



The Forest Heights Herald Examiner is a community journal for the people by the people. If you would like to contribute an article, advertisement, or comment, call 301-567-4204.

The Tan Brigade with the Black Berets

With summer upon us and activity picking up, it is good to see that the Tan Brigade with the Black Berets (TTripleB) is on the move. Have you seen them? The new summer uniforms that the Forest Heights Police Department officers are sporting these days are similar to desert fatigues. Combine these para-military duds with the tan boots, black berets and thigh holstered firearms, and you have a uniform that makes for a second glance by anyone. What makes this even more noteworthy is that the officers wearing these uniforms are doing an outstanding job in our town.

Despite all the political fall out in the town, the TTripleB is holding the line for the community. Under the leadership of Chief Michael Eubanks they are the one element of our Town Government that is proving to be consistent and doing what it is supposed to do. Criminal elements, no matter how long they have been in this town are beginning to realize that Forest Heights is not going to be open for that kind of business.

Some would say that those who do not like what has been going on should leave Forest Heights but TTripleB does not see it that way. Chief Eubanks has made it clear that "...people should be able to live in any community without having to tolerate crime, disorderliness, and chaos. In Forest Heights, it is my job to make sure the residents can live the way they are supposed to live in this community."

The front line of TTripleB consists of Chief Eubanks, Lt. Waithe, Officer Blake, and Officer Heberlig and while personable, they have all made it clear through an aggressive patrol and savvy approach that they are here to protect and to serve.

And for this, we salute them!



Dance Classes Forming
Young Ladies Ages 8-13
Call Diedra
301-567-4204

In this Edition

- Remembering.....1
- What1
- Budget.....3
- Confusion.....5
- The Boys.....8

THE COALITION OF CONCERNED CITIZENS'
Forest Heights Herald Examiner

From the Editor **Remembering Our Purpose**



Councilman Myles Spires - Editor

Neighbors, I am writing to you not just as a journalist but as a fellow citizen in the Town of Forest Heights. When we first started producing the Examiner, the sole purpose was to give the town residents another perspective of what was happening in our town. We accomplished this through simply reporting the facts as we observed them

throughout the community, at town meetings, and through verifiable sources. I am committed to continuing in that vein especially with the tumultuous community time that we find ourselves in.

To say the least, this past week has been a challenging week for our town, my family, and the residents of Mohican Drive. If you came to the public hearing on July 21, 2005, you were made aware (if you did not already know) that the mayor, Joyce Beck, using our tax dollars, distributed an inaccurate, heinous and most inappropriate letter in which she identified my family as police informants and eluded to another resident's home on Mohican Drive as a house of ill repute. At that same meeting she stated that she circulated this defamatory, divisive, and poten-

Continued page 4

What Do We Know Now

Not focusing on Mayor Joyce Beck's public flip-flop (kind way of saying "lie"), when she said that she would only vote to break a tie, at the June 17 meeting about taxes going up yet again within the first month of her tenure, it is important to figure out what do we know since her election some sixty days ago. After all, the crux of the Mayor's campaign was full disclosure of the state of the Town of Forest Heights. So I thought this assignment would focus on some of the highlights since her election.

Continued page 2

My goal in this article was to get a sense of where the community thought we were going since the ouster of Paula Noble from the Mayor's seat after probably the nastiest campaign in Forest Heights history.

But before I could get my walking shoes and light shirt on to brave this summer heat, the phone began ringing. First the residents, then the newspapers, and finally the television stations. Everybody had the same question; what in the world is going on in Forest Heights. To say the least, it was embarrassing.

All of the spectacle and media circus did nothing more than provide photo ops and a stage for the entire Washington Metropolitan area to see just how bad a political situation we have in Forest Heights. The residents performed, the council performed, and the spotlight landed on Mayor Joyce Beck, because of course you only end up where your leader takes you. Let's look at what happened.

