salem Area Chamber of Commerce CEO Amelia Opolski said she thinks the amendments do not make good sense for Salem or business.

"We don't feel that Salem can go backwards," said Opolski. "Though I understand the other side, that some want to revert back to Salem's bucolic era, that's not where the town is anymore."

Of particular concern to Opolski is the possibility that creating these new restrictions on signage could inhibit competition between businesses whose signs will be grandfathered in and new businesses that move to town.

"Salem has a thriving retail community and we don't want to eliminate the possibility for competition between new and old business. These amendments mean that new businesses couldn't put up big signs, and that is what attracts attention. Secondly, business conditions are such that in New Hampshire we don't want anything else to stop another business from moving here in Salem. We used to have the 'New Hampshire Advantage,' but business taxes have risen, and we don't have that anymore."

Bill Brock, owner of Salem Sign Company, says he has made signage for many businesses, from Chirichiello Muffler to Wal-Mart along the Route 28 corridor, and agrees with Opolski.

"My opinion is that 28 has been turned into a pretty decent commercial spot for business and for the town to try to convert it back to a small town again -- I don't think you can convert Salem back to small town with limited signage. I think the retail that's on 28 helps Salem, it doesn't hurt it," Brock said.

According to Brock, signage is very important to small business, especially in a marketplace like Salem where they're going head-to-head with the big boys like Best Buy and Target.

"If a business doesn't have a really good sign that stands out, it will probably go out of business. Especially if you're small, it's imperative for the success of the business."

"We did a comparison with other communities that are similar to Salem, and most have a lower amount of signage allowed, so communities are always trying to address this," Moldoff said.

Opolski added, "It will not achieve anything with aesthetics. It will deter businesses from coming to town and could put the town in a legal pickle because a business might sue the town for preventing it from being competitive."

Another thing that concerns Opolski and other opponents is the fact that safety electronic message boards, such as the type placed on highways to warn of construction or delays, will also be banned as the amendments are currently written.

"If they want to pass an ordinance to make it more appealing, we would support it, but we would like to see more with maintaining buildings and parking lots, and making sure planters are around signs and that lettering stays on. If it's well done and well designed, I'd rather see one big electronic sign than a bunch of little tiny signs when you're driving by. Even where the Chamber is at the Salem Marketplace, the little signs are falling off."

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Manchester, N.H. • Saturday, February 2, 2002



36 Pages

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Tragedy or opportunity? Rock closure would cost jobs, but open valuable land

By JANINE E. GILBERTSON
Union Leader Correspondent

SALEM — Closing the state's oldest thoroughbred racetrack would put 150 full-time, year-round park employees out of work and could have a devastating impact on the community, a top Rockingham Park official said yesterday.

But others, including the town planner, said the 170-acre piece of property has enormous potential for redevelopment.

"When the track shut down in 1980, it was disastrous for the community," said the

track's general manager, Edward Callahan. "The stories from those days were not pretty."

Callahan said the track may have to close after the 2002 racing season after the state Legislature defeated a plan Thursday to bring video slot machines to racetracks. For five years Callahan has been trying to convince the Legislature to pass racetrack video gambling to generate money at the track, which has seen declining business since 1992.

If the park loses its financial struggle, the 170 acres that have been home to horseracing

since 1906 could fall to a variety of uses.

"It could be a number of things," said Ross Moldoff, the town's planning director. "It's such a big parcel. It's zoned commercial industrial and that allows a lot of uses from retail development to motels, restaurants, hotels manufacturing to assembly and distribution centers. There is a great variety of uses appropriate for those acres."

Local commercial real estate broker Henry Shea, who has been selling properties in

ROCK, Page A8

ROCK

(Continued From Page A1)

Salem for nearly 20 years, said the land could be used for anything.

"There's no question that that is the most valuable piece of property in Salem right now," said Shea. "There are so many variables for development — a convention center, hotels, retail development — that I wouldn't hazard a guess at what the parcel is worth."

But Callahan said Rockingham Venture principals Joseph Carney, Ed Keelan and Max Hugel have not indicated it's time for the park to run its last race.

"We've fought to survive for the past nine years," Callahan said. "They've been approached numerous times by developers but haven't even talked to them. It's somewhat miraculous that the owners have fought to present as good racing as possible despite the fact that they have paid the state over \$30 million in taxes and fees. The track's not making the money that it was before. They would have turned a greater profit if they had the \$45 million they have invested in the facility in a passbook savings account. But they have always wanted to keep racing going and as strong as possible."

Callahan said the park closed on July 20, 1980, after a fire burned the track's grandstand to the ground. At the time, the park was owned by the New Hampshire Jockey Club, who did not feel they could continue to provide racing in a profitable manner and sought another owner to

come in and provide horseracing. "They didn't want to sell it solely for development," Callahan said. "Then they sold the park to its current owners, who rebuilt the grandstand and reopened for racing in May of 1984."

Lynne Snierson, the track's public relations manager, said the park has 500 full-time employees during the racing season. An additional 1,500 people such as groomers, jockeys, veterinarians and trainers employed by the stable owners also work at the track. But the one million people who visit the Rock annually don't just go for the horseracing.

"There's always something going on here," Snierson said. "There are trade shows, craft shows, bingo and simulcasting."

Snierson said the park's closing would have a ripple effect on nearby businesses that provide services to people who come from out of town to see the races or attend events at the park.

"Any merchant, lodger or restaurateur in the greater Salem area will tell you there was a significant upsurge in business when the track re-opened in 1984," Snierson said. "People who come here get gas, eat in restaurants, go shopping and go to the mall."

Callahan said several community groups using the facility to raise money by offering bingo would be left out if the Rock shut its doors.

"We have bingo six nights a week here," Callahan said. "The Kiwanis, Elks Club and other

community groups use the facility to raise money with bingo. Those organizations raised three quarters of a million dollars for their own profit. I don't know where else they would go."

Town Manager Jeff Towne said closing the park would have a significant impact on the community.

"It could be quite costly to the community," Towne said. "If they closed, there are a number of things that could go in there. The park demands very little town services. The letter that the Board of Selectmen sent to the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee outlined that the park is a good neighbor and they would like to do anything they can to support video gaming or to expand gambling. They supported the effort unanimously."

Towne said a staff survey five years ago showed an increased cost to the town of about \$1 million in operating costs and capital equipment if video slots came to town. But the increase in costs to the town would have been covered by legislation attached to the video slot bill that would have given back an estimated \$2.5 million.

"People forget about the two percent that would go back to the towns," he said. "We estimated that that would cover the cost of increase in services. Now, you've killed a sales tax, killed an income tax and killed video gaming. These organizations were willing to take on the burden of funding education. The question

now is, what is going to be the long-term solution. The burden the parcel is assessed at \$27.4 million and generates \$600,000 in tax revenue for the town, compared with the roughly 80 acres occupied by the track's neighbor, The Union Leader, Manchester, NH. The Mail at Rockingham Park that brings in nearly \$3 million a year in taxes to the town. Staff Reporter Katharine McQuaid contributed to this report.

AGE ONE

The Union Leader, Manchester, NH

Rockingham track official: Gambling elsewhere brings revenue down here

By JANINE E. GILBERTSON
Union Leader Correspondent

SALEM — Hopes that video slot machines would come to Rockingham Park and bring in much-needed business to the struggling racetrack were dashed this week, but despite mounting economic challenges, the racing will go on.

"We will try to make racing work," said Edward Callahan, general manager of Rockingham Park, where thoroughbred horse racing has been an institution since 1933. "It is somewhat difficult since the revenue declined in 1992. That happens to be the year Foxwoods (casino) opened in Connecticut."

Legislators Thursday shot down House Bill 1353 that would bring video slot machines to facilities where gambling is already allowed. The park had hoped to install 1,200 video lottery terminals or video slot machines if the bill passed.

"We're not sore losers," Callahan said. "But it's been a struggle since 1992 when Foxwoods opened. In 1991, we handled about \$191 million and then in 1992 we handled \$93 million. It's been particularly hard attracting horses from southern states to come here to race. People do like New England, but the economics behind it is if a horse is coming up from say, Florida, it has to pass by West Virginia, where the tracks have video lotteries, and Delaware where purses went

from \$50,000 a day to \$250,000 in 1995. Then they have to drive through New York which has just passed video gambling legislation at their racetracks. Then, assuming they don't want those good purses, they get to Rockingham."

Callahan said he is disappointed that legislators in Concord did not keep an open mind about bringing video slots to the track.

"I tend to get the idea that most of them in Concord feel that Salem is a part of Massachusetts," Callahan said. "This community is paying its share, without a doubt, with all the costs in Concord and I don't believe that Concord has paid us any attention."

Opponents of the bill that proposed bringing video slots to the state said the costs of social impacts to communities would dwarf any revenues generated by towns.

Gubernatorial candidate Gordon Humphrey said social science literature on communities where video slots are legal should serve as an example of why they should not be allowed in the state. Humphrey said the data reflects an increase in teen gambling, workplace absences and other adverse social impacts to communities within a 50-mile radius of facilities with video slot machines.

"For every dollar brought in through video slot machines, it would cost \$2.60 in social services

that the state would have to pay out," said Jim Ruebens, an assistant for Humphrey.

"It doesn't even make any money," Ruebens said. "It just doesn't add up. It would end up costing the state money."

Callahan said the overwhelming 217-80 no vote against bringing video slots to the state was disappointing but he hopes Salem voters approve a warrant article to allow greyhound racing to be simulcast at the track.

"That would help us to stay even," Callahan said. "The primary reason for this article is that Massachusetts passed legislation to have greyhound simulcasting at racetracks. We are concerned that we have lost some customers and will continue to lose more if we can't offer that here."

Callahan said he doesn't know how much longer the track will continue to stay open in competitive times.

"We attempt to project the future," Callahan said. "This isn't anything new. We were up in Concord in 1994 and 1995 and told them we didn't know how long we would last. It's miraculous that we survived to this point. The horse racetrack in Foxboro, Massachusetts closed, the Garden State Park in New Jersey closed and Hialeah in Miami, one of the crown jewels of racing, closed. Racetracks have been struggling over the last 10 years and many have already closed their doors."

Business

Section

D

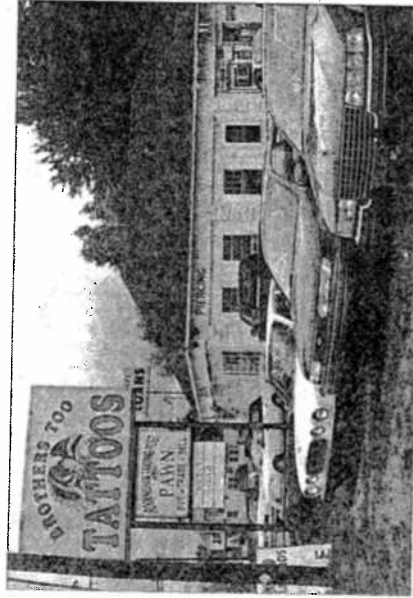
Market Beat, D2
Your Money, D2
On the Move, D4

Manchester, New Hampshire • February 3, 2002

A strip or style? Salem sees two choices for Route 28

THE OLD — At right, a concrete block-style building at 99 South Broadway (Route 28) in Salem now houses Brothers Too Tattoos. But the owners of the business recently went before the planning board for approval of a second-floor addition and improvements to the building's facade.

Below, a concrete block-style building at 155 North Broadway displays busy window signage for Electronic Repair Specialists and Pawn Shop.



Janina E. Gilbertson Photos

By JANINE E. GILBERTSON
Sunday News Correspondent

SALEM — Assorted signs and ramshackle buildings dot the strip along Route 28, but town planners are hoping stricter architectural and landscaping design standards will eventually change the face of the main stretch of road through this growing town.

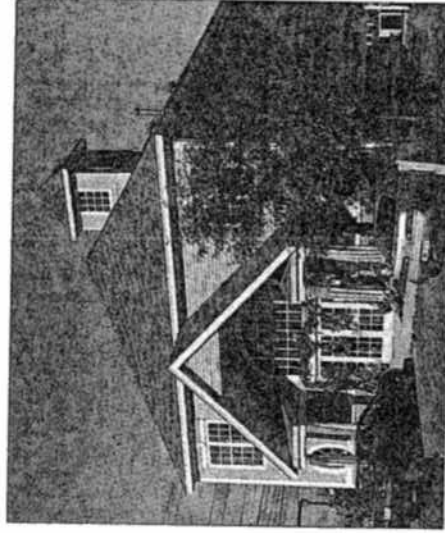
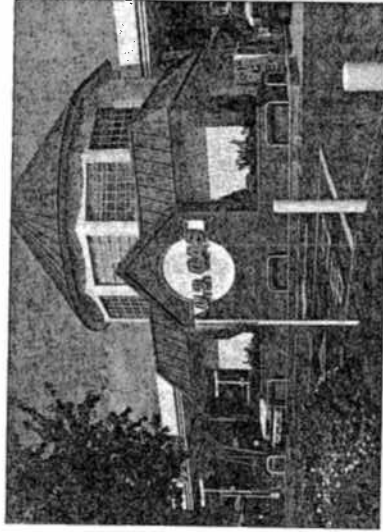
"The planning board has been asking for better looking buildings," said Ross Moldoff, the town's planning director. "Sometimes it's as simple as just asking for enhancements — and other times it's like pulling teeth."

Moldoff said the newly opened Burlington Self-Storage on the northern end of the strip is a good example of attractive new commercial design.

"Typically, storage places are not good-looking buildings," Moldoff said. "But this is not a standard, pre-fab, orange building made with sheet metal. The front building has some nice architectural design features and light fixtures. It's nice to look at when you drive by."

Local businessman Donald Turner, whose family started Turner's Dairy 102 years ago, has seen Route 28 change from large tracts of undeveloped farmland to a cluttered retail strip during the 73 years he has lived in town.

"I get lost down there on (Route) 28 at night," Turner said. "Years ago you didn't have to worry about signs because you knew just where everything was. But I guess that's progress."



THE NEW — In warmer months, bright landscaping complements the high-end retail design of U.S. Gas, top photo, at the intersection of Routes 28 and 111 in Salem. Above, Ford Flowers, at 83 South Broadway (Route 28), owned by local businessman Bert Ford, serves as an example of attractive retail design.

Janina E. Gilbertson Photos

Turner said he was disappointed with the overall appearance of Route 28.

"There should be more guidelines as to where and how close buildings can be built and what materials they're made of. The developments should be something we're proud of."

Bernard Campbell, who served

ROUTE 28, Page D4

Top 500 five years running, Blackdog offers full-service residential remodeling as well as a new Kitchen & Bath Remodeling Center at 7 Red Roof Lane in Salem.

Leadership cited

Accounting technician Deanna Crawford is the Commissioner's Leadership Award recipient for 2001 for NH Employment Security. She has worked for NHES six years.

The award is presented each year to the employee who best demonstrates leadership qualities and is outstanding in their work.

The Pembroke resident grew up in West Stewartstown.

Chamber chief

Timothy R. Nay, an Antrim native and graduate of Contoocook Valley Regional High School, has been elected chairman of the North Attleboro/Plainville (Mass.) Chamber of Commerce. He is the youngest leader in the organization's 44-year history.

Nay is a partner with Dyer-Lake Funeral Home and Cremation Services in Attleboro Falls section of North Attleboro.

Last year the chamber awarded Dyer-Lake Funeral Home with the "Good Neighbor" award.



THE NEW Burlington Self Storage Building on North Broadway in Salem features an upscale design and attractive lighting.

Janine E. Gilbertson Photo

Retail community suiting up for new look

ROUTE 28

(Continued From Page D1)

on the planning board from 1985 until 1997, said efforts to improve Route 28 were discussed during his tenure.

"Salem is a retail community," Campbell said. "We have to acknowledge that. We are what we are. The developments are what equalizes our tax rate."

Campbell said there is only so much the town can do to make improvements along the strip.

"It's difficult," Campbell said. "I think most people understand that."

Moldoff said many of the run-down commercial buildings along Route 28 were constructed during the '60s and '70s when commercial development was encouraged to pay for a growing demand for

services after the town's population doubled in under two decades.

"I think this led to a lax attitude in aesthetics," Moldoff said. "They wanted to get the businesses here."

But developers who want to come to town today will have to construct buildings that meet new retail design guidelines. In an effort to improve the aesthetic character of community, town planners drafted the guidelines to encourage high quality building design.

Guidelines include blending building design and layout with other site features such as landscaping, signage and lighting to produce an attractive commercial environment.

Moldoff said the town planners are trying to avoid monotonous and bland buildings typical of strip commercial development; the new guidelines, he said, are not so restrictive that they would make it difficult to get things built.

"It just gives the board some-

thing to hang their hats on," Moldoff said. "Town Fair Tire wanted to come to town and went to the board with plans to build a square, concrete block building. The board asked them to make some modifications and offer a more upscale design — and they did."

"It was the same story with what is now Osco Drug. The building was originally built by Rite Aid, who also came to the board with plans for a concrete block building, and the board told them they wanted to see a more historical looking structure that would fit in with a downtown type of setting."

Moldoff said sometimes business owners, especially local ones, do a great job improving and maintaining their commercial properties because they want something to be proud of.

"Ford Flowers is a great example. Bert Ford is a local businessman and he did a great job with his building. Brothers Too Tattoo recently came before the board to get approval for a remodeling project to add a second floor to their building and upgrade the landscaping. We love to work on stuff like that. It benefits the community greatly and increases property values."

Amelia Opolski, president of the Greater Salem Chamber of Commerce, said attractive building design is good for businesses.

"Any retailer will tell you that an attractive building is a place where people want to be," Opolski said.

Opolski said she does not think the town should be too restrictive in its design guidelines, since that may discourage potential new businesses. She said retailers may head to Massachusetts, where the development requirements may be less restrictive, taking their tax dollars with them.

"New Hampshire is becoming an increasingly hostile place to do business," Opolski said. "Business taxes are going up, and we don't want to add regulations that would discourage businesses from coming to town. The key is enforcing the regulations we already have."

Moldoff said enforcement has been an issue with electronic sign usage in town. In 2000, voters adopted regulations that required

"Any retailer will tell you that an attractive building is a place where people want to be."

— Amelia Opolski, Greater Salem Chamber of Commerce

messages on electronic signs to stay constant for two minutes before changing. That would mean no flashing, blinking or animated signs along the strip.

Moldoff said the regulation was put before voters by the planning board for aesthetic and safety reasons. However, after the regulation was adopted, the planning board concluded enforcement wasn't going to work.

"The types of signs people are buying give you so many options no one wants to keep one message up for two minutes," Moldoff said. "When you make an investment the magnitude of an electronic sign, you want to do all the things the sign allows you to do."

Voters will have the opportunity to revisit the electronic sign issue again this March. Proposed zoning changes, put before voters by the planning board, could mean the end of electronic signs as well as restrictions on the size of signs permitted in the town's commercial areas.

The proposed zoning changes were drafted after results of last spring's master plan survey revealed that residents want to see higher architectural and landscaping standards, including signage improvements, imposed on new commercial developments in town.

But even if the new regulations are adopted, some are still not convinced the aesthetics along the strip will improve.

"It's kind of like closing the barn doors after the horses were let out," said local interior designer Sally D'Angelo. "What businesses need is good design. Keep it clean. We certainly don't need a bunch of signs lit up and blinking so 28 looks like the New Jersey shoreline."

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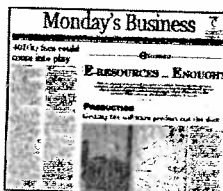
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2/11/02 Owners oppose new sign rules

◆ Voters will act on the sign ordinances March 12.

By Jim Kimble
Eagle-Tribune Writer

SALEM — Business leaders say tougher rules for commercial signs would cost the town jobs and discourage new businesses from moving in.

Voters next month will settle a dispute between officials who want to improve the look of Salem's

major thoroughfares and business leaders who believe the town's efforts will put a dent in the tax base. If approved, one proposed ordinance would shorten the allowed height for signs from 200 to 100 feet. A second proposed ordinance would prohibit electronic signs that scroll advertisements and other messages.

"We think they're a bad idea," Amelia Opolski, CEO and president of the Greater Salem Chamber of Commerce, said of the proposals.

If one restaurant had a slump in business and wanted to make a sign larger than its competitor, it couldn't happen under the proposed ordinance, according to Opolski. That could make it harder for the business to compete and set the

Please see **RULES**, Page 2

Continued from Page 1

stage for it to leave town, she added. Under the ordinances, signs that already exist would not be affected.

Voters will act on the sign ordinances March 12.

Town officials believe they have the support of many residents. After years of public debate, the Planning Board decided to put the issue to voters after a public hearing earlier this month.

Toughening the sign ordinance has been "a long-term goal of the Planning Board, and I think, the community," said Ross Moldoff, Salem's planning director.

When about 600 residents took a town survey to help update the town's master plan, about 70 percent of them said they wanted to restrict the size of signs on Route 28.

"We felt there was a kind of mandate from the public," said Moldoff.

About a dozen businesses along Route 28 have electronic signs that scroll messages and a variety of

graphics. Although they would be excused from the new regulations, managers of those businesses believe the limitations would hurt business.

"I don't see the signs as any danger. They've been around for years and years in cities," said Nancie Chandler, sales and financial manager at Toy Store Auto Sales. "I think it's an upgrade in this area. With all the businesses moving in, it's crazy not to have it."

She said the store has used its digital sign to advertise warranties, but also to show patriotic support following the Sept. 11 attacks and the Patriots' Super Bowl win.

"It shows we're all part of the same team," said Chandler.

Karen Chandler, owner of Toy Store Auto Sales, said, "It isn't like we're in a residential area."

Moldoff said some people believe the signs distract drivers.

Darren Bemister, owner of Pools & Spas by Bemister's Inc. on Route 28, said he dims their digital sign at night so it doesn't distract drivers. "It's definitely an asset for us," he said of the sign.

Ron Clapham, an employee at Pools & Spas, said the digital sign "definitely helps business."

"It works as good as any newspaper advertisement," he said. "It's a shame to keep other businesses coming in from having them just because someone wants to make the town look like 1727."

Planning Board Vice Chairwoman Maria Hamilton said the effort to shorten the allowed height for signs has been a long-standing debate among board members. But to her, the goal is to make the area "more aesthetically desirable."

2/21/02

Sign law no fix for Route 28

OUR VIEW

Businesses should not be prohibited from promoting their stores with signs of their own choosing.

Whenever officials or residents in towns throughout Southern New Hampshire see plans for new businesses they don't like, one of the first comments you usually hear is that they don't want their town to look like Route 28 in Salem.

When Salem voters head to the polls March 12, they'll be asked to approve two proposed ordinances designed to limit the spread of unattractive signs and improve the image of the town's main business strip.

One ordinance would shorten the allowed height for signs from 200 to 100 square feet while the other would prohibit electronic signs that scroll advertisements and other messages.

The proposed restrictions were drawn up after years of residents asking for them at Planning Board hearings, said Ross Moldoff, Salem's planning director.

Toughening the sign ordinance has been "a long-term goal of the Planning Board, and I think, the community," Moldoff said. "We felt there was a kind of mandate from the public."

But business leaders say tougher rules for commercial signs would cost the town jobs and discourage new businesses from moving in.

If one restaurant had a slump in business and wanted to make a sign larger than its competitor, it couldn't happen under the proposed ordinance, according to Amelia Opolski, CEO and president of the Greater Salem Chamber of Commerce. That could make it harder for the business to compete and set the stage for it to leave town, she added.

We appreciate the desire of officials to improve the town's appearance, but we agree with business leaders that the proposed ordinances are a bad idea.

It's too late to change the look of Route 28. The signs that are there now have been approved by the town in the past, and they're grandfathered under the proposed ordinances. Officials can't turn back the clock and change the town's image by putting new restrictions on the books.

Town planners should use the hearing process to encourage merchants to come up with sign and landscaping plans that better fit their vision for the area. But Route 28 is commercially zoned, and merchants shouldn't be restricted from advertising their business.

In the end, people in other towns may criticize Salem's Route 28 landscape. But that's not going to stop them from shopping there.

Little affordable housing built

◆ Selectmen Dick Gregory said he would like to see more reasonably-priced housing be a bigger component of any new elderly complexes in town.

By James A. Kimble
Eagle-Tribune Writer

SALEM — Developers want to build two new housing complexes that would add about 250 luxury elderly units in town.

But even if the complexes are built, they will do little to help the hundreds of Salem seniors searching for affordable housing.

"We've requested ... that any future development of elderly or

senior housing have a certain percentage that is affordable," said Diane Kierstead, executive director at the Salem Housing Authority. "We've had a couple of conversations about how that could be handled, but we don't have any arrangements in place yet."

Selectmen Dick Gregory said he would like to see more reasonably-priced housing be a bigger component of any new elderly complexes in town.

"They're both at market rate," Gregory said of the two proposed developments. "There may be an affordable component, but I think we could use a little less expensive (mix) of senior housing. You're not going to get a mix out of these two projects."

One project — called the Club at Meadowbrook — calls for building a luxury complex off of Lawrence Road with one-bedroom apartments renting for about \$975 and two-bedroom apartments listed for \$1,600.

The second project calls for building an 108-unit condominium com-

Please see **HOUSING**, Page 2

Continued from Page 1

plex off of Cluff Road behind the Target Store on Rt. 28.

Dave Jordan, an engineer with TF Morgan who is designing the plan, said 20 percent of the condos will be considered affordable housing, although he didn't say what they would sell for.

Jack McBride, a developer for The Club at Meadowbrook said part of the problem of building cheaper housing for seniors is finding a way to finance it.

"There is a huge demand for affordable housing today," said McBride. "But the cost for development today combined with land cost,

permitting, just continues to go up. We've been having a real challenge to make 10 of these units affordable."

Both projects include swimming pools, clubhouses and underground parking.

Gregory said that many seniors living in Salem can't afford the kind of luxury units that are being built.

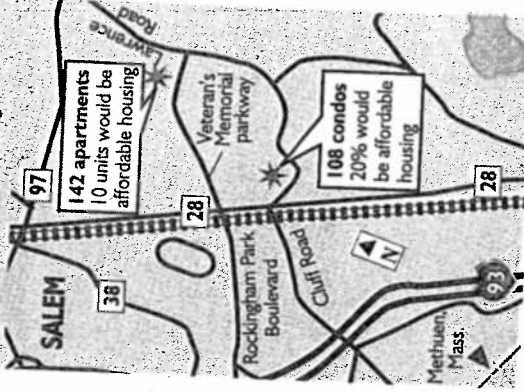
"There's a whole pile of people who moved here in the 50s and 60s who are not needing low-income but reasonable housing," Gregory said.

