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Community Issues
1985

Reconstruction of The 80's

1984-85

Vote For "Change"
VOTE
Willie Houseal
For City Councilman of
Post No. 1



Vietnam War Veteran
Free Mason
Valdosta Lodge #19
Instructor of Math & Reading
Lowndes Co. Board of Ed.
Dir. of Widdersville Coalition
Valdosta/Lowndes County
RIP Coordinator

"I'll strive to maintain adequate fire protection, reducing community crime, to gain an equitable return on your tax dollar while maintaining an open mind toward industries recruitment, thus allowing better jobs for the citizens of this community."

New Valdosta Councilmen Come Long Way Since Feb. Election

By RICHARD SELLERS
Times Staff Writer

Valdosta's three newest city councilmen, who were elected to their posts in February, say they've come a long way since their first council meeting but are still in the learning stage.

Joseph "Sonny" Vickers, Bunnis "B" Williams, and Willie Houseal have had a taste of what being a city government official feels like and — even though the job has loads of responsibility — say they like it.

"I feel a little better as far as other city council members are concerned," said Joseph "Sonny" Vickers. "I felt they weren't concerned with some of the problems we have...I was somewhat surprised that most councilmen were concerned."

Vickers said the only misconception he had was about the way city government operates.

"You get bogged down with the bureaucracy of it and that's discouraging sometimes," Vickers said. "Bureaucracies have a tendency to go at it different from what I'd do, but some have rules and regulations and don't want to take any shortcuts...I'm disappointed in the bureaucracy. They take a long time, and when they want to speed things up they do it."

Vickers said he is pleased with the progress he's made on his campaign promises, especially on policing Valdosta's housing standards and plans to tear down or renovate dilapidated, abandoned houses.

Vickers said he has plans to set up a district advisory board next month, another platform he campaigned on.

"I feel we'll get some things done but we still need to learn the job," Vickers said.

"I think the rest of the year will shape up good," Vickers said. "We'll have input on the new budget, and what I'd like to see is work on paving and getting additional personnel for housing. Those are two types of things I'm most interested in."

Councilman Bunnis Williams said by being a social science teacher he pretty much knew what to expect. said he now has "a new concept about other city council members."

"It has been a very pleasant experience and the cooperation and harmony among other council members has been good," Williams said. "Practically everything we've injected they've taken into consideration, and department heads have tried to accommodate us."

"Frankly, I have accomplished much more than I thought I would at this present time," he said, adding that as a member of the bond issue steering committee he helped lobby for many improvements on Valdosta's southside.

"I have better reception about people calling me about their community and their particular problem," Williams said. "Whites are calling me more than blacks and asking me for assistance, and I appreciate that."

However, Williams said he was surprised at how much time being a city official took.

"I didn't realize I'd have to put this much time in and I realize that it's still working through the system," he said. "Things I thought could be taken care of overnight have not been, but I've been given good answers that they'll be taken care of in future."

"The most surprising thing is the support I'm getting from the white community about the job I'm doing and the support they're giving me," Williams said. "If you do what you think is best you won't have any problems then."

Councilman Willie Houseal says he thinks veteran city council members have been more than supportive of the new councilmen.

"I approached the council several times before I was fortunate enough to sit on the council," said Councilman Willie Houseal. "Judging it from the other side, it's much different that I expected...It's easier to convey ideas to council. Some they're real receptive to and some things they don't care about."

"As a representative of District One, I have to realize I have to take my priorities and set them aside and think about Valdosta as a whole," Houseal said. "That's one of the realities that's hit me."

"As a black person, I feel like we've made a more substantial contribution to our community," he said. "Now, it's obvious that we will be effective and that we will have an affect on council this entire year, on decision making, on proposals being recommended and at budget time."

Houseal said he thinks the preparation of the 1985-86 budget will be a key factor in determining the new councilmen's goals for the rest of their term.

"Some of those goals take money and we're now fast approaching that hour where we prove our point as council members, rather than just being there," Houseal said. "Also, as a team, we've enlightened the council on the needs that at one time had been long forgotten — the basics — such as taking care of potholes, street sweeping and drainage problems."

"I think budget time is going to be key factor here," Houseal said. "If for some reason the bond issue isn't passed we'll have to contend with a revenue sharing cut and we'll have to learn how to tighten our belts while giving the citizens the same services they've been receiving."



GMA Meeting At Crescent

The spring meeting of the Georgia Municipal Association, 8th District, was held this week at the Crescent in Valdosta. It was attended by city officials from across the district. Among those attending were City Councilman Willie Houseal, third from left in foreground, and City Councilman Bunnis Williams, second from left, shaking hands with another GMA member. — Times Staff Photo.

Valdostans Show For Bond Hearing

By Times Staff Writer

About 80 citizens attended a public hearing on Valdosta's \$7 million bond referendum held Sunday at the Pinevale-Lomax School.

The public hearing, similar to public hearing held in April at Mathis City Auditorium, gave city officials the chance to promote the bond issue again before it is voted on on next Tuesday.

Members of Valdosta City Council spoke briefly on the 10 projects covered by the bond referendum before the audience adjourned to an adjacent room to view exhibits set up by city departments.

"I know we've got opposition, but you'll have opposition on everything you do," Valdosta Mayor Ernest Nijem told the audience. "Let's get the show on the road... We can't do it ourselves, it going to take votes."

"We hope this will solve some of our problems that we've had for two or three decades," said Councilman Willie Houseal. "If the bond referendum is not passed

things will be like they are now for a good while longer."

After the meeting Councilman Joseph "Sonny" Vickers told *The Times*, "We were happy with the crowd, the turnout we had, and the positive response we had about it.

Vickers said that most of the audience were property owners and said, "There was talk that the black people were not getting a good deal out of it.

"People I talked to said they thought it was good and they would support it," he said. "They said they thought we were getting a good deal out of it."

Vickers said the average black property owner on Valdosta's southside would pay about \$17-20 more annually on their property taxes if the bond referendum passes.

"There's some skepticism as far as some thinking the once percent option sales tax would be better because everyone pays it," Vickers said. "But on a bond referendum renters pay that too, with an increase in rent."

The May 13 issue of *Jet magazine* will feature an article on Valdosta's February special election in which a total of six blacks were elected to posts on the Valdosta City Council and the Valdosta Board of Education, according to a city official.

Willie Houseal, one of three black members elected to the Valdosta City Council, said the editor of *Jet* contacted him with the idea for the story after having the Valdosta election brought to his attention by Houseal's relative.

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From Times Staff Reports
Election Attention

May 23
Area

6 The Valdosta Daily Times, Tue

May 23, 1985

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Price 50¢

Valdosta, Ga., Sun., May 27, 1984

Four Sections—48 P

Lowndes County Blacks Want More Representation

By CAS SHEARIN
Times Staff Writer

Lowndes County need more commission representation, local blacks contacted about implementation of a district electing county commissioners.

The method of electing county commissioners was an at-large method to a period, ending a seven-month-old against the commission by the Department.

argued the at-large method was impossible for a black to the commission because the county's population is comprise approximately 30 population.

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and has no vote, except in the event of a tie or to express unanimity with the commission.

Some of the people contacted are taking a wait-and-see stance on the issue, but all contacted agree on one point — the commission should have five members rather than four.

"What we really want is a five-man commission," said Willie Houseal of the Winnersville Coalition Consultants and a former candidate for Valdosta City Council. "The geography warrants a larger commission. It would also probably be better to have more than one minority on the commission."

The outcome of the new plan will be determined once the new commission goes into action, he said. "When you have one black on the commission, it appears to be a token situation, but we're hoping it doesn't occur that way. That is possible, but I hope it's unlikely; I hope it's not probable. I hope we're dealing with rational people."

Houseal is one person who is taking a wait-and-see stance on the issue.

"I think that's pretty good and is acceptable at this time. It appears to be a compromise. At this point the county wasn't under any local pressure," he said.

'We don't want to elect someone just because they are black. We want to elect someone who is interested in the future of Valdosta.... Valdostan Willie Houseal

However, local black organizations have put the squeeze on the Valdosta City Council. The city council and the Valdosta Board of Education are also defendants in the Justice Department suits, and a similar suit has been filed against the city council challenging basically the same things challenged in the Justice Department suit.

Lewis Gordon, vice-president of the local NAACP chapter, said it was only a matter of time before the county was also sued by his organization. "The NAACP was getting ready to file suit to get five on the commission. We might have to file a suit anyway, if they don't want to talk

about changing it to five."

Gordon said he also wasn't pleased with the timing of the settlement — just two days before qualifying for the August elections began. "It was real short notice, as if they didn't want anybody to qualify. They didn't say anything to anyone that they were making plans. We felt like they should have talked with us or given us an

invitation to sit in at a meeting and ask us what we think."

Houseal said the lack of local pressure on the commissioners is one reason the new plan needs to be accepted. "We have to accept this situation, because there wasn't any local pressure. We hope to see a viable candidate come from this district. We don't want to elect someone just because they are black. We want to elect someone who is interested in the future of Valdosta."

The plan "is a step in the right direction," but the fact that one black could be sitting on a board with three whites is not good, according to Sheila Joyner.

"We need at least one other county seat. Whenever you're talking about one person, you're talking about ultimate isolation. With two, you feel a little bit better," she said.

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"They thought it was a good story to run that the rest of the world needs to know about," Houseal said.

"It's the first time it's ever happened in the Southeastern section of the United States, electing six blacks at one time."

The election was part of court settlements between the U.S. Justice Department and the Valdosta City Council and Valdosta Board of Education.

The settlements stemmed from lawsuits, charging that the at-large method of electing city council and board of education members made it virtually impossible for blacks to be elected to them.

The settlements stipulated that members to each body be elected through a district system instead of the at-large system.

Valdostan Injured

Four Sections - 181

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Houseal said the lack of local pressure on the commissioners is one reason the new plan needs to be accepted. "We have

Lowndes County Blacks Want More Representation

By CASSHEARIN
Times Staff Writer

Blacks in Lowndes County need more county commission representation, according to local blacks contacted about the recent implementation of a district method of electing county commissioners.

Last week the method of electing Lowndes County commissioners was changed from an at-large method to a district method, ending a seven-month-old suit filed against the commission by the U.S. Justice Department.

The suit charged the at-large method made it virtually impossible for a black to be elected to the commission because the majority of the county's population is white. Blacks comprise approximately 30 percent of the population.

The settlement enlarged the commission from three members to four and created three districts, one of which is 66 percent black. A commissioner will be elected from each district. The commission chairman will be elected at-large

and has no vote, except in the event of a tie or to express unanimity with the commission.

Some of the people contacted are taking a wait-and-see stance on the issue, but all contacted agree on one point — the commission should have five members rather than four.

"What we really want is a five-man commission," said Willie Houseal of the Winnersville Coalition Consultants and a former candidate for Valdosta City Council. "The geography warrants a larger commission. It would also probably be better to have more than one minority on the commission."

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"We need at least one other county seat. Whenever you're talking about one person, you're talking about ultimate isolation. With two, you feel a little bit better," she said.

"I'm a little disappointed. I know they need to have a manageable number...I would like a larger board. Certainly not

more than six or seven, but that would have given a clue towards representation beyond one person," Ms. Joyner said.

The Rev. Willie Ross, who ran for mayor in 1980, agreed with Ms. Joyner. "Expanding from a three man commission to a four man commission didn't do any good as far as representation is concerned. If you have anyone representing the black population, they would automatically be voted down because there would be two votes against him already," he said.

Ross said he's not counting on the possibility that that will not happen. "With the experience that has been demonstrated in this county and the politics in this area, it's proven."

