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No consensus on game-day parking
By Michael Abramowitz
The Daily Reflector
Tuesday, August 17, 2010

Greenville police returned to First Presbyterian Church on Tuesday night for a second meeting they hope would resolve East Carolina University game-day football parking issues for residents of neighborhoods near Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium, but gained no consensus and heard wide disagreement among those who attended.

About 75 people from the Stratford, Forest Hills and Elmhurst-Englewood neighborhoods attended the meeting organized to decide among three plans offered to the police at the first meeting on June 9. Cpl. Chris Viverette of the GPD code enforcement division and Lt. R.A. Williams and Sgt. Robert Brewington of the traffic division presented a “hybrid plan” they believed incorporated the most popular ideas they heard at the June 9 meeting.

The option of requiring a residential pass to enter a neighborhood on game day was rejected by residents at the original meeting.

“That left us with a zero-tolerance approach where we would ticket and tow all illegally parked vehicles and the option of following the status quo of the past 30 years, where we just monitored the parking and address issues as they came up,” Viverette said.

After presenting all the options at the first meeting, the officers found no consensus among residents. They decided to combine what they believed would be the most effective and acceptable portions of the two options and present them at Tuesday’s meeting.

“There were safety and access issues presented at the first meeting, so we tried to address those issues in our hybrid plan and get their opinions,” Viverette said.

Some of those issues included impaired access to some streets, including Berkley Road, for fire and other emergency vehicles when football parking occurs; impaired field of vision for drivers that could lead to accidents; and parking too close to driveways, street corners and fire hydrants.

An addition of 7,000 seats to the stadium this year increased residents’ concerns about what they said was an already dangerous and unsightly parking situation. Residents also expressed concern for pedestrians who walk several blocks from their cars to the stadium, especially via Elm Street.

“We’re trying to take a proactive approach to getting things under control,” Brewington said.

“Simply keeping things status quo does not deal with the problem, in my opinion.”

The hybrid plan presented Tuesday consisted of measuring streets to be sure of compliance and safety zones, then establishing temporary parking guidelines that would apply on game days. Violations would be noted with written warnings issued on the first game day, then enforced on subsequent game days, Viverette said.

“This will allow for consistent enforcement for vehicles not parked in marked spaces and continue to allow access for residents and their guests,” Viverette said.

Under the plan, East Carolina University would pay the cost of providing clearly marked white “T-box” parking spaces like those downtown, Viverettes said.
When the police opened the floor for discussion, it quickly became clear that they could not reach agreement on the options provided by the officers. Questions arose about the colors that would be used to designate parking and off-limits areas, the width of the stripes that would be painted, and other aesthetic issues with painted parking spots. Questions about signage and messages that would inform motorists of parking rules also came up. Terry Holland, ECU’s athletics director and an area resident, attended the meeting and reiterated afterward that safety is the university’s first priority.

“We’ll do everything we can to cooperate and promote safety, but I think we’ve seen tonight that people really don’t want any enforcement in their neighborhoods,” Holland said. “They want to continue to do what they’ve always done and hope that people will be smart and not try to trash their neighborhoods.”

The Pirates’ first home game is Sept. 5.

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Former Shelby High swimmer rescues girl from rip current

Staff Reports
2010-08-17 11:44:53

A Shelby native rescued a 6-year-old swimmer from a churning rip tide last week in Edisto Beach, S.C.

Alan Riggs, an East Carolina University student and a 2009 Shelby High School graduate, was vacationing with his family when he saw a crowd gathering on the shore Aug. 12.

Six-year-old Laura Bell had been playing in the surf with her sister when a strong rip tide swept her from the oceanfront.

“She was about 100 yards beyond the breakers clinging to a float and in trouble. I had to help,” said Riggs.

He dove into the surf and approached the child.

“I remembered what I had learned in Scouting with Troop 100 and as a Shelby City Park lifeguard to swim parallel to the shore and reassure and control the victim,” Riggs said. “She was very tired and bleeding when I approached her. I was able to calm her and pull her to shore. The combination of the tide, current and rock outcroppings made it a difficult swim.”