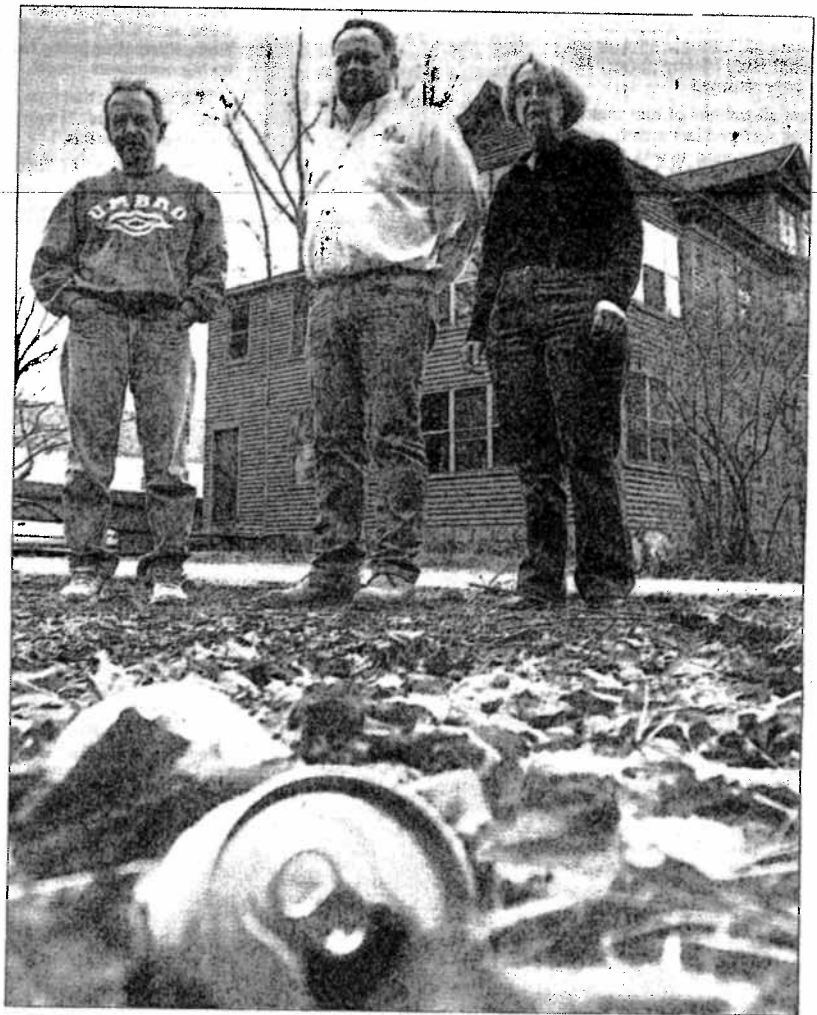
Kierstead said even though the number of affordable units in the two new complexes are small, they may help to shorten the 140-person

waiting list of seniors trying to get into public housing in Salem.

"We're telling people the average wait is one to three years," she said.

SENIOR HOUSING PROPOSED
Developers are proposing two senior housing projects in Salem. One would bring 108 condominiums to a complex off of Cluff Road. The other calls for building 142 apartments off Lawrence Road. Both would include a small percentage of affordable housing.





Cheryl Senter/Eagle-Tribune

Neighbors Dennis LaBrecque, Dennis Walsh and Mary-Frances LaBrecque are concerned about a plan by the Salem Co-Operative Bank to build a parking lot on an abandoned house lot which they are looking over.

2/28/02

SALEM

They want some quiet

Neighbors to fight plan for bank parking lot

By James A. Kimble
Eagle-Tribune Writer

SALEM — Church Avenue residents are fighting a move by the Salem Co-operative Bank to turn an empty house lot on their street into a parking lot.

The residents say they are worried if the parking lot is built it will increase the amount of noise and traffic in their neighborhood and decrease the values of their homes.

The bank is located on the corner of Route 28 and Main Street. Church Avenue is located off of

Main Street.

Residents say they are particularly upset because a group of 30 residents from outside the neighborhood signed a petition warrant article asking for the abandoned house lot to be rezoned from residential to commercial use.

"They don't live in this neighborhood and they're putting forth a petition to change someone else's neighborhood," said David Walsh, who lives at 11 Church Avenue. "They're (the bank) is not being forthcoming. It's time they tell us what

Please see **NEIGHBORS**, Page 2

Continued from Page 1
they want to do."

The bank hired MHF Design Consultants, Inc. of Salem, late last year, which started the citizen's petition for the rezoning, according to Planning Board records.

About a year ago, bank officials met with families in the neighborhood telling them that were interested in turning the house lot into parking for the bank and Samantha's Restaurant, which is also located on Main Street, said Mary-Frances LaBrecque.

Walsh said they never heard from the bank again, and then the petitioned warrant article was submitted to the town.

"When they spoke to us the first

time, they said they wanted to be good neighbors," Walsh said. "But as soon as we had concerns, they tried to go behind our back ... Honestly, from my perspective, we just bought the house a couple of years ago. I wish they bought our house instead of bringing us into this."

Neither Ann Lally, president of Salem Co-Operative Bank, nor several of the people who signed the petition returned phone calls yesterday.

Mary-Frances LaBrecque of 7 Church Street, who has lived in her home with her husband, Dennis, for 31 years, said building a parking lot in their neighborhood would only aggravate problems caused by people going to Samantha's Restaurant and leaving beer bottles or cans in

the street.

Mike Sarkis, owner of Samantha's, said he doubts people going to his restaurant and lounge are parking on the street, or creating loud noise at night.

He said he has signs to encourage customers to use the bank parking lot.

"There was one time when somebody said one of their driveways was blocked, but when I went out to check nobody was there," Sarkis said, who has been on Main Street since 1992.

He acknowledged he has seen some beer bottles on the street.

"We see that stuff out there, but it's stuff we don't even sell," Sarkis said.

He also said he polices the neighborhood.

"I take my guys out there every morning to pick up the parking lot," Sarkis said.

Sarkis said he is trying to work with the neighbors on Church Street by posting signs in his small lot and encouraging customers to use bank parking.

"I feel for them. I really do," he said. "It's hard because businesses are growing between Routes 28 and 97 (Main Street)."

Sarkis said he didn't know whether the bank had anything planned for the Church Street lot. "It would alleviate some of the parking, but either way I'm happy," he said.

School officials: We need sidewalks

3/6/02

◆ Planning Director Ross Moldoff said the School Board is one of many town boards and groups the Planning Board is soliciting input from to revise its sidewalk plan.

By James A. Kimble
Eagle-Tribune Writer

SALEM — School officials said last night they would like to see sidewalks built on side streets that are considered "cut-throughs" for students who walk near Route 28 on their way to school.

Salem Planning Director Ross Moldoff said those sidewalks may not be built anytime soon, but that input from officials is important so the Planning Board can upgrade its 10-year-old sidewalk master plan.

Streets where board members would like to see sidewalks added include Tyler Street, Summer Street and Dyer Avenue. All the streets are within a half mile to a mile of the majority of the district's schools.

"Parents of students say they don't mind the length their child has to make, but the traffic and density of it (near Route 28) has them concerned," said Superintendent Henry LaBranche.

LaBranche said the district has been sending buses to newer subdivisions along Zion Hill Road to pick up children there. However, if sidewalks were installed along Zion Hill Road, he said, "I may look at that differently."

Moldoff said he can envision "a number of houses being developed out there" because there is still an ample amount of open space for residential growth.

Board Chairwoman Pamela Berry said aside from school areas, she is very concerned about areas along Policy Street, a road she uses three to four times a day.

"It's a wonder somebody hasn't been killed there," she said. "There's always a kid or kids walking to the mall. There isn't anytime I go by there when there isn't somebody walking."

Moldoff said the School Board is one of many town boards and groups the Planning Board is soliciting input from to revise the sidewalk plan. No date has been set in finalizing a revised version of it.

"It's a wonder somebody hasn't been killed there."

Pamela Berry

Board OKs apartment units

◆ Residents are concerned about environmental and traffic impacts, while the developer says his proposal will fill a need for housing.

By James A. Kimble
Eagle-Tribune Writer

SALEM — The Zoning Board of Adjustment did not grant a fellow board member a special exception that would have allowed him to build two 60-foot-tall apartment buildings next door to Wal-Mart on Route 28.

But the board last night did give Edward Huminick permission to build 144 apartments in the commercial-industrial zone, despite harsh comments from abutters and concerns from fellow board members.

Huminick wanted the board to waive the 35-foot restriction on buildings in town so he could propose two, four-story complexes to the Planning Board. He also asked the board to allow a residential complex in a commercial area, which is also restricted by town ordinance. The board voted down the request on the height restriction, 4-1, but passed the zoning

exception unanimously.

The apartment plan hasn't yet been to the Planning Board, and is only in the conceptual stages, according to Huminick. Yet residents abutting the property — whose homes are in a rural zone — are furious at the prospect of the complex, which would be located on eight-acres next to Wal-Mart, behind Victorian Park Mini-Golf on Route 28.

While board members weighed the impacts between a bunch of apartment buildings versus another retail complex, Mark Petrychi, an abutter on 97 Lake St., said he had several concerns about the environ-

mental impacts of a massive housing complex near his home.

"It goes without saying that even if you use the garbage disposals, people aren't mandated to, and the wells adjacent to the property are relied on for drinking water," Petrychi said.

He also believes such a complex would attract more crime in the area and diminish the value of nearby homes. "No fence can maintain privacy from a building that's 25-feet above a zoning compliance," said Petrychi.

Frank Lascola of 95 Lake St. said

Please see **HOUSING**, Page 10

Continued from Page 9

he would be inclined to sell his home if the project were passed. "Rather than being redundant with what Mr. Petrychi said, I agree with him in spades, especially with the trash and impact to the area," he said.

"I appeal to the board. I've lived here for 32 years proudly and would be ashamed to say we did this," Lascola said.

Salem Planning Director Ross Moldoff also lodged several concerns about the project. Having the project located so close to Wal-Mart could cause complaints by the residents who lived at the proposed building, he said. "Wal-Mart is opened 24-hours per day," he said. "Early morning street sweepers and congestion on weekends and holidays already cause complaints by nearby residents."

He suggested that the Planning Board be asked to look at the issue, "because I think it's a Planning Board issue as much as formal criteria."

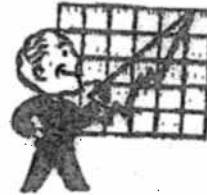
Board member Les Miller said he had serious concerns about granting a special exception on the height restriction because he thought it would set a precedent that would cause other builders to seek the same exception.

Board Chairman Joseph Scionti pushed members to base their decisions on whether making the exceptions to the height and zoning would create any fire or safety hazards. Huminick had secured letters from the fire and health departments saying that it would not.

But the majority of the board sided with Miller on the height issue. In response to resident's concerns, Huminick dismissed environmental criticisms and said his complex would be able to address some of the housing needs in town. He said apartments would likely be priced between \$800 and \$1,100 per month, and he was willing to offer between five and 10 percent of the units to the town's Housing Authority for more lower-cost units.

Board members said the town needs the housing, but didn't agree with how it was packaged. "I've got a problem with voting for that many units," said board alternate John Smith.

ON TUESDAY, MARCH 12 PLEASE PROTECT SALEM'S BUSINESSES AND TAX BASE



VOTE "NO" ON ARTICLES 12 & 13



To Salem Residents and Businesses:

On March 12, you will be asked to vote on several articles presented by your Town Planning Board.

We are concerned about Articles 12 and 13 — proposed restrictions to the sign ordinance that will have a negative effect on Salem's tax base.

The Planning Board voted a close 3-to-4 in favor of these restrictions.

The three members who voted against the proposal wanted to put this to a study before deciding. They, along with many others who spoke out against the changes, felt that it was their duty to study the

matter further to ensure a mistake would not be made.

The proposed changes may be well intended, but the actual effects will be negative, not just to your tax base but also to the aesthetics of Salem's business zone.

When new businesses do not come in to town, scared off by overly restrictive sign ordinances, or when existing businesses are doing poorly, the land value decreases, and a lower tax base soon follows. When business is bad, employment is affected, and unemployment affects the spending habits of the citizens.

Please don't let uninformed,

unresearched, misguided good intentions impact you or your town. If the Planning Board had done what was originally requested — research case studies and published data — these changes would never have gotten on the ballot.

If the 4 members who voted for these restrictions had agreed with the overwhelming public support present at the meeting, and with the 3 who voted against the proposed changes, a study on the impact of signage on businesses and a well thought-out ordinance could be written to improve Salem's aesthetics and keep Salem's businesses healthy.

PLEASE VOTE "NO" ON 12 & 13

3/7/02

Businesses petition against sign restrictions

◆ A two-thirds majority will be needed to pass a ban on electronic signs.

By James A. Kimble
Eagle-Tribune Writer

SALEM — More than 20 businesses along Route 28 have lodged a protest petition against two warrant articles that could downsize the square footage allowed for commercial signs and ban businesses from adding electronic letterboard signs.

But only one of those petitions has been deemed valid by the town and will be posted near voting booths when people head to the polls tomorrow, according to Planning Director Ross Moldoff.

Article 12 would prevent businesses from erecting electronic letterboard signs. Article 13 would cut down the square footage allowed for new commercial signs from 200 square feet to 100 square feet.

Moldoff said that town attorney Diane Gorrow has deemed the petition against banning electronic letterboards invalid because of a state law that says citizen petitions aren't allowed on warrant articles that deal with more than a third of the community.

In addition to posting signs noting the protest, the petition also raises the bar for how many votes are needed for the amendment to pass. Instead of a 50 percent majority, now two-thirds of the majority voting would have to favor the change.

When about 20 percent of the affected landowners in Salem sign a petition protesting a warrant article, state law requires town officials to post notices that there is a group opposing the warrant articles.

"It wasn't totally unexpected because the sign companies were vehemently opposed to the amendments at the public hearings in January," said Moldoff.

Salem Area Chamber of Commerce CEO Amelia Opol-ski has said she and several businesses in town believe that amending the rules governing signs is "a bad idea" because it would discourage businesses from coming to Salem.

MHF Design Consultants, Inc. in Salem has organized the effort to put the two protest petitions at the polls tomorrow, when voters decide whether or not to adopt the measures as part of the town's zoning ordinance. Mark Gross, principal for MHF, could not be reached for comment.

Many of the same businesses signed both petitions and include Rockingham Park Racetrack, The Mall at Rockingham Park, Canobie Lake Park, DeMoulas Supermarket, Northland Properties, Inc. and Salem Co-Operative Bank.

When asked if he believes residents still favor the proposed articles, Moldoff said, "We're going to find out. And we're going to find out how people feel about changing the aesthetic on Route 28."

High-end retailers head to Salem mall

3/17/02
Gayle-
Tubine

MOLLY MANCHENTON



The changing face of Southern New Hampshire has meant an upscale make-over for The Mall at Rockingham Park.

In the last year 13 new stores opened, including the state's first Apple computer store, Gap Body, Banana Republic, J. Crew and the Red Persimmon day spa. Thirteen other stores remodeled.

The changes continue in coming months with women's retailer Talbots and kitchen retailer Williams-Sonoma and its sister store, home decorations chain Pottery Barn.

Aeropostale, a clothing retailer that targets young shoppers, opens within the next two months, mall officials said, as will Godiva Chocolatier.

Cinnabon begins baking and selling cinnamon confections from a corner spot of the food court in July.

And in April, current tenants Casual Corner, August Max and Petite Sophisticate will open in larger, adjacent storefronts on the mall's second level.

"Turning 10 years old gave us the opportunity to redo leases with tenants" and adjust the store mix to fit Southern New Hampshire's changing face, said Mall Manager Michael Mero.

Retailers used to focus their expansion plans on Massachusetts. "Now they're realizing that Southern New Hampshire is a viable place to do business."

Across the street, Kohl's will open April 12 in the former Bradlees location. And not far away, on Route 28, the Super Kmart escaped the round of store closings brought on by the retailer's bankruptcy. Only the poorest-performing stores are targeted for closure.

The retail industry says good things about the area, said Ross Moldoff, director of planning for the Town of Salem. "The influx of those stores is positive. It shows that the economy is healthy and that the community continues to attract high-quality retailers."

Although the town doesn't yet have Census figures showing a climb in household spending, "most of the new houses are going up for \$400,000-plus," he said.

Another indicator of higher incomes is the effort to beautify Route 28, Salem's main thoroughfare. "In lower-income areas, people don't care as much about that; they're more concerned with making a living. But as incomes rise, people care more about how their town looks."

Also, Mero said, the company has been aggressive about going after stores that customers want.

"These have been our two best years ever from a leasing perspective," he said.

3/21/02

Observer

144-unit complex gets zoning exception

Salem is now closer to being the home of a new 144-unit apartment complex.

At a recent meeting of the Salem Zoning Board of Adjustment, members voted to give Salem resident Ed Huminick one of the two special exceptions he needed to erect the complex on North Broadway between Victorian Park and Wal-Mart.

by
**ADAM
BARONE**
Staff Writer

The request the ZBA approved was to allow Huminick to erect the structures in a commercial zone, a district not normally available to residential use.

Though details of the plans are still to be completed and have yet to reach the planning board, access to the parcel will be through the Wal-Mart traf-

fic light and through the parking lot, according to Planning Director Ross Moldoff.

Additionally, the complex is on an eight-acre parcel, which means the population density will be about 18 units per acre. Moldoff said that is interesting because the highest current density in town are the apartments off of Cluff Crossing, at 12 units per acre.

"There's not much the planning board can do one way or another," Moldoff said. "Certainly, we can talk details, but major approval has been given."

The ZBA did, however, reject Huminick's accompanying request to allow the construction of two 60-foot buildings. The current height limit is about 30 feet.

SALEM

3/29/02

Developer proposes upscale subdivision

◆ This is the third senior housing project that's been proposed in town this year.

By James A. Kimble
Eagle-Tribune Writer

SALEM — Another developer wants to take advantage of the hot upscale senior housing market in town by trying to build 17 \$300,000 homes.

It's the third senior housing project that's been proposed this year with potentially more on the way.

"We talked to about a half-dozen people about similar projects on a staff level," said Ross Moldoff, Salem's planning director.

The development, which if approved would be located off Main Street near the Greystone Farm assisted-living project, calls for 17 1,500- to 2,000-square-foot homes, according to Joe DeCaro-

lis, who is a consultant on the project for the developers, the Mesiti Corporation Inc. of North Andover, Mass.

"Basically, they'll hit the market in the \$300,000 range, give or take 10 percent," said DeCarolis.

"They won't be all built the same. The individual buyer will be able to select how it's designed."

DeCarolis described Salem "as one of the most desirable locations in Southern New Hampshire" for senior housing.

The Mall at Rockingham Park, nearby movie theaters and restaurants all lure seniors to town, he said.

The Planning Board is already

Please see **SALEM**, Page 4

Continued from Page 1

considering plans for a 142-unit senior apartment complex off of Lawrence Road, and an 108-unit condominium complex off of Cluff Road behind the Target store.

"The unusual thing is that to date there has been apartment-style complexes. This is a more conventional subdivision for people 55 and up," Moldoff said.

DeCarolis said the developers decided to build houses rather than condominiums after talking to seniors.

"One of the things that keeps coming up is that people are happy to downsize their home, but they want control of their own lives," said DeCarolis.

That means adding a deck or a garden in their yard if they want to, he said. "We're getting a tremendous demand from people who want to live in this kind of community."

The town passed a senior housing ordinance in 1998 that allows developers to build more units in less space to encourage senior housing.

For example, an 11-acre lot would only allow for about 40 apartments under the town's normal zoning requirements.

But a developer of senior housing could build up to 144 units in the same space, Moldoff said.

DeCarolis said the ordinance isn't as much as an incentive to build as the demand for senior housing itself.

"Most towns have the same ordinance," said DeCarolis. "We chose Salem because it's a great location."

After 17 years, Stiles Road will be completed

◆ The project is scheduled to be finished by the end of June.

By James A. Kimble
Eagle-Tribune Writer

SALEM — After a 17-year wait, work began this week on a road construction project that could end one of Salem's worst daily traffic jams.

Construction crews are connecting Stiles Road to Route 38 (Lowell Road,) which town officials hope will bring immediate traffic relief to the thousands of people who work in the offices and plants that line Stiles Road.

"Anytime between 4 and 6 (p.m.) is a nightmare," said Mark Gross of MHF Designs on Stiles Road. "You have to leave before 4 or after 6 so you don't end up shooting yourself or someone

else."

Gross' offices are next door to the project.

"Seventeen years is a long time to wait," Gross said. "I'm going to be the first car across that bridge."

Once it's completed, drivers will be able to travel from Pelham Road near Exit 2 off Interstate 93, down Stiles Road to Route 38 as they head to Lowell, Mass, said Selectman Chairman Richard Gregory.

Gregory said it may also relieve some traffic around exit 2 of I-93 in the morning because drivers will now have the option of accessing Stiles Road from Route 38.

That's good news for people like Tricia Hyder, who works in a dentist's office on Stiles Road.

"Five o'clock is the problem.

Please see **STILES**, Page 4

Continued from Page 1

You sit in traffic for 15 minutes just to get to Route 93," said Hyder.

Jack Szlyk, a psychologist who works for Salem Psychological Associates on Stiles Road, agrees.

"I certainly hope it helps things. You have a lot of people trying to get to 93, and there are times where there's a lot of congestion," he said.

A real estate developer was supposed to finish the road 17 years ago, but when the real estate market went sour, road work came to a halt, according to Gregory.

Salem ironed out an agreement last year with one of the original developers — Dr. Richard Hannon of Salem Corporate Park Associates — to donate \$500,000 to the \$653,000 project.

The town is paying for the remainder of the project.

There's no official count of how many employees work along the road, but at least 100 businesses are in the rows of condominium-style buildings that line Stiles Road, which sits between Routes 97 and 38.

Most of Salem's 22,000 jobs are in the Pelham Road area, including Salem's 3,600 manufacturing jobs, according to Ross Moldoff, Salem's planning director.

Only the Salem Icenter is located on the opposite side of Stiles Road. But even Icenter officials are optimistic about improving traffic once the road is completed.

"I think it's going to be a good thing for our facility. It will provide easier access to us," said Wes Tuttle, general manager on the Icenter.

4/16/02 Selectman should pay his own bill

OUR VIEW

Salem, N.H., selectmen were wrong to decide in a secret meeting to pay the legal fees of a selectman being sued for defamation.

Salem has no business paying Selectman Ronald Belanger's legal fees in his fight against police Officer Charles Flahive.

Belanger meddled where he did not belong and overstepped his bounds last September, when he confronted Flahive during a disturbance at Rockingham Trading Post on Route 28.

Belanger filed a complaint with the police department saying Flahive insulted and swore at him. Flahive was cleared of the allegations. Flahive says Belanger used his position to intimidate him, and is suing the selectman for defamation.

Belanger did not have the Board of Selectmen's backing to get involved, and taxpayers shouldn't have to pay him a cent for his legal bills.

Selectmen Chairman Richard Gregory confirmed the board agreed April 1 to reimburse Belanger for up to \$7,500 in legal fees if he wins the lawsuit, on the advice of the town's attorney.

But even he admits the lawsuit is an embarrassment to the town, and that selectmen aren't supposed to "get involved with anything without board approval."

"Not only is it unfortunate, it's embarrassing to have an employee suing a selectman. Things shouldn't have to happen like that. I just wouldn't put myself in that situation," Gregory told Eagle-Tribune Reporter James A. Kimble last week.

Belanger did put himself in that situation. And whatever the outcome in court, the legal expenses should come out of his pocket.

Selectman James Holland said he would "stay away" from the type of incident Belanger stepped into, but said Belanger believed he was acting within the guidelines of being a selectman.

"We're not completely sure if Ron understands what his job is or his role is," Holland said. "I'm not sure if he understood what he was doing was wrong so we have to give him some funds to mount a defense."

We disagree, and believe selectmen were wrong to decide the matter behind closed doors.

Residents should be able to attend any meeting where officials discuss how to spend their money.

It is also important that the public have access when an elected official's behavior is being discussed.

When decisions like these are made behind closed doors, residents are disenfranchised.

That's when they lose confidence in their leaders.

4/22/08

■ Business

Furniture World looking to build huge new store

◆ It's unclear how many jobs the new business could create.

By James A. Kimble
Eagle-Tribune Writer

SALEM — Furniture World wants to build a huge warehouse-retail store off Route 38 across from Hedgehog Park.

If approved by the Planning Board, it will be the third store the furniture-retail chain operates locally.

Plans call for a 100,000-square-foot building. "They told us they're going to have a retail store that is about 28,000 square feet. 70,000 square feet is warehouse. The rest is small office space. And there's 17 loading docks. It's going to be a big facility, I'm sure,"

said Salem Planning Director Ross Moldoff.

It's unclear how many jobs the new business could create. Furniture World owner Mark Bedrich was out of town and couldn't be reached for comment.

"It's mostly warehouse with furniture sales from that building. I'm not sure if they've actually decided what they're going to be selling out of there," said Steve Long, an engineer with Opechee Construction Corp. in Belmont, who is designing the building.

Long said the building would be much larger than Furniture World's other store in Windham, which is also a warehouse-retail style complex. He estimated Windham's store, located on Rockingham Road, is between 35,000 to 40,000 square feet.

Please see **STORE**, Page 2

Continued from Page 1

"I think what they have in Windham is similar because they have some distribution and a store there," Long said. "This building is going to be bigger."

Furniture World also has a store in Salem at 419 South Broadway.

About 12 acres off of Route 38, diagonally across from Hedgehog Park, is being eyed as the site. Long said the company won't purchase the land until the plan is approved by the Planning Board.

Kewaydin Realty Trust owns about 10.5 acres where the store would be located. The store would also buy a neighboring residential property to make way for a driveway to the building.

"You won't see it (the building) from Lowell Road," Long said.

He said consolidating the properties would not require any special approvals by the Zoning Board of Adjustment, and could be approved through the Planning Board.

The Planning Board will see plans for the store tomorrow, Long said.

MORE PLAYING SPACE

Three new athletic fields are in the works next to Soule School in Salem. Construction of two soccer fields and a baseball/softball diamond field could begin by June 1, recreation officials say. An 80-space parking lot is also planned.



Daphne Sterling/Eagle-Tribune

SALEM

4/26/02

Town set to build athletic fields

◆ The fields will provide more space for soccer and baseball, town officials say.

By James A. Kimble

Eagle-Tribune Writer

SALEM — The town plans to build three athletic fields off of Cluff Crossing Road next to the Soule School.

Officials hope to build two soccer fields, a diamond baseball-softball field, multipurpose space and an 80-space parking lot.

"It's going to take a little bit of the overuse off of the high school facilities and Michelle Park," said Recreation Director Julie Kamal.

Salem Youth Soccer has 800 kids in its league, Kamal said, and teams use the fields daily. Work on the fields could begin by June 1. Kamal said children at the neighboring Soule School would also be able to

2

Thursday, April 25, 2002 The Eagle-Tribune



Mark Lorenz/Eagle-Tribune

Recreation Director Julie Kamal stands in the field where a parking lot and three athletic fields are planned.

Fields: Plans progressing

Continued from Page 1

use the fields. The parking lot would include a bus turnaround the school could use.

