

HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS

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High school sports reporter Andrew Pearson takes the pulse of sports in Western North Carolina. Check out his frequently updated blog at CITIZEN-TIMES.com/blog/hshuddle.



Hearing for South Asheville apartment complex delayed

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When South Asheville residents discovered a large apartment complex was planned for Overlook Road, they mounted a grassroots effort to slow down the process. As a result of their effort, the government hearing that would approve the project has been delayed.

The board of adjustment hearing for Overlook Apartments is rescheduled for noon on July 12.

A Greensboro area company has proposed about 230 apartments and 30 townhomes near the intersection of Overlook Road and Westbrook Drive in South Asheville.

The mostly two-bedroom units would add about 400 bedrooms to the area. The development will occupy about 25 acres of previously vacant land.

Area residents have said the development will bring too many additional cars to the hilly, curvy road.

Several nearby homeowners attended the Buncombe

County Board of Commissioners meeting last week to draw attention to their opposition of the project, even though final approval rests with the Board of Adjustment, a separate county body.

"We have had zero opportunity to voice our opinions about this project," said Shannon Reece, who lives in the nearby Oak Forest neighborhood. "This is a major concern to all of us because this will directly impact our quality of life, our property values and our safety."

Vijay Kapoor, a candidate for Asheville City Council who has led a community campaign against the developer, said he thinks it will take longer than a month to sort out the confusion, and he expects the hearing to be further delayed until August.

"There's a lot of neighbors who feel like the developer was trying to ram rod this through and would have appreciated them reaching out when they filed the application in April," he said. "The process was absolutely crazy." He said the neighborhood

group he represents, South Asheville Resident & Business Community Organization, will ask the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners to change the development process. They would like the county to require developers to meet with neighbors before a major building project can be approved.

Commissioner Joe Belcher, who represents District 3, where Overlook Apartments would be located, responded to residents' entreaties, saying he shares their concern.

"If this came before me at the commission level then I would not support it," he said in an email. "The traffic, safety and quality of life would be compromised by this development being located on this two-lane country setting. This decision is in the hands of the Board of Adjustment which must make the decision based exclusively on current ordinances, safety, the evidence and testimony presented at the meeting. As this is a quasi-judicial board, they must make their decision without my influence."



BILTMORE FARMS HOTELS

Biltmore Farms opened the 118-room Hampton Inn & Suites Asheville-Biltmore Village in Biltmore Village on Monday.

Vanderbilt heir opens \$9.2M hotel in Biltmore Village

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ASHEVILLE - The 118-room Hampton Inn & Suites Asheville-Biltmore Village, a lodging facility that's part of a more than \$30 million hotel boom south of downtown, opened Monday.

The hotel will employ 36 people with some positions still available, developer Biltmore Farms Hotels said.

The company sent a release announcing the opening of the estimated \$9.2 million hotel in Biltmore Village at the doorstep of the Biltmore Estate, which draws tourists from around the world.

Biltmore Farms Hotels is headed by John Cecil, an heir of George Vanderbilt, the man behind the construction of the estate, including its well-known mansion.

In a release the 120-year-old company noted that the hotel is its fourth Asheville property.

The Hampton Inn is next to the company's DoubleTree Biltmore Hotel.

Of the new hotels 118 rooms, 35 are suites.

The facility "features a clean, modern design with vibrant colors reflecting the spirit of the city, as well as Biltmore Farms Hotels' Vanderbilt Legacy," the release said.

The hotel provides guests free hot breakfasts, a 24-hour "TREATS" shop featuring local vendors, a business center, free wireless internet access and a fitness center.

There's also an indoor pool, outdoor terrace and fire pit.

There's also energy-efficient features, the company said, with high-efficiency LED lights, "smart energy" HVAC units with infrared sensing thermostats to turn off when guests aren't present, direct vented fresh air to every room, and on-demand instant hot water.

The hotel's Milepost 408, a quaint bar that is atypical of

most Hampton Inn designs, is open to guests and the public and serves wine, local beers and light food. The hotel partnered with Cawtaba Brewing to create a special beer for the bar, "Stay a While Blonde Ale."

Biltmore Farms Hotels will also expand its partnership with MANNA Foodbank, with \$1 from the sale of each Stay a While Blonde Ale donated back to the local hunger relief organization. Catawba Brewing Company will also sell the new brew at its South Slope location and donate proceeds to MANNA.

The opening of the Hampton Inn & Suites created new opportunities for growth within the Biltmore Farms Hotels employment base, as well as for the Asheville community, adding 36 full and part-time positions. There are still a few openings available at the property, including bartenders, room attendants and maintenance staff. Interested candidates can apply online at BiltmoreFarmsHotels.com or fill out an application in-person.

"The opening of the Hampton Inn & Suites is an exciting milestone in our company's history, as it not only created new growth opportunities for our employees, but brings a unique hotel with modern amenities to Biltmore Village," stated Ron Storto, vice president of hospitality of Biltmore Farms. "We look forward to hosting visitors to Asheville and ensuring a memorable stay."

About Biltmore Farms Hotels
In 1989, Biltmore Farms Hotels opened its doors to travelers visiting Asheville. Its collection of hotels in the Asheville area includes: Double Tree by Hilton Asheville-Biltmore, Hilton Asheville Biltmore Park, Hampton Inn & Suites Asheville-Biltmore Village and Residence Inn Biltmore.

For additional information, visit BiltmoreFarmsHotels.com.

'Great American Tapestry' opens June 22

CITIZEN-TIMES

Due to a production error, the following information was omitted from Rob Neufeld's "Visiting Our Past" column on Monday:

The world premiere of the documentary film "A Great American Tapestry, The Many Strands of Mountain Music," by Hendersonville filmmaker David Weintraub, is at 7 p.m. June 22 in Bo Thomas Auditorium at Blue Ridge Community College.

Additional showings will be at 7:30 p.m. June 29 at Asheville's Fine Arts Theatre, 36 Biltmore Ave., and at 7:30 p.m. June 30 at White Horse Black Mountain, 105 Montreat Road, Black Mountain.

Musicians who participated in the film will perform at the start of each program. A brief discussion with the filmmaker and participants follows the screenings.

Tickets are \$10 and \$15. Call the Center for Cultural Preservation at 828-692-8062 or visit saveculture.org.

For Neufeld's full column on the documentary, please visit Citizen-Times.com.



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"Porch Scene," a woodcut by Paul Laune, is featured in the documentary film "A Great American Tapestry, The Many Strands of Mountain Music," by filmmaker David Weintraub, debuting at 7 p.m. June 22 at Blue Ridge Community College.



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