"We could avoid tokenism by having a wider spread on the county commission. We need more members than four. With that additional one man, it's just something to appease the people. It's not a very good political move for black representation in an area like Lowndes County," Ross said.

Drainage Projects Big Part Of Bond Issue

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following is the second article in a three-part series on the \$7 million bond referendum to be voted on May 28. Today's installment deals with drainage, paving and traffic signals.

By **RICHARD SELLERS**
Times Staff Writer

Drainage Projects throughout Valdosta will make up the second biggest portion of the \$7 million bond referendum.

City officials have proposed four types of drainage projects in the \$7 million bond issue if it is passed by city voters.

These include: (1) the development of drainage design standards; (2) the dredging of the five major drainage canals; (2) designing and building retention ponds along the drainage canals; and (4) isolated projects throughout the city to relieve minor flooding areas.

City officials say drainage design standards will be derived through collecting data on rainfall in Valdosta, hiring consultants to conduct rainfall studies, and gathering flood data over a period of time.

The five canals that will be dredged are: Duke's Bay Canal, east, south and west; White's Canal, from Corbett Street to Grodon Street; Brown's Canal, from Toombs Street to the GS & F Railroad; Bennett's Canal, from Hill Avenue to the GS & F spur at the old landfill; and One Mile Branch and Two Mile Branch.

The holding ponds will be located at McKey Park, Mary Street, One Mile Branch at Ashley, Barber Park, Dukes Bay Canal at Langdale Railroad Yard and Dukes Bay Canal at Oak Street.

Also included in the drainage projects — and one which city officials say will appeal to citizens — is construc-

Valdosta Bond Referendum

Part II

tion work proposed to eliminate the minor flooding and other drainage problems.

The following streets will receive work to eliminate flooding during periods of heavy rainfall:

Gordon Street at Lee Street/Gordon Street at Marion Street; Melrose Drive, Leone Avenue to Lakeland Avenue; Slater Street, Force to Ann; Cypress Street at Troupe Street; Oak Street at Two Mile Branch Culvert; 300 Block of East Alden Avenue; concrete channeling of Dukes Bay Canal, from Lake Park Road to Dampier; Sugar Creek at Magnolia Street; Lamar Street at White's Canal; Gornto Road at Georgia Avenue; Georgia Avenue at Patterson Street; Terrace Blvd. at Gornto Road; One Mile Brnch At Sustella Avenue; and One Mile Branch at Gordon Street.

Also included are: Castle Park Drainage System; Brown's Canal at Lamar Street; concrete channeling of Brown's Canal along Canal Street; Brown's Canal at Hightower Street; Toombs Street, from Central Avenue to Valley Street; channeling of Two Mile Branch west of Jerry Jones Drive; Smith Street at White's Canal; Gordon Street at White's Canal; Smith Street at Dukes Bay Canal; Smith Street at

Dukes Bay Canal; Dukes Bay Canal at Young's Lane; Dukes Bay Canal at Old Lake Park Road; Oxford Drive, from Moody Drive to Seymour Drive, and Charter Oaks drainage ditch.

"Some of the canal problems we'll permanently solve," said City Engineer Dave Moody. "Some are beyond maintenance. These haven't been maintained in a long time and you have to clean them out and rebuild them Then they'll be turned back over to public work for them to maintain."

Money also is earmarked for Valdosta paving assessment fund, which city officials say will receive \$700,000.

The project was increased by \$200,000 to have money available for future paving petitions. About \$400,000 will be used to pave the streets that have already had petitions submitted to the city.

There will be another \$150,000 in the paving fund that is being paid back from prior paving projects to add to the remaining \$300,000.

This \$450,000 is earmarked to encourage other petitions to be submitted.

The six streets that are currently on the city's paving assessment rolls are: Bunche Drive, from Lake Park Road to existing curb and gutter; Bethune Drive, from Lake Park Road to existing curb and gutter; JoRee Street, from Blanton Street to existing pavement; Bay Tree Drive, from Melody Lane to McArthur Street; Ledgeale Circle South, from Bemiss Road to Ledgeale Circle North; and Charlton Street, from Moore Street to Cranford Avenue.

Councilman Willie Houseal, who has advocated an extensive road-paving project, said he thinks the paving assessment projects in the bond issue will appeal to many Valdosta voters.

"Our paving assessment projects are

12 years behind," Houseal said. "We've still got unpaved streets in District One and all over the city that need priority.

"We've promised to pave streets and it hasn't happened," Houseal said. "There's no other way. The demand is now."

Traffic Signal Interconnect improvements also is scheduled to receive \$160,000 in bond money.

City officials plan to replace 30 traffic controller cabinets and rewire signal heads along Ashley and Patterson streets.

This, augmented with the one-way system along Ashley and Patterson streets, is expected to solve a lot of the city's traffic congestion, travel problems and to reduce accidents.

"We've got lot of outdated equipment," Moody said. "Technology come a long way with traffic equipment.

"There are no new intersections in this project," Moody said. "This is just to replace existing traffic signals at intersections to make the interconnect system work smoother.

"It'll make traffic flow easier and give us the capability to do things," Moody said. "We'll have better progression of traffic."

Money for other improvements within the city include: \$800,000 for relocating the Seaboard Coastline railroad tracks currently north of the James Beck Overpass; \$300,000 for intersection and road-widening projects; \$100,000 for sidewalks near schools and heavily-traveled pedestrian areas; \$250,000 for planning and topography maps for future city growth; \$100,000 for police department renovation and parking; \$2.5 million for parks, recreation and cemetery improvements; and \$150,000 for a fire station to be located in north Valdosta.

Managing Bonds Divides Council

By Times Staff Writer

Despite opposition by three city councilmen the Valdosta City Council voted 6-3 to sign a "letter of understanding" with a local brokerage firm to allow it to handle the city's \$7 million of bonds if the city's bond referendum is passed by voters on May 28.

Robinson Humphrey-American Express brokerage firm in Valdosta requested that city officials contract with the company to be financial advisor and managing underwriter of the bonds.

The money from the bonds will be used for a variety of improvements citywide, according to city officials.

However, Councilman Ashley Hill said he thinks City Council should take bids on the financial services rather than hiring a company before citizens vote on the bond issue.

Voting against the company's request was Hill and Councilmen Willie Houseal and Bunnis "B" Williams.

"If we sign it, we obligate ourselves to do business with Robinson Humphrey," Hill said. "There are a number of very high-qualified companies that would like to bid on the bonds."

"It looks to me like a business monopoly," said Councilman Houseal. "If they (Robinson Humphrey) are that well established I don't think they'll have a problem putting a bid up against other companies."

Councilman Jack May compared taking bids on the bonds like bidding services for "hiring an attorney. You get a low bid from someone you don't want. The contract states that if we're unhappy with the services we can terminate it."

Robinson-Humphrey managed the city's last two bonds. The city is not required by law to take bids on special services, said City Manager Mike Cason.

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Recreation Proposals Receive Mixed Reaction From Citizens

By RICHARD SELLERS

Times Staff Writer

Valdosta City Council members have mixed feelings on items proposed in the city's \$7 million bond referendum.

All members say they're for the bond issue as a whole and think it has a good chance of passing if voters inform themselves on the issues covered by bond referendum.

(Related Story Page 1-A)

This week City Council launched an extensive campaign for the bond referendum, which city voters are scheduled to vote on May 28.

If the bond issue is passed at the city election, the money will be spent to make improvements in a variety of city services, with the biggest portions earmarked for parks and recreation, at \$2.5 million, and for drainage improvements, at \$1.94 million.

However, several council members said citizens have been questioning them on why so much of the proposed money was allotted for recreation.

Councilman Ashley Hill summed up the feelings of at least three council members: "I expressed the same reservations as other taxpayers; we need to relocate the Seaboard Coastline tracks, we need intersection and road widening, more sidewalks, topography maps, paving and drainage improvements and fire and police protection.

"All citizens who have questioned me on the proposed bond referendum agreed to these needs, but they also questioned the need of \$2.5 million for recreation," Hill said.

"A recreation center and public pool at Scott Park near the Old Statenville Highway would be an asset, as would be a new gym and the baseball complex," Hill said. "The hesitation on the part of the voters and taxpayers is the long range maintenance expense of these facilities. New personnel will be needed, which includes instructors, lifeguards, counter and groundspeople and maintenance personnel.

"To help the bond referendum pass, we might need to take a look at voting on each individual item," Hill said. "This way, I feel you will get a better response from the voters and citizens as to what they feel are the needs of Valdosta."

But according to city officials, the chance for this is slim. City officials said City Attorney George Talley told them that if only one or two items on the bond referendum was passed, banks would be reluctant to loan such a small amount and if they did it would be at higher interest.

"You can see this doesn't take care of many items that are pressing, but it is a beginning," said Council member Bette Bechtel. "I don't know where the city would get \$7 million to do this. The improvements would have to be postponed for many years and they are needed now."

"What I like about concept of the bond referendum is if they want

'All citizens who have questioned me on the proposed bond referendum agreed to these needs, but they also questioned the need of \$2.5 million for recreation,'

Ashley Hill
Valdosta City Councilman

quality services they can vote on it," Councilman David Drumbheller said.

"I'm sure there are people for it and against it, and I think they should have the right to voice their opinion at the polls," he said.

Drumbheller said he thinks the \$2.5 million for recreation is "sometimes a hard pill to bite.

"The pros are, it's one of most successful programs the city has going," Drumbheller said. "When industry comes in they check on taxes, services and then check our educational system and recreational facilities.

"Granted, it is a hefty amount, but over long term it'll be one of the best things we've done as a community," Drumbheller said. "I'm supporting it because I know it's what industry looks for."

Drumbheller said the "cons" are that many people in Valdosta don't participate in organized recreational activities, especially softball, and can't see spending \$1 million on playing fields.

"In this package we have what we deem essential, essential needs," Drumbheller said. "If they want the city services they will (pass the bond issue). If not, we'll tighten our belts and do the best we can."

Other councilmen said they feel strongly that the bond issue has enough palatable items that it will be passed by voters in its entire form.

"I just wish we could do more," said Councilman Jack May. "There's more that we need money for but we tried to keep in the bounds of \$6½-7 million.

"I think what we have on the bond issue are important things we have to get done," he said. "I don't see anything the people won't support, because everything is needed....There are no frills there."

Councilman Sonny Vickers said he already has started working to drum up support for the bond issue in his district.

"I think the strongest point is that we haven't had a bond issue in 30 years and we need to work on paving, drainage and recreation," Vickers said. "The only way we can get money to do these things is to levy some kind of tax, because revenue sharing is going to be cut.

"There's no such thing as a free meal," Vickers said. "Someone's got to pay, and this way we have more control over what we can do with money...If we are going to make capital improvements we have to do it in form of a tax."

Bunnis "B" Williams said he also feels the public will accept the bond

issue because of the proposed drainage and paving improvements and recreational facilities.

"I think the number one thing is drainage problems, with paving and recreation following it," Williams said. "It was a lot of give and take behind closed doors, and all those articles are needed articles.

"There is something in the bond issue for every person in the city," he added.

Councilman Willie Houseal shared many of Williams' views but said paving and drainage improvements — not recreational facilities — are the city's most pressing need.

"Our paving assessment plan is 12 years behind," Houseal said.

"We have to be reminded that much of this came about on a national scale," he said. "The blame should be placed on national officials rather than local officials. We're trying to compensate for that which has caused a lot of economic hardships across the board for Americans. We should feel proud that we can do something for ourselves."

Jo Ann Hartman, a member of the bond issue steering committee, said she feels moving the railroad tracks, paving, drainage and fire and police departments are most important.

"With revenue sharing being cut it is a must that we get revenue from another source, so I feel our bond referendum is our main recourse," Mrs. Hartman said. "If Valdosta is to continue to grow...we must have the bond to provide these services.