The Planning Board took its first look at the plans Tuesday.

Kamal said plans for developing the park came through the backing of state Rep. Chuck Morse, who once served on a recreation advisory committee. The eight-acre parcel of land had once been eyed for a shopping plaza about 10 years ago, until plans fell through and the site was sold to the state for a Park & Ride. State representatives and local officials lobbied the state to swap their land on Cluff Crossing for other

town land, according to Ross Moldoff, Salem's Planning Director.

If approved, the parks would be located about 100 feet from wetland areas where Policy Brook and Porcupine Brook meet, according to Peter Biegel, a landscape architect with HBLA Inc. of Portsmouth, who is designing the field.

"There's a 100-foot setback from the wetland. And in a couple of areas it encroaches the buffer," Biegel said. "We're not really thinking there are any concerns. I think the benefits of having a project like this is that's a developable piece of property and it's going to have 100 percent vegetation."

The state Wetlands Board will have to give the final approval of the plans. Biegel said that he has already met with state officials who reacted favorably to the project.

But the town is still waiting for the plans to go through a hearing process. That hearing process could happen over the next few weeks, Biegel said.

Salem feels stung by Humphrey's remark

EAGLE EYES

Dave Levinthal



There is asphalt in Salem like there are clouds in the sky. More gray than green. Yeah, yeah, we all drive Route 28, too.

But Republican gubernatorial candidate Gordon Humphrey took it upon himself to illustrate New Hampshire's urban sprawl at Salem's

expense. At a forum last weekend in Bedford, he vowed that if elected governor, he will never let the rest of New Hampshire look like the Granite State's not-so-urbane urban-like gateway.

"I would feel pretty badly if I left a state to my children that looked like Salem, frankly," Humphrey told the audience. "No offense to the people of Salem, but we don't

"Urban sprawl is going to happen unless you close the state. You want growth in your state? This is the natural progression if you want growth."

Salem Selectmen Chairman Richard Gregory

pricking Salem, the state's sixth-largest municipality, is a curious strategy.

"What an (expletive)," Gregory said. "Notice he didn't say Nashua. Notice he didn't say Plaistow."

want more Salems in every part of the state."

No offense? Nice try, Salem Selectmen Chairman Richard Gregory said.

Salem might be an easy target, Gregory acknowledged. But for a candidate who already lost one gubernatorial race and is trailing in the polls during his second try, pin-

Gregory likes Salem. His daughter just bought a house there. He likes shopping at stores open 24 hours a day and likes the proximity to Boston. And he doesn't like Humphrey scoffing at it.

"I mean, what's he thinking?" Gregory wondered aloud. "To slam Salem for what Salem is, is inappropriate. Urban sprawl is going to happen unless you close the state. You want growth in your state? This is the natural progression if you want growth."

And what does Gregory think of Chichester, Humphrey's residence?

"I don't particularly like Chichester," he deadpanned.

Humphrey explained his comments were not meant to disparage Salem. Would Salem residents themselves want the Granite State to become the Concrete State?

"I used the example to amplify a point: If we fail in our goal for environmental stewardship, we fail our children," Humphrey said. "In this context, the people of Salem I believe will understand."

Not Ed Callahan, general manager of Rockingham Park.

He noted Humphrey's Salem-slammings history: This is the same guy who earlier this year called the gambling industry "scummy and sleazy" during a Statehouse public hearing. That's not exactly a stunning endorsement for Salem, the capital of New Hampshire's gambling universe.

"He has basically called everyone in the community of Salem nasty things," Callahan said. "If he thinks he can win a gubernatorial race doing that, he apparently knows better than I."

Former House Speaker Donna Sytek, a

Please see **LEVINTHAL**, Page 10

Continued from Page 9

Salem resident and fiscal agent for Humphrey's gubernatorial opponent Bruce Keough, gave the former two-term U.S. senator some benefit of the doubt, if not much.

"Salem is an example of what happens when you don't have a long-term urban plan. The town recognizes the need for beautification projects," Sytek acknowledged. "But come on, you're not going to win a lot of friends here by poking us in the eye."

Republican primary opponents Keough and **Craig Benson** declined to comment on Humphrey's comments.

But, added Keough spokesman **Charlie Arlinghaus**, "Bruce definitely loves Salem."

Humphrey should hold his tongue

5/13/02

OUR VIEW

Policies Gordon Humphrey supports help make Salem, N.H., look the way it does.

No one will ever accuse New Hampshire gubernatorial candidate Gordon Humphrey of being a silver-tongued smoothie.

The former two-term senator and 2000 Republican nominee has a record of making more enemies than friends with his mouth. In 2000, he and Gov. Jeanne Shaheen ran campaigns based more on verbal attacks than real issues.

In a three-way race for the Republican nomination for governor this year, Humphrey already has hinted at "rumors" that rival Craig Benson's health is not all it could be. Benson later said that he once had a viral infection of the heart but his current health is fine.

On two separate occasions Humphrey's words may have cost him votes in Salem, N.H., usually a Republican stronghold.

Earlier in the campaign, Humphrey said the gambling industry is a "scummy and sleazy" operation in which New Hampshire should have no part. Many viewed that as a slam against Rockingham Park, the horse owners who race there and its patrons.

And recently, Humphrey made it clear that Salem is not his idea of a great little town.

"I would feel pretty badly if I left a state to my children that looked like Salem, frankly," he told a candidate forum in Bedford while discussing urban sprawl. "No offense to the people of Salem, but we don't want more Salems in every part of the state."

We imagine that Humphrey is talking about the strip of retail establishments along Route 28, businesses that generate a good deal of property taxes for the town. Route 28 is indeed heavily developed. But it is hardly all there is to Salem, which in places is as rural and picturesque as any community in New Hampshire.

If Humphrey wants to criticize retail development, he ought to consider, in light of his opposition to broad-based taxes, how Salem came to look the way it does.

New Hampshire's lack of a sales tax draws many shoppers from Massachusetts. Nashua, Salem and Plaistow, N.H., are just north of large population centers in Massachusetts — Lowell, Lawrence and Haverhill, respectively. Each has grown a large and prosperous retail strip.

But why would these three New Hampshire communities allow the dense retail development Humphrey considers so unsightly? Because with no state income tax to help fund their schools, they need to grab all the property tax they can get.

Before candidate Humphrey throws any more slurs our way, he should consider how the policies he supports shape the communities in which we live.

Humphrey to Salem: Mea Culpa

You can't fault him for lack of responsiveness.

Gordon Humphrey last month: "I would feel pretty badly if I left a state to my children that looked like Salem. No offense to the people of Salem, but we don't want more Salems in every part of the state."

Gordon Humphrey this month: "Beautiful Salem. What a beautiful town! No wonder residents are proud. Yet, most would agree we need to do more to prevent commercial sprawl in our state. As governor, **Gordon Humphrey** will work to preserve open spaces for us, for our children and for their children."

These latest comments came courtesy of a full-page advertisement yesterday in the weekly Salem Observer, complete with a postcard-pretty picture of Salem flush with foliage. (No Wal-Mart, Rockingham Park or strip mall in sight.)

"Sen. Humphrey wants to make sure that he wasn't implying anything disparaging toward Salem," said former state Sen. **Jim Rubens**, Humphrey's spokesman. "People in Salem felt their town was referenced in a way that was less than flattering, and we're trying to make it clear what Sen. Humphrey is saying."

Humphrey, again a Republican gubernatorial candidate, made his original comments at a gubernatorial forum last month in Bedford.

For one Salem legislator, Humphrey's kiss-and-make-up strategy is a joke.

"Definitely too little too late. I was completely turned off by what he said," said **Selectman and state Rep. James Holland**, R-Salem. "Look, his campaign is in trouble. He's just reaching out and grabbing at anything. He may be getting desperate."

State Rep. Richard Cooney, R-Salem, offered Humphrey some benefit of the doubt.

"He's trying at least," Cooney said. "The ad running is better than him not doing it."

5/24/02

SALEM

Banknorth plans retail-office building

◆ Plans call for a new 7,000-square-foot building that would combine a bank with retail-office space.

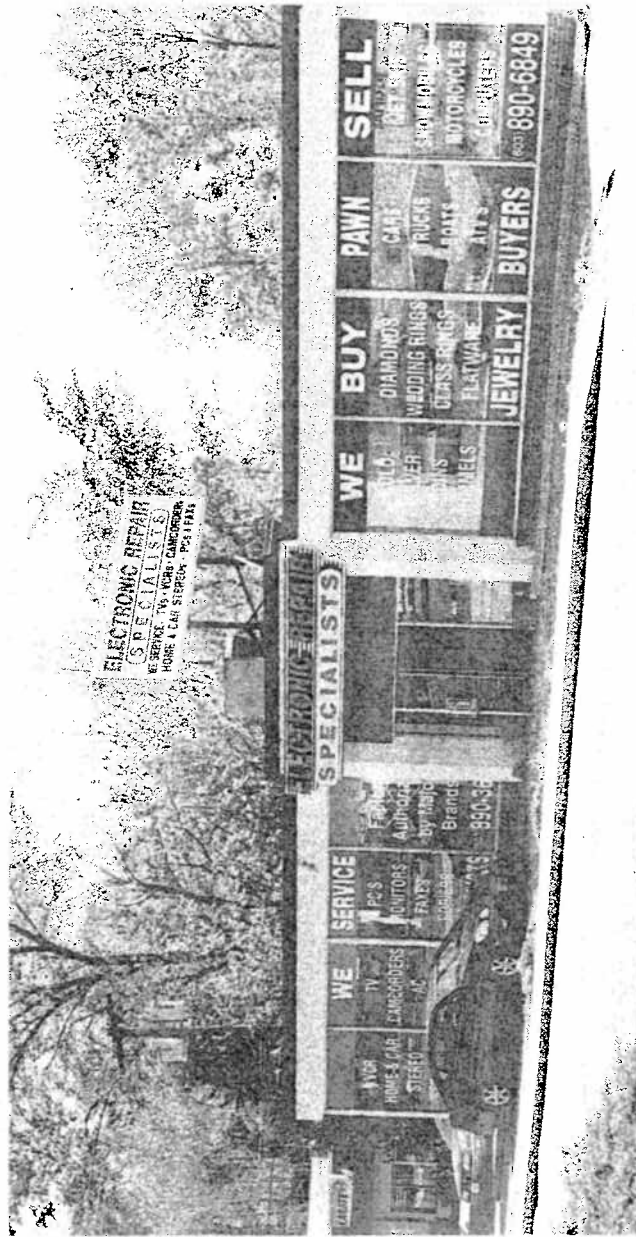
By James A. Kimble
Eagle-Tribune Writer

SALEM — Banknorth Group Inc. is planning a new bank and retail building on North Broadway, along a strip where town officials say major renovations are already being done by neighboring businesses.

The \$21.1 billion company bought the property at 155 N. Broadway, where Electronic Repair Specialists is now located, according to Salem Planning Director Ross Moldoff.

The company has seven banking chains throughout New England and New York, including Bank of New Hampshire and Banknorth Massachusetts. It remains to be seen what Banknorth will put in the new office space, or whether it will move one of its divisions, Andover Bank, from Main Street to the new location. Banknorth Group Inc. spokespeople could not be reached yesterday.

Plans filed with the town call for a new 7,000-square-foot building that would combine a bank with retail-office space, said Moldoff. The Planning Board recently approved plans



The Electronic Repair Specialists building at 155 N. Broadway will be razed to make way for a new 7,000-square-foot building. The electronics business will be able to relocate in the new building, town officials said.

James A. Kimble/Eagle-Tribune

for the project.

Moldoff said Electronic Repair Specialists would be able to relocate in the rental portion of the property.

The new structure would take place of a 2,800-square foot building now occupied by Electronic Repair Specialists, which is across the

street from the Dexter shoe outlet.

No date has been set for razing the existing building on the site.

Moldoff said the new building will represent a welcome upgrade to the area, where other businesses have been approved for building renovation. Those businesses include the

new building for Town Fair Tire, plans for renovating Dunkin' Donuts on Route 28, and Brothers Tattoo.

"This will be the fourth one in about a year or so," Moldoff said. "I think it's a very positive trend for the town."

SALEM

Finally, Stiles Road linked

It takes 17 years but connection to Route 38 done

By James A. Kimble
Eagle-Tribune Writer

SALEM — The road was so new the center yellow line hadn't been painted — even as selectmen were stretching out the ceremonial ribbon to be cut yesterday.

It's taken town officials and the developers, who first promised to connect 600 feet of Stiles Road to Route 38, 17 years to work out a deal to get the work completed.

But today, the road officially opens.

When a real-estate developer began building office parks along Stiles Road, the plan was to connect the road to Route 38. Then the real estate market went sour, and road

work came to a halt.

Salem ironed out an agreement last year with one of the original developers — Dr. Richard Hannon of Salem Corporate Park Associates — to donate \$500,000 to the \$653,000 project.

"It's a wonderful thing. I'm very happy that after 17 years, this is finished," said Selectmen Chairman Richard Gregory, who stepped between the still-wet yellow lines for the ribbon cutting.

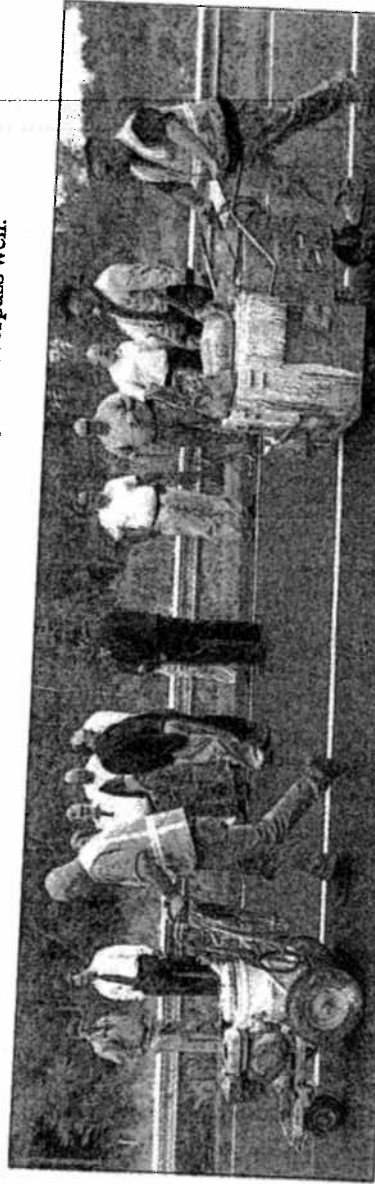
Gregory credited Town Manager Jeffrey C. Towne for negotiating with Hannon to secure the money.

Towne thanked a number of town officials, contractors and local officials for sticking with the project.

Environmental concerns played

a role in bogging down the process over the years because of a brook that now runs under the bridge, according to Town Planner Ross Moldoff. The nature of the area, designated as prime wetlands, caused the state to waffle on its approval, Moldoff said.

"Undoubtedly, this is going down in history as the longest project the Conservation Commission has been involved with," said Conservation Commission member George Jones. The challenge was to "find a solution that was environmentally responsible and civically responsible. We're sorry it's taken so long to get where we are, but it was worth the wait. I hope people will use this overpass well."



Salem town officials (in the background) step aside to allow Chuck McAdam and Bill Shean to paint the yellow line on the extension of Stiles Road, which now connects to Route 38 in Salem.

Mark Lorentz/Eagle-Tribune

SALEM, N.H.

B. 6/06E
6/20/02

Hidden forest entrance uncovered

The Salem Town Forest, a 200-acre refuge on Route 11, just after the state highway garage and before Shadow Lake, is getting more use now that what had been a hidden entrance has been opened up. "It's an oasis in the sea of sprawl that has become Salem," said planning director Ross Moldoff. "It's a gem." There's a brook, ponds, wildlife, and 3 miles of trails. A long footbridge leads from the parking lot to the forest and various projects have added bulletin boards, bat houses, and trail markers. The Conservation Commission manages the site.

Salem Planning Board axes trees, stone walls on scenic Zion Hill Road

Despite appeals and protests from more than 60 people who live on or near Zion Hill Road or travel it every day, the planning board voted 4-3 Tuesday night

by
JOAN HUNT
News Editor

to allow trees to be cut and stone walls to be taken down in order to widen the road to a travel width of 24 feet. The vote came after four hours of emotional input from residents and deliberation between board members.

The planning board must approve removal of trees and stone walls related to roadway improvement projects only in the case of a scenic road, and Zion Hill Road, designated a scenic road at town meeting in 1976, is the town's only scenic road.

Public Works Director Rodney Bartlett described the road reconstruction project, which extends from Bluff Road to Matthew Drive and requires the removal of any obstruction within three feet of the travel way. He explained that the plan originally called for a four-foot

shoulder, but it had been altered to two-foot shoulders, which saves about 38 trees. The 24-foot width, Bartlett said, includes a bituminous concrete Cape Cod berm and underground drainage system.

In all, some 67 trees will be removed, 17 of which are within three feet of the existing pavement, which Bartlett said the town could take down as part of a safety issue anyway.

Reasons given for widening the road were to improve drainage and safety on the roadway. According to Mark Gross of MHF Design Consultants, their survey showed that the pavement averages from 20 feet wide near the intersection of Bluff and Millville roads to 18 feet in some places and 22 feet in others, going up to 24 feet near Matthew Drive.

He said traffic volume on Zion Hill Road has increased to more than 3,000 vehicles per day. Any street where 800 or more vehicles per-day travel on it should be considered a primary street, and that requires 30 feet of pavement, he said. Since they didn't feel that was appropri-

ate for a scenic road, he said they cut it down to 24 feet.

During the public hearing, Cliff Cleary of 1 Zion Hill Road said he thought more than \$100,000 could be saved by reducing the project to a 20-foot width, and he said he saw no reason that couldn't be done. He also said the trees along the Putnam property, which belongs to his wife and her family, were of no interest to them.

"I feel personally if some of them were removed it would make a more scenic view and would open up the stone walls that are not visible," he said. "But we need some speed signs on that road."

Speed was a major consideration for most of the residents who spoke against the project. Most residents believed that widening the road, smoothing out curves and lopping two feet off the hill would encourage motorists to travel at even greater speeds than they do already.

Erica Sieffert, who grew up at 53 Zion

Please see **PLANNING** page 10

Hill Road, said her grandmother lives across the street and she was never allowed to walk across to see her because of the danger caused by speed and the volume of traffic on the road. She said she lived one kilometer from North Salem Elementary School and never was allowed to walk to school for the same reason.

"I have one row of trees between me and what is essentially a 50 mph road, and I'm concerned about my property value," said Charlie Hutchins of 7 Zion Hill Road. One of his trees is 24 inches wide and 150 years old, which he said could not be properly replaced by a sapling.

Tom Campbell, a Zion Hill resident who is also chairman of the conservation commission, asked the board to consider the oaks and maples that form a canopy of color in the fall as well as the deer and wildlife that would be forced further out if more trees were removed.

Manny Sousa, who lives at 54 Zion Hill Road, said two automobiles have landed on his stone wall, the most recent one this spring. He maintained the wall was a safety feature, which would have protected children had they been playing in his yard.

"Consider the historical perspective — what's the purpose of stonewalls," he said. "Last summer at

"We have lost much of the woodland on Zion Hill Road and much of the open space and what remains is the trees and the stone walls. Remove the trees, remove the stone walls and clearly you don't have a rural road any longer."

— Conservation Commission member
George Jones

my own expense, I reconstructed my wall and every one of them came from that piece of property. ... Those rocks have been there for a long time."

Brenda Sack, speaking as a resident and member of the budget committee, said there was no money in the budget for reconstructing stone walls, although selectmen have pledged to do that in places where they will have to be taken down. She said neither Ermer Road nor Kelley Road had drainage problems until they were "fixed," and she reminded the board that trees also act as a sound barrier.

"One thing I have tried very hard to do in this community is to try to maintain some modicum of its rural character," said conservation commission member George Jones. "We have lost much of the woodland on Zion

Hill Road and much of the open space and what remains is the trees and the stone walls. Remove the trees, remove the stone walls and clearly you don't have a rural road any longer."

"I suggest to you that the quality of life can't be measured with a tape measure, and it can't be checked out with a transit," Jones said. He also questioned the board of selectmen's authority to remove trees in the right of way unless they could be proven to create a hazard.

He said it was his understanding that a property owner owns all land to the center of the roadway.

"When you go to remove a wall or trees, you better be damned certain you have the permission of the property owner to do that," he said.

After the public hearing, planning

board member Maria Hamilton said she was unconvinced that trees and stone walls had to be sacrificed to improve Zion Hill Road.

"There is nothing you have said to us that will refute the common sense comments from the public," she said.

Phyllis O'Grady asked Bartlett if the ultimate goal was to reconstruct the road or make it better for traffic or drainage or all of the above. He said it was presented as a reconstruction project to completely replace the roadway structure with all new drainage. He maintained that a 24-foot width was necessary to do the job adequately.

Michael Lyons said the "speedway" issue shouldn't be considered because "we don't say we are not going to improve roads because we are worried about people going faster." Arguing that the board of selectmen was ultimately responsible for making the residents on the road happy with the project, he favored voting for the removal of trees and stone walls.

In the windup, Hamilton, O'Grady and Robert Boucher voted against giving permission, but the measure carried. An amendment to encourage the board of selectmen to do "all they can to maintain the scenic character of Zion Hill Road passed unanimously.

Selectmen will discuss the project at 7 p.m. next Monday night during their meeting in the Knightly Meeting Room in Town Hall.

7/11/02 Who speaks for the trees?

Obviously not the planning board, who voted Tuesday night to allow the town to cut down numerous trees on Zion Hill Road — the town's only scenic road — making it, we can't help but think, less scenic. Why?

That's the question several members of the board had as much trouble coming to grips with as the audience, who crowded into the Knightly Meeting Room during the public hearing hoping to find an advocate.

Planning Board member (and Chairman of the Board of Selectmen) Dick Gregory went so far as to say that Zion Hill Road really isn't scenic any more anyway, and there are lots of ways to make the road prettier after it is widened, adding that "there are all kinds of ways to make something historic."

That one stumps us. We can't for the life of us figure out how to recreate a 100-year-old tree.

The old Concord coaches used to travel Zion Hill Road, said Stephanie Micklon. It was a road before Salem was a town.

"If you do not preserve your past, you are going to regret it," she warned.

Zion Hill Road is a remnant of Salem's rural charm and character that hasn't been overrun by progress, and every one of the 60-plus people who turned out Tuesday night wants to see it stay that way. They like the canopy of trees, the stone walls that were built with rocks as old as, well, dirt; and the wildlife that still frequents the area.

Linda Harvey, of the conservation commission and an avid bicyclist, said the road is listed on state Department of Transportation maps as a regional bike route for adult touring cyclists. Because the road is narrow, cars will hold up and wait for cyclists, she explained.

That may soon change.

The planning board's voice of reason, Maria Hamilton, urged her colleagues to hold out for a better plan or at least for more information as to why the road couldn't be reconstructed without losing trees and stone walls, but not enough of them listened. They did, however, tack on a little postscript to their decision, urging the selectmen to preserve the rural character of the roadway they had just jeopardized by their decision to cut down the trees and move stone walls.

Like that's going to happen. As George Jones said, when you get rid of the trees and the stone walls, there isn't much else that is scenic to preserve.

The planning board passed the buck. Hamilton tried to keep the board focused on its responsibility — to make a tough decision, which is an unusual one for the planning board but necessary because of the importance of a scenic road. Instead, they voted 4-3 to allow the cutting with the idea that the selectmen were the final authority and they would be dealing with the public again on Monday night.

Judging from the remarks made by various members of the public as they stomped out of Town Hall this week, the planning board didn't do the selectmen any favors.

7/18/02

IRS lien placed on Salem selectman's business

Because of unpaid payroll taxes, the Internal Revenue Service has placed a lien on a business owned by Selectman Richard Gregory.

On June 20, the IRS placed a federal tax lien on D.G. Electric Co. Inc. of 9 Delaware Drive in Salem.

The lien notes that the company is behind in paying \$33,971.92 in payroll taxes, interest and penalties.

The unpaid payroll taxes are for Social Security and withholding taxes, which businesses must file quarterly.

According to Peggy Riley, a spokesperson for New England IRS offices, the unpaid payroll taxes are subject to a 0.5 percent per-month penalty and a 6 percent interest rate.

The lien states the business is delinquent in paying payroll taxes for the periods ending June 30, 2001; Sept. 30, 2001; and Dec. 31, 2001.

According to the Rockingham

County Registry of Deeds, this is the fifth IRS lien placed on the company since September 1989 for unpaid payroll taxes.

Liens previously placed were in September 1989 for \$11,184.84; in December 1989 (\$6,452.40); in April 1990 (\$6,967.67); and in May 1990 (\$6,325.06). The liens listed 50 Northwestern Drive in Salem as the businesses' address.

All four liens were released after payment was made.

A civil penalty lien of \$23,079.19 was placed against Gregory's 6 Belair Lane residence in June 1992 and was released 18 months later.

Riley said civil penalties are usually assessed against principal officers of a business for unpaid business taxes.

D.G. Electric was also subject to liens filed by Car Del Property Management Inc., representing Northwestern Drive Condo Association, for unpaid condominium fees for three units, according to Registry records. An April 1991 lien listed a total of \$23,914.89 for unpaid fees.

Registry records indicate that the town of Salem has placed at least a half-dozen liens on the Belair Lane property, in the name of Susan B. Gregory, for unpaid taxes, interest and fees. The total amounts due ranged from \$460.90 to almost \$4,000.

Dick Gregory, who on Tuesday said that he has not been notified of the latest IRS lien on his business, said his finances do not have anything to do with running the town.

"I actually have no clue that there is a lien on me," Gregory said. "Do I know I owe the IRS? Absolutely. Sometimes I am late paying my bills but I always pay them. Should we do a credit check on everybody who runs for public office?"

"Sometimes I don't have enough money to pay (bills)," he added. "The biggest problem with business like this is cash flow. (I) have a check in my wallet right now from someone to me that bounced for \$5,000."

"I am still paying off a debt from 1989 when I built and owned some buildings in Salem in the industrial park," he said. "I don't know what rel-



Dick Gregory

evance there is to this."

Gregory said he first pays his employees and then his suppliers.

"You do whatever keeps you in business," he said.

"Life goes on, things happen; I don't think they are going to take my first born," he said.

According to Riley, the IRS usually mails three notices to a late taxpayer and will usually attempt to make contact with the taxpayer to try to achieve a solution, such as arranging a payment schedule, before a notice of intent to file a lien is mailed.

"We try to work with taxpayers as much as possible," Riley said.

How long before a lien is placed after a tax deadline passes varies on an individual case basis, Riley added.

"(It) could go on for months," she said.

— News Editor Joan Hunt contributed to this story.

Editorial

Meeting or marathon?

It's not an Olympic event yet, but Salem board meetings are taking on Herculean proportions, and it's getting to the point that some sort of advance conditioning may be needed for participants to go the distance.

