Aldermen make no decision on baggy pants law

Nuisance furniture ordinance passed.

By J. Lynn West

New Albany’s outdoor furniture and appliance nuisance ordinance has become law but the proposed public indecency ordinance which addresses wearing pants well below the hips was placed on hold after a public hearing degenerated into personal comments.

The so-called “baggy pants” ordinance was introduced by Ward Three Alderman Tommie Beasley, concerned, he said, that outstanding young people might be incorrectly associated with wearing pants well below the hips, and because in some cases the wearers simply showed too much undergarment or skin.

The law would have prohibited exposure of genitals, public urination or defecation, partial nudity and a variety of other acts but the part that drew discussion and differing opinion prohibited “intentionally wearing pants or skirts more than three inches below the top of the hips (except of the fame) exposing the skin or undergarments.”

A few residents at the public hearing on the ordinance that just Tuesday spoke out in opposition to it. One critic was that the problem is not that bad, and a few already going out of style. “I don’t think police should confront young people and tell them how to dress,” Southside community activist Larry Dykes, who opposed Beasley in the 2009 municipal election, said. Jennifer Jones was opposed to the low-slung pants but said she had no trouble with kids who put them up “a little. I don’t want it to turn into a racial problem. I just want to teach the young people to respect the police,” she said.

Dykes argued that police should enforce current laws before getting into the business of telling people how to dress, complaining that young people are allowed to cause noise and make a mess on Wall’s parking lot but when his lodge has event police come and tell him to be quiet or shut it down.

Jones noted that the pulled-down pants are worn by white young people as well as black and others said they just did not think the police should be involved in telling people how to dress.

Aldermen made no decision on Beasley’s baggy pants ordinance with a delay until the next public hearing.

Grant awarded to help fund ‘whistle-stops’ on Tanglefoot Trail

GM&O Rails-to-Trails Recreational District of North Mississippi Chairperson Betty Hamilton of New Albany today announced the awarding of a $40,000 grant by the Carpenter Foundation to fund construction of two “whistle-stop” rest area facilities along the Tanglefoot Trail in Ecru and Algoma. Tanglefoot Trail is being developed from a 44-mile stretch of abandoned railroad tracks from downtown New Albany to Houston.

“We are extremely grateful to the Carpenter Foundation and are honored to have their generous support in construction of our planned Whistle Stops,” said Mrs. Hamilton. “These facilities located in Ecru, Algoma, New Holuida and Houston, will provide rest areas for users including rest rooms, water fountain, bike rack, picnic table, waste receptacles and parking,” she noted.

The Tanglefoot Trail, which will meander through the rural counties of Northeast Mississippi, will offer multirecreational opportunities for area residents and travelers. The rails-to-trails project will preserve the abandoned railroad corridor, and its right-of-way will be dedicated to recreational trail use and possible future reactivation for economic development purposes.

Erzii Mayor Tom Todd, a Tanglefoot Trail board member, joined in expressing Carpenter’s appreciation to their donation. “The Carpenter Foundation is most generous in recognizing the need in our area. For years they have used their resources to fund worthwhile projects, and we are pleased that ours was one of them.”

Tanglefoot Trail is situated in Union, Pontotoc and Chickasaw Counties and runs through Union, Ecru, Algoma, New Holuida and Houston. Tanglefoot Trail will provide opportunities for area residents, walkers, runners, bikers, trail bis and others to experience the history of this area in the hills of Mississippi.

“If in addition to positively affecting our communities, this project will benefit the region from the statewide recreational, tourism and economic aspect due to its length and scope,” Hamilton said.

Tanglefoot Trail Planning and Development District serves as administrative and fiscal agent on behalf of the GM&O Rails-to-Trails Recreational District.

Ted Porter

Christmast coffee with Santa

Youngsters who had no hesitation about visiting with Santa were Micah Reed, 8, and Jobe Reed, 5, sons of Bro. Matthew and Jennifer Reed.

Christmas coffee with Santa

Garden club members served refreshments to the steady stream of visitors to the museum.

Photos by J. Lynn West

Architecture alumnus gives back to alma mater

Ted Porter may be a long way from home, but that has not stopped him from saying thanks to his Mississippi roots.

Porter, principal at Ruhl Porter Sheridan Architects in New York, recently won the Brick Industry Association (Southeast Region) Design Award for a project he created his hometown of New Albany, his roots.

Porter designed a house to fill a home he always wanted New Albany, and he is now moving out the house. “The idea was a fill a house,” he said.

The Brick Industry Association Award came with a $2,000 scholarship that Porter could designate in an institution of his choice.

“Oh course I chose the Mississippi State University School of Architecture,” he said, but giving back of all what it means to be able to travel, so he decided to set up a scholarship to help others.

“I think it’s really important that everyone has the same opportunity for travel in the school,” he said. “It’s good to be able to see great works of architecture, and often that means traveling to far, fun places. Architecture can’t truly be appreciated online.”

Porter named the travel scholarship after an art history professor he had while studying at Mississippi State, Paul Godwin.

“He opened a lot of interests for me that I’ve enjoyed pursing for the last 40 years or so,” Porter said. “It think it’s good to recognize professionals who have an influence on you.”

He presented the award money to the School of Architecture on Nov. 30 in Starkville and also served as a guest judge for fourth-year student final reviews.

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