Councilman I.H. "Bubber" Tillman, chairman of the bond issue steering committee, said he also felt revenue sharing spurred the decision for the bond referendum.

"The mood of the country is that revenue sharing is going out and we have to do what we can," Tillman said. "When we asked for priorities from department heads a tremendous list came in.

"We had to whittle it down to what the public can afford," he said. "No one item on the bond referendum is more important than the others."

Mayor Ernest Nijem said, "We've tried to cover every section of town we could cover and there are not any weak points in the bond issue.

"We've planned the bond issue for over a year and we've been working hard on it," Nijem said. "We just hope the people will approve it."

To Include Black Neighborhoods

Houseal Pushes For 2nd Historic District

By RICHARD SELLERS
Times Staff Writer

Valdosta will have a second historic district within a few months if the city's Preservation Commission follows through with a request by City Councilman Willie Houseal.

Houseal recently suggested the city's existing historic district be extended south to include several additional city blocks.

Specific sites Houseal said he wants included in the historic district are St. Paul AME Church, First Anitoch Baptist Church, Lomax Center, and particularly what is known as "gun-barrell" houses on Branch and Holiday Streets.

These houses, built about five feet apart, were the first to be built for blacks in Valdosta area and are more than 90 years old, Houseal said.

The proposed district boundaries would be a large block area, extending from Patterson Street south to Pullman Street, west to Griffin Avenue and north on Troup Street to Savannah Avenue.

The city presently has a historic district which has a southernmost boundary at Savannah Avenue.

Nancy Tinker, project coordinator of the historic district through the Valdosta-Lowndes Planning Commission, said the Preservation Com-

mission has expressed a desire to designate those areas in the black communities.

"What we discussed is setting up a second historic district, the reason being there is so few contiguous historic buildings between (the proposed) area and the historic district that already exists," Ms. Tinker said. "If a second district was designated, it would have the same protective measures as the other."

Ms. Tinker said in order for individual buildings to be designated as historic a request has to be made by an individual to the city council, which in turn presents it to the preservation commission.

The commission prepares a report and sends it to the state preservation commission in Atlanta. Property owners are notified of the proposed district, it is advertised, then a public hearing is called.

After the hearing City Council designates the area an historic district, she said.

Though local historic districts differ from sites that receive money from the National Register, there are some structures within the proposed district that would qualify for the National Register, Houseal said.

A local historic district simply protects the architecture from change and recognizes its historical and cultural

significance, Ms. Tinker said.

Though it was suggested that the area Houseal requested be included in the first historic district, the preservation commission is in the process of "redesignating" that district and to change it now would cause a two-month delay, Ms. Tinker said.

"We have our final reading on April 11 with mayor-council and we could begin the very next day working on second one," Ms. Tinker said.

Houseal said a committee will be formed to tour the proposed area to see if it is feasible to amend the boundaries.

"We haven't toured the other areas, though we'll probably find other sites as well," Houseal said.

"Being that the historical preservation program has taken so long I would not think of hindering its progress," Houseal said. "But I want to include historical aspects of the southern part of the town."

"There are some homes that could apply for the (National) Register, but I'm concerned about immediate environment also," he said.

Houseal said he expects the city officials and department heads to tour the proposed district in mid-April.

Valdosta's existing historic district encom-

passes about 135 blocks and some 2,000 properties. District boundaries extend from Park Avenue, south to Savannah Avenue, west

to Oak Street and east to Williams Street.

This includes the city's central business district and older neighborhoods

Lowndes Gives \$6,000 To Victim-Witness Group

By RICHARD SELLERS
Times Staff Writer

The Lowndes County Commissioners agreed to give the newly-formed Victim-Witness Assistance program \$6,000 at their meeting early today.

The \$6,000 will carry the program until the city and county government's 1985-86 budgets are complete in July.

District Attorney Lamar Cole has approached both the Valdosta City Council and Lowndes County Commission and asked that they help fund the program.

The purpose of the program is to provide help to victims and witnesses of violent felony crimes.

It is expected that if the program relies heavily on volunteer assistance it will hold the cost of the original budget of \$36,000 down to an estimated \$23,100.

Cole told the commissioners if the program is started, federal money is available for the victim-witness assistance programs. Cole said "several hundred thousand dollars" is scheduled to be spent in Georgia.

"We're only one of six programs in the state, but they don't (fund) it on speculation," Cole said. "They're going to give it to somebody who has an active, ongoing program."

blowing...I've extended the olive branch and I'm tired of drawing back a bloody nub."

"We're going back to the city council and we have some reason to believe they will advance a certain amount of start-up money," Cole said. "We hope for an annual grant, but will appreciate whatever help they may give us."

The commissioners' decision to fund the program came after Cole cut more than \$13,000 from the original proposed budget.

Included in the cuts were the hiring of a part-time employee and \$2,400 worth of fringe benefits.

Cole today said though he cut funds for a part-time employee he expects part-time help could be received through a program at Valdosta State College.

Cole said though he doesn't want to speculate on whether the Valdosta City Council will give any money, he feels there is a chance.

City Councilman Willie Houseal, who chairs a city committee to study funding the program, was present at the commission meeting and spoke in favor of the program.

Houseal told *The Times* Tuesday the council probably won't give any money to the project until at least the next fiscal year, which begins in July, but that in-kind help might be provided.

When asked by Commission Chairman Fred DeLoach his personal feelings on the proper balance between the city and county funding the program, Houseal said, "I believe we need that magic number of five (on the committee to agree)."

DeLoach, referring to city council-county commission relations, added, "New winds are

Until now the victim-witness assistance program has been sustained through contributions and donations.

Contributions to the program have amounted to about \$1,700, after a donation of \$200 Tuesday by the Valdosta Chapter of the Police Benevolence Society.

Council Takes 2nd Look At Sales Tax Idea

By RICHARD SELLERS
Times Staff Writer

Since Valdosta's \$7 million bond referendum was defeated last week, members of Valdosta City Council said they are willing to meet with Lowndes County commissioners to discuss a one percent sales tax for what they say are needed improvements.

The \$7 million bond referendum was overwhelmingly defeated by city voters Tuesday. The projects proposed in the bond referendum ranged from \$2.4 million for parks and recreation to \$1.94 million for drainage projects citywide.

City Council members Ashley Hill, Willie Houseal, Bette Bechtel and Joseph "Sonny" Vickers said they were willing to discuss a countywide one percent sales tax proposal with the

county commission.

"I feel the voters from all districts, both black and white, rich and poor, property owners and apartment tenants have sent a message to City Hall that you don't go hunting for elephants with a water pistol," Councilman Hill said. "Therefore, you don't propose a tax increase wherein you spend \$2.5 million for recreation and you allot only \$100,000 for police protection and \$150,000 for fire protection.

"The city of Valdosta has grown by 25 percent in the past 10 years and it might well be that its recreational facilities are two-thirds below the national average," he said. "But we still have the same number of police officers and fireman that we did 10 years ago.

"I think if we'd cut out \$2.5 million

the bond referendum would have passed," Hill said.

"All people ask that mayor-council provide police and fire protection, paving, drainage, good drinking water, sidewalks and other major improvements," he said. "Property owners — those who pay the taxes — are justified in asking for and receiving these services.

"We at City Hall need to sit down and open the lines of communication with our county commissioners," he said. "If a 1 percent sales tax increase is the answer to meet those priorities so vitally needed, by working together with commissioners — and most importantly the taxpayers — then those goals can be reached.

"I'd be happy to meet with the commissioners any time," Hill said.

"Hopefully it'll be soon, because we need to talk about it.

"As I understand it, the one percent sales tax will self destruct within four to five years," he said. "I think this could be sold to the public better than the bond referendum because property taxes will not increase.

"I'm not saying we would cut back on services, but it's very possible in areas such as Parks and Recreation, for example," Hill said. "Also, it may be we aren't going to be able to continue some street improvements."

Councilman Willie Houseal said he thinks the bond referendum failed for two reasons: that property owners felt it was unfair to burden them with a tax increase, and also that the \$2.5 million earmarked for recreation was not needed. Houseal also said he is willing

to meet with Lowndes County Commissioners to talk about a one percent sales tax.

"I don't know when it's going to come about, but I know it's going to happen," Houseal said. "Judging from the consensus I've received, most people felt that it would be a better way to generate funds.

"I might say those who are conscious of taxes are anticipating a tax increase, therefore many citizens will be receptive to a one percent sales tax," he said.

"There was no way City Council would back up plans for a bond referendum because of a one percent sales tax that just came about five months ago," Houseal said. "Realis-

See SALES TAX, Page 2A

...Sales Tax

Continued From Page 1A

tically, I didn't feel very good about it all the way through. I had too many negative feelings about the money for recreation and the 18 years of taxing."

City Council Member Bette Bechtel echoed Houseal's statements about why the bond referendum failed.

"The people also felt that it should be for projects that did not have ongoing expenses," Ms. Bechtel said. "I'd like to have seen a line item voting and have set a minimum of \$3½ million voted on...With the line item ballot at least we could've had a feeling from the voters as to what they thought was important.

"What all of the incorporated areas in Lowndes needs to do is sit down with the commissioners and say 'This is what we need to do and this is how much money we need to do it,'" she said.

"We've got to have sanitation; water and sewer; police and fire protection; roads and paving; street lights; and drainage. And that to me is essential," she said.

"People think I'm 'anti-recreation,' but that to me is not as essential as it is with other council members," she said. "We have a YMCA, a Boys and Girls club, high schools and junior high schools with organized sports.

"We should provide fields and parks, but it is questionable in my mind whether we need to organize those sports," she said. "I would look at that area very, very carefully if things needed to be cut."

However, although several City Council members seem more than willing to discuss the formation of a one percent sales tax with the Lowndes County Commission, one county official said the meeting won't occur any

time soon.

"We've adopted a wait and see attitude," said County Commission Chairman Fred Deloach. "Because we think the bill as drawn by the legislators is ambiguous.

"We don't think it's possible to get together on needs of the city and county as they are," Deloach said. "We also need to take into consideration the mood of people at this time."

Deloach said that with the recent defeat of the \$7 million bond referendum and a new federal tax structure proposal, "we don't really know the pulse of the public."

Deloach added that if a sales tax referendum was drawn up it "would have to be highly selective, or badly-needed type things.

"The first thing we need to do is get the law straightened up before we do

anything," he said. "We don't know if we can only do one project at a time or three projects at a time...If you put in roads there's some doubt whether you can but in an office building at the same time.

"It's a needed law but it was done hastily," Deloach said. "If we adopted it we're not anxious to get into a lawsuit with anybody as to the objectives of the state legislature."

Deloach said state legislators are aware of the problems with the law and are expected to introduce legislation in January to correct it.

As the law is now written, the sales tax would only be imposed for as long as it is needed to pay for capital improvements projects.

"It blows slap-dab up when its paid out," Deloach said.

'Helping The Relationship'

Councilmen Return From State GMA Convention

By RICHARD SELLERS
Times Staff Writer

Seven city officials returned from a three-day Georgia Municipal Association state convention Wednesday afternoon and one councilman summed up the trip as "helping the relationship" of the Valdosta City Council.

"Every council member or commissioner should have been there," said Councilman Willie Houseal. "For those who went, we were able to communicate and have good fellowship."

"We got a chance to express ourselves without being under pressure and without having our guards up," Houseal said. "We're not brothers and sisters now, but it was a learning process for all of us."

"We hadn't socialized that much off the council before," he said. "But it's more of a warm feeling among us...It did us some good."

"It was our first trip, it was exciting and helped us with the direction new council members should take with new city council," he said.