Take the planning board meeting last Tuesday night, for example. The entire four hours were taken up by just one event — the Zion Hill Road discussion. Those who lacked training in sitting in one place for long periods of time or the ability to repeatedly hear the same information without allowing their eyes to glass over were at a distinct disadvantage coming down the home stretch.

It was good experience, however, for Monday's board of selectmen meeting, where the Zion Hill Road contest came late on the program but lasted until morning. The event featured many of the same competitors, but they employed new game strategies that initially seemed to favor the selectmen.

To many spectators it appeared that a cadre of the selectmen had formed a team within the team, having practiced and perfected the compromise with the residents on road improvements maneuver. But they were no match for a motivated team of citizens who discovered the strategy and found a way to overcome it.

The residents, enjoying a hometown advantage, clearly profited by tightening up their arguments and pacing the competition in areas where running side-by-side could be accomplished without anyone becoming winded.

Still, it was a grueling contest, and judges would give the selectmen high marks for listening and the residents kudos for stamina and determination. Their ability to accomplish a tabling of a final decision promises a rematch down the road.

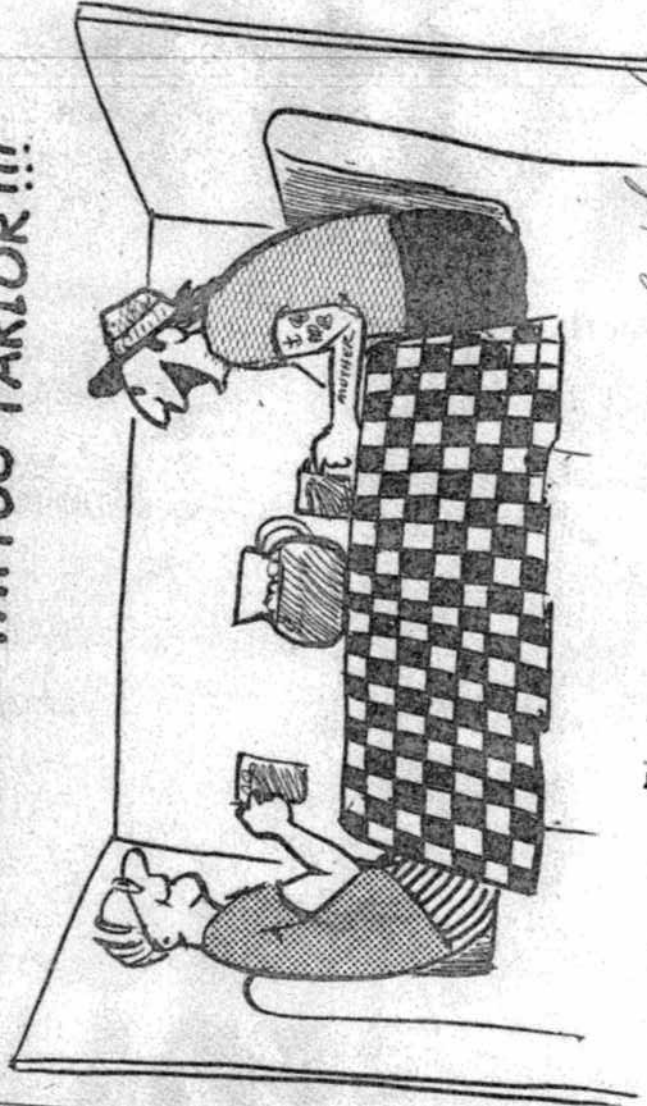
The Zion Hill Road event, occurring as late in the evening as it did, may have caught some selectmen at a disadvantage, as they had already participated in the Millville Beach tug-of-war between residents who want to share the beach with others in town and those who prefer to shut out the public.

This event followed the Brenda Sack citizen request, similar to the old-fashioned bear-baiting event, where the town manager sat quietly in the limelight, while Ms. Sack tossed accusations at him before the crowd applauded.

Somewhat spent, the selectmen rallied late in the agenda (albeit early in the morning) to sprint with the proponents of speed bumps on Shore Drive. It was a sloppy finish, but they stuck to their guns, putting off a decision in the face of strenuous opposition.

And that was that. Despite the fact that additional training may be necessary to keep up with some of the town's board meetings, it is encouraging that so many participants are joining in the games. With the low turnout at recent town meetings, it is refreshing to see residents taking an interest in things that fall into their arena.

OH BOY! WHEN THOSE WALLS AND TREES
ARE GONE FROM ZION HILL... I GOT FIRST
DIBS FOR MY TATTOO PARLOR!!!



7/18/02

L. W. Swank
SALEM OBSERVER

7/18/02

Planners need to listen to residents

To the Editor:

At the Salem Planning Board meeting of July 9, the residents of Zion Hill Road came out to ask the Planning Board to consider our desire that the road NOT be widened. The impact of the widening would be the loss of 68 trees and the removal and reconstruction of several stone walls. Although Zion Hill Road is classified as a scenic road, certain members of the Planning Board, including the selectmen's representative, Dick Gregory, chose to ignore the vote of the 1976 Town Meeting (because it is not as scenic as it was 27 years ago) and allow the potential devastation of a scenic road.

Are they afraid to make the tough decision? Are they unwilling to listen to the residents? I do not know. I am concerned that some members of the Planning Board apparently think that the so-called experts and their data are more important than the concerns and opinions of the residents. Maybe they will listen if we change some members of the Board of Selectmen next March, and if a new group of selectmen will appoint members of the Planning Board who will consider the opinions and concerns of the citizens of Salem to be more important than what an expert says.

Thomas Campbell
Salem

The Eagle-Tribune

Pulitzer Prize winner and New England Daily and Sunday Newspaper of the Year

WEDNESDAY
July 31, 2002

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32 pages 50 cents

100 YEARS
of FAMILY OWNERSHIP

Affordable housing group stumped by lack of land

♦ The group was eyeing a town-owned 15-acre lot behind Salem Town Hall to build on, but officials won't sell.

By James A. Kinnale
Staff Writer

SALEM — A group trying to erect an affordable apartment complex in town has been hampered by its inability to find a piece of land cheap enough to build on.

John Vilele, Housing Development Director for

Rockingham Community Action — the state's anti-poverty agency — said work on bringing a development to town has been "slowed, not stalled," in recent months because they have been unable to find property.

"It's not stalled. Basically, we've come up against the land barrier," Vilele said. "Finding land has been very difficult. Overall, the land problem is enormous

for us."

Vilele said finding suitable lots has been very difficult because Salem continues to be a popular place for new development. He said he's working with town officials to help locate a piece of land big enough for the apartment complex.

"When you're looking for a needle in the haystack you want to look in the community and work with people to find parcels before they are brought to the market," Vilele said.

Even if they do find the land, agency officials

worry that residents wouldn't want the complex because of the stereotypes that come with the term "affordable housing."

"That's clearly an issue," said Realtor David F. Choate, who has been helping the group look for land. "The problem with affordable housing is that people have a stereotypical image of the slums. It's moved a far distance from that. They see these projects in the 1960s and '70s, and they say all afford-

Please see LAND, Page 2

FROM PAGE ONE

Land: Affordable home groups stumped

Continued from Page 1

able housing is poor, slum housing, but how do you get people off their stereotypes?"

Rockingham Community Action has been working with the Greater Salem Council of Churches and the Salem Housing Authority in hopes of building an apartment complex with 30 to 40 units. Families eligible to live at the proposed complex would have to earn between \$25,650 and \$41,520 a year to qualify.

Rents for the apartments, which will have two to four bedrooms, wouldn't exceed 30 percent of a family's gross income. Some selectmen also said they were troubled by the fact that they couldn't stop out-of-town residents from moving into the complex because it will be built using federal funds.

"My personal belief is we need to do something about affordable elderly housing (for Salem residents)," said Selectman Chairman Richard Gregory.

In addition, the group is struggling to find a piece of property zoned for multi-family use because many towns in the county — including Salem — have passed stringent ordinances regulating them.

"As a result of all the multi-family development in Rockingham County in the 1980s, a lot of communities have zoned them out. So you have to go through rezoning. One of the biggest problems (for towns) has been the number of kids these multi-family units put in the school system. ... It's been a problem everywhere in Rockingham County," said Choate.

The group was eyeing a town-owned 15-acre lot behind Salem

Town Hall to build on, but town officials didn't want to sell the land.

Gregory said selectmen want to hold on to the land while it examines its needs for a new police station and other long-term projects. "The town isn't in the habit of giving up property. We're looking to locate a new police station. We're now doing a fire department study. ... Because of all those kinds of things, it would be short-sighted to dump property no matter how good the cause is. We need to keep our options open."

Now that the town property is out, the group is hoping someone may donate property for affordable housing.

If not, they will continue to struggle to find something they can afford.

"It really has to be a low enough price that when you figure out the

cost of doing a development, the development can sustain itself," said Diane Kierstead, director of the Salem Housing Authority.

Kierstead said the last two affordable housing projects were built 10 years ago: Policy Brook Estates, a 24-unit apartment complex on Pleasant Street, and the Ivan Gale subdivision, which has 39 units off of Lawrence Road.

Both complexes are fully occupied, she said.

This report was prepared by Salem reporter James A. Kimble. If you have questions, comments or material to add on this subject, please feel free to contact him by phone at (603) 893-9555 during business hours, by mail at 100, Turnpike St., North Andover, MA 01845, or by e-mail at jkimble@eagletribune.com.

Ed Colley's View



Some people in Windham, N.H., are upset over the laser light show from the new Canobie Park ride.

8/4/02
B-6/668
WINDHAM, N.H.

Town vexed by Canobie laser light

By Caroline Louise Cole

GLOBE CORRESPONDENT

Obnnoxious" and "inconsiderate" are the words Windham selectmen are using to describe the new nighttime laser light show at Canobie Lake Park, which they believe is piercing their community's "country feel."

The local amusement park in neighboring Salem, N.H., launched its new Star Blaster thrill ride just in time for its Memorial Day opening. The 12-seater vertical slide sends riders airborne up an 80-foot-high tower simulating the weightless punch astronauts feel blasting off into outer space.

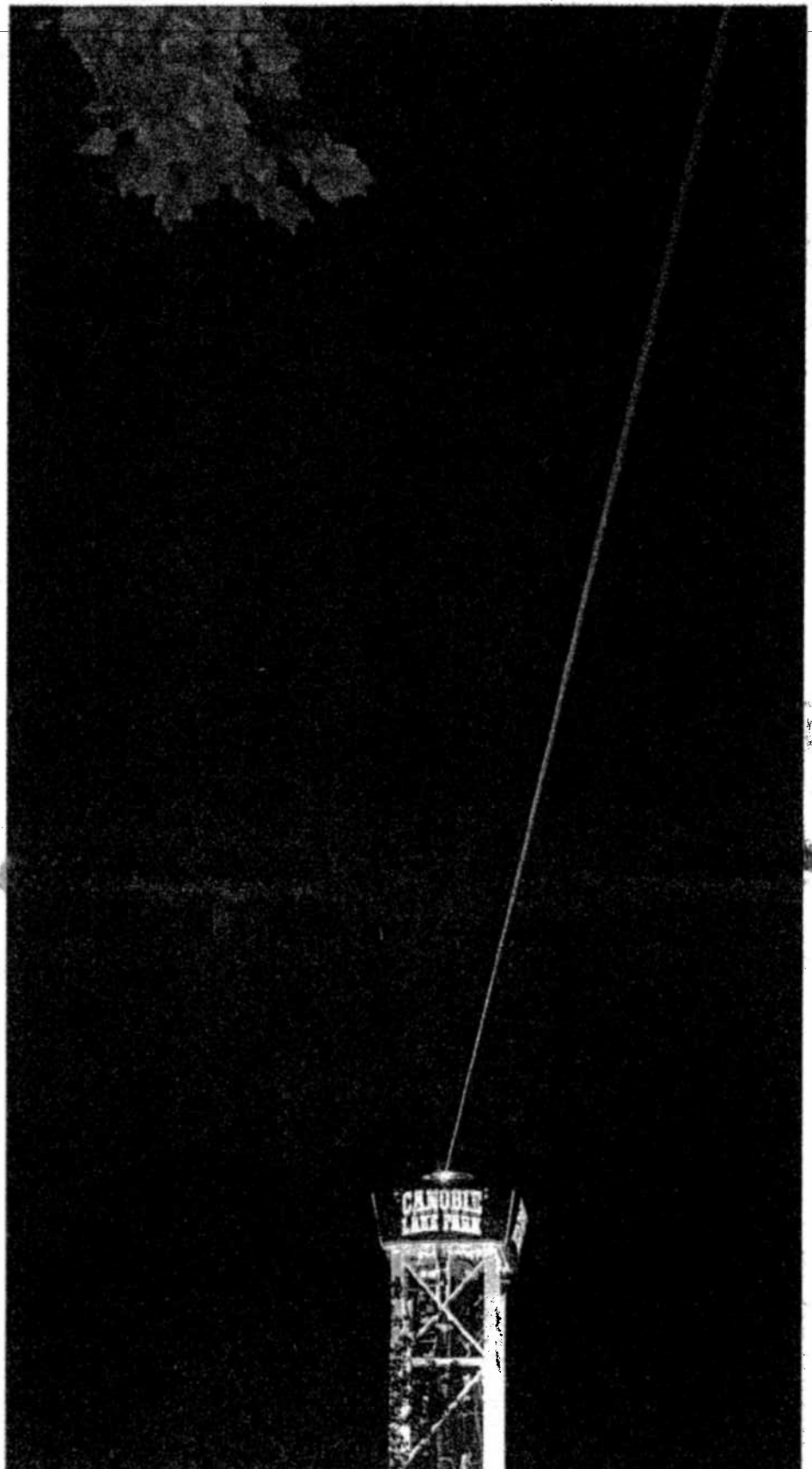
To draw attention to the ride, a brilliant shaft of green light shoots into the night sky. The display, in which the laser light moves in a circle flashing sequentially in eight different directions, will continue each night until Labor Day.

The pulsating laser spotlight that emanates from the top of the Star Blaster tower can be seen as far away as Manchester 19.5 miles to the north, Amesbury 26.1 miles to the east, and Woburn 25 miles down Interstate 93 to the south. In fact, park owner Wayne Ulaky said he spent hours figuring out where to aim the thin beam of light for maximum exposure. It is the only laser show attached to an amusement park ride in the Northeast, he said.

Windham's five-member Board of Selectmen and many who live in the rural enclave of 12,500 are not amused.

"It's one of those marketing things we just don't think is needed," said Margaret Crisler, chairman of the Windham Board of Selectmen, whose community shares Canobie Lake with Salem. "Windham is a com-

A 2-second time exposure showing the laser beam emitted from the Star Blaster amusement park ride at Canobie Lake Park.



LASER LIGHT, Page 6

GLOBE STAFF PHOTO/JOANNE RATHE

Town not amused by Canobie Lake laser

► LASER LIGHT

Continued from Page 1

munity that has worked hard to remain a rural oasis and this laser is just the sort of light pollution we try to discourage."

Windham Selectman Alan Carpenter said he is particularly disappointed because Salem's planning board permitted the laser without asking its neighbors for an opinion on its regional impact.

"And then when we wrote them a letter asking for a chance to discuss the possibility of regulating the laser's hours of operation, they ignored us," Carpenter said.

Carpenter said he is also surprised the Federal Aviation Administration allowed the laser given its proximity to Manchester Airport and the flight corridor up I-93 connecting Boston's Logan Airport to Pease in Portsmouth and points north.

James Keller, chairman of Salem's planning board, said he was unaware of Windham's May 23 letter and his board approved the laser "as a minor change" in Canobie Lake's site plan.

"That's what we do whenever they add a new ride," he said. "As far as the letter from Windham goes, I guess it must be sitting on our planner's desk."

Ross Moldoff, the town's planner, is on vacation and therefore did not respond to a reporter's call for comment.

Arlene Salac, a spokeswoman for the FAA, said her agency does not have "regulatory authority" over so-called "non-terminating entertainment lasers," but that Laser Fantasy Inc. of Bellevue, Wash., which supplied Canobie's laser, did request a safety analysis.

"We ask the vendors to work with us and we have been involved with this laser," she said. "As far as regulation goes, really their only motivation for coming to the FAA is that if there is an accident and it can be proven the laser caused it, the amusement park could be found liable for damages."

Salac said the FAA performed the safety analysis and told the company it had no objection to the

What do you think?

Should there be more restrictions on the laser at Canobie Lake Park?

Mail your responses to:
Globe NorthWest
442 Marrett Road
Lexington, MA 02421

or e-mail them to:
globenorthwest@globe.com

laser's installation.

Kevin Dillon, airport director at Manchester Airport, said the laser does not affect flights at the airport.

In fact, it was an aviation incident that convinced the owners of Laser Fantasy to seek the FAA's help, according to Paul Torgeson, a company salesman.

"A Southwest airline pilot was momentarily blinded by a laser we installed at the Las Vegas Hilton back in 1994 which caused Las Vegas to shut down all laser light shows," Torgeson said. "Now we are very careful how the beams are directed and their intensity."

Keller in Salem said he is "not averse" to the idea of working with his Windham counterparts to tweak the laser so that it is less intrusive on the night sky.

But at Canobie Lake Park, Ulaky said he doesn't know what all the fuss is about.

"I've wanted one of these since I saw a laser show for the first time at the opening of Tokyo Disney in 1983," said Ulaky. "It just enhances the thrill of this ride and adds to its space mission theme."

Seconding that motion was James Bride, 14, of Tyngsborough, as he was exiting the Star Blaster ride.

"Awesome," he said.

'It just enhances the thrill of this ride and adds to its space mission theme.'

WAYNE ULAKY
Owner of Canobie Lake Park



GLOBE STAFF PHOTOS/JOANNE RATHE

At dusk, (above) the Star Blaster laser show begins, as riders enjoy the ride. Time exposure (below) shows the laser beam.



8/19/02
SALEM

Turning lane proposed for busy intersection

◆ The town can use fees Wal-Mart gave the town to pay for removing a curb and adding a turning lane at the Route 111 and North Policy Street intersection.

By James A. Kumble
Staff Writer

SALEM — Just a year after a curb was placed at the busy Route 111 and North Policy Street intersection to improve traffic flow, town officials want to remove it and add a turning lane.

Wal-Mart paid for the curb and several other improvements along Routes 111 and 28 when it came to town two years ago.

Planning Director Ross Moldoff said sev-

eral people complain the curbing slows traffic. Town officials want to move back the curb located on the left side of the road facing north to make way for the added turning lane.

"You can't have a car waiting to turn left (on North Policy) because you've got a lot of traffic (from North Policy) wanting to turn right on Route 111," said Moldoff.

Selectman Chairman Richard Gregory agreed.

"At rush hour it's a little bit tough," Gregory said. "The big problem is turning left. It's going to add another lane, so you can get around (and) the backup (on Route 111) won't be as bad."

Town Manager Jeffrey Towne said the cost of the project is estimated at \$10,000. Still, he needs more estimates before selectmen decide whether to approve the project.

The town can pay for the project using impact fees Wal-Mart gave to the town. The fund amounts to roughly \$90,000, Towne said.

But before selectmen sign off on the project, Salem officials will have to talk with Windham officials because the intersection

is in Windham.

"We're trying to do it the right way so we can sit down with the town of Windham to make sure everyone is in agreement with what's happening," said Towne.

State officials have already accepted the proposal, which would add an 11-foot wide, right-turn lane and a 2-foot wide shoulder. State and town officials inspected the site July 18.

Towne would like to see the work completed before next year when the state begins construction of Route 111 bypass. The bypass is intended to give drivers an alternative to the busy intersection of Routes 111 and 28.

Senior housing development gets conditional approval

A plan for a senior housing development at 8 Ewins Lane was conditionally approved by the Salem Planning Board last Thursday after

by
**STANLEY
DANKOSKI**
Staff Writer

the developer and the town housing authority agreed on the number of affordable units the site would have.

The developer, Commons Development Group of Westford, Mass., and the Salem Housing Authority came to an agreement that was presented to the planning board last week to have the proposed two-building 142-unit elderly housing development include eight units set aside as affordable units.

The planning board approved the plan 4-0 to construct the elderly housing, called the Club at Meadowbrook, subject to six minor conditions:

- Commons Development will pay \$6,000 of the total cost to install a traffic light and pay about \$93,500 toward the construction of a Sally Sweet's Way extension prior to obtaining a building permit.

- Commons must receive approval by the town for a deed restriction on age limits (to house only those aged 55 or older).

- Commons must submit final approval from both the fire department and the town engineering division.

- Commons must also record the agreement it had with the housing authority, with any amendments or termination to be approved by the town planning board, as well as record the agreement it had with the town to allow the public to use the extension.

The town would need to access the road because a new police station is planned for a nearby lot, said Planning Director Ross Moldoff.

- Commons Development Group has 60 days to ensure those conditions are met, before Commons goes to the planning board again to show those conditions were met.

"My client has no problem with allowing the town access [to the property and with the other conditions]," said Steve Lewis of SLI Consulting,

the consultant for Commons.

The planning board nearly a month ago would not approve the plan based on the disagreement between the Salem Housing Authority and Commons about how affordable the developer's affordable units were.

Commons' original plan included 10 units at what it said was the affordable price of \$1,011 per month per one-bedroom unit, for a period of 10 years. Under the new plan, the units will be \$1,011 for one-bedroom units and \$1,213 for two-bedroom units, for 15 years, even if Commons decides to sell the property to another business during that time.

The units are considered affordable because the Club at Meadowbrook price includes utilities and such luxuries as a public pool, exercise rooms, a concierge service and an underground, heated parking garage. The housing authority conceded that the price tag would only be affordable if the tenant's income was at least \$40,000.

Affordable housing is generally considered in New Hampshire to be

no more than 30 percent of a tenant's yearly income.

Commons and the SHA agreed on the following recommended affordable housing deed restrictions: Eight units, two two-bedrooms and six one-bedrooms, will be designated as affordable and will be unmarked and scattered throughout the two buildings.

The SHA will have responsibility to verify eligibility of the applicants and will maintain a waiting list as needed, at no cost to Commons. It will also ensure that the eight units will remain fully occupied, and Commons will inform the SHA when a vacancy is imminent.

If the SHA fails to find a suitable tenant for the unit within 30 days, Commons may lease the unit at regular price; the next available unit would then be considered as an affordable unit that the SHA can fill.

The SHA has been advocating for more affordable housing projects in town and for more units within a developer's project to be set aside as affordable.

Work session addresses Salem's future

On Tuesday, Sept. 24, planning board members began working on a Salem not yet built. Among the topics discussed were improvements to Veteran's Parkway, preserving open space and examining uses for the land around Rockingham Park.

by
**ERIC
BAXTER**
News Editor

The plans are extensions of the town's master plan, adopted in 2001. The master plan functions as a loose set of guidelines to help the town become what the planning board members and town planner envision between now and 2011.

Tuesday's topics covered a wide spectrum, from roads and buildings to open spaces. Town Planning Director Ross Moldoff said each topic discussed at the work session was "connected in the sense they deal with the future growth and development in the community."

Rockingham Area Plan

For the past several years, the town has eyed the land around Rockingham Park for possible devel-

opment. The questions faced by planning board members at the Tuesday work session were how to attract developers and how to develop the area.

Moldoff suggested tinkering with the area's zoning and allowing for multi-use, rather than strictly commercial and industrial development.

"We'd like to create a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly area," said Moldoff in an earlier interview. "Village-oriented development would work very well with the race track."

Village-oriented development mixes businesses and residential developments together. Moldoff said the land around the track would be a good place for luxury apartments or senior housing with a mix of smaller businesses.

Under the master plan, the first priority would be preservation of the track. Further development would be used to enhance the area and make the track more viable.

However, Moldoff stressed plans were in the early stage and subject to change.

Open space preservation

With open space disappearing at a rapid rate Moldoff has aimed the town's sights on preserving the remaining large tracts of land. Again, planning board members looked at tinkering with zoning regulations and development guidelines to ensure the remaining 24 parcels of 25-plus acres of land will contain some undeveloped areas.

"The value of the land is so high there is a pressure to develop. We're just looking to preserve some green space," said Moldoff.

Veteran's Parkway Plan

The Veterans Parkway is one of the key access roads on the travel routes between Route 28 and Lawrence Road. Planning board members, with consultant Steve Pernaw, used traffic studies from the proposed senior housing project and Market Basket to examine possible changes to the parkway.

The group looked at widening the parkway to three lanes and improving the problem intersection at the entrance to the Kmart plaza.

gram weekly with the help of SCTV interns Eric McManis and Ben Woodward. For information about Salem Community Television, visit the Web site www.salemcommunitytelevision.com or call 893-7069, Ext. 118.

SAFE PLACE SUPPORT:
A Safe Place, is in need of gift certificates for phone cards and grocery certificates. The shelter's wish list is updated regularly to reflect the current needs of the agency. Corporations may provide support through private foundations or direct giving programs. Non-kind gifts are also welcome.
A Safe Place, in Rochester, Portsmouth and Salem, provides aid to victims of domestic violence and their children.
For more information, or to help, call 436-4619, Ext. 3.

The Union Leader
SUNDAY NEWS

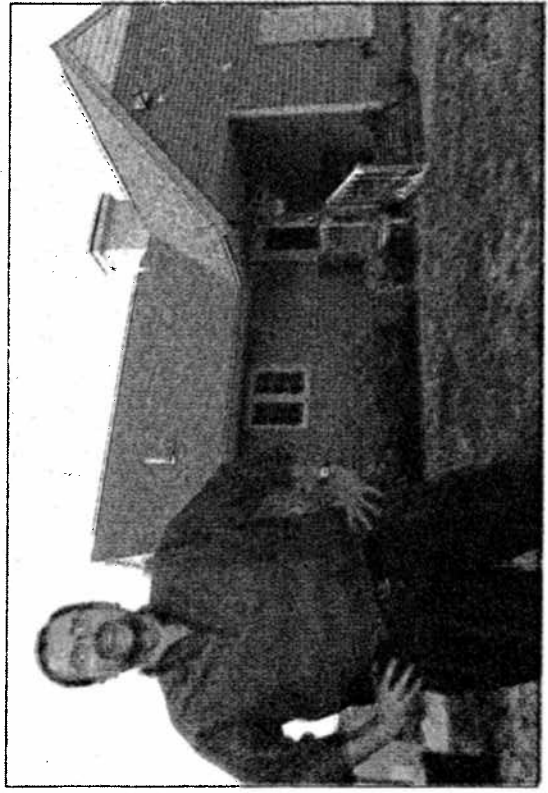
CLASH OF THE TITANS?
Not quite, but Saturday's football game between host Dartmouth and UNH does pit New Hampshire's only Division I-AA teams in a battle for state bragging rights. What's more, this may be the best chance an team has to win a game this season. Don't miss the New Hampshire Sunday News Sports section.