Riggs said he used his skills as a member of the Sharks Aquatic Club and a past Junior Olympics and high school state championship swimmer to navigate the current. He returned the girl to her parents and arriving paramedics.

“Rip tides can easily take a swimmer off shore and into deep water,” said Officer William Marsh of the Edisto Beach Police Department. “The conditions of an outgoing tide can further complicate the situation. When caught in a rip tide, inexperienced swimmers can become victims when they become exhausted from struggling to get to shore.”

Bell was hospitalized and treated for a broken leg at Colleton Medical Center in Walterboro, S.C.

“The whole situation happened so fast,” said the girl’s father, Stan Bell. “We are so thankful that he took action and saved our daughter. He is a hero for us.”
‘Best colleges’ list has familiar names

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Local universities fare well in the 2011 edition of the U.S. News & World Report’s “Best Colleges” issue, which came out this week.

UNC-Chapel Hill ranks fifth among public universities for the 10th straight year, following the University of California, Berkeley, UCLA, Virginia and Michigan.

N.C. State University placed 52nd on that list, tied with Oklahoma, Oregon, Washington State and South Carolina.

Duke, which ranked 10th among national universities offering doctoral degrees a year ago, crept up one slot into a three-way tie for ninth with Dartmouth and the University of Chicago.

Harvard, Princeton and Yale were the top three institutions on that list.

Wake Forest placed 25th and UNC-CH, 30th.

Elon University ranked second among Southern regional universities and also placed well in a series of other rankings.

Appalachian State University ranked ninth on the Southern regional universities list.

N.C. Central University ranks 11th nationally among historically black institutions, one spot higher than another member of the UNC system - N.C. A&T. UNC Wilmington placed fifth among public master’s institutions in the South.

Seven North Carolina schools made Forbes Magazine’s list of America’s Best College Buys, led by UNC-Chapel Hill at 13th. Others are UNC Wilmington, Appalachian State, UNC Asheville, NCSU, East Carolina University and UNC Greensboro.
Letter: UNC health plan to fund abortions
Wednesday, August 18, 2010

With new insurance requirements now in effect for the 2010 school year, all UNC system universities now mandate that students buy health insurance in order to attend the institution and obtain a degree. The default coverage is for a private insurance policy selected and mandated by the UNC Board of Governors under the General Assembly, and costs each student nearly $800 yearly. This policy which is the only plan offered, is obtained through Pearce & Pearce Co., one of the largest national providers of student health insurance. It turns out that the North Carolina plan includes coverage for elective abortions, unlike plans in neighboring states, such as South Carolina, which have specifically removed abortion coverage.

This abortion coverage health plan has no options and presents a quandary for pro-life students who are affected directly if they have to use this coverage, and is a quandary indirectly for all North Carolina citizens paying for state education who do not agree with this state-mandated abortion coverage. Many students aren’t even aware that they are paying into a pool that will very likely pay for elective procedures to end the lives of their classmates’ unborn children. ECU collects the health insurance premium up front along with its tuition for every student, but does give the option of a refund, if proof of coverage by another plan (such as a pre-existing family plan) is made by the student. Citizens should be outraged that not only has abortion coverage been universally applied to our university system, but that the mandatory coverage and arbitrary health choices have been assumed by the state and torn from the individual without a second glance.

WILLIAM RUCKER
Aydene_SPgB

(Editor's note: The UNC system announced Thursday that students can opt out of the abortion provision of their mandated health insurance plan.)
MEET THE PIRATES

The 16th annual Meet the Pirates Night, East Carolina's preseason football fan fest, is scheduled from 6-8 p.m. Saturday at Dowdy-Ficklen Stadium. First-year head coach Ruffin McNeill, his staff and the 2010 team will sign autographs. There will be inflatable rides, games and photo-taking stations. The ECU cheerleaders also will participate, and there will be concessions and a Dowdy Student Stores souvenir booth. Enter through Gate 6 on the north side of the stadium. Admission is free.
After turbulent Texas Tech finish, McNeill takes reins at East Carolina

Posted 11h 17m ago

From wire reports

For a guy with little head coaching experience in college, Ruffin McNeill doesn't seem rattled by taking over a program with back-to-back conference championships.

