

Lawrenceville signs lease agreement

By Sylvia Allen
Editor

LAWRENCEVILLE – On Tuesday, Aug. 14, 2018 in a three to two vote the Lawrenceville Town Council voted to lease a portion of Tax Parcel 52A7-6-1A to Brunswick County for the purpose of installing a small building to house the new radio equipment to accommodate the new communications initiative. Lawrenceville Town Manager C. J. Dean said the property, located behind the old firehouse and next to the existing tower, will have enough space for the building and a backup emergency generator. This lease is part of the communication upgrade for law enforcement and emergency services.

Councilman H. B. Brockwell, Jr. made the motion to enter into the lease agreement, seconded by Councilman Robbie Pecht. Councilwoman Martha Myers voted yes. Councilwoman Alice Talbert and Councilwoman Dora Hardy voted no.

Prior to taking the vote Talbert questioned why council was not given more time to review the lease agreement. Dean said he received the lease agreement from the county on Thursday, Aug. 9, 2018. Dean said W. C. Outten, Jr., Town Attorney, had reviewed the lease and made changes. Pecht said he felt comfortable entering into the lease agreement and further stated that Outten had reviewed the lease. Brockwell brought up the tremendous benefit the upgrade to the 911 equipment would be to Lawrenceville and the entire county.

Grimstead shares knowledge of James Solomon Russell

James Grimstead, center, Chairman of the James Solomon Russell/Saint Paul's College Archives and Museum, was the guest speaker at the Lawrenceville Rotary Club. He spoke from the heart sharing information about James Solomon Russell, seldom referring to his notes. Rotarians Sylvia Allen, left, and President Charlette Woolridge, right, welcomed Grimstead, Gloria Menyweather-Woods and Regina Gordon, Treasurer. (David Harrison/Brunswick Times-Gazette)

Legacy of James Solomon Russell is Rotary topic

By Sylvia Allen
Editor

LAWRENCEVILLE – James Grimstead, Chairman, of the James Solomon Russell/Saint Paul's College Museum and Archives, provided information about James Solomon Russell to the Lawrenceville Rotary Club.

Grimstead said James Solomon Russell was born on Dec. 20, 1857 in the midst of extreme poverty. He was special from the very beginning and exhibited a strong sense of vision and he had a sense of direction and destination. Only his mother was with him while his father, Solomon Russell, was on another plantation in Warren County.

When Russell was 4-years-old the Civil War started. He knew he wanted to get an education and with his mother's encouragement he took advantage of all opportunities to learn as much as he could. At the age of 8 his father was finally allowed to become a whole person by way of the 13th Amendment and he was able to join his family.

Russell's concentration on learning during the early years prepared him to enter Hampton Institute. There he faced great challenges from the lack of funds and transportation hardships. Grimstead said Russell had to drop out of school and re-enter on several occasions. Through all of this he was able to be among the highest ranked classmates at the school.

Russell became a teacher and found a copy of the Apostles Creed and had his students recite it every week. This delighted the students and the parents. Later he discovered the creed came from the Episcopal Common Prayer Book. Also in 1876 he attended conferences of the ZUA Church (later called RZUA) and unsuccessfully tried to switch them over to the Episcopal Church. Russell developed a strong

desire to study the Episcopal faith and with the help of Patti Buford he enrolled in the St. Stephen's School for Negro Clergy in Petersburg and was a class of one.

After graduating Bishop Whittle sent him to minister to the colored congregation in Brunswick in 1882 which was at the time meeting at St. Andrew's Church. This congregation was the beginning of the church in Brunswick. Russell noticed that poverty abounded and quickly began forming groups to find solutions to this growing problem. He first set up the St. Paul Benevolent Society which cared for the sick and gave funds to the heirs of the deceased.

Grimstead said over the next few years Russell established nine parishes and many school programs to educate and provide for needy persons. In 1888 he proceeded to open a school of higher learning and with the help of Rev. James Saul of Philadelphia he opened his first building which he named the "Saul Building." This building led to the beginning of what became St. Paul's Industrial and Normal School.

Russell realized that educational needs were growing rapidly and envisioned larger and more adequate facilities. With little funds to work with he let his faith in God be his guiding force. His first vision was to acquire parcels of land for his future plans. Even during that time wheeling and dealing went on to deprive him of that opportunity. Russell's faith in God prevailed and with his Bishop's endorsement his first vision became a reality. Early on he developed a strong working relationship with key supporters – both white and colored. He became a great negotiator in land purchases for the school and whittled down many land offers to rock-bottom bargain prices. Some said he was on a "buying spree" but he explained that the properties were worth ten

times what he paid for them. In the end he had acquired 1700 acres. He gave his "faith in God" credit for making this happen.

Grimstead said at the same time Russell was involved in many Diocesan and national activities pioneering many opportunities for colored clergy and preaching at several other denominations around the country.

As time went on the school grew in buildings, staff and enrollment. Students came for all across the country and from abroad.

With this vast complex came many expenses, however, Russell was a prolific appeal writer and wrote thousands of letters and visited places around the world to bring in needed funds. It was said at one time that the school would become extinct. His response was that this would not happen because "this is the work of God." Faith was still his mantle and he was very successful in having a constant flow of funds coming into the school. It was not uncommon for him to meet with his Board of Trustees and announce that the school was debt free.