TROLLEY TRIP
Remember trolleys? Well, Manchester Historical Association is planning a motorcoach trip to sit the Seashore Trolley Museum in Kennebunkport, Maine, here you can see the ornate trolley of Manchester's parlor car and the old Manchester-to-Nashua trolley. For a look at other trolley activities, turn to NH Pre-

Affordable housing

Can Salem make it work?

9/26/03
Salem Observer



Reporter Stanley Dankoski has been looking into the lack of affordable housing in the Salem area. Here he looks at an affordable housing complex in Atkinson that has been successful. Its developer thinks the same can be done in Salem.

It took a lawsuit more than a decade ago against the town of Atkinson to bring affordable housing into the fold. Most likely, however, it would not come to that if Salem incorporates an amendment onto a town ordinance in order to require affordable units in future housing.

by **STANLEY DANKOSKI**
Staff Writer

"There's no easy solution," said Salem Planning Director Ross Moldoff of the town's affordable housing struggle. "It's very difficult."

Please see **HOUSING** page 2

► WINDHAM

League faults planners, withdraws building plan

Claiming the Windham Planning Board bogged down a proposal for a multi-use building at Griffin Park, the president of the Windham Baseball-Softball League has withdrawn the plan.

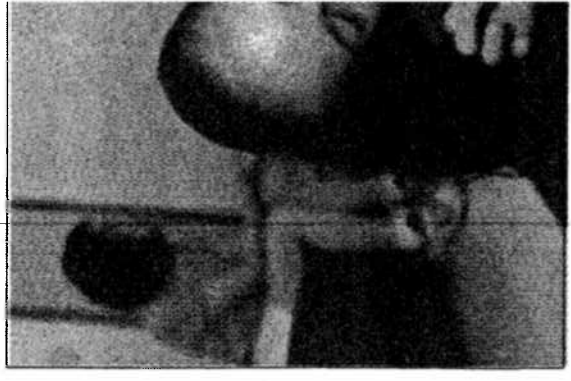
by **DARRELL HALEN**
Staff Writer

"We have a planning board who said a roof design is more important than public safety," said League President Charlie

and volunteer labor dried up.
"This was all based on timing," he said. "We had to get this done before the winter."
But the request by some planning board members for a redesign of the building, McMahan claimed, effectively killed the project by delaying its start.
"I think they did a tremendous disservice to the town," McMahan said.

ty of Windham selectmen denied McMahan's request to circumvent planning board approval of the project after McMahan complained about comments made by some planning board members when they reviewed the proposal the previous week. The planning board had moved the proposal to the top of the list of projects it is reviewing to help fast track its approval.

A battle lost



Stanley Dankoski

TS

REGIONAL
WEATHER

All forecasts and maps provided by AccuWeather, Inc. ©200



Friday			Saturday			Sunday			Monday		
HI	Lo	W	HI	Lo	W	HI	Lo	W	HI	Lo	W
68	50	6	69	40	8	61	42	pc	57	42	W
66	51	pc	64	44	sh	60	42	c	53	43	r
68	50	pc	62	40	sh	60	38	pc	60	38	sh
66	41	sh	63	33	r	63	38	pc	60	39	s
70	52	pc	64	51	r	64	49	pc	64	44	s
69	53	sh	65	47	r	63	45	pc	61	43	pc
68	49	pc	65	38	r	58	42	pc	60	42	pc
61	46	pc	56	38	sh	55	37	c	48	33	r
68	49	pc	62	38	sh	58	38	pc	56	41	r
71	53	pc	65	44	r	65	43	pc	63	46	r
70	57	c	69	48	r	60	46	pc	62	40	s

► **HOUSING:** Atkinson
Continued from page 1

By using natural landmarks in the available land, Lewis designed a community with winding roads (to limit speeding cars) that circle around ledges, with large open spaces that in some places have become community gardens, and with enough trees used naturally to separate Settler's sections, which are based on residents,

88 Stiles Road, Suite 103
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PUBLISHER AND EDITOR: TAMM PLYER

"Patrons have the right to preview books for themselves but they don't have the right to make decisions for other readers," Strauss said.

Continued from page 1

Such is the case for those living in "age-targeted" homes purchased at market prices. Most residents there are those whose children have grown up and left home, and who want a house to grow old in. They feel like it's their time to treat themselves to a big house. Lewis said, and some would rather not deal with little kids running around.

Availability of any housing in Jerusalem is a unique struggle of supply and demand, Moldoff said. There is a natural level of demand, he said, in an area with a small affordable housing supply.

Salem is nowhere near full housing capacity, with 2,700 additional houses that can be developed on available land, Moldoff said. New houses are being built on Kelley Road

Correction

For information on Banned Books Week contact your local library or visit the ALA Web site at www.ala.org.

1:football

While developers are not required to include affordable units in their housing projects, the option is open to have the affordable housing ordinance amended somehow to require a certain percentage of affordable units. Moldoff said the town Board of Selectmen and Planning Board are interested in at least learning more about that.

be located on Ewinus Lane just behind Salem Town Hall, the town planning board suggested Commons work with the Salem Housing Authority to work out a plan, which resulted in having eight units at a relatively low rental price.

"There isn't any chance of us solving the (affordable housing) problem," Moldoff said. "Unless we get the state or the federal government involved (to subsidize developers)."

Misconceptions about affordable housing, such as it being detrimental to a town's tax base and neighborhoods, are not prevalent in Salem, Moldoff said.

"It's not a huge issue," he said. "I don't think (residents are) adverse to it at all."

Lewis, who was a U.S. housing representative in Poland in the early 1990s, knows well the delicate balance town residents want.

"Even if they change zoning tomorrow (as an easy solution to get more affordable housing), it wouldn't be wall-to-wall affordable housing," Lewis said. "A town with an excess of anything will fail its people."

ON-TRACK wagers dipped this year, but inter-track wagering or simulcast showed an increase at Rockingham Park. Yesterday

marked the close of this year's live racing card.

Mark Bolton/Union Leader

9/23/02

■ On final day of the 2002 live meet, insiders say Rockingham Park will continue for seasons to come despite financial struggles. Management says track should reach a decision within 30 to 60 days.

By KEVIN GRAY
Staff Sports Writer

SALEM — Although attendance was down four percent this season and track officials speculate on the future of Rockingham Park, insiders predict live racing will continue for seasons to come at the historic park.

"I've been coming here 30 years, and every year you hear it's the last year. I still say we'll be racing next year," said Ron Dandy, a horse trainer with the most victories at The Rock this season.

Yesterday marked the final day of the 2002 live meet, and ownership will now review business plans before making any decisions on continuing live racing. General Manager Ed Callahan said the track should reach a decision within 30 to 60 days.

"We look forward with hopefulness for 2003," Callahan said.

Rockingham Park, which opened in 1906, will continue its full card of simulcasting racing, trade shows and bingo. But unless the New Hampshire Legislature changes its stance on allowing slot machines here, the track expects an ongoing financial struggle while losing its foothold in the gaming in-

cheering for football, horses and dogs.

Long-time race fan Mike Kolfas of Lawrence, Mass., who owns a club box at Rockingham, said the track positively will be hosting live racing again next

season. He, too, has been attending the races for 30 years and has heard the rumors of the Rock shutting its doors.

"All the tracks are hurting. Everyone is going down to the casinos, but they still make money

with the simulcast," said Kolfas. "Everyone I know that's retired, this is home. This is where we go during the summer. There's no doubt in my mind we'll be back next season."

'Rock' On

dusty throughout New England.

"What would help is if we ended up with slot machines here. If New Hampshire got the slots, they could pay for the education problem right here," said Dandy. "I've won 63 or 64 races here this season, and it's still hard to squeak a living."

Horse owner Ed Lippman, who ranked sixth on the winners' list this season, shared the same opinion yesterday: The Rock will return next season, but slots eventually will be needed to save the park.

He pointed to the success of horse tracks in Delaware and West Virginia which offer slot machines. A greyhound track in Lincoln, R.I., is the closest park to New Hampshire offering the one-armed bandits.

"At some of the other tracks, you can't get

a stall. The purse structure is 10 times what they have here," said Lippman, who expects his top horse, Heat of the Night, to return for more action in 2003.

"This is part of the New England circuit. In my opinion, I don't believe it will close. What else are they going to do with this place? They simulcast year around. Unless somebody comes in and offers them a ton of money to develop it, what else are they going to do?"

In yesterday's main event, 2-year-old Sweet Samantha ran to an easy victory in the \$25,000 Concord Stakes. Other purses were no smaller than \$4,900.

Josiah Hampshire, named the 2002 Coors Light Jockey of the Year, cruised to more than 100 wins at Rockingham this season. He said he couldn't imagine the Granite State without the historic horse track in action from June to September.

"That would be a crime. It would be a sin. I understand they're in a little bit of financial problems, and they're desperately seeking slots, but it would be a shame for this place and the whole community if it ever shut down."

Money wagered at Rockingham this season was virtually even with the "handle" from last season, according to public relations manager Lynne Snerson. On-track wagers dipped in 2002, but the inter-track wagering or simulcast showed an increase this year. Fans yesterday mingled inside and out, watching live racing and simulcast,

ROCK, Page A10

Vermont man kills
Lebanon. Another
Vermont man chas-

By KATHARINE McQUAID
Union Leader Staff

LEBANON — A Vermont man was killed in the parking apartment complex early this morning.

Vermont police arrested Cyl Waters, 23, in connection with the shooting death of Corey Brink, 19, of South Royalton, Vt., according to New Hampshire Senior Assistant Attorney General Malinda Lawrence.

Waters, reportedly from White River Junction, Vt., surrendered to police in Hartford, Vt., yesterday afternoon after New Hampshire State sued a warrant for his second-degree murder. Lawrence said.

Lawrence would not say what Brink and Waters killed or what motivated the shooting.

One woman who witnessed the incident said Waters shot her Beechwood apartment building on Wood Lane at about 10:30 a.m. Monday.

Michelle LaFromboise was awakened by a c-

ROCK
(Continued From Page A1)



By JOHN J. LUMPKIN
The Associated Press

QUANTICO, Va. — U.S. forces in notentia-

Military of Bagh

10/16/02

A unique solution to wetlands problem

◆ The site is near another driving range, around the corner on Brady Avenue at The Scottish Highland Golf Course.

Wetland Board recommended the nets, the Planning Board may have little choice in approving that part of the plan, according to Planning Board Chairman James

Please see **GOLF**, Page 16

By James A. Kimble
Staff Writer

SALEM — Proposing a golf driving range off of Route 38 may not be an unheard-of idea, but how its owners plan to keep balls from landing in the drink may be a first for Salem.

Developers for the project — Mark Pearson and Steve Devito — plan to cover two wetlands that run through the center of the proposed range with large nets set on 10-foot poles.

"What they have proposed to do is cut down the trees and build up a bit of a berm around the wetland and put 10-foot high posts and netting on top of the wetland so they could use the site," said Planning Director Ross Moldoff. "They're not allowed to fill the wetland but apparently we have a letter from the state saying they're allowed (to use the nets)."

Salem's Conservation Commission voted against disturbing the wetland, but because the state's

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Joseph A. Torrisi, Treasurer

Continued from Page 15

Keller.

"We'd be hard pressed to not approve that portion of the plan although it's peculiar and it's awkward. They will go before the wetlands bureau and if it's granted conditional approval (by the Planning Board), they will get the permit," Keller said.

"I have never seen a proposal that called for screening above a wetland to protect it, but there's a first for everything, I suppose," said Keller.

The two wet areas run approximately 90 feet long and 60 feet wide, and 110 feet long and 60 feet wide. The first would be near the 75-yard mark, the second would stretch across the 150-yard mark, according to Moldoff.

Developers plan to use a 20-acre site, but only 2 to 2 1/2 acres would be developed, Moldoff said. The Zoning Board of Adjustment previously granted a variance to locate the range in a residentially zoned section of town.

The site is near another driving range around the corner on Brady Avenue at The Scottish Highland Golf Course.

Keller said some nearby residents have concerns about some vegetation and trees being removed from the area. But with only a preliminary visit to the board so far, Keller said the plan faces at least one more hearing before approval.

**...NAW... IT'S NOT AN ACCIDENT IT'S A RED
LIGHT... I CAN ALMOST SEE THE DEPOT !!!**



10/24/02

Developer: Pursuing many projects in area

Continued from Page 1

Callahan, vice president/general manager of Rockingham Park. The third owner is Thomas Maher.

Along with Kelly's brother, Christopher Kelly, and another partner, they bought the old Wang towers for \$525,000 when the high-rise buildings went up for auction following the bankruptcy of the former computer giant Wang.

The developers pumped \$65 million into renovating the towers, which gave Lowell's sagging economy a big boost, said Bob Malavich, Lowell's director of housing and community development.

"I think Rockingham Park is in good hands," Malavich said. "They took a building and put \$65 million into it and sold it for \$120 million. It's fully-tenanted with more than 3,000 employees combined in the (renovated) towers.

"It was a big deal for Lowell to take a building in distress during (sluggish) financial times and help rebuild the city's economy on that site."

NYNEX is one of the tenants in the renovated towers, called Cross Point Building.

Currently, Eastern Development is in the process of turning the former Ann & Hope Department Store at the Liberty Tree Mall in Danvers, Mass., into a Kohl's Department Store, Stop and Shop Supermarket and a Pier I Imports.

Eastern Development has already developed half of the 200,000 square-foot building in the Kohl's Department Store.

Evan Belansky, a planner for the town of Danvers, said the company has most of its approvals in place to create the Stop and Shop Supermarket and Pier I Imports at the site.

"In their dealings with the town, they worked real well with the town," Belansky. "Ann & Hope sat vacant for a year and a half and the town was anxious to

make it a viable part of the mall. They hired top notch consultants to do studies and plans."

It was one of five former Ann & Hope stores bought by Eastern Development with a total of 1 million square feet of retail space. Based in Rhode Island, Ann & Hope, a discount department store chain, is downsizing into a smaller retailer.

In July, North Country LLC, a Delaware company with an address in Woburn, Mass., purchased the Pentucket Shopping Center on Route 125 in Plaistow — which is home to Wal-Mart and Staples — for \$6.2 million at a foreclosure auction.

Just days after the sale, several store owners received eviction notices from an attorney for Eastern Development — a company which is located at the same address as North Country LLC.

According to Plaistow planning officials, no plans have been filed by the development company.

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Horses break from the gate on Rockingham Park's turf course. The track plans to run its summer season the next two years.

Eagle-Tribune file photo

10/30/02

Eagle Tribune

Racing to end in two years

Developer pursuing many area projects

◆ The same developers hired to develop Rockingham Park are credited with revitalizing the old Wang towers in Lowell.

By John Basileco
and Margo LeSage
Staff Writers

SALEM — The same firm hired to come up with plans to redevelop Rockingham Park has played a key role in major redevelopment projects in Lowell, Mass., and Boston.

Eastern Development of Woburn, Mass., a developer of retail and office projects throughout New England, has been involved in efforts to revitalize the Downtown Crossing area in Boston, according to Jessica Shumaker, a spokeswoman for the Boston Redevelopment Authority.

"Eastern Development has played a major role in the 33 Arch St. development project — which is a 33-story office tower that is nearly finished, in Boston's Downtown Crossing area," Shumaker said. "The ground floor has retail stores which are currently open."

She said the development "has played a big part in the Downtown Crossing revitalization."

Two of Eastern Development's owners, Brian Kelly and Daniel Doherty, also played a big role in revitalizing the old Wang towers in Lowell in the 1990s, said Edward



Eagle-Tribune file photo

An aerial shot of Rockingham Park in Salem, N.H. The owners of Rockingham Park have announced they will end racing at the 170-acre site in two years and are planning to redevelop the property. The Mall at Rockingham Park was built on 88 acres the racetrack sold in the late '80s.

A wish list for 170 acres

◆ Several people said they don't want to see retail or residential development at Rockingham Park.

By Katie Bressack
Staff Writer

SALEM — The debate over how to redevelop Rockingham Park has already begun, even though news that the owners of the 170-acre site will end racing in two years at the racetrack is just hitting the streets.

Like many people interviewed by The Eagle-Tribune yesterday, Selectman Everett McBride said he'd like to see some kind of mixed development at the racetrack, which was opened in 1906.

"I'm not interested in single family residential property, but I'd be interested in more high-end apartments. I think those are in demand right now," he said. "We have to sit and talk to them. It is their property but it is our com-



Eagle-Tribune file photo

Trainer Tammi Piermarini works on a horse at the Rock. She is one of 600 people who work at the track in the live racing season.

Please see CLOSING, Page 2

Lack of slot machines spells doom for Rock

◆ Ed Callahan, general manager for the racetrack, said redevelopment could include a cluster of offices, retail stores, a public park and residential development

By James A. Kimble
Staff Writer

SALEM — The owners of Rockingham Park have announced they will end horse racing at the Salem landmark in two years and immediately begin creating plans to redevelop the 170-acre property.

Ed Callahan, vice-president and general manager for Rockingham Park, told The Eagle Tribune yesterday the track's owners have hired a Massachusetts developer to bring what officials say could be a cluster of offices, retail stores, a public park and residential development to the track.

The owners of the park have watched as revenues at the race track have plummeted by 50 percent since the opening of two gambling casinos in Connecticut during the early 1990s.

Last year's defeat of a plan by the state Legislature to add video gambling at the state's four racetracks marked the end of racing at Rockingham Park, which opened in 1906.

"After pursuing that (expanded gambling) for eight or 10 years, it does not appear the legislative situation in New Hampshire is going to change," Callahan said yesterday.

"You can't go on forever with a hope and a dream, so we thought it was in our best interest to plan the future



"You can't go on forever with a hope and a dream, so we thought it was in our best interest to plan the future."

Ed Callahan,
Rockingham
Park general
manager

Please see TRACK, Page 2

Salem High school

Salem, Windham agree to proposal

By Camille Ducey
Staff Writers

WINDHAM — Members from the Salem and Windham School boards agreed last night on a draft proposal to change the agreement that allows Windham to send its high-school age students to Salem High School.

Under the plan, Windham could keep sending its students to Salem High School, but they would have to pay to build an addition to the school and cover all the expenses for renting portable classrooms until the addition is completed.

For their part, Salem board members agreed to cut Windham's per student tuition

Please see SCHOOL, Page 10

Spooky lenses 'hot' to teens, scary to doctors

By Randy Trick and Meg Murphy
Staff Writers

A irony Santana and her friends at Lawrence High want spooky contact lenses for Halloween and they know where to look for them. Forget the mall. Many teenagers are turning to friends, acquaintances or the Internet to buy a less expensive set of the glamorous eye-changers.

"Those things are hot. I want the glow-in-the-dark ones for Halloween," said Santana, 14. "You can scare a lot of people with them — what about the black ones?"

Please see CONTACTS, Page 10



Lisa Poole/Staff photo

Martha Law, a sales associate at Parrelli Optical in North Andover, Mass., tries out a pair of WildEyes contacts.



Tomorrow: Partly to mostly sunny. 47°
Eagle-Tribune
WMUR weather
forecast,
Page 36



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THE LOTTERY

MASSACHUSETTS

Daily Lottery

Oct. 29	Psychometric order	\$579
Oct. 29	First 4 digits	\$4,723
Oct. 29	First 3 digits	\$463
Oct. 29	Any 3 digits	\$57
Oct. 29	Any 2 digits	\$6
Oct. 29	Psychometric order	\$394
Oct. 29	First 4 digits	\$231
Oct. 29	First 3 digits	\$110
Oct. 29	Last 3 digits	\$110
Oct. 29	Previous numbers	\$110
Oct. 29	Oct. 25	\$602
Oct. 29	Oct. 24	\$895
Oct. 29	Oct. 23	\$570
Oct. 29	Oct. 22	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 21	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 20	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 19	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 18	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 17	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 16	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 15	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 14	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 13	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 12	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 11	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 10	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 9	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 8	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 7	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 6	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 5	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 4	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 3	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 2	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 1	\$35

Rockingham Park is about 300 people in the off season and twice as many during the racing over the spring and summer, according to Callahan. Despite the excitement over what the redevelopment of Rockingham Park could mean to the town of Salem in the long run, Stephanie Mickelson, a lifelong resident and state representative, said the announcement marks a dark day for Salem.

"It's a shame. I'm really, really heartbroken because it's part of Salem tradition and we really don't have a lot of traditions in Salem," she said. "It's a sad day for all of New Hampshire. Rockingham was famous all across the country. The Legislature should be really proud of themselves for putting the Rock out of business."

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who is also a Republican state representative, said Salem will benefit from whatever new development comes out of the Legislature's bill to legalize video poker machines this year.

"Well, you know it's sad," Belanger said. "I'm sure people in town are going to be pretty well shocked up about it. But it is private property and it's a dying industry they're in. I was hoping my slot machine bill would've passed. That probably would've kept them there. I'm still going to put a bill in this year."

THE LOTTERY

MASSACHUSETTS

Daily Lottery

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Oct. 29	Oct. 19	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 18	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 17	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 16	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 15	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 14	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 13	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 12	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 11	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 10	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 9	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 8	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 7	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 6	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 5	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 4	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 3	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 2	\$35
Oct. 29	Oct. 1	\$35

Closing: 'Only surprise is that it's two years away'

development. It means more kids in the schools and we don't need that. We're overcrowded as it is."

School Board member Bernie Campbell said he would like to see a multi-story office park on the site, like Cummings Office Park in Woburn, Mass.

"We need to do creative planning if racing has to disappear," Campbell said. "I'm not sure we need anymore retail, but turn it into a nice office park or headquarters site for a large corporation. It has immediate access off of 93 and other nearby business."

Conservation Commission member George P. Jones said town officials need to move quickly and be involved in the planning of what happens to the site.

"I think the entire town needs to be involved — the planning board, recreation department, conservation committee — all need to be involved with whatever happens there," Jones said.

Jones said he'd like to see part of the land used as a multi-purpose development. "I think the entire town needs to be involved — the planning board, recreation department, conservation committee — all need to be involved with whatever happens there," Jones said.

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neighbor to the Salem community," she said. "They've gone to great lengths not to be a burden on the resources of the town. I can only imagine whatever they do will be in the best interest of the community."

Town Manager Jeffrey Towse sees the redevelopment of the park as "an opportunity" for the future of Salem.

"We've been interested in working with the owners and developing the track. They play an integral part of what the future of Salem is going to be," Towse said.

Like others, he hopes to see a multi-use project that could boost the town's tax base and overall quality of the town.

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FROM PAGE ONE

Track: Owners say horse racing to finish in 2004

Continued from Page 1

for not only Rockingham Park, but for the people of Salem."

The park's owners — Rockingham Development, LLC of Woburn, Mass., to redevelop the property, which town and state officials have called one of the most valuable pieces of real estate in New England.

The park is located just over the Massachusetts border in Salem between Interstate 93 and Route 28.

The 170-acre site is almost twice the size of the Mall at Rockingham Park, which draws shoppers from all over New Hampshire and Massachusetts.

Town officials learned of the deal on Monday when the park owners invited Town Manager Jeffrey Towne, Salem Planning Director Rose Modoff and Selectman Richard Gregory to a luncheon meeting with them and Eastern Development.

"They (the developers) were very interested in what we had to say and they had a lot of questions," said Modoff. "The general manager of the racetrack said they wanted to make sure they would build something they could be proud of. They were very interested in hearing what the town

was looking for with public facilities on the site."

Conceptual plans for the redevelopment of the park could be created within the next two to three months, Callahan said.

"I think it's real early yet to say what's going to end up being here. It would be some type of mixed use. I think you'd see some office, some retail, some residential component. How it all ties together I don't know," Callahan said.

He said he hopes redevelopment of the property will bring more jobs to the area and tax revenue to the town of Salem.

That's good news for the workers who will lose their jobs when the race track closes in 2004.

Rockingham Park employs about 300 people in the off season and twice as many during live racing over the spring and summer, according to Callahan.

Despite the excitement over what the redevelopment of Rockingham Park could mean to the town of Salem in the long run, Stephanie Mickdon, a lifelong resident and state representative, said the announcement marks a dark day for Salem.

"It's a shame. I'm really, really heartbroken because it's part of Salem tradition and we really don't have a lot of traditions in Salem," she said. "It's a sad day for all of New Hampshire. Rockingham was famous all across the country. The Legislature should be really proud of themselves for putting the Rock out of business."

Despite her sadness about the end of racing at Rockingham Park, Mickdon acknowledged visiting the racetrack recently was nothing like a day at the races in the park's heyday.

"When I went there, I said it was kind of like going to a wake. You knew it was Rockingham, but it wasn't Rockingham," she said about the dwindling audience. "I remember Paul Newman and Robert Redford in the movie 'The Sting.' Every time they mentioned Rockingham Park in the movie, people in the theater cheered. We really thought it was famous then."

Gregory described the redevelopment of Rockingham Park as "one of the most important projects the town will oversee in its history ... It's very important we do it right."

"I would like to see that land developed in a sort of downtown area toward Main Street and the Depot (near Routes 97 and 28). I'd also like to see something pedestrian oriented, and mixed-use oriented," Gregory said.

While those possibilities are exciting, Gregory agreed seeing the track's racing days come to an end is sad.

"It's sad to see something die. It's been dying a slow death," Gregory said.

Before learning of the announcement, Planning Board members had already scheduled discussion about revising an ordinance to re-zone Rockingham

ROCKINGHAM PARK TIMELINE

DATE	EVENT
June 28, 1906	Rockingham Park opens its doors to more than 10,000 fans. It costs more than \$1 million to build. At the end of 21-day inaugural season, Rockingham Park closes to gambling for 15 years.
1930	One of the last car races is held at Rockingham Park after prominent lay a wooden track over the horse racing surface.
1930	Low Smith invests \$200,000 to give the Rock's facility and parties the Legislature to allow betting at the race track again.
1933	Rockingham Park reopens for betting on horse racing.
April 1957	Harness racing returns to Rockingham Park with a spring and fall season.
1964	The Rock creates the New Hampshire Sweepstakes after the state of New Hampshire starts the first lottery in 1963. The sweepstakes is patterned on the Irish Sweepstakes and it's the nation's first sweepstakes lottery. The 1965-67 runnings of the N.H. Sweepstakes are the richest races in the country for three-year-olds.
1967	Due to declining sales, the N.H. Sweepstakes is ended.
July 29, 1980	A Tuesday morning fire destroys the grandstand and damages the clubhouse and the rest of the season is canceled.
1984	Rockingham Park reopens with current owners Max Hugel, Joseph Carney Jr., Dr. Thomas Carney and Edward Keenan — who form Rockingham Ventures, Inc. A new clubhouse is built for the reopening.
1991	Simulcasting begins.
2002	Efforts to push a bill to expand gambling at the state's four racetracks, including Rockingham Park, fail in the Legislature. People hoping to keep Rockingham Park open for horse racing say this is the only realistic chance to keep the track profitable.
Oct. 30, 2002	The park's owners announce racing at Rockingham Park will end in two years. They have a Massachusetts firm to develop the 170-acre property for them.