Attending the GMA convention held in Savannah were Council members Jack May, Bette Bechtel, Willie Houseal, Joseph "Sonny" Vickers, Bunnis "B" Williams, Mayor Ernest Nijem and City Finance Director Richard Hamlen.

During the council members stay GMA delegates voted to allow counties join the all-city group, saying the time has come for cities and counties to work together and possibly even

consolidate.

The group also agreed to form a joint committee with the Georgia Association of County Commissioners in an effort to prepare "for the governmental challenges posed by the next century."

During the convention the GMA also came out in favor of consolidation of local governments too small to provide effective services, by combining currently independent city and county governments or possibly even combining small counties which separately cannot meet the needs of their constituents.

GMA Executive director James Burgess said to offer taxpayers the most efficient use of their money, cities and counties must consolidate

services, citing Georgia's 715 local governments and questioning whether they are all necessary or beneficial to the communities they represent.

However, Councilman Houseal said the city councilmen "shied away" from the topic of city-county consolidation.

"They didn't talk about that too much," Houseal said.

City and county government officials here formed a committee to study city-county consolidation in January, 1984 but apparently dropped the idea because state representatives were reluctant to go through with the plan.

About 800 representatives of municipalities from across Georgia met in Savannah for the group's 52nd convention.

day, January 15, 1986

25 Cents



King Drive Dedicated

The Martin Luther King Jr. Drive was officially renamed this morning with Mayor Ernest Nijem, councilmen Sonny Vickers, Bunnis Williams and Willie Houseal participating. The street is the former Branch Street here. Other activities

were slated throughout the area in recognition of the slain civil rights leader's birthday today. — Times Staff Photo by Bob Lupinek

Reading Association Takes Its Case To Mall

By Times Staff Writer

Reading will be in the spotlight at the Valdosta Mall Saturday.

The South Central Council of the International Reading Association is sponsoring a series of activities that will begin at 11 a. m. with a puppet show.

There will also be storytelling sessions as well as interpretations of "Superman" and "Amelia Bedelia".

At 2 p.m. Morven Mayor Jerry Coffee will make an appearance as Willy Walker the Clown and at 2:30 p.m. the Reading Is Fundamental program will distribute books.

Reading Program Set For Summer

By Times Staff Writer

Students who have fallen behind in their reading skills will get a chance to catch up during a summer remedial reading program that gets into full swing June 17.

The program is sponsored and operated by the Retired Senior Volunteer Program, RSVP director Bobbie Lester said.

The plan calls for six weeks of tutoring for a one hour session five days each week. The program will end July 26, Ms. Lester said. Each volunteer will work with no more than three students at a time.

Tutors will be RSVP workers, who volunteer their time helping in community projects.

RSVP is handled by the Coastal Plains Area Economic Opportunity Authority. Volunteers who work in Lowndes County, have for the most part been kept busy with the RSVP Study Site at Lomax Community Service Center, which opened March 25, Ms. Lester said.

The study site had an average daily attendance of 25 from W. G. Nunn Elementary School, South East Elementary and Pinevale-Lomax.

Donna Croll, associate professor in Early Childhood and Elementary Education of the Education Department at Valdosta State College, donated one hour each week to the program.

Ms. Lester said Valdosta Junior Service League representatives are working on plans to help on a regular basis in the fall.

Although the study site closed down for the summer Thursday, volunteers will be busy tutoring by June 17.

But the Thursday event, marking the summer closing, wasn't a day without its rewards, Ms. Lester said.

Volunteers gave each student a book from the Reading Is Fun program.

Ms. Lester said the program was successful this year, but more volunteers are needed.

Anyone 60 years or older, Ms. Lester said, can join the volunteers.



BROWNCO

James A. Cody, Executive Director

"ARRIVE ALIVE" CONFERENCE

Larry was one of two high school juniors selected from Lowndes High School to attend the recent Arrive Alive Conference in Atlanta. Larry was one of 2,000 teens statewide to attend the conference. It was a weekend workshop used to increase awareness of the dangers of drinking and driving which is the leading cause of death among high school students.

The workshop was sponsored by Arrive Alive, Inc. which is a panel of statewide business leaders, community leaders, law enforcement officials, and other concerned citizens. The workshop was Georgia's first effort to bring high school students together for a state conference on drinking and driving.

The students had adult representatives accompany them. During the conference there were films and discussions on the dangers of drunk driving, the importance of wearing seat belts and the benefits of chemical-free parties. Law enforcement officials, psychologists, community workers, and other teens addressed student concerns and counselors advised participants on how to establish "Arrive Alive" programs in their own communities. We at the Ranch congratulate Larry on being chosen to attend the conference. We know that Larry will share his experiences with teens in our community and here

TITLE ONE TEACHER GIVES MORE THAN TIME TO BOYS

We are lucky here at the ranch to have a Title One Teacher for the boys who puts forth more than 100% effort to help them in their school work. Willie Houséal has helped the boys in many ways. This is clearly shown in their improvement in their grades and study habits since his arrival at the ranch.

Willie has come up with many new and good ideas to continually motivate the boys to achieve more in school. Willie has even managed to get the school system to lend computers and other aids that make learning more enjoyable for the boys. The staff at the ranch is very appreciative of Willie for helping us to be able to do our jobs better. We hope Willie will continue to be with us here at the ranch for a long time to come.

Bill and Roxanne Hare, Editors



Willie showing Scott how to use the computer.

Willie & Mother
1800422-5060



THE BRONCO

James A. Cody, Executive Director

Bill and Roxanne Hare, Editors

TEEN SELECTED TO ATTEND "ARRIVE ALIVE" CONFERENCE

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Willie showing Scott how to use the computer.

Scott working at the computer.



Willie is always "there" for the boys.

Memorial Gifts

The Memorial Fund donations for this listing were received by the Georgia Sheriffs Youth Fund between January 1 and January 31, 1984.

Contributions to the Georgia Sheriffs Memorial Fund are listed in alphabetical order by name of the deceased. Donors are listed after the name in whose memory they contributed. All monies contributed to the Memorial Fund are used for only two purposes:

1. For the higher education of our seniors; this may be either college or vocational school.
2. For capital improvements that will remain to serve many needy children for years to come.

Using the Memorial Fund is a private, non-competitive way of remembering someone special.

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RANCHERS RECEIVE AWARDS

Once again two of our ranchers have received awards from the Hahira United Methodist Church. Adam and Randy participated in a contest over a two month period. The awards were given to Sunday school students who brought their bible most often. Adam won first place and Randy won second place. They were both given a trophy for their efforts. This also happens to be the second straight time that Adam has won the first prize.

Hats off once again to these two boys for a job well done.



Randy and Adam receive Sunday school trophies.

HIGHEST ACADEMIC ACHIEVERS HONORED

Two boys were recently given awards as the highest academic achievers on the Ranch. At the end of each six weeks period, the Title One Teacher at the ranch and the rest of the staff give awards to the boys with the highest grade point average. Bill and David both had the same average so they were both given an award. The staff at the ranch is very proud of Bill and David in their accomplishments. Congratulations Bill and David. Keep up the good work!



Bill and David are "Really into school"!

City Council May Help Fund Victim-Witness

By RICHARD SELLERS
Times Staff Writer

The Valdosta City Council still might provide some money to the Valdosta-Lowndes Victim-Witness Assistance Program, according to City Councilman Willie Houseal.

Houseal, chairman of a city committee to study funding the program, said the it met Monday night and added, "it looks favorable.

"I'm trying to iron out the details, but we plan to do something," Houseal said. "However, all we can do is make a recommendation.

"We're having a time trying to convince (other councilmen) that the money (involved) is not the most important thing," he said.

Houseal earlier said the council probably won't give any money until at least the next fiscal year but added that in-kind help might be provided.

Last week the Lowndes County Commissioners agreed to give the program \$6,000 to begin. District Attorney Lamar Cole said the money will sustain the program until city and county governments adopt their next budgets in July.

The commissioners also have donated in-kind help and office space, Cole said.

The Victim-Witness Assistance program, designed to help to victims and witnesses of violent felony crimes, hopefully will increase the participation and effectiveness of witnesses in the prosecution of criminals.

Houseal said he expects the matter to be discussed at a city council work session in two weeks and to be voted on at an April 11 council meeting.



WILLIE HOUSEAL
Pushing For Funding

"Basically we trying to help them get started," Houseal said.

An advocate of the program, Houseal said that after the assistance program gets started he hopes it can be continued through federal funding.

"The money is available, you just have to apply for it," Houseal said.

It is expected that if the program relies heavily on volunteer assistance it will hold down the cost of the first year's original budget to an estimated \$23,100, of which \$16,000 would be for one full-time director.

Before the commissioners decided to fund it the program was being run on contributions and donations.

Council Puts Victims On Hold

No City Money Allowed Yet For Lowndes Crime Program

By RICHARD SELLERS
Times Staff Writer

Lowndes County District Attorney Lamar Cole is having a hard time drumming up city government support for the Victims-Witness Assistance Program.

Cole appealed to Valdosta City Council Thursday to help fund part of an estimated \$36,150 annual budget for the program.

City Councilman Willie Houseal withdrew his motion to fund the program and the council then voted to form a study committee to see if money could be allocated in the 1985-86 city budget.

Related stories on Page 5

The newly-formed assistance program is designed to help victims and witnesses who are unfamiliar with criminal trial

procedures.

Cole, who earlier had approached the Lowndes County Commission about helping pay for the expenses of the program, said the commissioners agreed to help with in-kind contributions such as office space in the courthouse, a telephone and some office furniture.

The commissioners told the program organizers to approach the city council to see if it would "chip in" some money for the program, Cole said.

Cole said the program should have a full-time and a part-time director whose combined salaries would be \$24,000 a year, in addition to \$7,200 for other expenses.

Several Council members said they think the county should pay for the expenses.

"Lowndes County encom-

passes Valdosta and the county ought to pay the tab," said Councilman I. H. "Bubber" Tillman. "This is a classic example of double taxation."

Council Member Bette Bechtel echoed Tillman's statements.

"I'm not saying I'm against the concept and I wouldn't mind saying we'd have X amount of money to send people to workshops, but I think it should be funded by the county as an ongoing project," Ms. Bechtel said.

When Cole pointed out that most of the victims are from the city and not the county, Tillman said, "Most of the taxes come from the city."

Councilmen Houseal and Joseph "Sonny" Vickers spoke up and said they would like to fund part of the program in next year's city budget.

"It's a small amount of

money for a needed cause," Houseal said.

"It's a community problem," Vickers said. "The city should stop saying 'We' and 'Them' and try to work out their problems."

At that time Houseal made a motion to fund the program in the city budget and meanwhile for the city to provide in-kind contributions. Houseal's motion was seconded by Vickers and the matter went up for discussion by Council.

Council Member Jo Ann Hartman, with Houseal's permission, then made a motion to table the issue and to form a committee to study it and report its recommendation at the Council's next work session.

Houseal's motion was withdrawn. Mrs. Hartman's motion was seconded by Councilman Ashley Hill and

voted on. Houseal voted against tabling the request.

Explaining his reason for seconding Mrs. Hartman's motion, Hill said, "We've exhausted our contingency funds. With the budget coming up, the program could be included, but right now we don't have the money."

After the meeting, Houseal told *The Times*, "From what I understand, we didn't have a whole lot of support. I think Ms. Hartman tabled it to get stronger support."

Houseal said he "reluctantly" gave his permission to withdraw his motion.

"The support wasn't there and it would have been voted down," Houseal said, adding that he will introduce the issue again at the next Council meeting.

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Council To Hold Off On Victim-Witness Money

By RICHARD SELLERS
Times Staff Writer

A city committee to study financing a Victim-Witness Assistance program will recommend Thursday that Valdosta City Council not provide any money to the program until at least July, according to Councilman Willie Houseal.