Promising complete disclosure, honesty, and never to lie, Joyce Beck handily won the election to the Mayor's seat on May 11, 2005. Since that time, the fighting between the new mayor and four councilpersons (Wiggers, Atkinson, Stoner, and Ross) who were strong supporters of the former mayor has spiraled out of control. Mayor Beck calls them "The Block" and they emphasize her dictatorial manner of running the town. The Mayor proposed a budget. "The Block" met, modified the proposed budget, and approved it (that really is what the town council is supposed to do). The Mayor disagreed with the way "The Block" handled the budget (citing open meetings acts violations) and threatened to shut down town services if the budget was not approved again in a proper forum. Finally, somebody called in the media and the circus began.

The truth is that this was theatrics at its best. Was there any real reason for residents to be afraid that town's services would be shut down? Nope. There are too many laws in place that would have made it legal and political suicide for the Mayor or Town Council to take actions to shut down the town.

So what are the important issues? Here are some of the issues that residents are raising.

1. How much money does the town have?

Each month the operating balance fluctuates. This is realistic. The high amount that we heard was over \$100,000 while the low amount was \$60,000.

Continued page 7

2. Where did the money go last year?

Well, the jury is still out on this question. Some have suggested that the Mayor have the FBI or the State come and audit the books for us although, if she wanted too, she could simply look at the cancelled checks and tell us who and how much they got paid from the operating account in the past year.

3. How much money came into and went out of our operating account last year?

The answer to this is simply incredible! The Mayor says she does not know. Residents' response has been "Where are the bank statements and do you know how to read them and add the numbers?"

4. Is there money to fix the streets?

I am sure we have all noticed the recent paintings of curbs and lines in the streets. Hopefully, that is a sign of things to come but with no RFP for street repair, we have to wonder. Even broke people window shop.

5. Why are taxes going up?

The Mayor, Councilpersons Wiggers, Stoner, Ross, and Hoskins chose to exceed the constant yield tax rate which is designed to keep you from having to pay more taxes when the county increases your tax assessment. By the way, now your taxes will increase every year for the next three years without you having a say so. The mayor failed to mention this at the June 17 hearing where she hit the gavel when Councilman Spires tried to explain it to you.

7. When will we get more police?

If you look at the budget that the Mayor first proposed, it included more officers. Then the second budget she proposed, cut an officer out. If you look at the budget that Councilmen Stoner, Ross, Wiggers, and Atkinson passed, it decreased the Mayor's proposed officers' salaries.

Residents are hoping that the answers to these questions will soon be answered. Answers to these questions would do so much to unify our community and improve the quality of our lives in Forest Heights.

unnecessary. However, our town charter requires that the Town Council have rules to run the meeting. Giving the latest turn of events and the craziness of the recent meetings, I see why.

Hopefully, the Mayor, Council and residents will begin to abide by these rules so that we can get down to handling the town business with some efficiency.

These six basic elements are in no way all the rules to meeting but are key to any meeting being conducted in an orderly fashion. To further explore the rules that the Forest Heights Mayor and Town Council are supposed to use to conduct business, I encourage you to read The Town Charter and *Roberts Rules of Order*.

So now, let's stop the confusion.

Martial Arts Classes Forming



Youth Ages 8-14
301-567-4204



Creative Funding Group

- ⇒ Refinance
- ⇒ Purchase
- ⇒ Cash Out

Fast closing - Professional Service

Call Hahns
301-486-0047

Cruisers With No Cops! *Looking At the Budget.*



Empty Forest Heights Police Cruisers



While the media watched the budget circus and residents panicked because of the false representation that shutting down the town was going to happen, one of the greatest bait and switch plans was happening right under our noses. The budget being passed was further reduced by the "Block" (as the mayor refers to Councilmen Stoner, Wiggers, Ross, and Atkinson) to include a reduction in the Police salaries although they supported her reduction in the originally proposed number of officers. While our officers, under the leadership of Chief Eubanks, are doing a good job, we can certainly use two more officers to fill these vacant vehicles and shore up our town against the rising tide of crime spilling over from other jurisdictions.

Just to be sure that you know some of the other things that were passed off on you in the budget while they played the drama that the sky was falling, we have provided this short list of where we will spend instead of getting another officer:

1. \$15,000.00 to revise the charter and ordinances
2. \$8,900.00 for more office help.
3. \$5,851.00 surplus

The list could go on. You be the judge, does this make sense? How much do we really need another body in the Town Hall? And so we will just leave \$5, 851.00 hanging around just in case? We already have a case.— We need cops to go with these cruisers!

PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

Phone: (301) 686-1432

William Clarke, *Supervisor*

POLICE DEPARTMENT

Phone: (301) 839-4040

Michael Eubank, *Chief of Police*

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES

Phone: (301) 839-1030

Bonita Anderson, *Town Clerk*

Joyce A. Beck, *Mayor*

Continued from page 1.

tially endangering letter in response to a confidential Town Council memo which addressed public safety matters. Her intent could only have been malicious and to cause disturbances among the residents. Fortunately, Forest Heights residents are smarter than Joyce Beck thinks. Despite the few people who expressed support for her despicable action, which, among other things, violated police protocol and investigation confidentiality, an overwhelming majority of town residents have expressed their support for my family and horrific disappointment that Mayor Beck would stoop to such tactics in the name of politics. No one would expect any mayor to act so unintelligently and cold-heartedly as to compromise any citizen who might assist the police in ridding the town of crime in the parks where our children play.



Mayor Joyce Beck bowing just before her swearing in ceremony.

What good came out of this? We now know who she is and can clearly understand the tenor of her character. Unable to admit that she was wrong in her action, the mayor arrogantly pointed at everyone in the room who has opposed her views and placed the blame on them.

Not once has she taken responsibility for any of her actions. Yet, the public saw just how transparent the mayor's manipulation was when it was revealed that she "blasphemed and reprimanded" Chief Eubanks for making a drug bust in the park the night before the public hearing. It was further indicated that she also asked for his resignation during that same reprimand. The Town Clerk was in tears when she truthfully attested to the mayor's bullying tactics of threatening termination for any person who is "not loyal to me." No one has to be told that this sounds like a dictator.

The public hearing to address public safety, the budget, the current trash contract, and the municipal building roof disbanded without anything being resolved. So where do we go from here? With residents already calling for the Mayor's resignation and threatening a recall effort, things seem to have gone from bad to worse. Add to that the residents' clear disdain for the "Block" opposing the Mayor and for the Council as a whole constantly bickering, it becomes more evident that we must remember our purpose because the need for business to be addressed is now critical. We need more police officers and we need to know where our money is.

We have a community of citizens who want to live in the crown jewel and gateway to southern Maryland. They are ready to work for it, and so am I.

Let's Stop the Confusion

With all the recent focus on the confusion that happens at the town meetings here in Forest Heights, the question comes to mind; is there a way to at least maintain order? The answer is yes. In fact, last year, the Town Council adopted *Roberts Rules of Order* to conduct all of their meetings. However, it seems that these rules just get thrown out the window and everyone starts yelling.

So, we wanted to make sure that you were able to quickly tell who is causing the confusion at the meetings. The following is a quick synopsis of how business is supposed to be conducted at our town meetings.

1. The Mayor (or the Council President in the mayor's absence) "chairs" the meeting. This is the person that holds the gavel, calls the meeting to order and keeps the meeting moving along according to the agenda. The gavel should be used only to gain attention for some declaration (calling the meeting to order, adjourning the meeting, declaring a member out of order with cause).
2. The agenda is the list of items that are scheduled to be covered during the meeting.
3. The agenda can be amended but must be done at the beginning of the meeting before it is adopted.
4. All actions of the mayor and council during the meetings must be executed by a vote. This includes amending the agenda, adopting the agenda, adopting a resolution, etc.
5. A vote is made by someone first making a motion. Once the motion is seconded by another member of the council, then the chair calls for the vote. At that point any member can call for discussion. This is where the discussion between council members takes place and it is not supposed to be interrupted by people who are not on the council without another approved vote by the council.
6. The actions of the Mayor and Town Council should be consistent with the Town Charter. Who determines if the Mayor and Town Council are taking actions that are in line with the Town Charter? First the Mayor and Town Council — together. But if someone disagrees with the action that they take, then the Circuit Court for Prince George's County will make the decision.

Unfortunately, there are those who feel that rules to conduct meetings are