Source: Rockingham Park

Park for multiple uses. Planning Board member Gene Chandler urged fellow board members last night to put an ordinance

Closing: 'Only surprise is that it's two years away'

Continued from Page 1

open," he said. Larry Belair, a Salem resident for 42 years found out yesterday at 4 p.m. that the track was closing in two years.

"I was surprised that the time has finally come this quickly," Belair said. "But I knew and understood for years that without increased revenue, it would only be a matter of time before it closed."

Belair, a builder in Salem for 32 years, said part of the property could be used to help develop a

development. It means more kids in the schools and we don't need that. We're overcrowded as it is."

Planning Board Chairman James Keller said he'd also like to see a multi-story office park on the site, like Cummings Office Park in Woburn, Mass.

"We need to do creative planning if racing has to disappear," Campbell said. "I'm not sure we need anymore retail, but turn it into a nice office park or headquarters site for a large corporation. It has immediate access off

neighbor to the Salem community," he said. "They've gone to great lengths not to be a burden on the resources of the town. I can only imagine whatever they do will be in the best interest of the community."

Town Manager Jeffrey Towne sees the redevelopment of the park as "an opportunity" for the future of Salem.

"We've been interested in working with the owners and development of the track. They play an

nance allowing mixed use at the park on the town ballot in March. "It should be very easy to have something in front of voters. The Salem citizenry is going to read about this and the next thing they're going to want to know what the hell were doing about it," Chandler said. "I think we need to show we're taking this seriously."

Planning Board Chairman James Keller cautioned board members to move deliberately, so the town protects itself from unwanted development.

"This is like constructing a little town," Keller said. "I think it's very exciting."

Selectman Ronald Belanger, who is also a Republican state representative, said Salem will benefit from whatever new development is built.

But he can't help thinking things might have gone differently if the Legislature had passed his bill to legalize video poker machines this year.

"Well, you know it's sad," Belanger said. "I'm sure people in town are going to be pretty well shook up about it. But it is private property and it's a dying industry. They're in it was looking my slot machine bill would've passed. That probably would've kept them there. I'm still going to put a bill in this year."

Belanger says he still plans on introducing the bill again in 2003. "I believe it's not over until it's over," he said.

Chandler urged fellow board members last night to put an ordinance

to re-zone Rockingham

putting the Rock out of business."

THE LOTTERY

MASSACHUSETTS	
Daily Lottery	
Oct. 29	5579
All 4 digits	\$4,733
First 3 digits	\$663
Any 2 digits	\$57
Any 1 digit	\$6
Payout/any order	
All 4 digits	\$394
First 3 digits	\$221
Last 3 digits	\$110
Previous numbers	
Oct. 28	5595
Oct. 27	6300
Oct. 26	2504
Oct. 25	5570
Megabucks	
Oct. 26	9-10-28-30-32-35
Oct. 23	1-3-12-25-27-39
Mass Cash	
Oct. 29	3-16-26-31-33
Oct. 25	8-15-24-28-32
	Mass Millions

MAURICE MURPHY of Portsmouth died earlier this week. The name may mean little to many present-day Granite State voters; but the story involving Murphy and a U.S. Senate seat holds an important lesson for Republicans.

Attorney Murphy was Gov. Wesley Powell's choice to fill the seat left vacant by the death of Styles Bridges in 1961. A bruising fight ensued for the GOP nomination the next year and the party's failure to close ranks handed that seat, and the governor's office as well, to the Democrats. It took years for the Republicans to recover.

It is that same U.S. Senate seat that the national liberal Democrats want desperately to take next Tuesday. They have outspent Republican John Sununu and put up so many negative, outrageous and inaccurate advertisements against him that they have got their candidate neck-and-neck in some opinion polls.

Independent voters who want the most capable and competent person in the job will vote for John Sununu. But that won't be enough. Republicans need to get out their vote, all of it, and remember the lesson of an earlier feud. (For an additional lesson, active on the current race, please be sure to read today's editorial page commentary by former state GOP Chairman Gerald Carmen on Page A16.)



U.S. SENATE candidate Gov. Jeanne Shaheen, left, speaks to senior citizens as AARP President Bob Dettl, center, and Republican candidate Rep. John Sununu listen yesterday in Bedford. See story, Page A3.

The Undecided key to Senate

WHAT ARE THEY? They are neither ghosts nor vampires. Call them The Undecided. But soon they will rise and they will decide the U.S. Senate race.

They are few in number, and if either Jeanne Shaheen or John E. Sununu had a wide lead, they wouldn't matter. But most polls show Shaheen with a small lead — 3 to 6 percent. Most

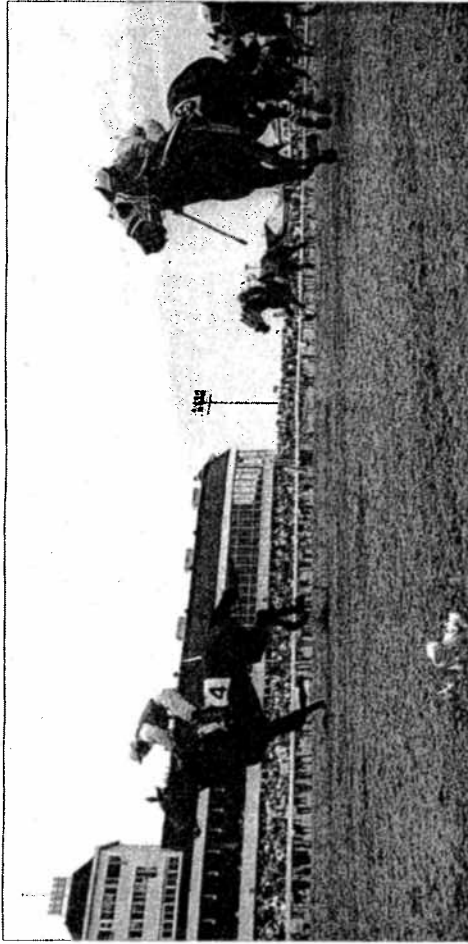
Granite Status
JOHN DISTASO

REACTS — THE DISCOURSE OF MANICURES has a long way to go to rebuild trust among the laity, judging from comments at a public hearing last

Three other hearings are scheduled across the state. Robin Duruth said he had been victimized by a priest while attending

OTHERS WERE CONCERNED WITH CHURCH SECRECY, AND OF COURSE, THE VARIOUS STATES. Does the laity have a right to CATHOLICS, Page A15

'The Rock' is in home stretch



JOCKEY VERNON BUSH rides Da Blaze (#4) ahead of second place finisher Job's Crowner, far right, during the second race of opening day at Rockingham Park back in June in Salem.

Cautious reaction greets proposal

■ Not everyone is excited at the thought of saying goodbye to historic track.

By JANINE E. GILBERTSON
Union Leader Staff

SALEM — Businessmen and town officials reacted cautiously yesterday to the announcement that plans are in the works to redevelop the state's only horse-racing track.

"It's a sad day on one hand but a great beginning on the other," said Ed Callahan, the general

manager at Rockingham Park. "We've tried very hard to make things work here."

Rockingham Park officials had hoped the expansion of gambling would give them the edge they needed to compete against big casinos like Foxwoods, but those hopes have been dashed as election day draws near and both gubernatorial hopefuls have said they are opposed to the expansion of gambling.

"I have said very clearly that I am opposed to the expansion of gambling," said Democratic candidate for governor Mark Fer-

nald, of Sharon. "I don't think slots are the right thing for New Hampshire."

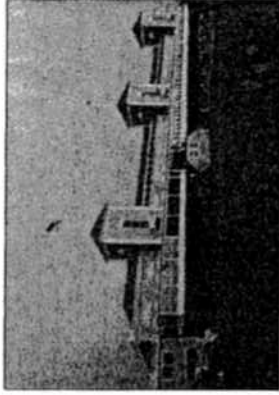
Fernald added that the prospect of Massachusetts allowing slot machines is another reason no.

Fernald said adding slots at the state's four racetracks assumes that Massachusetts residents would be the ones coming to bet at the tracks.

He said if Massachusetts allowed slot machines, that would cut

REACTION, Page A18

More on Rockingham Park

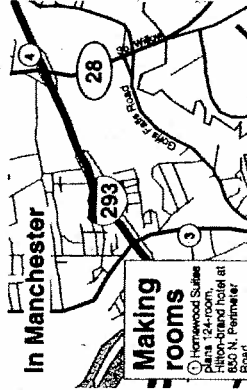


HISTORIC Rockingham Park may be in its final seconds. See related stories on casino gambling in Maine and on the developer on Page A18.

Inn Town Homewood Suites hotel proposed for near airport

By MICHAEL COUSINEAU
Union Leader Staff

A four-story Homewood Suites hotel is being proposed for just north of Manchester Airport. Plans call for the 124-room, Hilton-brand hotel to



I-93 widening project to get speedy review

■ But officials say project may take longer than expected to finish.

By BENJAMIN KEEPLE
Union Leader Staff

The U.S. Department of Transportation has put the Interstate 93 widening project on a short list of construction plans to receive a quicker environmental review. The office of U.S. Rep. John E.

10/31/02

REACTION

(Continued From Page A1)

the potential revenue in New Hampshire from slots in half.

"With the social costs that the state would have to pay, I just don't think it's worth it," Fernald said.

Republican candidate for governor Craig Benson did not immediately return calls for comment.

The decline of gamblers at the track has been apparent the last few years with thinning crowds and rows of empty seats.

Track officials said they have had a difficult time trying to get horses to race at Rockingham when horse owners can race their horses at busier tracks that offer expanded gambling or larger purses.

Callahan said the track's four owners want "to do the right thing for the community" and not leave people guessing from year to year whether or not the track would remain open.

"All four of the owners have been very involved in the track and have a love for the sport," Callahan said. "They have put their own personal blood, sweat and tears into this joint. They have a lot that they should be proud of."

Callahan said the owner's desire to bring a quality redevelopment project before town officials prompted them to reach an agreement with Eastern Development of Woburn, Mass.

The company has developed projects in the Downtown Crossing area in Boston as well as the Wang buildings in Lowell, Mass.

Callahan said no plans are on the table yet.

ROCK

(Continued From Page A1)

clear at this stage what the developer will build on the site, but it seems almost certain racing will end in two years.

"I think there is sadness in the thoughts that another race track is going by the boards," said Callahan, citing the problems faced by

"It's a tremendous opportunity," Callahan said. "What other community has a chunk of land in its dead-center near the interstate that they have a chance to redesign. It's going to take some time to try and put this package together."

Town planner Ross Moldoff said the planning board has been preparing for the likelihood that the track would someday close and has been looking at putting some zoning articles before voters in March that would allow for some mixed uses of the property.

"Right now, it's zoned commercial industrial," Moldoff said. "I think the worst thing that could happen would be to see a continuation of what is currently on Route 28. Under current zoning, they could essentially double what is on 28."

Moldoff said the planning board started discussions last year on how to allow a variety of uses for the track's property.

"Last year we started to talk about laying down some guidelines," Moldoff said. "Things like, let's see some mixed uses... zones or some hotels, maybe even a convention center and something pedestrian-oriented. Let's limit access points on South Broadway and require very high-quality landscaping and signage and some parking decks and maybe connect the Depot area and the Mall property. I think the planning board is very excited to be involved in this redevelopment project."

But not everyone is excited about the prospect of saying good-bye to the historic racetrack

and bringing in something completely different.

Francis Burke, whose family business, Dodge Grain or Route 28, opened in 1924, said the track's closure would take a big chunk out of his business.

"My son worked with me over at the track this summer," Burke said. "That would be the fourth generation from my family. We have been involved with the race track since 1950. Today, we are not totally dependent on the track, but it certainly is the meat and potatoes of our business."

Burke said the track's closing would be a "big gap to fill" and the trickle-down effect would impact many other local businesses. "The dry cleaner around the corner, the diners filled with the jockeys in the morning and the pharmacies that provide day-to-day human needs for all the people living on the backside of the tracks during the summer... nothing could replace a service-based business like racing or would stimulate the local economy the way a race track does."

Burke said he took steps to diversify his business after seeing a steady decline in the caliber of racing over the years and brought in other products to meet needs of gardeners, owners of all types of pets and to offer supplies to other farms he services.

"When I was a young man, it

used to be called Little Saratoga," Burke said of the track. "In it's heyday, it was filled with excitement. Now it's a dying dinosaur, a shadow of what it used to be."

Moldoff said when Callahan spoke to him recently about the track owners' decision to redevelop the land, he said the owners want to create something that asked for input from the town as

would be a source of pride for the community.

"Ed told us whatever happens over there, they wanted to make sure it was something the community would be proud of," Moldoff said. "Believe me, we don't hear that very often."

Moldoff said developers have our opinion and what we would like to see."

Biddeford, Sanford to vote on tribal casino plan

By JODY RECORD

Union Leader Correspondent

PORTLAND, Maine — Two southern Maine communities will decide next week if they want casino gambling in their towns, a year before the measure goes to a statewide referendum.

On Tuesday, Biddeford and Sanford voters face the gambling expansion question, which asks if they would support a tribally owned resort casino in their community.

The neighboring cities are the only two towns to express interest in a casino being built in southern Maine. Eight York County communities have already rejected the proposal.

Even if Biddeford or Sanford gives the project the okay, it must still be sanctioned by Maine residents or the Legislature.

"The Legislature could ap-

prove it this winter, without it going to a statewide vote," said Erin LeHane, project coordinator for the pro-casino organization, Think About It.

If not, the question will go on the ballot in November 2003.

On Oct. 8, on behalf of the Penobscot Nation and the Passamaquoddy Tribe, LeHane forwarded an application to the secretary of state for a citizens initiative seeking a statewide referendum vote.

If passed, the bill would let the two tribes run a jointly owned casino in whichever town will have them. Right now, LeHane said, southern Maine is the only area being considered.

The proposed measure stipulates the casino would pay 25 percent of its gross annual take to the state. Of that figure, 50 percent would be allocated to local municipalities, explicitly

to help lower property taxes, while 40 percent would be earmarked for general program costs at local schools.

The remaining 10 percent would fund scholarships.

The estimated \$500 million project includes an 800-room hotel, a golf course and a convention-resort casino.

Danielle Fox, a staff person on the state's task force that is studying the casino initiative, said yesterday the committee will deliver its report in December.

"Considering there is no specific proposal or specific location, it's a difficult task," Fox said of efforts to evaluate the impact legalized gambling would have on a community.

"It's more likely our report will say what needs to be looked at, like how do the cost benefits weigh against the effect on the addicted gambler."

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Key dates in Rock history

► 1908: More than 10,000 fans showed up for the track's opening.

the table yet.

good-bye to the historic racetrack

ROCK

(Continued From Page A1)

clear at this stage what the developer will build on the site, but it seems almost certain racing will end in two years.

"I think there is sadness in the thoughts that another race track is going by the boards," said Callahan, citing the modern trend of racetracks closing in New England communities such as Foxboro.

Declining revenues brought on by competition from casinos that opened in Connecticut a decade ago are to blame for the scheduled closure, Callahan said. He said track officials have waged an intense campaign in recent years to bring video lottery to the park. However, that effort met with failure earlier this year when the state Legislature defeated such a plan.

Callahan said business began declining sharply in 1992 when the casinos opened, with wagering on races dropping by 50 percent. In 1991, the park experienced almost \$200 million in business. However, that figure fell to \$93 million a year later.

"We have continued to operate and battle the competition," Callahan said. "Just the cost of living since 1992 has exceeded what we have been able to produce, and ultimately you have to give everybody an idea what will happen — this way we'll have two years to plan and try to make the transition as smooth as possible."

Owners will work with track workers and the associated unions in the coming months to provide job training and other programs, Callahan said. The track employs about 300 people in the offseason and about 600 during the racing season, which runs in the spring and summer.

"There are a lot of very good people who have worked here a long time," Callahan said.

While there is no development plan yet, track officials intend to work with the Salem Planning Board and other local boards to coordinate the effort and keep the community informed about the project.

Once the two years are up, it

Key dates in Rock history

► **1906:** More than 10,000 fans showed up for the track's opening, despite the fact that betting on horses was illegal. When the 21-day meet ended, however, thoroughbred horse racing in the state ended, too.

► **1931:** Lou Smith invested in the track and lobbied the state legislature to legalize pari-mutuel wagering.

► **1933:** Rockingham Park became a thoroughbred race track.

► **1980:** A fire razed the grandstand and damaged the clubhouse. The property closed.

► **1984:** Current owners Max Hugel, Joseph Carney Jr., Dr. Thomas Carney and Ed Keelan reopen the track after rebuilding it.

► **2002:** After years of rumor that Rockingham would close, the owners announce they plan to develop the 170-acre property in Salem for retail, office and residential use, possibly within two years.

seems certain the track will be replaced by another business operation, since the facility encompasses almost all of the property, said Callahan, who's spent many years working around horse-racing tracks.

He grew up in Foxboro and worked at the track there in high school and college. He has been with Rockingham Park since 1983 and agreed that the announcement marks a "sad day" for horse racing in the state.

In 1906, more than 10,000 fans attended the track's opening, when it became New England's first thoroughbred race track. Along with Shoemaker, Johnnie Longden, the only person to win the Triple Crown as a rider and owner, also rode at The Rock.

Eastern Development company is familiar with Granite State

Representatives of Eastern Development LLC in Woburn, Mass., met with Salem town officials this week, according to Planning Director Ross Moldoff.

Londonderry Turnpike, in Manchester, formerly the home of Owen's Marine. The firm has never said what it plans to do with the property, despite recent

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Rockingham Park in the final stretch



Horses race at Rockingham Park Race Track this past season. Park officials announced this week that they will end racing and develop the 170-acre parcel.

What has been called "a change of historical proportions," will possibly result in a pedestrian-oriented area with a mix of development in the area of what is now Rockingham Park Race Track.

by **TAM
PAYLER**
Publisher

Rockingham Venture Inc, the owner and operator of Rockingham Park, the state's first and only horse racing track, said Wednesday that horse racing will end in about two years and that meanwhile the park will look into ways to develop the 170 acres at the park.

"The community has been a great supporter of Rockingham, but we must all be realistic," read a press release issued by the park. "After the casinos opened in Connecticut, wagering on races dropped by 50 percent. We have explored every avenue to legalize video lottery in New Hampshire, but have not found the finish line yet."

Planning director Ross Moldoff said on Wednesday that town officials had met with park officials on Monday and will have many more meetings in the coming months.

"Obviously this is a very significant project for the town with wide-ranging implications," he said. "Someone said last night that it's a change of historical proportions for the town."

"Sometimes it takes lemons to make lemonade," Selectman Everett McBride said Wednesday. "It will be a good boon for the tax base because we will develop it to its maximum potential."

Moldoff said that the Master Plan com-

pleted last November lays out some specific guidelines for what kind of development the town would like to see at the park.

Rather than filling the almost 1-mile-long stretch of frontage with more retail, the area will possibly include a mix of uses including apartments, offices, hotels and limited retail, Moldoff said.

"We talked about creating a pedestrian-friendly downtown area," he said, adding that possibilities include a public transit connection that would link cars and pedestrians between the Mall at Rockingham Park, the race track area, and the Depot.

"We're very much looking forward to working with the race track and its partners and reviewing plans," Moldoff said.

The park has lobbied the state for years to legalize video slot machines at the state's horse and dog tracks in hopes of making up some of the revenue officials said they lost to Connecticut casinos.

The track has hired Eastern Development LLC of Woburn, Mass., to assist Rockingham in finding development opportunities for the park. According to the press release, Eastern Development specializes in office and retail development and has been involved in a number of major projects in New England.

"We hope to work together with the town of Salem to bring an attractive, first-class project to this area, which will benefit the community with increases in jobs and tax revenue," track Vice President and General Manager Edward Callahan said in the release.

slators will meet to discuss the needs of Derry and any proposed bills that may benefit the community. The workshop will take place at 6:30 p.m. Nov. 26 at the Derry Municipal Center.

LONDONDERRY:

Goodwill Industries honored

CLM Behavioral Health recently recognized Goodwill Industries of Londonderry with the Community Partners for Mental Illness Advocacy award.

The award was presented to Goodwill for its efforts and partnership in working with CLM's Employment and Education Program to assist individuals with mental illness to return to the work force.

"By providing volunteer and work opportunities, Goodwill's collaborative relationship with CLM is an example of the vital role of a community organization like ours, working in partnership with the business sector, advocate for people with mental illness," Vic Topo, CLM's chief executive officer, said.

CLM Behavioral Health is a nonprofit mental health organization that has been serving the local community for 35 years.

IRRY:

inkerton invites parents

inkerton Academy will host its parent meeting of the year beginning at 7 p.m. tomorrow in the cafeteria of the new Arts and Sciences Center.

Topics to be discussed include the progress of the weighted-grades committee, the new honors program and expectations of students wanting to participate. Pinkerton's tuition rate for the 2002-03 school year, and alternative academic credit options available to students.

At the end of the meeting there will be an opportunity for parents to ask questions.

11/19/02 Union Leader

Rockingham's future a concern

■ Salem selectmen worry zoning changes could hurt town.

By JANINE E. GILBERTSON
Union Leader Correspondent

SALEM — Selectmen last night said they want to schedule a meeting with Rockingham Park race track officials to discuss the track's imminent redevelopment.

"It would be good to have a meeting with the owners of the park," said Selectman Ronald Belanger. "I get different signals and mixed messages than what was portrayed to us about what the track

wants to do."

Belanger said he is concerned about tonight's scheduled joint meeting between the planning board and selectmen to discuss possible zoning articles that would affect the 96-year-old racetrack.

The owners of the state's only horse racing track announced last month plans to redevelop the 170-acre parcel that comprises Rockingham Park.

Officials at Rockingham Venture Inc., which owns and operates the racetrack, said the track will remain open during the two years it takes to develop "first class" plans for the property.

Belanger said he wants to talk to officials at the track to find out what they

see for the future before any articles are put on the warrant to change the current zoning at Rockingham.

"Right now you can do just about anything at the track as far as the zoning goes except for residential," Belanger said. "But I don't want to go to a zoning amendment at this point in time until I hear it from the horse's mouth that that's what they want."

Belanger is hoping the track will remain an icon in Salem, where horse racing began in 1906.

He has sponsored a legislative bill that would legalize video slot machines at the

ROCKINGHAM, Page B2

Woman hurt in Salem crash

By HUNTER MCGEE
Regional Correspondent

SALEM — A Londonderry woman was taken to the hospital after the car she was driving collided with another vehicle yesterday.

Amelia Opolski, 36, was taken to Parkland Medical Center in Derry complaining of neck pain, police said. There were no other reported injuries.

The accident occurred about 11:45 a.m. as Opolski was driving a Nissan Maxima on Dyson Drive. Police said she attempted to turn left onto North Policy Street and struck the front passenger side of a northbound Lincoln driven by Diane Lazdowski, 51, of Pelham.

The cause of the accident is under investigation, police said.



SALEM rescue workers prepare to place Amelia Opolski in ambulance. Tracy McGee Photo



Tracy McGee Photo

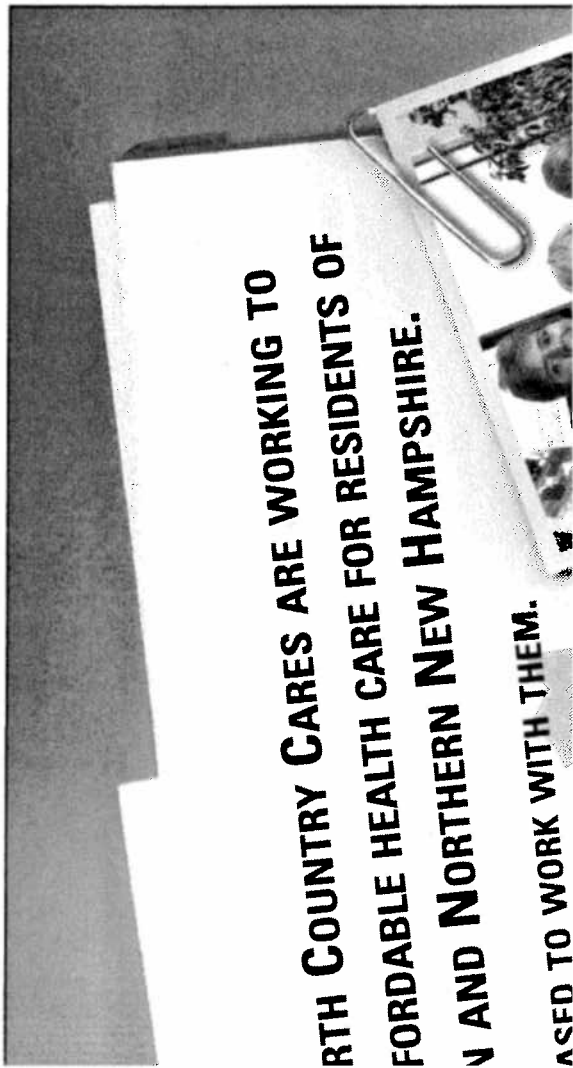
h on High Range Road last Thursday between a fuel
arry.

strange when you of his truck in the collision. "I
," Hulse said last didn't even see her swerve over.
o crashes. The 60- She must have done it at the last
aid he recently re- minute. The funny thing was,
riving award from that's the best part of High
r 35 years on the Range Road. That's the one
by the accident. straight-away out there."

oming up the road Bell could not be reached for
ext thing I knew, I comment yesterday.

ump," said Hulse, Londonderry police said a tox-
ose and front axle icology report is pending.

RTH COUNTRY CARES ARE WORKING TO
FORDABLE HEALTH CARE FOR RESIDENTS OF
AND NORTHERN NEW HAMPSHIRE.
ASSED TO WORK WITH THEM.



billed for the cleanup.

The latest settlement invol- parties who contributed no m- than 5,000 gallons to the site, and are being charged amounts rang- ing from \$1,500 to \$32,000. The settlement totals \$6.2 million for the cleanup, which will eventual- ly cost an estimated \$48 million.

About 5,000 service stations, schools and even parish churches had their waste oil hauled off by licensed contractors to the Beede site, not realizing it was being poured into the ground rather

that unwittingly contributed the oil are responsible for funding the cleanup. In June 2001, the Environmental Protection Agen- cy notified 2,000 parties what they would owe, with some small businesses facing bills in the hundreds of thousands of dollars, which they said could put them out of business.

The EPA has been negotiating settlements with the smallest parties first and working its way up, with plans to begin negotiat- ing next year with about 1,100

and hoping a bill currently under consideration in Congress change the law.

Sal Dampolo, owner of Sal's Automotive in Billerica, said he had refused the take part in the latest settlement round and planned to keep holding out.

"It's not right," said Dampolo, who owes about \$4,600 and said many of his fellow service station owners had refused the settle- ment. "We're trying to get the law changed and hopefully that will happen."

ROCKINGHAM

(Continued From Page B1)

state's four race tracks and hopes if approved, the slots would give the track the boost it needs to stay in business.

Ed Callahan, the track's gener- al manager, has said the track has tried "very hard to make things work," but revenues have been declining since the opening of Foxwoods Casino in Connecti- cut 10 years ago.