At alma mater East Carolina, McNeill instead talks more about being a father figure. If anything, the man players call "Papa Ruff" figures doing a good job at that will help ease the Pirates' transition in a change-filled year.

"I think with kids, and with anyone, it's 'show me' on a daily basis," he said. "The saying is 'I'd rather see a sermon than hear one.' I think they hear me, but then they'd rather see it. And they've seen how I am. It's not interview talk or media talk. I mean it. I do love them, and I want them to do well."

C-USA PREVIEW: UTEP's Buckram primed for runaway season

McNeill, 51, knows there are high expectations for a program that under Skip Holtz reached four consecutive bowls. When Holtz left for South Florida, McNeill — a defensive back for ECU from 1976-79 — was eager to take his "destination job."

He also knows the program's challenges, including fighting for headlines in a state full of Atlantic Coast Conference programs.

"We're able to go out there and put everything on the line for this man because he knows what he's talking about," linebacker Steve Spence said. "It's a matter of trust and just having faith."

The more pressing challenge is a roster with seven returning starters.

McNeill spent 10 seasons as an assistant at Texas Tech and then was interim coach when Mike Leach was suspended and ultimately fired before a win against Michigan State in the Alamo Bowl — his only game as a collegiate head coach. He's bringing that pass-happy offense as well as a blitz-heavy defense.

But spend five minutes with McNeill, and you'll hear him talking about the importance of taking care of his players.

"He came in and said the first day, 'Nobody's going to love you harder and nobody's going to work you harder than I am,'" wideout Darryl Freeney said. "At
times he'll get upset, and as soon as he finishes on
his little tirade, he'll come back and say, 'I love you.
I love you, but I still want things done the right
way.'

At a recent event with area coaches, McNeill proudly
said, "I'm as country as a dozen eggs."

"It helps me because I've been here," he said. "It
helps (the players) know I'm automatically one of
them. I've been in the same seat they've been in. ... They know I have no hidden agendas with them.
They know at the same time I will bite them. I will
demand. I want their best on a day-to-day basis
from them and will accept nothing less."
NCSU to give cars a charge

By Jay Price
STAFF WRITER

N.C. State University plans to start work today on what university officials say will be the first public high-powered electric vehicle charging station in Raleigh.

Such “Level 2” stations operate at 220 volts and can charge a typical electric-powered vehicle in perhaps five or six hours compared with about twice that for a station working at standard household power levels, said Stacy Fair, director of the university’s Joyner Visitor Center just off Western Boulevard, where the charging station is being built.

It’s the first of about 200 fast chargers planned for the Triangle in the next couple of years and about 350 across the state. Power companies, local governments and others are preparing for all-electric vehicles – Nissan’s Leaf will be the first – which are expected to begin reaching showrooms next spring.

NCSU’s E. Carroll Joyner Visitor Center is converting a minivan to electric power for no-emissions tours of the campus, and the center will house an educational display on the technology.

It’s perhaps no surprise that NCSU is building the station, since the university is performing key research and development of technology crucial to making electric vehicles more practical, such as a smart power grid and better batteries.

Because many visitors come through the center, it’s a smart place to share the technology with the public as part of NCSU’s traditional missions of outreach and extension, said Anne Tazewell, who runs the Clean Transportation Program at the N.C. Solar Center, one of the sponsors of the new charging station and several others planned for the area.

“Having this sort of charging station at the visitor center in particular is a great opportunity to demonstrate that this technology works, and it’s available right now and ready to use,” Tazewell said.

The station should be finished by the end of the month. NCSU plans to build a second one at the nearby McKimmon Conference Center, another location on campus that gets thousands of visitors each year.

Free to the public

The public can use the station free simply by registering at a log book at the center, Fair said.

For awhile, though, there may be more amps than takers, because only a handful of fully electric cars are in the area, Tazewell said.

“There’s a pretty aggressive list of electric vehicles on the horizon, but there are almost none around right now,” she said.

Peter Eckhoff, president of the Triangle Electric Auto Association, a group of enthusiasts, said there were perhaps a couple of dozen electric vehicles in the area but most probably weren’t set up to use the station.

Clearly the problem of which comes first – charging stations or cars to use them – is a chicken-and-egg situation, Eckhoff said. But it’s great that the university is building stations, he said, given that the Nissan Leaf and other models are on the way.

