

## Town reverts to longer terms

### *Walkertown board likes 4-year stints for council after all*

By Wesley Young

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Brenda Mabe

Town council members will be elected to four-year terms starting this fall.

The town council voted unanimously last week to change the term length of council members from two to four years.

Members will serve staggered terms; each year voters will vote on two of the four members of the town council. The mayor also will serve a four-year term.

"It takes time to learn your job," Council Member Brenda Mabe said before the vote. "You need time to establish goals. Two years is not enough time."

Mabe was a council member the last time it had four-year terms. Walkertown switched to a two-year term in 1994 when voters overwhelmingly endorsed the change.

This time, the change back to four-year terms was done by a simple vote of the council with no further action needed.

Town Manager Ron Bell said that, in his experience, a four-term term allows the council more continuity.

"It gives you some overlap from a business-operations standpoint," Bell said. "It gives them time to learn how things work, and they have more time to try to do some things for the citizens. With the staggered terms, you always have board members who have been there and will have some continuity."

To get to staggered four-year terms, two council members will be elected to two-year terms this fall, with the other two elected to four-year terms. After that, all council members will be elected to four-year terms, with two being selected every two years.

When the municipal election results are tallied this fall, the two council members with the largest vote totals will earn the four-year terms and the others the two-year terms.

The change in the town charter does not require the approval of the N.C. General Assembly.

In other business, the council approved an intersection improvement being done with the help of the N.C. Department of Transportation.

It is the intersection of Old Hollow and New Walkertown roads that will get the addition of a signal light and turn lane.

Bell said that the DOT has made \$2,000 available with a \$500 grant from the town. The project involves repainting Old Hollow Road at the intersection to provide a left-turn lane for eastbound traffic turning onto U.S. 311 north.

A new traffic signal will have a left-turn sequence.

Bell said that the road is wide enough to accommodate the turn lane, and that all it would need are new stripes of paint.

The project was one of a number of intersection improvements that the town applied for, but Bell said that the others may have cost more money than the state was willing to grant.

The other projects, not approved, included putting a left- turn lane for traffic leaving Old Hollow Road to turn north on Main Street; left-turn lanes on Darrow Road at U.S. 158; a turning lane at U.S. 158 and N.C. 66; and on Darrow Road near Walkertown Middle School.

The council heard an appeal for support and money from the Walkertown Warriors, a youth baseball team. Jeff Watson, speaking for the team, said that the team was hoping to go to a national tournament this fall and needs to raise \$10,000.

The team has raised between \$3,000 and \$4,000. The council made no decision on the request.

The council passed an ordinance against loitering for drug purposes similar to ones passed in other towns.

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