Belanger said track officials are unhappy about the town's plans to discuss the potential zoning changes.

"The horsemen have told them

they want to stay here," Belanger said. "The video gaming could be the shot in the arm they need. A portion of the money from the video gaming would go to the horsemen's purses."

Whatever the track's fate, se- lectmen made it clear they intend to be closely involved with any redevelopment plans if that is the path the track intends to take.

"My goal is simple," said Se- lectman Everett McBride. "It's to take a gold mine and make it into a diamond mind. I want to work with the Rockingham Park devel- opers. I am going to demand that the selectmen have a lot of input. I care what the citizen think in this community. I don't care what (town planner) Ross Moldoff thinks or (community developer) Bill Scott, we are the town fathers and we are going to have input."

McBride said he does not want Moldoff or Scott to meet with

track developers until selectmen can meet with track officials.

"I would like to see Ross not meet with them," McBride said. "Tell them politely and see what we can do to help the track and see what they need for us to do. I still think even if you get video gaming there's still going to be redevelopment. I think it's going to be redeveloped either way."

Belanger said he didn't think it was right to try to rezone the property while the track is still open for business and trying to attract customers.

"It's like going to Rockingham Mall and saying they can't have retail there," Belanger said. "If people see that in the press it could hurt their business. I feel that we have to know exactly what they want to do. I am not comfortable with the planning board going so far ahead until we know."

Couple indicted for theft

SANDOWN — John Pelletier, 26, and Megan Berry, 19, both of 78 Sentry Way in Merrimack, were indicted before a Rock- ingham County grand jury last week in connection with an at- tempted theft at a construction site in Sandown.

The couple was arrested on

Police saw Berry alone in her vehicle and discovered Pelletier in the woods nearby after he fled the scene. Police said they found burglary tools and two-way radios in the couple's possession.

Pelletier was indicted last Tuesday on one count of at- tempted theft by unauthorized

No zone change for track, 2 suggest

◆ Two selectmen said they want to discuss ideas proposed by developers hired by the park before considering changes.

By James A. Kimble
Staff Writer

*Excerpt
Tribune*

SALEM — Two selectmen say they oppose changing zoning at Rockingham Park unless they first meet with park owners about new plans for the 170-acre property.

One of the selectmen, Ronald Belanger, says he wants to avoid interfering with park business by having premature discussions between selectmen and town planners.

He said meeting with Planning Board members and discussing the park's future without first talking to the owners could hurt their business.

"I don't like shooting up red flares over somebody's private (business)," he said. "I want it for the record I oppose supporting the zoning ordinance."

Selectmen and the Planning Board will meet tonight to discuss creating an ordinance allowing a variety of uses on the property. The ordinance is needed to redevelop the land. Voters may decide on that ordinance in March.

Last night, Belanger and Selectman Everett McBride said they oppose tonight's meeting because they want first to discuss ideas that developers hired by Rockingham Park have for the property.

Belanger, a Republican state representative, said he plans to reintroduce legislation during the next session to allow video gambling at the park.

Before learning last month that Rockingham Park would close, the Planning Board had scheduled a discussion about revising an ordinance to rezone the park for multiple uses. The next day, Rockingham Park announced it would end racing in

Continued from Page 9

2004 and use Eastern Development, LLC of Woburn, Mass., to redevelop the property.

McBride said he does not back a zoning ordinance because he wants first to meet with owners of Rockingham Park and officials from Eastern Development. Still, McBride said he planned to attend tonight's meeting.

"I'm going to demand that the Board of Selectmen have a lot of input on this project. If they (Planning Board members) don't like that, then maybe we don't reappoint them next time," he said.

Selectman Phillip Smith said the town should secure a letter of intent from Rockingham Park showing "that they want us to work with them."

CHAMPION CANINE



Tracy McGee Photo

SALEM police dog Ritz and Officer John Joy show curious students from Butterflies Crossing Kindergarten the back seat where Ritz spends some of his time. They met with the youngsters yesterday. Joy, Ritz and Salem Detective Richard Oliveri received a Commissioner Citation in Boston last week for their work in a joint effort with their department, the FBI and Boston police in seizing 31 kilos of cocaine last summer. The street value of the seizure is estimated at \$2.7 million.

Track: Stay flexible

■ Rockingham Park could be the site of offices, a small retail area or movie theater; big-box stores are not in the forecast.

By JANINE E. GILBERTSON
Union Leader Correspondent

SALEM — The general manager of Rockingham Park race track asked members of the planning board last night to hold off on developing zoning articles that would impact the track for the March warrant and let plans for the park's redevelopment take some shape.

"It's like hanging the frame without the picture," said Ed Callahan, who has managed the track for almost 20 years. "I pray every night that gaming will occur and racing will continue. I don't know if it will but I sure hope it does."

Callahan said he still has hopes a bill sponsored by State Rep. Ronald Belanger to bring video gaming to the state's four race tracks will win approval from the House, Senate and Governor-elect Craig Benson, but acknowledges it's time to let go of that dream.

"If the video gaming doesn't go in and that track is dead, it's going to look like Beirut," Callahan said. "The appropriate planning needs to be done now."

Callahan told the planning board that Eastern Development of Woburn, Mass., who has been retained to redevelop the 176-acre parcel, is eager to work with the town and get input on the project.

But planning board members last night said they wanted to protect themselves from undesirable development such as a row of big-box retailers.

"We're going to become partners in a giant risk," planning board member Gene Bryant told Callahan. "You're faced with changing an historic property."

Salem is faced with some tremendous change and right in the heart of the town. This is going to redefine the image of Salem and the risk you are asking us to take is to let the developer rezone 180 acres of our town to the extent that you want us to wait and see how this all plays out."

Callahan said although there are no concrete plans for the property at this time, he guarantees it will not become a new home to more big-box retailers.

"There are a thousand ideas," Callahan said. "There is potential for a small retail area down near the depot area or maybe some offices... it could look ex-

TRACK, Page B2

E. Derry urges new vote

by KIMBERLY HOUGHTON
Union Leader Correspondent

DERRY — More than 200 residents have signed a petition asking town councilors to reconsider a vote made more than two years ago that would change the boundaries of the East Derry Fire precinct.

The petition was presented to the town council yesterday a day after the new Hampshire Supreme Court ruled at the council's September 2000 vote to transfer nearly half of the East Derry Fire Precinct into the Derry Fire District as reasonable and legal.

June Fahey, an East Derry fire commissioner, read the petition to town officials. Prior to her announcement, the council issued a statement on the court's ruling, saying it is "especially gratified at the Supreme Court recognized that a council decision was based on legitimate public safety concerns."

Fahey argued that the council should consider changing the boundaries for the sake of every citizen's safety in Derry and East Derry, adding the fire de-

partment that can reach a certain location in the quickest amount of time should be allowed to cover that area.

Although the court ruled that boundaries may be changed, its ruling did not take into consideration a new substation recently built by the East Derry Fire Precinct in East Derry.

Ron Dupuis, state representative-elect, R-Derry, said he signed the petition because the new boundaries could essentially dissolve the East Derry Fire Precinct. The best solution to the entire problem is for East Derry to secede from Derry, he said, an initiative he has spearheaded in the last year.

Since the Superior Court originally ruled that the boundary changes were unlawful, the Supreme Court's opposing ruling that the vote was legal must be sent back to the Superior Court so the original judge can reprimand her decision.

Because it may take some time to formalize the court's decision, some councilors said they were concerned about taking any action on the petition.

"I am not sure if that is legal," said councilor Craig Bulkley, adding the town's legal representative should review the petition and make a recommendation on what should be done.

Councilors Paul Needham and Paul Hopfgarten said a public hearing should be scheduled as soon as possible to address the petition's request. Once the town clerk clarifies that the petition is legal, a public hearing must be scheduled within 30 days.

If the boundaries are changed as originally proposed two years ago, it could cut East Derry's tax base by about 42 percent and mean significantly higher taxes.

"If the matter is not further appealed, the council is now considering that the revision of the tax rolls will take place prospectively, effective on April 1, 2003," said councilor Paul Doolittle. "This will enable the East Derry Fire District to conduct its annual meeting in March on a forward-looking basis and minimize the disruption that this appeal has caused."

HUNGER BANQUET



School study group ends up empty-handed

By ADAM GROFF
Union Leader Correspondent

HAMPSTEAD — After several months of study, the school district space needs committee came up empty-handed last week on the question of how to address the school space crunch.

"In the time frame given, the space needs committee could not agree on a solution," said committee co-chairman and school board member Martha Pond

spring and co-chaired by board members Pond and Natalie Gallo, has been dissolved, to be replaced by a "space solutions" committee expected to comprise basically the same people.

School Board Chairman Howard Davine said he was disappointed with the committee's report.

"I thought they were going to tell us what we were doing," said Davine.

TRACK

(Continued From Page B1)

tremely attractive. These are some of the ideas that are being floated. I also think there is some great entertainment potential ... maybe something like an Imax theater. We don't know what could work there until you do the demographics and a full analysis."

Selectmen Everett McBride and Ronald Belanger both said they would not support any zoning amendments on the track's property.

Selectmen Everett McBride

and Ronald Belanger both said they would not support any zoning amendments on the track's property.

They really pput the nails to the place over there "I think you are going a little too fast," Belanger told the planning board. "It's not the town's property. It belongs to the track. I can't agree with any zoning amendments at this time. As far as looking at this as a legislator, I feel whatever I try to do upstate to help the town, there are a lot of mixed signals going out to the public in just what the

heck is going on with the track. "People in the state will not know if we support video gaming or not because here we are trying to change the zoning over there to redevelop it. They are really trying to put the nails to that place over there."

Planning Director Ross Moldoff said representatives from Easter Development will address selectmen Nov. 25.

The planning board still plans to review the track's zoning, but it is unclear whether it will seek amendments in March.

TENSE

(Continued From Page B1)

for training. He said in August, before the town instituted a spending freeze on any non-essential items, he had submitted the paperwork to the town's finance director to spend \$3,000 of the department's training budget to send the deputy chiefs to Phoenix, Ariz., to learn how to command large-scale fire or disaster scenes.

"They have not been in a position where they will command relatively large fire scenes," Barnes said. "If they are put into that position, they need to have that kind of training behind them."

Campbell criticized the chiefs' decision to send the pair to sunny Phoenix for training now that temperatures have dropped.

"When people go away for business trips, it's not all work," Campbell said. "There is some down time too. Here we are going to send two men to Phoenix. It just seems to me that every time we send someone out of state for training it's in the winter and they are going somewhere warm like Phoenix."

Barnes defended his decision and said few places in the country offer the kind of training the deputy chiefs will get in Phoenix.

Members of the Budget Committee also decided last week not to fund certain budget items approved last year and not purchased due to a spending freeze. The freeze was imposed this fall when the town realized it was going to come up short due to in-

creased operating costs at the town's transfer station.

That includes \$10,000 for new police scanning equipment and \$6,000 to purchase accounting software needed to make the town compliant with the financial reporting procedure that municipalities across the country will be required to follow.

Instead, the money went to make up for the \$130,000 deficit at the town transfer station.

"I am not going to ask the town to fund these items a second time," Merrow said. "So you're gonna eat the \$6,000 and you're gonna find a way to get it."

Merrow said if the items funded and not bought were so important to the departments, they would have bought them as soon as they received the funding.

But Town Manager Jeff Towne said it's not as simple as that.

Once items are funded

Theodore J. Westfall

WESTFIELD — Theodore J. "Ted" Westfall, 71, of Oak Hill Road, died Nov. 18, 2002, at Huggins Hospital in Wolfeboro, after a long illness.

Born July 17, 1931, in Cambridge, Mass., he was the son of John and Estelle (Descoteau) Westfall. He grew up in New Hampshire and Vermont, having resided in Wakefield for four years, residing in Ossipee for eight years and Hudson, Mass. for 20 years. He and his wife had also wintered in Fruitland, Fla., for the past 16 years.

A United States Army veteran of the Korean War, he moved from Hudson, Mass., to New Hampshire to fulfill his dream of owning and operating a mom and pop store, the Milton Mills Village General Store, which was later sold and then went on to establish, own and operate Ted's Discount Warehouse on Route 16 in Ossipee.

He wrote music, and enjoyed singing and playing the guitar. He was an easygoing and kind man who loved socializing with customers at his stores. His dog, Gilly, was his great companion.

Family members include his wife of 48 years, Shirley A. (McDonald) Westfall of Wakefield; three sons, Theodore J. "Ted" Westfall and Michael F. Westfall, both of Wakefield, and Kurt P. Westfall of Ossipee; two daughters, Cheryllanne M. Smith of Effingham and Kimberly A. O'Keefe of Wakefield; 10 grandchildren and two great-grandchildren; three brothers, John Westfall and Jeffrey Michaud, both of Vermont and Raymond Michaud of Manchester; two sisters, Valueda Michaud and Jean LaDeau, both of Maine; many nieces and nephews.

SERVICES: A memorial service will be Saturday at C.E. Pease and Son Funeral Home, 2079 Wakefield Road, (Sambornville) Wakefield at 2 p.m. with a calling hour from 1 to 2 p.m. Memorial donations may be made to the American Cancer Society, 360 State Route 101, Suite 501, Bedford 03110-5032. Visit www.peasefuneralhome.com.

M. Maxine Boyd

HOOKSETT — M. Maxine (eira) Boyd, 63, died Nov. 18, the Community Hospice of Merrimack.

She was born in Hillst where she lived all her life moving to Hooksett in 2000.

She was the daughter of and Mary (Rodrigues) Teixeira. She was a graduate of borough High School, Class and Bentley College, Class and she studied piano under Porter at the Sherwood Conservatory of Music. She played churches for many years a organist.

She was an insurance agent Davis & Towle Group for 21 and also worked at SAU 34 years. She worked at NHMA the time of her death.

She was a member of St. Church, Hillsborough, choir tor and organist for over 50 CCD teacher and communic

Family members include husband of 44 years, George Boyd of Hooksett; a son, S. A. Boyd of Milford, Mi stepson, Michael A. Boyd of Easton, Mass.; two dau Susan E. Boyd of Manchester Karen B. Cardoza of Holl grandchildren; two sisters, T. Horvath of Georgetown, and Catherine J. Teixeira of Spring, Fla.; a brother, Roi Teixeira of Florida; several and nephews.

SERVICES: Calling hours will be day from 6 to 8 p.m. in the Holt-W Funeral Home & Cremation School St., Hillsborough. Memorial Mass will be held Frid a.m. in St. Mary Church, Hillsborou Rev. Andre M. Thibodeau, pastor, 1

Burial will be at a later date in Hampshire Veterans Cemetery, Ros Donations may be made to the Children Research Hospital, P.O. B Memphis TN 38103.

Alice A. Lavoie

Editorial

Paralyzing the process

Just about the worst thing a person in close contact with government can hear is, "Let's form a committee."

That statement has sounded the death knell for many well-intentioned projects.

Study committees, citizen committees, sub-committees, planning committees and well-intentioned but misnamed future planning committees, are often misused as a way to keep control of a project in the hands of people bent on micromanagement.

And as more people are brought on board the oil lubricating the wheels of progress thicken to treacle and make any movement almost impossible.

A recent example of this is the board of selectmen's decision to form a police station study committee. Composed of citizens, police and, of course, selectmen, the study committee is charged with finding solutions to the price and location of the new station.

The committee will essentially allow the selectmen more control over a project over which they should not have control. Some input and some oversight on the part of selectmen is to be expected, but selectmen have thus far waffled on the station's location, failed to outline cost parameters and then complained when the station came in at \$11.7 million.

They seemed miffed the police had not included them more in the design process and decided to add their two cents through the new committee. The new committee, however, promises to do little more than paralyze an already slow process and set back the much-needed station even further.

Like their directions to Rodney Bartlett on how to conduct a survey on transfer station usage, the selectmen are merely rehashing what police department members have already paid professionals to do.

Except the selectmen will do it with people who have little knowledge and experience dealing with the needs of a modern police station.

With the police station project now held captive, the selectmen are setting their sights on the Rockingham Park development. The project itself falls under town and planning board review but two selectmen, Ron Belanger and Everett McBride, have voiced strong opposition to zoning amendments being drafted by planning board members guiding the future of the track's 170 acres.

It is only a matter of time before the selectmen place unnecessary restrictions or unneeded pressure on the planning board to ensure their input, again slowing the process.

The board of selectmen needs to realize they are not the ultimate arbiters of Salem government. It's time for the selectmen to let the professionals do their jobs, to trust in their judgment, and pay attention to their own responsibilities.

WE CAN'T PLEASE EVERYBODY, SO.... WE MADE HOURS WE LIKE!



Guest Op-Ed

Trade fear for kindness at the holidays

by Mattie J.T. Stepanek

This holiday season, do a random act of kindness. Think to yourself, "You know what? I feel like doing something nice for someone," and then just do it!

Maybe you could walk up and give somebody a hug. Or you could go somewhere you've been invited, even if you don't want to go. You could take time to notice the little things that someone does and tell them how much you appreciate their effort.

You could give a dollar to a needy person or a good cause. You could bake cookies and take them to a lonely neighbor. You don't have to save the world, just commit one little act of kindness!

There's something wonderfully human that comes from giving and helping others. You've probably felt it — that full feeling that swells your

heart and makes you feel warm and strong and peaceful.

And you know what? That full-heart feeling doesn't go away. It lasts a long time. It's solid and real.

Americans are some of the most generous, giving people in the world. I've seen this for myself, traveling across the country in the past year. I feel proud to be a citizen of a country that cares so much for others.

But I've also seen something else — that fear can make people shut down and back away from giving. Things like corporate scandals and terrorism and talk of war and the economy make people afraid, and then they pull back to protect themselves.

Many charities are hurting now because people aren't giving as much as they used to. People who need help aren't getting it, and that's a terrible thing in a country as blessed as ours.

It's patriotic to help other America is the country of goodwill tolerance and peace. Let's truly live to that image, so we all can have a better future.

This time of year, don't let mess up your holidays. Reach out give to others in many acts of kindness. That full-heart feeling will one of the best presents you'll receive.

Mattie J.T. Stepanek, 12, is the selling author of four "Heartsof" books of poetry (Hyperion Press). outspoken advocate for peace and tolerance, he serves as the Nat. Goodwill Ambassador for Muscular Dystrophy Association. Mattie has a rare disease called muscular dystrophy called mitochondrial myopathy. To learn more Mattie, visit www.mdausa.org.

Letters to the Editor

Salem shouldn't allow low-income housing

To the Editor:

The closing of Rockingham Park brings to Salem many opportunities and challenges to the citizens of our wonderful community. I think it would be lovely to keep the equestrian

feel, yet have a modern residential neighborhood, with access to transportation for working residents (bus or rail service) to Manchester, Concord and Boston. As we move forward, let's all voice our ideas to make Salem an even better place to live. Under no circumstances should we allow low-income housing. This will bring drugs and crime along with bur-

dening our fine police force and inal justice system. We have an opportunity to change our town in a way. I have worked hard and saved my life to become a homeowner there is no finer town than N.H. to raise your children. Let it that way.

God bless America.
Ken Gelormini, Salem

Community Calendar

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 28

THANKSGIVING

Kelley Library closed; will reopen Saturday, Nov. 30

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 29

Rotary Club of Greater Salem 7:30 a.m. Holiday Inn
10:00 a.m. Red Tavern

Salem Community Television

CHANNEL 17

MONDAY, DECEMBER 2

8 a.m. In Praise & Celebration; 9:30 a.m. Salem Today; 11:30 a.m. Sports Talk; 12:30 p.m. News in Brief with Joan; 1:30 p.m. Health Enrichment; Holiday Treats; 3

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 6

6 a.m. Varsity Field Hockey vs. Winnacunnet; 8 a.m. Health Partners; 9:30 a.m. The Medicine Man; 10 a.m. Salem Today; 11 a.m. On the Road; 12 p.m. In Praise & Celebration with GSBC; 3 p.m. Ski & Snowboard Safety; 7:30 p.m. Salem's

Showcase; 10 p.m. Classic Arts; 12 a.m. NASA TV

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 4

5 a.m. Message Board; 8 a.m. Science Hand; 9 a.m. Planet Earth; 10 a.m. E Revealed; 11 a.m. Teaching High School Science; 12 p.m. Science First Hand; 2 p.m. NASA TV; 3 p.m.

11/28/02 Salem Observer

ry face post-holiday court date

tion of the robber.
employees at the Pie Guy shop
re police a description of the
cluding it having the entire
indow covered in plastic.
ice received a similar call
a suspicious car the previous
t Paysaver. The witness there
ed police with the car's
number.

information led authorities
rero. A search of Marrero's
overed a sweatshirt similar to
ject's that was described by a
Scene employee. They also
Movie Scene receipt and BB
munition matching the kind
described as being used in
very.

King was being held at
Rockingham County jail on
\$500,000 cash bail or surety and
Marrero was being held in the same
institution on \$2,000 cash bail or
bond and \$100,000 personal recog-
nizance bail.

two guns used in the robbery were
hidden there, as well.
Marrero, who allegedly drove
the 1996 Pontiac getaway car, was
charged as being an accomplice to
armed robbery.

"K.V." was also taken into cus-
tody. The court did not reveal
charges against the juvenile
Police also arrested King who
allegedly acted as a lookout and
"controlled the driver of the get-
away car." King was charged with
conspiracy to commit armed rob-
bery.

During a Nov. 20 bail hearing
prosecutor Marcia Lehninger said
King escaped from prison in 1995
and in 1992 assaulted a jail guard.
King was being held at
Rockingham County jail on
\$500,000 cash bail or surety and
Marrero was being held in the same
institution on \$2,000 cash bail or
bond and \$100,000 personal recog-
nizance bail.

Forecast for Salem, NH

Day	Saturday	Sunday	Monday	Tuesday
Partly cloudy and cool.	Times of clouds and sun.	Turning out cloudy.	Cloudy and rainy.	Cloudy with rain.
126°	43°/30°	43°/24°	45°/36°	44°/31°

Planning board looks to sync town with the future of Rockingham Park

While the future of Rockingham Park waits in limbo, planning board members are looking at ways to align the town's future look and development with that of the park.

by **ERIC BAXTER**
News Editor

Several weeks ago Rockingham Ventures Inc., announced racing at the historic track would end within two years, barring changes at the state level to legalize video gambling.

Track General Manager Ed Calahan said pressure from Connecticut casinos and the larger purses offered by states with legalized video gambling, like Delaware, made live racing at the track a difficult possibility. Instead, 170-acre Rockingham Park, opened in 1906, will recreate itself as a multi-use area mixing business and residential development.

The announcement dovetailed with Salem's 2001 master plan outlining a similar plan for Rockingham in the event the track closed its doors.

The challenge now facing the town is how to work with the track's developers while at the same time remain faithful to the town's master plan.

"We have created much of our identity from the track," said Planning Board Chairman James Keller. He explained many of the newer developments along the Route 28 corridor,

such as Target and the Christmas Tree Shops, drew many of their architectural elements from the track itself.

Planning board members are on two parallel courses to sync the town and the track developers.

The first, said Keller, is to draft a written agreement between the town, planning board and Rockingham Park saying the track would not come forward with an application for development before the town had a chance to solidify zoning in and around the 170-acre parcel.

If no suitable agreement can be reached, the town would create something like a mini-master plan for the area around the park that would help guide its development.

"There would be a very high level of goals and attributes and progress by which the parcel would come before us," said the planning board chairman.

Keller said the both courses were aimed at creating something akin to a town center for Salem using the track as a focus.

At a recent meeting, selectmen Ronald Belanger and Everett McBride offered two future considerations for planning board members to weigh in addition to the board members goals.

Belanger, who also serves as a state representative, is drafting a bill to attempt to legalize video gambling. If

passed, the bill could change the future of the park, allowing it to remain as a viable racing venue.

McBride said the ordinance was premature and did not take into account all Rockingham's possibilities.

"There's no provision for video gaming," he said as an example during a more recent interview. "This is a critical piece of development."

He said he would campaign against the proposed zoning and added because of the pivotal role the track plays in Salem, a selectman should be invited to any and all meetings between Rockingham and planning board members.

Keller said there was merit to both arguments but he added the planning board's sole responsibility was to protect the interests of the town and guide and navigate any planning that occurs.

Keller said under current zoning, the park could simply be converted to a site for four more "box" stores, like Best Buy or Target.

Instead, planning board members, whatever the future of the track, would like to guide the development of the area toward creating a visually appealing and useful town center.

"This is an important set of decisions," said Keller adding the last set of decisions of this scope was when the Mall at Rockingham Park was built.

At a meeting between the two boards Nov. 19, Bryant lobbied for a zoning amendment that, in his view, protected the town's interests so town officials had some control over whatever plans developers proposed.

McBride and Belanger both spoke against the amendment, saying changing the park's zoning before plans are created could hurt the park from fully utilizing their property.

Ed Callahan, general manager and vice president for Rockingham Park, had urged both boards to hold off on amending the zoning as well, saying it could limit the park's potential for re-development. Callahan stressed developers Eastern Development LLC, of Woburn, Mass., are just beginning to research what's feasible on the 170-acre parcel.

Bryant said he was speaking out against the selectmen's inaction on his reappointment because he felt it was part of an effort to stifle public dialogue on rezoning Rockingham Park and how it could be redeveloped over the next several years.

If Rockingham Park is to be redeveloped, voters must approve of a different use at the park other than racing by revising the current zoning law. Town officials have suggested a new zoning amendment may allow for a mixture of office buildings, retail stores and even park space. But proponents of the amendment have also suggested revising the zoning was needed to prevent developers from erecting a grid of complexes or big box retailers.

Bryant, who has served on the Planning Board for about 4 1/2 years, said he wanted to make sure residents knew "that their elected officials are doing everything they can to make sure Rockingham Park is not being held accountable."

But McBride defended his choice to not support Bryant's continued service on the Planning Board. "I'm not going to support somebody who is going to rezone the property," he said. "That's just something I couldn't support."

McBride called rezoning the property before developers submit plans to the town was "premature", and the town's interests would be protected through an agreement the lawyers for Salem and Rockingham Park are now working on.

SALEM, N.H.

Rock zoning ideas cost planner spot on board

By James A. Kimble
Staff Writer

SALEM — Planning Board member Gene Bryant said selectmen decided not to reappoint him because he has lobbied to rezone Rockingham Park in order to protect Salem before park owners submit plans to redevelop the property.

Bryant, whose term expires at the end of the month, said Selectmen Everett McBride and Ronald Belanger voiced their nonsupport during an interview on Monday because of his stance on re-zoning Rockingham Park.

No motion was made to reappoint Bryant following his interview with selectmen on Monday, and a new call for members was made instead.

"They said that in no way would they support my reappointment to the Planning Board because I stood for a process that they would not support," Bryant said of Belanger and McBride. "Everett McBride repeated that if there was going to be an amendment to the current zoning at Rockingham Park he would campaign against it, and not appoint anyone to the Planning Board in favor of it."

Bryant said he fears it is an effort to stifle public dialogue about the future of the Rock.