“Our hats are off to them,” he said. “It’s at least a good start.”

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Judge limits Davidson College police

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS
RALEIGH - An appeals court says a North Carolina college cannot have police officers arresting suspects and enforcing state law because the school is considered a religious institution.

The N.C. Court of Appeals ruled unanimously Tuesday that the Attorney General's Office shouldn't have commissioned Davidson College officers as law enforcement.

The court says that violates the U.S. Constitution by creating "an excessive government entanglement with religion."

Judge Jim Wynn wrote that Davidson falls in line with earlier cases involving Campbell University and Pfeiffer University. Wynn mentioned Davidson's requirements that most trustees be active church members.

The ruling grew out of a 2006 case in which a Davidson officer stopped a motorist.

There's no automatic appeal to the state Supreme Court.
The Washington Post

For-profit higher-education providers resist regulatory action

By Nick Anderson
Washington Post Staff Writer
Tuesday, August 17, 2010; A12

The Washington Post Co. and other for-profit providers of higher education pushed back Monday against a government report last week that found many of their former students are not on track to repay their loans.

Several industry stocks, including The Post Co.'s, fell after the release of the report related to a federal effort to tighten regulation of for-profit colleges. The Post Co. said in a statement Monday that the federal initiative "could have a materially adverse effect" on earnings of its Kaplan higher-education unit.

Late Friday, the Education Department released data on student loan repayment rates that showed 28 percent of Kaplan University's former students are repaying the principal on their federal loans.

That was lower than the 36 percent loan repayment rate posted by the for-profit sector overall and significantly lower than the averages of 54 percent for public colleges and 56 percent for private, nonprofit colleges, according to an analysis by the Institute for College Access and Success, based in Oakland, Calif. Borrowers who are not considered to be repaying, education officials said, include those in default or delinquency or situations in which they are not reducing the principal balance.

Repayment rates are a factor in proposed federal regulations that would under certain circumstances restrict eligibility for colleges to participate in financial aid programs. Under the proposed regulations, colleges would be ineligible for aid if their repayment rate is lower than 35 percent and they fail to meet other criteria. Obama administration officials have said they want to ensure that the graduates of for-profit colleges are on track to find "gainful employment" and are not overloaded with debt.

Kaplan, which offers higher education, test preparation and professional training services, provides 62 percent of the total revenue of The Post Co., according to company documents, far outpacing the contribution of The Washington Post newspaper to company coffers. Kaplan's higher-education unit, which is under government scrutiny, provides 64 percent of Kaplan's total revenue, underscoring the importance of the proposed regulations to The Post Co.'s future bottom line.

In a statement, The Post Co. said that "a significant number of Kaplan schools" could be at risk of new limits on financial aid.

"Thus, these rules, if adopted as presently drafted, could have a materially adverse effect on the future results of the company's higher-education division," the statement said.

The company called the government's definition of repayment "narrow" and said it penalized schools in which many borrowers consolidate loans or participate in federal income-based repayment plans.
"Low-income students often rely on these programs," said Kaplan spokeswoman Melissa Mack. "The impact of this proposed metric will be the shifting of the sector en masse to a more affluent population."

James Kvaal, deputy undersecretary of education, said the repayment data were published for informational purposes, not enforcement. "We plan to consider very carefully the comments on the methodology," Kvaal said. "We haven't heard anything yet that has convinced us there are mistakes in the information we've published."

The proposed regulations could become final this fall and take effect in July.

Post Co. shares fell $27.83, or 8.1 percent, to close Monday at $315.65. Post Co. stock has fallen 16.4 percent since the release this month of the company's second-quarter earnings report, which mentioned the proposed rules on for-profit schools.

Strayer Education Inc., based in Arlington County, took issue with the government analysis, which showed that about 25 percent of former students of the for-profit school were repaying loans. Strayer said its own calculations show a repayment rate of at least 55 percent.

"We think there's major problems" with the report, said Robert S. Silberman, Strayer's chairman and chief executive. "This data is clearly wrong to us."

Strayer's shares dropped $36.75, or 18.4 percent, to $163.26.

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