However, Houseal, chairman of the study committee, said he hopes the money the city will earmark for the program will be more than expected earlier.

"What we're saying is, from our findings it's not economically feasible to support the program now," Houseal said.

The Victim-Witness Assistance Program is designed to provide help to victims and witnesses of violent felony crimes.

The Lowndes County Commission recently agreed to give the Victim-Witness Assistance program \$6,000, which is expected to carry the program until the city and county government's 1985-86 budgets are complete in July.

Houseal added that "rumors were going around" that he city and county do not support programs jointly and that the committee will recommend giving money as an act of good faith.

"They have a blemished image as far as working together is concerned," Houseal said. "But in this case the city decided to consider

making a contribution because of this type of image we're trying to shed.

"Many committee members thought it would be a goodwill gesture more than anything else," Houseal said.

In a committee report Houseal recommended that City Council earmark money on a one-time basis in the city's 1985-86 budget to help the program with travel and education expenses.

"In the first committee session we proposed a certain amount of money (\$3,000) to aid workshops, travel, etc. but we found that the city's contingency fund — a general revenue fund — is exhausted," Houseal said. "The county fund is much more healthy than the city's, therefore,

all we could do is recommend that the budget committee fund an expense account (next year).

"It's better than coming away with nothing, besides, we may be awarded more funds than we'd planned," he said.

"It'll be much better than we proposed in the beginning, because we won't have the stress on the contingency fund," Houseal said.

Houseal said the committee has not discussed providing in-kind help to the program.

"The committee is leaning toward one-time financial support," he said. "By that time, it should be sufficiently on its feet by grant money awarded by the state."

Bechtel Surprises City Council

By Times Staff Writer

Members of Valdosta City Council were apparently surprised Wednesday night by one city council member's proposal to cut the council's \$500-a-month salaries and to give the money to an outside program.

During a 1985-86 budget work session, Council Member Bette Bechtel suggested City Council should decrease their salaries in order to give \$3,295 to the Victim-Witness Assistance program located at the Lowndes County Courthouse.

Related Story Page 3

The newly-formed assistance program is designed to help victims and witnesses who are unfamiliar with criminal trial procedures.

"Why don't we just decrease our own salaries," Ms. Bechtel said.

After a moment of silence several councilmen questioned the benefit the city is receiving from the

program.

Councilman I.H. "Bubber" Tillman contended the program does benefit Valdosta police officers who get valuable training from it.

Ms. Bechtel's proposal came after Councilman Willie Houseal, chairman of a committee to study the assistance program, made a plea for City Council to earmark money for it.

Houseal said the group had requested \$3,295 and he recommended setting aside the money in the city's new budget for that amount.

Houseal said the one-time funding would be a "good will proposal" to the group and said it would help city-county government relations.

Before Houseal's request, City Council had spent two hours cutting more than \$400,000 from the proposed new budget in order to balance it.

City Manager Mike Cason said he would take the money from a capital improvements account instead.

7/27/85
RIF Gets Home

The Reading Is Fundamental program has a year-round home in Valdosta now.

Valdosta City Councilman Willie Houseal said the books given away in the program will be distributed at the Hudson Docket Community Center.

Houseal said the center will also be developed into a library and study center, providing tutoring services for children.

He said the South Georgia Regional Library has offered to help supply some of the books and once the repairs on the building are complete and liability insurance has been purchased, the center will be open for business.

Houseal said it should be open before school starts this year.

'Spot Zoning' Protest Going Before Council

By ERNIE ROGERS
Times Staff Writer

Actions and protests against spot zoning in Valdosta by neighborhood groups are focusing on zoning that would allow multi-family dwellings to be built in areas that have been traditionally single family home neighborhoods.

One effort, being led by home owners on Georgia Avenue, is against the rezoning of land at 505 Georgia Ave. from R-15, single (detached) dwellings to PRD-15, (planned residential development) which would allow the construction of multi-family dwellings.

According to the Valdosta zoning ordinance, as many as five units per acre can be built on land zoned PRD-15.

M.L. Strong, a member of the planning commission and owner of a home adjacent to the land proposed for rezoning, said the rezoning request would allow construction of buildings "not in keeping with the neighborhood."

"We (people in the neighborhood) are all opposed to this kind of construction here," Strong said. And, we are opposed to spot zoning throughout the city. There is too much spot zoning. It should be eliminated."

Strong added that the home owners have some 200 to 250 names on a petition against the approval of the rezoning in their area. He also said that a "sizeable crowd" would be at the city council meeting tonight to speak against the proposal.

"Sometimes petitions don't get much attention," Strong said. "But, numbers count with politicians."

One effort to stop multi-family construction in single family housing neighborhoods is taking another approach. The first of its kind under the new zoning ordinance.

A recommendation has been made by Ken Garren, director of the planning commission, to change the zoning of the entire area of Woodgate Subdivision and Lincoln Park from R-6, which allows single and multi-family dwellings, to R-6S, a more restrictive designation allowing only single family construction.

"We see this as more or less a trial of the new ordinance," said City Councilman Willie Houseal. "This being the first attempt under the new ordinance, we think it will serve as a model for other areas with un-

developed property. They will look at it and consider having it done for their neighborhoods."

The request for the area rezoning will be brought before council Nov. 7.

Spelling Fair Thanks

The first annual Reading and Spelling Fair, sponsored by the Kappa Tau Lambda Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Incorporated; the Valdosta Alumni Chapter of Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, Incorporated; Winnersville Coalition Consultats; the Retired Seniors Volunteer Program; WVGA-TV-44; and WGOV-95 radio; was held on Saturday, July 13, at the Lomax Community Center.

The purpose of the event was to promote and encourage more youngsters to see the importance of perfecting the much-needed reading and spelling skills.

Special thanks go out to: Colonel F.J. Smircina, Dr. Arthur Hart, Henry Everson, Sandro Blalock, Willie Jones, Tony Daniels, Councilman Willie Houseal, Iras Dubard, David Shedd, Reuben Jenkins, David Troy, Bobbie Lester, Grady Whitfield, Laura Love, Rhonda Power, Danny Davis of Holiday Skate Palace, Mary Zorgias of Ashley Cinema Theaters, the parents and the contestants for their corporation in making this first annual Reading and Spelling Fair a rousing success.

Donald Williams
School Board Member
District 3

City Sign Moratorium 2nd Extension Mulled

By GARY SOBERAY
Times Staff Writer

The 60-day sign moratorium could be extended another 60 days if Valdosta City Council approves the move Thursday night.

City manager Mike Cason said a committee has been set up to draft a new ordinance regulating signs more rigorously.

Although the committee members have been chosen, Cason said the committee has not yet met.

The moratorium, originally imposed on June 20, stopped the construction of all new off-premises signs and billboards.

The additional 60 days to look into the matter was made when citizens expressed an interest in the new ordinance.

"Some of the public made some objections . . . they wanted some input

into it (the ordinance)," Cason said.

He said the committee includes council members Bette Bechtel, Ashley Hill and Willie Houseal, Planning Commission director Ken Garren and city inspector Ralph Noles.

Mayor Ernie Nijem suggested a new ordinance as a move to make the city more attractive.

The committee has several ordinances from other cities to help in modeling a new ordinance, Cason said.

However, Cason said legalities will have to be studied carefully because some of the ordinances may not have been tested in court forums.

For example, he said, the ordinance may leave some existing signs in place but will keep other signs from going up.

He said he hopes the 60 additional days that will be used to draft the new ordinance will be long enough.

Historic Register Listing Sought

The Valdosta Daily Times, Wed., Aug. 28, 1985 7

For 14 Valdosta Black Churches

By GARY SOBERAY
Times Staff Writer

Valdosta planners are looking into getting 14 black churches on the national historic register.

City Councilman Willie Houseal said he has met with historical preservationist Nancy Tinker of the Area Planning Development Commission and the first steps have been taken to getting the churches registered.

Houseal said he had toyed with the idea of a black historic district, but most of the buildings dot Valdosta, rather than being concentrated in one area.

This way, old buildings of historic

theme and a common history," she said. "Architectural and historical integrity" will be the measuring stick to see if the churches are eligible for the program.

Ms. Tinker said she will work for the next week on taking photographs and filing the necessary paperwork with the state office in Atlanta.

Once the state office reviews the files, officials will make a decision as to which would be best suited for the national historic register.

Then, Ms. Tinker said she expects to work on a research project and write histories for the buildings. Once the state office reviews those records, officials will submit it to the Historic Preservation Section of the Department of Natural Resources.

While the status of having a building on the national register won't aid in funding for preservation projects, it will protect buildings from federal programs such as road widenings, Ms. Tinker said.

value to black culture will be protected by the same laws which would protect an historic district, he said.

"They need to be preserved, that's the bottom line," Houseal said. "There's not a lot of (historical preservation) contributions made by blacks, I'm constantly looking for things."

Ms. Tinker said while she'll apply at the state level to see if all 14 churches could be selected for the national register, she said she expects at least 10 to be eligible.

The 14 churches are:

— St. Paul AME Church, 419 S. Ashley St.

— Antioch Baptist Church, 517 N. Oak St.

— St. Timothy AME Church, 1219 W. Hill Ave.

— West Adair Church of Christ, 519 W. Adair St.

— St. John AME, 800 W. Magnolia St.

— Morning Star Baptist Church, 761 S. Troup St.

— Greater Pleasant Temple Baptist Church, 309 Cherry St.

— Friendship Freewill Baptist Church, 110 West St.

— St. Peter AME Church, 901 Charlton St.

— Mount Calvary Baptist Church, 500 E. Force St.

— Bethel CME, 702 Johnson St.

— Tabernacle COGIC, Lake Park Road and East Branch St.

— Macedonia Baptist Church, 715 Jackson St.

— River Hill Baptist Church, on James Road.

Ms. Tinker said while the churches are not clustered together in one area, they will have a thematic bond.

"The buildings carry a common

Council Roundup

Annexation Argued By Officials

By GARY SOBERAY
Times Staff Writer

That was the question that led one Valdosta City councilman to argue against annexation Thursday night at City Hall, before council passed a motion to let a property owner go back to the planning commission.

Councilman Willie Houseal said he felt the city's boundaries had extended far enough and city hall had plenty of problems to deal with before annexing any more property to the city.

When Ric Rowan, of Rowan Homes, Inc., reapplied for annexation and rezoning of 3.67 acres of land on North Forrest Street next to Dosta Heights Subdivision, Houseal gave his views.

He said not only did the city have its drainage problems to solve before annexing any more land, he said he feared annexation would also dilute the black vote in Valdosta.

"Dilution will take place," Houseal said. Councilman Joseph "Sonny" Vickers said he didn't agree with Houseal that the annexation would dilute votes because the people who would move to the proposed single-family housing would come from the city anyway.

Houseal was joined by Bunnis "B" Williams in voting against the motion, but because two-thirds of council voted for the motion, Rowan will take his plans back to the planning commission.

Rowan had come before council and asked for annexation earlier this year, but neighborhood protests moved council vote it down.

The main reason for the protests was home owners didn't want multi-family housing, such as apartment buildings, near their homes.

Now, with a different type of zoning, Rowan said he could put single-family, detached homes on the land. Council members said they felt Rowan had a good idea for the area and recommended the planning commission take a fresh look at the land.

Council precedent does not allow anyone to reapply for rezoning or annexation for a one-year period, unless a person can receive a two-thirds majority vote from council.

In other action, council:

— voted to accept the best bids for two garbage trucks and one towing truck.

— voted for a change order for the extension of a 12-inch water main on Bemiss Road. The change order will cost the city \$12,280.

