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Birthday

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I'll take her to the store and she can pick out the music."

Whether the music was simple or not, Hoffman won over the audience at her party.

A former nurse, the Michigan native wasn't even sure she was worth the fuss Wednesday.

When asked how it felt to be 102, Hoffman downplayed it.

"It's just like every other day," she said. "You can't stop it."

Her son Paul, a former television news anchorman, added: "Today is the day."

It was the day in 1916 when Hoffman was born in Holland, Michigan, to Jacob and Eureka Zuidema, the oldest of three children.

She married Howard Hoffman, a funeral direc-



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tor, in 1937. Howard Hoffman was also quite a piano player, according to Paul Hoffman and his daughter, Janie Moore.

Paul Hoffman said his father could play any song by ear, routinely going to functions and finding a piano and then spending the night playing whatever song someone requested.

Marjorie Hoffman, though, played from sheet music.

Even when it's "too simple" like her party music Wednesday.

But her impact on Wittman has been anything but simple.

"She looks at me with tears in her eyes and says, 'How do I deserve you?'" Whitman said during the party. "Because I need you as much as you need me."

"This has been a wonderful experience for me. We've just had a ball."

Jefferson

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tian Church read from Matthew 5:1-16 for the scripture reading.

Class Vice President Natalie Lord led the graduates in the benediction.

Caleigh Croft, Jennifer Delgado, Ashton Harrell and Alex Mares sang the Alma Mater song.



PHOTOS: JESSIE R. BOX
Pastor Tim Carver of First Advent Christian Church presented the scripture reading.

Sauerman

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lesson I'd like to share, I did find out that if I changed the way I looked at things, things I looked at did change."

She concluded her speech with advice on how to accomplish long-term goals.

"If it's a long-term goal, it's easier to chop it up," she said. "Break up that one goal into many smaller steps that will take you to your destination."

"As your reach each step, celebrate. The more

you celebrate the more you enjoy life. Life is not just about reaching your destination, it's about enjoying the journey along the way."

Following Sauerman's address, Taylor White and Carter Phillips gave a musical performance, singing "The Further you Go." Dylan White then presented a slideshow of the graduating class.

During the academic recognition of the 87 graduates, Aimee Clesi was named Valedictorian and Gimel Portillo was recognized as Salutatorian. Seth Reaves finished the service with a closing prayer.

SCSD

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subject to change, per the school district. The likelihood of rain Saturday is 50 percent according to the NWS, climbing to 60 percent Saturday night. The heaviest rainfall this weekend is expected Saturday night into Sunday.

According to the release, the district will make every effort to hold graduation at the stadium between 9 a.m. and 9 p.m. Saturday.

An update will be provided by 6 p.m. today for any time changes know at that time.

Additional updates will be forthcoming Saturday at 9 a.m. and 1 p.m., if necessary.

Updates will be provided to students through the ONE CALL NOW automated system.

Information will also be posted on the Suwannee Democrat's website at www.suwanneedemocrat.com as well as the district's website, the BHS and SHS Facebook pages and on WQHL Radio.

If the weather conditions don't allow outside graduation, the ceremony will be moved to the SHS auditorium at 8 p.m. Saturday with overflow seating in the SHS gymnasium. In that case, seniors will be given a ticket allotment for guests to be seated in the auditorium and gymnasium.

Per the release, moving the graduation indoors is "a last resort only."

CRA puts Court Street beautification project on hold

BY JAMIE WACHTER

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LIVE OAK — The Court Street beautification project has been put on hold.

The Live Oak Community Re-development Agency rejected the bids on the project at Tuesday's meeting, which would have added landscaping and bulb outs to the Court Street corridor in downtown.

The low bid received was \$83,774.06, which was more than \$30,000 above the amount the board had budgeted for the project.

The board had previously rejected the bids on the project in January with staff then making minor modifications before rebidding it.

Curtis told the board, in response to a question from board member Bruce Tillman, that the bids increased by about \$10,000 since that earlier rejection.

"Clearly at the numbers that continue, at least twice now, to be well outside the budget, we can not recommend that you authorize approval of this project, at least the way it's structured," City Manager Ron Williams said.

Williams and George Curtis, the city's planning, zoning and development director, said the board could decide to use that budgeted allotment on other projects if they decided to reject the bids. Those projects included work on the parking lot at 125 Court Street.