Changing the zoning at Rockingham Park has been a contentious issue in front of Planning Board members and selectmen since the horse track announced plans to redevelop the property, and likely end racing in 2004.

FROM PAGE ONE

Tracks: A look at the plans for closed N.J. racetrack

Continued from Page A1

phia, and Salem are somewhat striking.

Both towns are roughly the same size and are known for hundreds of retail stores that attract customers from across state borders. Both have regional malls that neighbor their horse tracks. Office buildings, restaurants, and some of the area's major employers have been attracted to both Salem and Cherry Hill — and provide a strong tax base.

Turn off to a side street in either town, and neighborhoods are still quiet and in some cases rural.

But both communities also lack the same thing — a pedestrian downtown.

"What we have is a lot of really strong neighborhoods and good schools," said Leah Furey, Cherry Hill's acting director of community development. "We don't have a town center like the smaller towns around us do. Their history created these downtowns, but for some reason it just didn't happen in Cherry Hill."

Cherry Hill appears to be on its way to getting a town center, while Salem is still uncertain what will become of Rockingham Park, which announced last month its intention to redevelop its 170-acre property and possibly end racing in 2004.

Ed Callahan, vice-president and general manager for Rockingham Park, has told Planning Board members and selectmen that no plans have been developed for the racetrack and it will take three to five months to muster their initial



A LOT IN COMMON
Here are some of the similarities between Salem, N.H., and Cherry Hill, N.J.:
■ Size: Salem, 25.6 square miles; Cherry Hill, 24 square miles.
■ Retail mecca: Both have hundreds of stores.
■ Cross-border traffic: Both attract business from across state borders.
■ Employment: Both attract job seekers to offices as well as stores.
■ Big malls: Both have large regional malls neighboring their racetracks.
■ Similar-sized tracks: Rockingham Park is 170 acres, Garden State Park is 220 acres.

towns to take a proactive approach where they don't have one," Zimmermann said.

"I think the key is conductivity. You can develop something for the needs of today, but that is inherently unsustainable. If your plan is inflexible for the demographics of the next 50 years or 100 years from now, it's not going to work. That's what made cities and towns renewable."

Garden State Park announced it would end racing in December 2006, and plans for a grid of "big box" retail stores, large parking lots and an apartment complex were rejected by city councilors there.

Furey said, "It was horrible. There were too many units, too many big box retail stores; then they got some feedback."

Cherry Hill officials then start-

ed to work with the developer of what is now a \$500 million project. The grandstand and 50 other buildings at the New Jersey park will be razed and replaced with 1,200 housing units, \$50,000 square feet of retail space, and 1 million square feet of office space.

"It ended up being such great, cooperative partners. Even though it's a private developer, they worked with township staff. Now they're giving land to the school, giving land to the fire district," Furey said.

Chris Goodnow, a Salem-based consultant for commercial and industrial projects, said developers of Rockingham Park will likely look at options that would serve the long-term needs of the region.

Whatever is decided, Goodnow said, "It could literally transform the face of Salem for the next 100 years."

Now Real Estate Services, "but if

Bayle Tribune 12/11/02

N.J. track offers clues to Rockingham's future

By James A. Kimble
Staff Writer

SALEM, N.H. — The future look of Rockingham Park will likely remain a mystery for months or years.

But 322 miles away, the township of Cherry Hill, N.J., home of the now-defunct Garden State Park horse track, may offer a glimpse of what's possible while developers begin conjuring the transformation of Salem's landmark.

Salem planning officials are now researching how the New Jersey racetrack is being converted into a development that includes retail stores, high-end apartments, a downtown center and 30-acre park. Cherry Hill officials have approved the first part of a redevelopment plan for the 220-acre park.

The similarities between Cherry Hill, which is about 10 miles east of Philadelphia

*Please see **TRACKS**, Page A7*



Photos courtesy of the Courier-Post

The 220-acre racetrack in Cherry Hill, N.J., (left) closed after December 2001. At right is an artist's drawing showing what has been proposed for the site: high-end apartments, a downtown center, and some retail stores.

12/6/02

Demand strong for senior housing

◆ Three new projects will add 250 units for residents 55 and older to the city's housing stock.

By James A. Kimble
Staff Writer

SALEM — Even after the approval of three new senior housing projects that will add 250 units of housing for residents 55 or older within the next year, the demand for senior housing isn't slowing, Salem's top planner says.

"I can tell you we're still getting calls for applications from engineers," Planning Director Ross Moldoff said. "I wouldn't be surprised that by the end of next year we have a couple hundred more units. After next year, we'll see what happens — we'll see if they

saturate the market or if the demand is still there."

While one of the projects incorporates some "affordable" units as requested by the planning board, all three developments will be offered at market rates, and will offer community rooms, pools and walking paths in response to a growing demand for such amenities.

Joe DeCarolis, a consultant for a 16-lot senior subdivision off Main Street, said demand is so strong that he expects the houses being built by Mesiti Corporation of North Andover, Mass., will sell before most are actual-

ly built.

The houses will be offered in the low \$300,000 range and up, said DeCarolis.

DeCarolis said developers decided to build individual houses — rather than an apartment complex or condominiums — because customers from previous projects said they still wanted a certain degree of the independence that comes with owning a home.

"They love the concept of an elderly community. There's a great deal of safety to go with it and you don't have the problems with youth, drugs, this type of thing," said DeCarolis. "Many, many people want to go into an adult community, but do not want to give up a right to do things to their property.

Please see **HOUSING**, Page 8

Continued from Page 1

So if you want to put on a sun porch, you can without permission."

For those looking to shed their houses, Kensington LLC of Londonderry, N.H., is building 88 condominiums this spring for seniors off of Cluff Road behind the Target Store.

"There's three buildings and each building has a parking area. There will also be a small clubhouse and community center and pool area," said Dave Jordan, a Salem-based engineer for TFMoran.

Jordan said one-bedrooms will be sold for about \$179,000 while large two-bedrooms will be around \$229,000. But the project also is offering 17 units as "affordable," at 80 percent of the market rate. Planning Board members had asked the developer to consider including affordable units in the complex. Jordan said the project could be completed by the end of next fall.

"Part of the approval (also) included the dedication 3.6 acres of conservation land deeded over to the town of Salem that runs along the Spicket River. It's a wooded area with an existing trail that runs through it. It'll be maintained, undisturbed and used for walking," said Jordan.

The two projects come on the heels of one by Commons Development of Westford, Mass. — approved in September by Planning Board members. That project will bring 142 apartments that will have underground parking, access to a clubhouse and a concierge service.

One-bedrooms will rent for \$1,250 a month and two-bedrooms between \$1,400 and \$1,600 a month, developers have said. Developers with the project have also been working with the Salem Housing Authority to include affordable housing in the plans.

12/12/02 observer

Town works to refine 'Rock' plans

by
**ERIC
BAXTER**
News Editor

Salem planning board members are eyeing a more cooperative approach to creating zoning for Rockingham Park after a three-hour work session last week focused their ideas on a viable plan for the 170-acre parcel.

Planning Director Ross Moldoff

said members were looking into flexible and less lengthy alternatives to prior zoning plans, but were sticking to a few baseline principles to guide future consideration.

The first principle included staying with a mixed-use zone for the area and envisioning the acres as something of a pedestrian-friendly downtown center. The second guiding principle will

require the developer to bring a master plan to the town before specific plans, such as housing or business areas within the park, are introduced.

Planning board members had directed town attorney Diane Gorrow to look into legal options for engaging in a contract with Rockingham Park. The agreement, said Moldoff, would essentially give the town and planning board more time to come to a zoning agreement with the track.

At last week's work session, Gorrow said while a contract was possible, it may not be legally enforceable.

The track's owners, Rockingham Ventures, Inc., have contracted Eastern Development, LLC, of Woburn, Mass. to oversee the general master development plan for the park.

Track General Manager Ed Callahan told selectmen earlier this month the park's new face would be determined in part by whether video gambling was legalized or not. If legalized, live racing would continue and be integrated into the overall plan for the park. Salem Selectman and House Representative Ron Belanger is one of the legislators spearheading a bill to legalize video gaming.

If video gambling is defeated, as it has been since legislation was first introduced in 1994, then the redevelopment would take that change into account and shift the look of the park accordingly.

Eastern Development is redeveloping more than 4 million square feet of retail and office space in Boston, Lowell and several other cities. The 31-person company began looking at the park's potential earlier this year when Rockingham announced it could only sustain two more years of live racing.

New housing plans to aid seniors

For the past decade Salem has experienced a growing need for housing, particularly for senior housing as the aging population has continued to grow. The recent approval of two new senior housing projects will help fill the growing need, said Salem Planning Director Ross

by
**ERIC
BAXTER**
News Editor

Moldoff.

One project, proposed by Lunan Realty, Inc., will allow 16 single-family homes to be built off Main Street. The second project, proposed by Kensington, LLC, would see 88 "garden-style" condos in three buildings behind Target off Cluff Crossing Road.

Moldoff said the Lunan development is requiring all residents to be 55 years old and older. Kensington, while only requiring that one person in the household be 55 or older, will set aside 20 percent of the units, or 17 condos, as affordable units. The criteria for "affordable" will be set down according to New Hampshire Housing

Authority guidelines.

Both developments have hit upon aspects of what Moldoff and planning board members are considering as zoning amendments for a new definition of affordable senior housing.

Initial zoning proposals may require builders to offer 10 to 20 percent of units as "affordable." Affordable, said Planning Board Chairman James Keller in an earlier interview, is designated by state and federal regulations.

The second aspect of senior housing being examined is the age requirements for creating senior housing.

At present, the town requires senior housing to have one individual in the household age 55 or older. Keller said planning board members were asking whether this was truly senior housing or a mid-transition point for families.

The proposed amendment would require each person in the household be 55 or older with the exception of caregivers. Keller said the amend-

ment would help ensure only seniors used senior-designated housing.

The incentive offered to builders to develop in Salem will be "density bonuses," where a developer building on land zoned for 1-acre minimum lots could be allowed to build using half-acre parcels effectively doubling capacity.

Keller said the affordability clause, based on historic examples, would do little to deter developers.

"The last two to three projects have offered affordable units on their own," said Keller.

Given that, Keller said there was reasonable expectation developers would be amenable to both the affordability requirement and the density incentive. Planning board members also studied 15 other communities drafting similar zoning rules and amendments as well as speaking to special consultants for further insight.

Keller stressed planners will hone the amendment's language and intent before presentation to voters in March.

12/12/02 observer

Town works to refine 'Rock' plans

by
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Local

Southern New Hampshire

NEW HAMPSHIRE EDITOR LEN STUART ♦ (978) 946-2138

WINDHAM

Man, woman arrested on drug charges

WINDHAM — Two New Hampshire residents were arrested on drug charges Saturday night on Interstate 93.

State Police said Kevin Hardy, 37, of Bristol, N.H., was found in possession of a large amount of cocaine following a search of a car that was stopped for a motor vehicle violation on I-93 northbound in Windham. Hardy, a passenger in the vehicle, struggled with troopers Mark Hall and Greg Ferry when they tried to arrest him, police said. Hardy attempted to destroy evidence, police said.

The driver, Suzanne Gross, 35, of Franklin, N.H., also was arrested, without incident.

Hardy was charged with possession of a narcotic with intent to distribute, resisting arrest and falsifying physical evidence. He was held on \$1,000 cash bail in the Rockingham County Jail, and was to be arraigned today in Salem District Court.

Gross, who was charged with possession of a controlled drug and transportation of a narcotic, was released on \$2,000 bail.

HAVERHILL, MASS.

Councilors seek more contract bids

By Kelly A. Whiget
Staff Writer

HAVERHILL, Mass. — School

SALEM

Town ponders new zoning rules for Rock

♦ Planners are considering changing Rockingham Park's "commercial-industrial" zoning, which would allow a mixture of office, retail and residential development.

By James A. Kimble
Staff Writer

SALEM — Planning Board members and selectmen are at odds over whether the town needs to set a standard for rebuilding Rockingham Park before park owners submit plans

for redevelopment.

Whether to change zoning at the 170-acre property has been an ongoing debate in recent weeks among town officials, some of whom feel the town needs to protect itself from "big-box" or grid-like retail development.

"A very polarized example is

that with the zoning they have now they could build five box retail buildings along Route 28 or a strip mall," said Planning Board Chairman James Keller. "They (the park owners) don't want to see that, I don't want to see that. But certainly within the zoning context they could do that."

Currently Rockingham Park is zoned as "commercial-industrial" that allows a variety of retail, office and industrial uses. Planning Board members have been considering changing the zoning to allow a mixture of office retail

and residential development with a "town-center"-type development.

Keller said he believes, "philosophically the planners are on the same page," with park owners about building something aesthetically pleasing on the site.

But that doesn't stop the possibility of the land being sold to someone else in the future — and going ahead with box-styled retail buildings, Keller said.

Planning Board members will likely vote on whether to accept the proposal for rezoning the

Rockingham Park at a meeting tomorrow night.

Some selectmen have opposed the effort of changing uses on the property, saying the park's former project — The Mall at Rockingham Park — proves the planning process protects the town.

"When we had the Mall at Rockingham Park, it took a year and a half of meetings before a shovel went into the ground," said Selectman Everett McBride. "All the things the Planning Board

Please see ROCK, Page 4

NORTH ANDOVER, MASS.

Firm has history of safety violations



♦ Merrimac Cartage, the business that

Rock: Rezoning considered

Continued from Page 3

wanted they received, so how I look at it, until we have some kind of a clue as to what they want to do, we shouldn't restrict anything."

Keller said the proposed zoning amendment would require park owners to submit a conceptual plan for redesigning the park that the Planning Board would have to approve before allowing them to submit a site plan.

"Once we approve that, it becomes part of the town's Master Plan," Keller said of the rezoning proposal. "The second part of it is what we foresee occurring on that site. A vision in five or eight bullets, such as we'd like to see a downtown, we'd like to see a town common, we'd like to see a pedestrian-friendly development that supports a notion of people going there and

spending the day there."

Selectman Chairman Richard Gregory, the selectmen's representative on the Planning Board, said the park has already set a precedent with developing the Mall at Rockingham Park and doesn't need revised zoning.

"With the mall we didn't have to do anything," Gregory said. "The people who came in were first class. They hired first-class consultants. It appears to me, and it appears to our (town) staff, (the developers) appear to be of the same caliber, and I believe them and I also believe they can protect the town without the zoning amendment and not upset anybody. But I'm in the minority."

Ed Callahan, the park's general manager and vice-president, said he is concerned about the short timeline in forming the ordinance,

and how it could hinder the development of plans.

"I do think, as I've said before, trying to change the zoning in my eyes would be premature," said Callahan. "We don't know to date what can work, what will work, and it's sending a difficult message to the citizens of Salem because possibly six months down the road you'd have to change what you've already changed."

Keller said he and fellow board members have already made their initial proposal for an ordinance less complicated. The board has revised their proposal so it creates a process to review such a massive plan, while suggesting the types of development the board would like to see on the site, he said.

"We really were torn between being very specific and very detailed, and then we realized we'd

like it to be a collaborative process and we don't want to stifle what they want to do. We shouldn't rush, and if we did do a 13-page ordinance we'd be sure to miss something," Keller said.

While Gregory concedes the newer version of the proposed ordinance is "getting better than it was," he has echoed concerns about creating an ordinance within six to eight weeks.

"I hate putting in zoning amendments that are not quite right and are rushed," Gregory said. "We did that with three of them: open space,

the senior overlay district and the town-center district. Those were three we did in a hurry and still haven't done right — some are being proposed to be changed now."

Selectman Ron Belanger said he's worried a call to rezone the property is coming too early and could hurt possible amenities the town could see from the project. "It may hamper something good they want to do for us at the track,"

Belanger said. "If they rezone the property they could hold it up... in a zoning amendment."

Keller said he believes the ordinance will allow the board to work "collaboratively" with planners, while ensuring protection for the town.

"It's moving forward nicely," he said. "If any of the town citizen's read the ordinance I can't imagine anyone in town, including the track, would disagree with what were trying to do there."

"I want to look at see what the town is going to do first," he said,



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Man caught with heroin in traffic

SALEM — A Berlin man was arrested and charged with illegal possession of heroin during a routine traffic check, police said.

State Trooper Greg Perry stopped a Plymouth Neon on Rockingham Park Boulevard about 9:25 p.m. Friday and discovered that the passenger, Eric Rodgers, 26, of Berlin, was in possession of 17 packets of heroin, said trooper Mark Hall.

"The street value of the drug is estimated at about \$5 to \$10 a bag," he said. "It's certainly not something we would consider (that he was using) for distribution."

Because the amount of the drug was small and Rodgers lives in

Trucks: Poor safety record

Continued from Page 3

Board voted this week to accept a safety plan submitted by the Thomsons' company, including driver training and a vehicle maintenance system.

The board initially demanded that Merrimac Cartage submit a safety plan this summer. The first plan submitted was "generic," without any details particular to the company, so the board rejected it and demanded a new one, said Hinkley.

Thomson refused to provide details on how the family would reduce safety problems if they used their own trucks to service the possible North Andover transfer station.

In fact, only six of the company's 27 violations were for mechanical problems. The other 21 were for driver documentation, excessive weight, and other offenses. Merrimac Cartage also got so many citations because they travel main roads and therefore get inspected more often than other trucking lines, said Thomson.

Hinkley said he hears a lot of complaints about certain companies.

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FROM PAGE ONE

Rezone: Rockingham doesn't want changes now

Continued from Page 1

op the property as a mix of business and retail space.

Meanwhile, the Legislature will be considering in the upcoming session whether to place video gaming at the state's four racetracks, a move that would alter the course of development at Rockingham Park.

Ed Callahan, vice president and general manager of Rockingham Park, said the current zoning proposal would require submission of a plan for the entire redevelopment of the park even if the owners only wanted to add one building onto the grandstand.

"It would probably set back any given development, six, eight, or 12 months, where the state would have to wait for that revenue," said Callahan. "It's supposed to allow flexibility, but I don't see that."

Within the next month, Callahan said he may have to make

alterations to buildings at Rockingham Park to accommodate the conversion from thoroughbred racing to harness racing, which has been approved by the state Part-Mutuel Commission and begins next spring.

Since the ordinance was unveiled, Callahan has argued before the board that implementing new zoning at the race track before plans were created could only restrict future development.

Part of the proposed ordinance would require developers to submit a plan for redevelopment of

the entire 170-acre site; create a mixture of uses such as residential, retail and office space; and create open space and pedestrian areas.

Dan Callahan, Rockingham Park's lawyer, also suggested the ordinance that limited how owners could develop private property. "The requirements are restrictions," he said.

Planning Board members — who see the zoning proposal as a way to streamline redeveloping the park — said last night the

board would likely have to revise its proposal after hearing Callahan's concerns.

"I'd be the last person to limit anyone's rights on their own property," said Planning Board member Phyllis O'Grady.

Board Chairman James Keller said suggestions on the proposal, such as "creating a pedestrian-friendly downtown area," was meant to encourage the message developers have already sent to the town — that they want a first-class development.

"This was meant to be mother-

hood and apple pie," Keller said. "Not restrictions."

But other board members said they were still concerned about the possibility of the park's development team, Eastern Development LLC, of Woburn, Mass., backing out of the project, and new owners coming into the fold.

"Not to sound too Clinton-esque, but we're asking you to feel our pain," said board member Mike Lyons.

For now, it's unclear as to whether voters will decide on rezoning the property at the polls

in March. Callahan said if a final draft of the ordinance looks like it does now, then he would campaign against it, an effort that could also be backed by some selectmen who have vocally opposed a new ordinance for the park.

"I'm concerned that it just can't work to everyone's benefit," Callahan said.

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12/18/02 Track owners: Don't rezone Rock now

♦ Planners' proposal calls for a full redevelopment plan for the 170-acre site even if the change is only one building.

By James A. Kimble
Staff Writer

SALEM — Rockingham Park officials say the town's effort to set standards for developing the property could prevent The Rock from accommodating harness racing — or video gaming if it's passed by the Legislature.

While a new plan for the Salem horse track is still months away, representatives from Rockingham

Park and the Planning Board argued last night about whether new regulations could hurt the potential for development of the 170-acre parcel.

The Planning Board began hearings on a proposal to change zoning at Rockingham Park in October, just as the owners announced they would likely end horse racing in 2004 and redevelop

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Local

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Southern New Hampshire

NEW HAMPSHIRE EDITOR LEN STUART ♦ (978) 946-2138

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Rock: Rezoning considered

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wanted they received, so how I look at it is until we have some kind of a clue as to what they want to do, we shouldn't restrict anything."

Keller said the proposed zoning amendment would require park owners to submit a conceptual plan for redesigning the park that the Planning Board would have to approve before allowing them to submit a site plan.

"Once we approve that, it becomes part of the (town's) Master Plan," Keller said of the rezoning proposal. "The second part of it is what we foresee occurring on that site. A vision in five or eight bullets, such as we'd like to see a downtown, we'd like to see a town common, we'd like to see a pedestrian friendly development that supports a notion of people going there and

spending the day there."

Selectman Chairman Richard Gregory, the selectmen's representative on the Planning Board, said the park has already set a precedent with developing the Mall at Rockingham Park and doesn't need revised zoning.

"With the mall we didn't have to do anything," Gregory said. "The people who came in were first class. They hired first-class consultants. It appears to me, and it appears to our (town) staff, (the developers) appear to be of the same caliber, and I believe them and I also believe they can protect the town without the zoning amendment and not upset anybody. But I'm in the minority."

Ed Callahan, the park's general manager and vice-president, said he is concerned about the short timeline in forming the ordinance,

and how it could hinder the development of plans.

"I do think, as I've said before, trying to change the zoning in my eyes would be premature," said Callahan. "We don't know to date what can work, what will work, and it's sending a difficult message to the citizens of Salem because possibly six months down the road you'd have to change what you've already changed."

Keller said he and fellow board members have already made their initial proposal for an ordinance less complicated. The board has revised their proposal so it creates a process to review such a massive plan, while suggesting the types of development the board would like to see on the site, he said.

"We really were torn between being very specific and very detailed, and then we realized we'd

like it to be a collaborative process and we don't want to stifle what they want to do. We shouldn't rush, and if we did do a 13-page ordinance we'd be sure to miss something," Keller said.

While Gregory concedes the newer version of the proposed ordinance is, "getting better than it was," he has echoed concerns about creating an ordinance within six to eight weeks.

"I hate putting in zoning amendments that are not quite right and are rushed," Gregory said. "We did that with three of them: open space, the senior overlay district and the town-center district. Those were three we did in a hurry and still haven't done right — some are being proposed to be changed now."

Selectman Ron Belanger said he's worried a call to rezone the property is coming too early and could hurt possible amenities the town could see from the project.

"It may hamper something good they want to do for us at the track,"

Belanger said. "If they rezone the property they could hold it up... Why would they tie someone's hands? The developers are professionals, and they're going to be working with them."

Belanger, also a Republican state representative, said he's delaying signing off on his video gaming bill and cosponsoring a similar senate bill to allow racing at the track — as a sort of last ditch effort to save racing.

"I want to look at see what the town is going to do first," he said,

about delaying his bill. "I would hope they would hold off on putting in a zoning amendment."

Keller said he believes the ordinance will allow the board to work "collaboratively" with planners, while ensuring protection for the town.

"It's moving forward slowly," he said. "If any of the town citizens read the ordinance I can't imagine anyone in town, including the track, would disagree with what were trying to do there."



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Petitions aimed at gas station zoning rules

Two citizen petitions passed on by selectmen at Monday night's meeting are aimed at strengthening zoning rules for gas stations. The petitions are seeking to amend current zoning rules and widen the distance between new gas stations and increase the buffer zone between gas stations and

by
**ERIC
BAXTER**
News Editor

the town's two primary water sources, Canobie Lake and Arlington Pond.

The first petition asks voters to approve increasing the building distance between stations from 1,000 feet to 3,500 feet.

The second petition asks voters to approve zoning prohibiting any new gas stations from locating within 1,320 feet of the surface water protection area surrounding Canobie Lake and the Arlington Mill Reservoir. The additional footage will be added to the quarter-mile buffer already in place in the existing surface water protection area.

The submitted petition use stated goals for preserving and protecting drinking water within Salem as well as contamination risks associated with the gasoline additive MtBE as preamble and reasoning for the increase to the quarter-mile buffer zone.

There are more than 15 gas stations operating within Salem. Existing stations will not be affected by the new zoning if it passes. However, they will be classified as "preexisting non-conformants" and any changes to the stations could be affected by the new zoning rules.

Salem Planning Director Ross Moldoff said the new zoning, if passed, may have an effect on new station development, but would not speculate as to the extent of the effects.

A public hearing on the proposed zoning amendments will be held on Jan. 10.

Planners amend zoning rules for Rock

By James A. Kimble
Staff Writer

SALEM — Planners have revised a zoning amendment for Rockingham Park so it won't affect any short-term changes the park might have to make for harness racing or the possibility of video gaming, said Planning Director Ross Moldoff.

The amendment, which would set standards for redeveloping Rockingham Park, is one of nearly a dozen proposed zoning changes scheduled for a public

hearing Jan. 8.

Moldoff said Planning Board members amended the language after track officials met with the Planning Board earlier this week. Racing officials have said racing could likely end in 2004, but short-term modification could be made to the complex as they transition from thoroughbred racing to harness racing in 2003.

Planners also hope to amend their rules for building senior housing in the "senior overlay district" so that larger-scale pro-

jects would have to reserve at least 10 percent of their units for affordable housing.

"It's something the Planning Board has been asking for when projects come in, but it hasn't been in the requirements," Moldoff said.

Another part of the ordinance would allow builders to have more units in a project if the age requirement for residency was 62 or older, Moldoff said.

Planners also want to revise its open space preservation ordinance in hopes of keeping some

of the larger parcels of untouched land in Salem intact. Moldoff said currently Salem has about 17 lots that have more than 25 acres each.

A potential subdivision built on a 50-acre lot would be able to fit 25 houses under the current zoning regulations.

"Under the open space preservation, if they agree to take 25 acres and leave it in its natural state, we would give them a density bonus, so instead of getting 25 houses they'd get up to 30 houses. It's a 20 percent bonus

there," Moldoff said.

Two citizen petitions will also be reviewed at the hearing. One asks the town to require new gas stations to be set back 3,500 from existing gas stations.

Another petition asks for a rule that would require new gas stations to be set back about a quarter-mile from Arlington Pond and Canobie Lake, two water supplies for Salem. The meeting is scheduled for 7 p.m. at Town Hall.

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SALEM, N. H.

Hearing on Rockingham Park set

Residents and officials can weigh in on a revised zoning amendment for Rockingham Park at a Jan. 8 hearing. If approved, the amendment would not affect the park's eventual transition from horse racing to harness racing or even video gaming. The purpose of the zoning amendment is to set standards for any future redevelopment of Rockingham Park. The meeting will begin at 7 p.m. in Salem's Town Hall.