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History Unites Black Churches

National Register Listing Sought

Research is under way on Valdosta's Black churches that may lead to 14 of the churches being nominated for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places.

The proposal, first suggested by Valdosta City Councilman Willie Houseal, has already been submitted to and approved by the Historic Preservation Section of the Department of Natural Resources.

"We are working with the congregations of the churches on research," said Nancy Tinker, coordinator of the project through the South Georgia Area Planning and Development Commission. "The research includes title searches to determine who owned the land before the church was built on it."

Past members of a church, who may have had an impact on Valdosta history, are also researched. These members and the impact they had are a factor in the nomination of the church.

"How the church and its members fit into the context of Valdosta history is a factor," Ms. Tinker said. "It's time these buildings got there due."

Ms. Tinker added that the project is "involved as much with history as with the buildings."

The preparation for the nomination process began about six weeks ago. All of the churches will be nominated as a group. They will be either accepted or denied by the Keeper of the National Register in Washington, D.C.

"The process, from research until acceptance, should take about a year," Ms. Tinker said.

The churches under consideration for the project are:

- St. Paul's AME.
- Atioch Baptist.
- Riverhill Baptist.
- St. Timothy AME.
- West Adair Street Church of Christ.
- St. Johns AME.
- Morning Star Baptist.
- Greater Pleasant Temple Baptist.
- Friendship Freewill Baptist.
- St. Peter's AME.
- Mount Calvary Baptist.
- Tabernacle
- Bethel CME.
- Macedonia Baptist.

City Officers Targeted In Alleged Misconduct

By ERNIE ROGERS
Times Staff Writer

Two Valdosta Police officers have received written reprimands following an incident of some three weeks ago.

A letter alleging police misconduct in that incident was read at the Valdosta City Council meeting Thursday night.

The letter from Bro. Zebedee Moore of the River Street Church of Christ referred to "misconduct of white policemen when making arrests in black neighborhoods" and specified details of an incident on Bethune Street several weeks ago.

City Councilman Willie Houseal read the letter to council.

Houseal said the incident related in the letter involved a shotgun being discharged by a sheriff's deputy and revolvers discharged by Valdosta police officers.



HOUSEAL

CASON

"From what I understand the man the police were after (William Moore) had his hands in the air when the shots were fired," Houseal said.

Houseal said the suspect

apprehended in the incident turned out to be the wrong man. But by the time the officers got him to the police station, the suspect was charged with resisting arrest.

Little said he had turned a report of the investigation into the city manager's office Friday.

City Manager Mike Cason said the two officers, Staff Sgt. Allen Cato and Detective Raymond Conner, received the reprimands following an investigation. He said complaints from citizens had said that the suspect was "pulled by his hair" during the arrest.

Lowndes County Sheriff Robert Carter said he has not reprimanded his deputy, Lieutenant David Arnold, who was involved in the incident.

"He was trying to help. He thought he was doing the right thing. I am taking actions to see it doesn't happen

again."

Officers Cato and Conner are said to have fired one warning shot each during a chase of the suspect.

"Moore ran after he was arrested. While Det. Conner was taking the suspect to the police car, Moore turned and ran," Cason said. "He ran into the Hudson Docket housing project, jumped a fence at Bethune Street. The officers told him to stop and he didn't."

"From what I understand from people in the black community this (misconduct) has been an ongoing situation. This is not the first time. If there is misconduct, I want to see it stopped.

"I believe there is a lot of pressure on the police department because of all the robberies. The officers are probably a little jumpy with suspects."

Moore's letter was read by Houseal

at the meeting after Moore was unable attend. In the letter Moore said, "We expect them (police officers) to carry out their duties with the utmost respect for all people in every community."

Little said he hopes the situation is corrected and that "it doesn't happen again."

The investigation indicates four shots were fired during the arrest of Moore. Two shots were fired by the sheriff's deputy and two by the police officers.

"If the guy hadn't run, none of this would have happened," Cason said.

"I'm not trying to protect criminals," Houseal said. "I just think extra precautions are necessary when guns are used in a neighborhood. I'm glad the investigation took place and that city officials are responding to the citizens."

Reader Responds To Police Support

In response to several articles that appeared in the *Valdosta Daily Times* (Oct. 27, 1985), namely: "Officers Here Need Support" and "Cop Reprimand Unfair" the following is said.

In reading, "Officers Here Need Support" it is clear the article was written in a bias manner. And while the facts appear to be known, they are asked to be ignored.

The wife of a police officer has asked us to conclude that the victim of an irresponsible shooting by officers of the Valdosta Police Department must have been guilty of "something" or he would not have fled when the officers identified themselves. Deriving the conclusion that a person must be guilty of something because they flee from the police escapes my comprehension and places logic back to the cave-man era. Deriving such an illogical conclusion carries with it the connotation "he was black; the robber was black; he must be the robber."

The article appeared to lose the fact that the police officers were firing at the wrong man. In view of this essential fact, any action taken by the police officers was totally wrong. The alleged suspect was an innocent human being, who probably ran due to police-phobia. Acting in "good faith" is no excuse for violating a person's human rights.

The article, "Cop Reprimand Unfair" contained some

unfortunate and incorrect language which stated "a police officer has the right to use as much force as he deems necessary in arresting someone, as long as the force is reasonable." Such laws have been struck down in federal court throughout the land. The Courts found that you can't leave a lunatic or madman with the full power of what he may deem as necessary force in arresting someone. I suggest that you read: "When Does Police Officer's Force During Arrest Become So Excessive As To Constitute a Violation of Constitutional Rights, Imposing Liability Under Federal Civil Rights Act."

As to the reprimand; City Council should investigate all activities of the Valdosta Police Department. A "hands-off" policy which would prohibit City Council having any say in police affairs is a bad rule and needs to be reversed. A city cannot handcuff its elected officials. Expect things to be done in a fair and unbiased manner.

The City Council is the governing body of this city and has jurisdiction over all institutions and issues that are governed by its policies. The question is, who governs the City Council or the Valdosta Police Department? All we need is a "can do no wrong" police department.

Jimmy Wilcox
Valdosta

Backs Action On City Police Probe

This is a letter in defense of City Councilman Willie Houseal's conduct and actions concerning the recent incident of police negligence and irresponsibility in performing their duties in apprehending an assumed robbery suspect.

Four of Valdosta's police officers entered the Bethune Street area of the predominantly black District 1 area of town where Councilman Houseal is the elected representative. The investigation by policemen indicates four shots were fired during the arrest of Moore (the assumed robbery suspect.) Two shots were fired by the sheriff's deputy and two by the police officers.

Citizens of the community complain of policemen firing gunshots into crowds of innocent bystanders, seemingly without concern for the safety of the people at all, and also citizens complain of police brutality.

Certainly this type of action is nothing new to the black community; historically the police have always placed a lower priority on black life, and this incident certainly doesn't give positive signs of changes. These types of tactics by the "keepers of the peace" have been used to put fear in blacks of the police, people who we should feel protected by. It is obvious that blacks and whites view the role and significance of the police department in Valdosta differently.

The black community actually feels that the police have caused more problems in the black community than they have solved. But, as mentioned above this is a letter in defense of City Councilman Willie Houseal's conduct and actions. In response to the Oct. 28th editorial correctly identifying the incident, "Justice Defeated Here", the writer completely ignores or places a low value on the fact that lives of women and children were endangered by the

irresponsible actions of the officers in performing their duty.

The citizens and constituents of District 1 were and are concerned about such matters, and we have a right to demand of our leadership, that they take a stand on behalf of the community on such important issues. Councilman Houseal acted honorably and responsibly in seeing that the incident was investigated.

It is true that the city council are policy makers, but no councilman should separate the interest and concern of his district from the policies being made. To restrict Councilman Houseal from speaking out on issues affecting his community will only serve to make him a token and puppet of someone other than the people who elected him to represent them. It is a disrespect to Councilman Houseal and the black community to even ask to sweep it under the rug. If a policeman were to act in such a way on the north side or in white residential areas of town, he probably would be asked to leave town or the very least find a new job.

Valdosta was recently redistricted to allow for a more equal representation of the city, and each city council person should take as their top priority their district. So to all who seem to think that Councilman Houseal abused his power, I say stop showing your racism and ignorance and be glad that incidents of this type are investigated and necessary actions are taken to prevent such incidents in the future.

To Councilman Houseal, continue to represent your district and the Valdosta community with dignity and a commitment to justice and righteousness.

Gary Denegall
Valdosta

Justice Defeated Here

Two Valdosta police officers have been reprimanded and a deputy sheriff "talked to" after an incident here which went wrong from the beginning.

There was a crime, officers were looking for an armed robber, a man was spotted and fled when ordered to stop. Shots were fired, the man stopped and turned out to be an innocent bystander.

Obviously, it calls for some type of investigation.

Now, the other side of the story.

A packed crowd was at City Council meeting recently about a zoning matter. In a public meeting, City Councilman Willie Houseal read a letter from a private citizen which made accusations against police which bordered on police brutality charges and accused some officers of rank racial prejudice.

This was unfair to the officers and in fact was an abuse of power by Houseal.

If necessary we can call in

the GBI, FBI and CIA to investigate a police complaint here. But a city councilman is a policy maker, not an investigator. Certainly, Houseal could have mentioned the matter and demanded an investigation. There are ways to do things and he chose the politically popular way over the responsible way and he was wrong. He in effect threw gasoline on a hot stove.

If the police department is trying to cover up, then we can call in the GBI, FBI or whatever and do another investigation. If officers are using unnecessary force or are racially prejudiced they should be dealt with swiftly. But that is not the duty of City Council.

What they did may have been wrong. Making decisions in a split second as officers must do calls for a lot of restraint and even then they have a 50-50 chance of being wrong. It is a no-win situation.

They deserve better than to be tried and found guilty in the court of political expediency.

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The City Council is the governing body of this city and it has jurisdiction over all institutions and issues that are governed by its policies. The question is, who governs this city — the City Council or the Valdosta Police Department? All we need is a "can do no wrong" police department and then we'll really be in trouble.

Jimmy Wilcox
Valdosta

Community Center Opens Again For Children

Times Staff Writer

The Hudson Dockett Community Center stood empty 21 years, but Saturday City Councilman Willie Houseal opened its doors once again for children.

The center now serves as Reading Is Fundamental (RIF) headquarters, and a library-study hall for youngsters in the predominantly black and low-income area of Valdosta.

Houseal said he pushed hard to open the center by June, but only after CHALC (Child Health Association of Lowndes County) helped secure \$500,000 liability insurance could he and other principles move forward.

Houseal and others spent months painting, cleaning and renovating the building. Houseal said he frequented the center in his youth and was inspired by activities there to excel.

The opening went well Saturday, he said, with roughly 35 children and four parents in attendance.

He hopes to enlist college students and parents as volunteers to operate the center two hours (4-6 p.m.) during the week and Saturday mornings, he said.

Books were donated by the Lowndes County Library, he said.

The RIF program will operate from the center.



Children Read In Library-Study Hall

Times Staff Photo by Nadine Shock

1 DEC 85

Councilman Houseal Defends Action

First, let me begin by saying it matters not the outcome of disciplinary action taken nor the results of the appeal. I personally feel that there were no victories gained either on the officers part, or on the part of the "alleged victim of misconduct."

What does matter is that we, as a community, are more aware of the fact that: 1) We have a policy on the books that could possibly get someone killed; and 2) This same policy could affect the careers of good police officers.

There is evidence that this policy concerning the "use of force" needs to be changed. It is the job of city officials and department heads to see that his change takes place immediately.

To add further, I feel that my actions taken as a councilman of District 1 and Valdosta as a whole have not been made clear to the public. While, on the

other hand, there are those who feel that they are in a position to make judgement; let me say to Mr. Grady Dukes and Mr. Archie McKay that your information brought forth has been somewhat distorted and clarification in the matter is much needed.