Currently an unpaved lot, the CRA purchased the property with the goal of improving it.

Councilman David Burch said with parking issues identified on Court Street, utilizing the funding in that direction made sense.

"That will kind of solve some of the problems that people have addressed," he said. "I would rather put our funds toward something like that."

Tillman, though, questioned whether it would actually address the parking issues since the lot is already used for parking.

"I don't know that you can say we'll create more parking than already exists there," Curtis replied, adding the improvements would add handicap accessible parking and improve the lot. "It would make it, what would be considered a legal parking lot instead of just unapproved."

The board unanimously agreed to reject the bids, although there was no decision on how to redirect the funds.

Project manager search

The CRA board also gave Williams the go-ahead to search for a new CRA project manager at Tuesday's meeting.

The position would replace CRA project specialist Kim Smiley, whose last day with the city and CRA was Friday.

"We'll all miss Ms. Smiley, that's for sure," Williams said. "She served the city very well."

With Smiley's departure, Williams and Curtis proposed a plan that would shift most of Curtis' responsibilities to the city with the incoming CRA project manager handling most of the CRA duties. Curtis and Smiley had been serving in hybrid positions that required them working for both the city and the CRA.

"My concern is George is working for the city part of the time, CRA (part of the time) and I've heard that he's overloaded," councilman Bennie Thomas said.



PHOTO: JAMIE WACHTER

CRA board member Bruce Tillman discusses the parking lot on Court Street.

Williams assured him and the board that the proposed plan would lessen Curtis' load.

"This reduces his CRA effort," he said, adding that Curtis helped design the plan. "It provides him with additional support."

"We think that grows his productivity."

Board chairman Frank Davis added: "We'll call this 'The Curtis Plan.'"

Under the plan, the project manager would answer to Williams with Curtis serving as a consultant for CRA projects. Gina Salvati also works in the CRA office and the new plan would call for adding a part-time employee as well.

Board member Cindy Robinson asked if the CRA should just look for a CRA Director, something the board had discussed and examined in the past.

Williams said it was certainly something they could decide to do, but at an increased cost too.

"I think maybe if we find the right person, they could potentially grow into something like that," Burch said.

Davis agreed.

Illuminating downtown

Davis asked the board to also look into the cost of adding lighting to the downtown parks for safety purposes, especially in regards to the festivals held there: Freedom Festival on July 4, the Candy Carnival for Halloween and, obviously, Christmas on the Square.

The CRA had discussed the issue previously and budgeted some funds for it.

Williams told the board he had been in contact with Florida Power & Light about its current work in replacing and upgrading lights around town.

Suwannee County Chamber of Commerce President Brandon Fernald told the board he — and the Chamber — were very interested in improving the lighting in that portion of Live Oak, especially in regards to Christmas on the Square.

He said specifically the areas around Wilbur Street, Church Avenue and Warren Street have been identified as needing improved lighting.

"Not just related to Christmas on the Square, if you walk in there anytime, it's really dark down through that area," Fernald said. "If we have more illumination down there, it will enhance that downtown area."

Fernald said the Chamber is



Brandon Fernald, the Suwannee County Chamber of Commerce president, talks about the need for lighting improvements near the downtown parks.

open to whatever is the best solution, whether it's permanent lighting or temporary additions for events, such as the Christmas on the Square.

"Lighting is important for families to feel safe," Tillman said, adding that the improvement needs to benefit the area as a whole and not just for a few festivals.

Heritage Square

The board unanimously approved the concept and master plan for Heritage Square that Kimley Horn & Associates presented at a workshop May 1.

With the approval of the master plan, Williams and CRA staff can now begin the process of trying to identify funding sources for some of the developments within the project.

Davis' only concern was to make sure the phases outlined in the plan weren't set in stone.

"If somebody looks at this, it's a pretty ambitious plan," he said. "I would want to know that we have the flexibility to do whatever we need to do as funds are available and needs dictate as we move along."

Curtis told him that they could move ahead with any part of the project once funding was identified.

Tillman added that the funding sources, including grants, are separate from what the city otherwise has access to.

"People may ask, 'How are you going to pay for it?'" But my understanding is a good deal of this is available and eligible for grant funding," Davis said. "So hopefully a majority of the funds will come from other sources than CRA money."

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