In 1902 Russell help start the Farmers Conference. The mission of this conference was to encourage land ownership, build better homes, churches, and schools and promote better race relationships, develop useful and intelligent society members, and publish statistical progress of the Negroes.

In 1917 Russell was granted an honorary Doctors of Divinity from the Protestant Episcopal Seminary in Virginia and in 1922 a Doctors of Law degree from Monrovia College in Liberia.

Over the years he provided numerous services to the Town of Lawrenceville to the point that it was suggested that the town be called "Russellville."

Dr. Russell continued his efforts to grow St. Paul's and his involvement with the Episcopal Church.

When he retired in 1929 the school had 800 students, 50 staff members and 36 buildings. He passed away in 1935.

Grimstead closed by saying, "Archdeacon Dr. James Solomon Russell was a strong man, a learned man, a religious man, a pioneer, a negotiator, an empire builder, a strategist, and most of all he was a visionary. In his mind he always did long range planning. Among the beneficiaries of this great man are the graduates of St. Paul's College who have gone on to achieve great prominence in this country and throughout the world. This is his legacy. A legacy which left a future that has benefited countless young and old as they have prepared for the positive opportunities that life had to offer."

The museum is located at 219 North Main Street, Lawrenceville, Virginia. For more information call (434) 848-2173 or email at gsmus@aol.com. Monetary contributions and donations of memorabilia from Saint Paul's College are welcome.

Lake county sheriffs to talk at LGA meeting

The Sept. 5, 2018 LGA monthly meeting at 9:30 a.m. will feature the Sheriffs from all five Lake Gaston counties: Sheriff Brian Roberts (Brunswick), Sheriff Bobby Hawkins (Mecklenburg), Sheriff Jack Smith (Northampton), Sheriff Johnny Williams (Warren), and Sheriff Wes Tripp (Halifax).

Each will give a brief overview of the county law enforcement and areas where you may be affected. This is a rare opportunity for us to receive an update on county matters and ask questions or get clarification of your individual concerns. Come join us for what will be an important and informative meeting.

The meeting will be held at the Lake Gaston Baptist Church located on Hwy. 903, 1-mile north of Eaton Ferry Bridge, across from the Subway Restaurant.

The meeting will also provide an opportunity to get caught up on the various activities that the LGA Committees – Public Safety, Lake Environment, Government Relations, Marketing and Membership, Education and Lake Clean-Up – are working on.

Do you have a lake-related issue or concern that the LGA should be working on? There will be time allotted on the agenda to present those concerns to the LGA Board.

The meeting is open to the public, members and non-members alike, so gather up your neighbors and come join the LGA.

For more information contact (252) 586-6577 or 1-888-586-6577 or info@lakegastonassoc.com.

**Do you have a story idea?
Call Sylvia at (434) 848-2114.**

Lawrenceville VFD report approved

From staff reports

LAWRENCEVILLE – Kevin Jones, 2nd Lieutenant, submitted the report for July for the Lawrenceville Volunteer Fire Department to the Lawrenceville Town Council. Volunteers responded to 25 calls. One call was in the town limits and 24 calls were outside of the town limits. Of the total 21 calls were within Lawrenceville Fire 1st Due with four calls being mutual aid to other agencies. Approximately 84.38 man-hours were expended. The breakdown is: 2 for smoke scare, 1 for medical assist, 2 for brush fire, 6 for motor vehicle crash, 8 for disregard, 1 for public service, 1 for aircraft crash, 1 for vehicle fire, 2 for alarm, and 1 for landing zone.

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VDOT Virginia Department of Transportation

**Bridge Rehabilitation
Route 46 Nottoway County
Design Public Hearing**

Wednesday September 26, 2018, 5 – 7 p.m.
Blackstone Primary School
615 East Street, Blackstone, Va. 23824

Find out about the proposed rehabilitation of the Route 46 bridge over the Nottoway River near the Brunswick/Nottoway line. The bridge will be closed during construction and detours will be in place.

The meeting will be held in an open forum style from 5 - 7 p.m. This format will provide the flexibility to allow participants to meet and discuss the proposed project directly with project staff members.

Review the project information and National Environmental Policy Act documentation at VDOT's Richmond District Office located at 2430 Pine Forest Drive in Colonial Heights, 23834-9002, 804-524-6000, 1-800-367-7623 or TTY/TDD 711. Please call ahead to ensure the availability of appropriate personnel to answer your questions.

Give your written comments at the meeting or submit them no later than **October 6, 2018** to Anthony Haverly, project manager, Virginia Department of Transportation, 2430 Pine Forest Drive, Colonial Heights, VA 23834-9002. You may also email your comments to anthony.haverly@vdot.virginia.gov. Please reference "Route 46 Nottoway Bridge" in the subject line.

VDOT ensures nondiscrimination and equal employment in all programs and activities in accordance with Title VI and Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, contact the project manager listed above.

* In the event of inclement weather on September 26, this meeting will be held October 3 at the same time and location.

State Project: 0046-012-722,P101, R201, C501, B623
Federal Project: BR-012-4(029)
UPC: 93093