First, the incident was brought to the City Manager's attention — asking that an investigation be conducted. No further action on my part was taken. Rebuting Mr. McKay's editorial on whether I chose the responsible route, this was in fact done. It was only after weeks had passed did I choose to bring the matter to the public's attention.

Second, Mr. Dukes must realize that the use of political power, according to the City's charter, does not clearly define exactly how I should speak for my constituents. If it comes a time when I cannot voice the opinion of

those who elected me, then perhaps I should step down.

I am not dismayed by the fact that the written reprimands were not upheld. However, I am somewhat disturbed that many Valdostans choose to believe that all officers are top notch and that misconduct does not exist.

When all is said and done we must remember that a little preventive medicine is less costly than a remedy for an unwarranted situation, such as the shooting death in Ashburn or in Savannah. It must be remembered that awareness has been gained as well as consciousness on the part of our officers while making an arrest. I firmly believe that by working together our problems can be ironed out, making Valdosta "as a whole" a better place for all to live.

Willie Houseal
Councilman District 1

Political Forum Becomes Heated

1/11/86

By DEBORAH BUCKHALTER
Times Staff Writer

Valdosta's incumbent District 1 City Councilman Willie Houseal came under heavy fire in an emotionally charged political forum Friday night in Hudson Dockett.

The session appeared to have been limited to participation by black candidates. Although Albert Doig, a white candidate, came to the meeting, he did not join blacks at the candidates' table.

Two white candidates contacted last night said they were not invited to the session. Others could not be reached for comment.

Councilman Willie Houseal said the meeting didn't start out as a forum.

Houseal said it was his understanding that the only he and incumbents Bunnis Williams and Sonny Vickers were to meet with the group of voters.

"It wasn't supposed to be a forum, it was supposed to just be people in community meeting with the black city council members; that's how I understood it, but it didn't turn out that way. It was a total surprise to me," he said.

Houseal was hit early with questions about the Valdosta Police and Fire departments.

When asked why he didn't push for a black police chief when Roy Little resigned the post in December, Houseal said, "I appreciated the reality of the situation. I don't think the black community was strong enough to force the city to do something it didn't want to do."

"If you expect to get a black police chief when we're still fighting for ranking officers, I don't think you're being realistic. It's my job to work within the system, attack its weak points and work blacks up though the system as it improves."

Houseal refused to discuss the matter further.

People also asked the candidates about their views on hiring and promotions policies of the city and what they would do to improve the situation if elected.

Napoleon Bryant, District 2 candidate, said he wants to redefine council policy on the issues.

"Part of the morale problem in the police department is the lack of policy concerning promotions and hiring. What is needed is a long term plan for defining the qualification for moving in and moving up."

When asked to back up his claim that

he would channel city money back into the black community, Bryant said he would jockey for a position on the council budget committee and that he would meet regularly with the city manager and the finance director.

Alphonso Hall, District 1 candidate, said he would couple his vote with his knowledge of politics to meet the needs of his community.

"Other members of council want something too...They'll need my vote, like I'll need theirs. And if I study and do my homework, I'll know what it is they want and how the issues will affect each district. I'll also know how their voters will react to each issue before us, and I can use that advantage," he said.

James Gibbs, an at-large candidate, was questioned about rumors of low police morale, and he said he had a theory about the problem.

"Low salaries lead to low police morale, and the attitude doesn't help the high crime rate in the community."

Gibbs said he would like to compare police and firefighters salaries in Valdosta with those in other similar communities to determine the appropriate salary level here.

Cason Sets Hearings For Police

By DEBORAH BUCKHALTER
Times Staff Writer

Valdosta City Manager Mike Cason set grievance hearings for Valdosta police officers Allen Catoe and Darrell Griffin for Nov. 21 in City Hall, according to Police Chief Roy Little.

Catoe and fellow officer Raymond Conner were reprimanded after an investigation into police conduct in a September incident on Bethune Street. Catoe and Raymond Conner fired warning shots while apprehending what turned out to be the wrong man, suspected of robbery.

Some question as to what is allowable use of firearms in residential communities remains in the minds of those who support and those who protest the police action.

Police Benevolent Association representative Grady Dukes said the laws governing firearm use are vague and that the reprimand is unwarranted. The association is supporting Catoe's appeal.

City Councilman Willie Houseal, however, publicly questioned the action, saying he was questioned the judgment of the officers who fired their guns in a residential neighborhood under the circumstances. He was concerned for the safety of bystanders, he said, who could be injured by ricocheting bullets.

Four shots were fired during the arrest of Willie Moore, but witnesses said some were fired after Moore had put his hands in the air, according to earlier reports.

City Manager Mike Cason will hear the appeals. He would not comment on the case.

1/16/86

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1/16/86

Black Councilmen To Run For Posts

By DEBORAH BUCKHALTER
Times Staff Writer

All three black councilmen elected to Valdosta City Council early this year in a special election announced their candidacy for re-election today.

Willie Houseal (District 1), Bunnis Williams (District 2), and Sonny Vickers (District 3) were elected in March to three newly formed districts in Valdosta. District 2 councilman Bunnis "B" Williams said upon announcing, "my main priorities are paving and drainage. The city has made a commitment to a paving program and that...must become a working program.

"Being appointed to the Transportation Committee of the Georgia Municipal Association, I will have some input on paving, in general, in GMA policymaking."

Williams said he supports adopting an additional one percent sales tax to pay for paving.

"Hopefully, after the first of the year, the General Assembly will amend the one-cent tax to include more than just one project, and if we can get it approved, we'll use that for paving.

"We've outgrown our capacity to take care of the paving needs here," he said. "There are 28 miles of unpaved streets here and 99 percent of them are in districts 2 and 3.

"Drainage is bad in some areas of town, also," Williams said. "On some streets, the water backs up knee deep. I want to stay on council to make sure some of those things are taken care of. Progress has been made in the past nine months and Valdosta is a better place to live than it was last year at this time.

"I want to continue to work with the citizens so that they can be proud of Valdosta and their neighborhoods," he said.

Williams is a native Valdostan. He and his wife, Alma Williams, have one son. He is director of guidance services at Lowndes High School, and has worked in education 23 years.

Sonny Vickers announced he will run again for the District 3 seat. He said he sees paving, drainage, increased police protection, improvement of substandard housing, and better pay for city employees as issues in the future of Valdosta.

"We must find a way to pay for paving. I like the one percent optional sales tax because everyone pays for it then," Vickers said.

"We also have some drainage problems. Some of the drain pipes are too small to take the water in the old section of town, and it backs up.

"Some of our drainage canals need to be cleaned and widened. The sales tax could be used to help fix that, too," Vickers said.

"The citizens have to realize that if

they want some of these problems corrected, they also have to be willing to pay for it. We can't, under the present financial structure, pay it out of the city's pocket. In the future, we'll have less and less help from the federal government, and we'll have to do it ourselves, which I think we should," Vickers said.

Vickers said he also wants to concentrate on increased police protection and on better pay for officers.

"The pay scale is insufficient. They train here, then move on to a better paying job. We'll just have to find the money. I don't have the answer to where it will come from, but I think the city must look at it," he said.

Vickers said he is pleased that an extra building inspector has been hired to monitor sub-standard housing in the area.

"Last Friday, for instance, we (the city) had about 10 slum landlords in court, charged them a \$100 fine and gave them 30 days to correct it. I think I was partially responsible for getting the extra inspector on the city payroll," he said.

Vickers also took partial credit for establishing a city holiday on Jan. 20 in honor of Martin Luther King's birthday.

Vickers owns Vickers' Motors. He and his wife, Avera, have 10 children.

Councilman Willie Houseal also announced his intention to run again for his District 1 seat.

"I won with 68.1 percent of the vote last time. This time, I hope to win with even a higher percentage than before (and) that more of my constituents are convinced that I can get the job done," he said.

Houseal said he wants to "work toward an affirmative action course in assuring a reasonable amount of jobs for minorities, to include management positions."

Houseal also said he wants the city to revise or amend its charter.

"With the city's new growth and changes I feel that this should be top priority," he said.

Houseal said he believes "the presence of three black councilmen has set the stage for the future of Valdosta, focusing on problems long forgotten by previous administrations."

Houseal said that in 1985 he believes he has contributed to several city accomplishments while on council, such as "correcting unsafe road conditions in District 2, initiating a complete rezoning project making Lincoln Park and Woodgate residential only, fighting crime with Crimewatch, and forming the Witness Assistance Program.

Houseal is employed by the Lowndes County school system at the Sheriff's Boy's Ranch. He and his wife Cleopatra have three children.

Effective Next Week

Council To Meet On Revenue Sharing

By DEBORAH BUCKHALTER
Times Staff Writer

Valdosta City Council has a little spare change, and tonight will decide how to spend the last federal revenue sharing allotment they expect to get.

The allotment comes to \$350,000, and because it signals an end to federal revenue sharing, members of Council said they felt a special session was warranted to decide how to spend it.

Most City Council members want to put at least some of the money in drainage and paving. Willie Houseal said he wants Council to put almost all of it into those two projects.

"We've got 28 miles of unpaved streets and I'd like to see at least half of it paved in the next four years and paved on a priority basis. I think 40 percent should be used for paving, 40

percent for drainage, and the rest into miscellaneous projects," he said.

But David Drumheller wants to squeeze money out for cemetery improvements.

"I want as much as possible in paving and drainage, and to fence the cemetery, plus pave two or three cemetery roads," he said. "It needs to go into projects that we've somewhat neglected. At budget time, we made a list of things we wanted to do with the money. I think our priorities may change somewhat seeing that this is the last piece of the pie."

Drumheller said he is willing to drop a proposal to build a mausoleum at the cemetery to save space there, but said he thinks the city should go ahead with fencing and irrigation plans for the cemetery.

"I especially want to concentrate on drainage and streets, and this problem of sewage backing up into peoples homes...It's terrible and it's time we do something to correct it. There so much more to be done that we have money for, but we have to start somewhere," she said.

While he is pleased the city has the \$350,000, Councilman Sonny Vickers said he is looking realistically at what the cash can accomplish. He wants to spend the majority for paving and drainage, but he said the money is "nothing but a drop in the bucket," compared to the needs.

"We need to work on widening and dredging our canals and replacing pipes in the flood areas, particularly downtown on Lee, Gordon and Ashley

streets. I imagine we need \$3 or \$4 million for all those projects. I'd like to first see what the city manager is proposing," Vickers said.

Councilman Ashley Hill wants to use the money for cemetery improvements, drainage and paving, as well as a new fire station.

Councilman Bubber Tillman said he will submit specific projects for consideration, including a new fire station, drainage improvement at Two-Mile Branch and on Oak Street.

Councilwoman Bette Bechtel wants to put the money into Fairview Park, paving and drainage, as well as cemetery improvements.



COUNCILMAN WILLIE HOUSEAL
Wants Paving, Drainage

MAYOR

The Times recommends Gill Autrey for the post of mayor. Autrey is a proven leader with the ability to take charge and lead the city into a new growth period that is easily within our grasp. Autrey has been active in and for his city and his term on City Council was a high water mark for that body.

Autrey has the ability to lead the city to new growth, help find more and better jobs for our citizens and the leadership ability required to take the helm of the city and provide leadership for all citizens.

At-Large Post

The Times recommends James Rainwater as the candidate best qualified to fill the post of councilman at-large. The at-large post and the post of mayor will be the posts of critical need for new leadership, new ideas and setting the tone for the entire Council. Rainwater has a firm grasp of the issues facing the city. Is able to work with all government bodies and has promised to help provide team leadership involving all segments of the community to seek a brighter future.

The Times recommends David Drumheller for another term. Drumheller has been a quiet but effective leader for the city and has shown the ability to work well with others toward a common goal.

District 6

The Times recommends Jack May for another term on Council. May is able to stimulate open conversation on issues facing the city. His financial background has been valuable to the city and he has been a good spokesman for the "little" things that need to be done and are vital to the operation of a growing city.

Again, the most important recommendation The Times can make is that every registered voter in the city exercise the right and duty on election day and vote. Vote for the candidate of your choice but please vote.

she moved here from Minnesota. Zikmund and Goddard provided the following figures on voter turnout.

In District 1, 647 ballots were cast; 1,859 people registered. In District 2, 1172 ballots were turned in, 1,929 registered. In District 3, 995 ballots were counted; 1,909 registered. In District 4, 1,140 ballots were cast; 2,351 registered. In District 5, 1,773 ballots were turned in; 3,290 registered. And in District 6, 1,626 ballots were counted; 2,780 registered.

Goddard said she was happy with the turnout, and said she remembers one voter with particular pride. She believes she met Valdosta's oldest registered voter at the polls Tuesday.

Georgia Washington is 87 years old and just two months shy of her 98th birthday. A friend brought her to the polls to vote Tuesday. Her friend is another elderly woman, Ethel Greer.

At 53.7 percent, the voter turnout in bad weather, while Goddard, wife and assistant to Supervisor Bob Goddard. Zikmund predicted that at least half the turned voters would show up. But it was a bet Zikmund was to lose. A former elections supervisor herself, Zikmund has worked voter registration and elections

workshops and to address an urgent problem recently brought to Council attention by a private citizen.

Our Recommendations

Valdosta municipal elections are Tuesday and there are serious issues at stake. Valdosta as a city stands at a crossroads, a crossroads where it can move forward and take its citizens forward or sit idle and then retreat and wither on the vine.

Voters will be asked to vote for a mayor, a city council member at-large and for council members in six districts.

The Times today makes its recommendations to the voters on the candidates. These recommendations are made based on performance, interviews with candidates and represent a recommendation as to which candidate we feel is best qualified for the post in question.

The most important recommendation this newspaper can make is that you go to the polls and vote. No matter your choice of candidates the most important issue in the election is that you vote. All of the candidates have worked hard and now it is up to the voters. We should be ruled by majority vote and this requires that each of us cast our ballot.

The following are the recommendations of *The Times*:

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District 1

The Times recommends Willie Houseal for this post. Houseal has been active during his first term to try and improve city services to all citizens and has been a positive influence on city government.

District 2

The Times recommends Bunnis Williams for this post. Williams has spoken out on the issues, has not been hesitant to take a stand and has a good grasp of the direction needed for the city to reach its potential.

District 3

The Times recommends Sonny Vickers for this post. Vickers has represented his district and his city well in the time he has been on Council. Vickers has shown he is willing to work hard and communicates very well with all citizens.

District 4

The Times recommends Bette Bechtel for another term on City Council. Mrs. Bechtel has been vocal on the issues and raises questions about the direction of the city that should be raised.

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"We've got 28 miles of unpaved streets and I'd like to see at least half of it paved in the next four years and paved on a priority basis. I think 40 percent should be used for paving, 40

percent for drainage, and the rest into miscellaneous projects," he said.

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Drumheller said he is willing to drop a proposal to build a mausoleum at the cemetery to save space there, but said he thinks the city should go ahead with fencing and irrigation plans for the cemetery.

Like most other council members, Bunnis Williams said his number one priority is paving. But he said the bulk of the money may have to be spent on topography maps if drainage is to be addressed.

"The city manager wants to take the topography study before we go into drainage, so we'll know what's under the city. I understand the map study will cost about \$250,000. Perhaps we can get the study done and use the balance to pave some of our streets," he said.

Drainage, he said, may have to be addressed at a later date and within a long-term and budgeted plan.

Councilwoman Jo Ann Hartman said she wants to take a look at the council "wish list" drawn up during budget workshops and to address an urgent problem recently brought to Council attention by a private citizen.

Of 14,042 registered voters, 7,552 came to the polls or turned in absentee ballots Tuesday.

At 53.7 percent, the voter turnout surprised Zikmund, who made a friendly wager with the Gelana Goddard, wife and assistant to Elections Supervisor Bob Goddard.

Zikmund predicted a 30 percent turnout in bad weather, while Goddard contended that at least half the registered voters would show up.

But it was a bet Zikmund was happy to lose. A former elections supervisor herself, Zikmund has worked with voter registration and elections since

"I especially want to concentrate on drainage and streets, and this problem of sewage backing up into peoples homes...It's terrible and it's time we do something to correct it. There so much more to be done that we have money for, but we have to start somewhere," she said.

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she moved here from Minnesota. Zikmund and Goddard provided the following figures on voter turnout.

In District 1, 856 ballots were cast; 1,859 people registered. In District 2, 872 ballots were turned in, 1,869 registered. In District 3, 995 ballots were counted; 1,909 registered. In District 4, 1,140 ballots were cast; 2,351 registered. In District 5, 1,773 ballots were turned in; 3,290 registered. And in District 6, 1,626 ballots were counted; 2,780 registered.

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COUNCILMAN WILLIE HOUSEAL
Wants Paving, Drainage

All But 1 City Council Member Is Returned

By DEBORAH DUCKHALTER
Times Staff Writer

Winston Unseats May On Council

By Times Staff Writer

Valdosta City Councilman Jack May was ousted from his council seat Tuesday night by his friend, Dr. Richard K Winston, who registered a decisive victory against him in the District 6 race.

Winston laid claim to 1,089 of 1,607 votes cast in the District 6 race for 65.3 percent of the unofficial vote count May gathered only 578, for 34.6 percent.

May on Council eight years, said he had no inkling why the vote went the way it did, and had little to say following the election.

"I knew I had a tough race to start with, and Dr. Winston is a popular, well-liked man...what else can I say? I have no idea why the vote turned out the way it did," May said.

Winston said he has several goals in the coming year as a new member of Council. He said he will inspect all city departments and get familiar with city operations.

His first responsibility, he said, is to listen to the public and "try to understand their concerns," Winston said. "I want to protect homeowners from heavier burdens. I think we should try to work together with the county to do that. We need certain improvements, and we have to pay for

them. If we have a good relationship with the county, maybe we can use a one-percent sales tax together to provide the best things for the city and the county," he said.

Winston said he also will search out grants and endowments to support the fine arts in Valdosta. "That's not only because people enjoy it, but it's one of the first things potential industries ask when they're looking at a community, 'Does the area have any cultural life to speak of?' So that will help us bring industry here."

Winston said he and Jack May were good friends before the election, and came out of it better friends. He said he thought the race was going to be closer than it was. "I thought he might win, he's a good man, and he ran a great race," Winston said.

Winston said his wife and about 10 campaigners and employees joined him at Mathis Auditorium Tuesday to hear the precinct totals come in.

By precinct, Winston carried #10 with 399 votes to May's 220. In #11, he took the race handily, pulling in 644 votes to May's 339.

Incumbent District 1 Councilman Willie Houseal was the next most successful City Council winner. He took 62.8 percent of the 778 votes cast, gathering 489 to opponent Alphonso Hall's 289. (37.1 percent).

By precinct, the vote went as follows. Precinct 1: Houseal: 354; Hall: 204. Precinct 2: Houseal: 122; Hall: 71.

Houseal said he didn't know what to expect when he got to Mathis Auditorium Tuesday to await the results. But he said the comfortable victory "proves that District 1 voters know it takes more than posters and a campaign speech to win. It takes dedication and commitment to the community, to be there when they need you."

Houseal said he wants to get 28 miles of dirt streets in Valdosta paved during his term on council, and said he would be working toward an amendment to the City Charter concerning the powers of the City Manager.

"I don't want so much to take any of them away, but to set it up so that he shares them with council, especially when it comes to hiring department heads. We need to have more information," Houseal said.

In District 4, Bette Bechtel didn't have such an easy time of it, but she — See COUNCIL, Page 3 —

Williams, his wife and a group of about 20 supporters and campaign workers he calls 'The 'B' Team' listened for the vote tally at Mathis Auditorium.

At the other end of the spectrum,

Sonny Vickers once again trounced old rival Jaunita Jackson Parker. Last year he took more than 70 percent of the vote in a District 3 race with Parker, and he did it again Tuesday.

Vickers took 76.3 percent of the 937

votes cast, drawing 715, while Parker claimed only 23.6 percent with 222 votes.

By precinct, the vote went as follows: precinct 5: Parker: 156; Vickers: 444. Precinct 6: Parker: 63; Vickers: 255.

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All But 1 City Council Member Is Returned

by DEBORAH BUCKHALTER
Times Staff Writer

All but one of the incumbent Valdosta City Council members who sought election to District seats won Tuesday night, according to the unofficial vote count, some by landslide and others by the slenderest of threads.

Bunnis Williams won re-election to his District 2 Valdosta City Council seat, but only by the skin of his teeth.

By just five votes, Williams avoided a run-off election with Robert Dewar, Jr.

Napoleon Bryant came in third with 145 votes, or 17.4 percent.

A total of 832 votes were cast in the race.

According to election rules, Williams needed half the votes plus one to win outright. He claimed 50.6 percent with 421 votes, five more than he needed.

Had he come up short, Williams would have faced a run-off with Dewar, who drew 266 votes for a 31.9 percent share.

By precinct, the vote went as follows: precinct 3: Bryant: 71; Dewar: 236; Williams: 183. Precinct 4: Bryant: 71; Dewar: 21; Williams: 229.

Williams said he expected a close race, and that the win proved he, as a current Council member, has earned the trust of voters.

Winston Unseats May On Council

By Times Staff Writer

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— See COUNCIL, Page 3 —

Valdosta City Council Vote Tally

		District 1	District 2	District 3	District 4	District 5	District 6	Absentee	Total
Mayor	Gill Autrey	282	321	330	512	1070	931	157	3633
	Jo Ann Hartman	184	153	165	353	363	414	58	1690
	Ernest Nijem	263	278	361	221	319	263	59	1767
	John W. Smith, Jr.	77	69	77	13	7	8	1	255
At-Large	James Leon Gibbs	281	179	287	65	19	27	17	905
	Ashley Hill	226	262	301	357	586	539	90	2361
	Vivian Jones	113	152	156	254	224	235	30	1164
	James H. Rainwater	88	143	76	427	866	778	131	2509
District 1	Alphonso Hall	275						14	289
	Willie Houseal	476						13	489
District 2	Napoleon Bryant		412					3	115
	Robert Dewar Jr.		257					9	266
	Bunnis Williams		412					9	421
District 3	Jaunita J. Parker			219				3	222
	Sonny Vickers			699				16	715
District 4	Bette Bechtel				627			21	651
	Reuben Bennett				306			8	314
	Albert Doig				169			3	172
District 5	David Drumbheller					958		65	1023
	Inman Grimsley					753		41	794
District 6	Jack May						559	19	578
	Richard K. Winston						1013	46	1089

... from the biosciences project. Legislature.

TO MY MANY SUPPORTERS

My sincere thanks for Re-electing me to City Council District 1. Together we can continue to pave the way for our future. During my term I will continue to commit myself to the works of the City, making Valdosta a place we can all be proud of.

Again, I Thank You Valdosta and District 1 Voters for making this Election a Success.

WILLIE HOUSEAL



Large Voter Turnout

Valdosta voters turned out at better than a 50 percent mark for Tuesday's municipal election. Votes are shown being tabulated as the crowd remained at Mathis City

Auditorium until about 10:30 p.m. for the final figures. — Times staff photo by Bob Lupinek.