Investigation closes, security issues remain

by Christopher Caile

In the workshop preceding Monday's town board meeting Supervisors James Pax asked board members to sign a letter which contained the wording of a letter sent to the town from the County District Attorney Dick Clark which stated they were cleared of criminal investigation of file tampering.

Pax said he had asked board members to sign the letter so people of Grand Island would know that the County DA had concluded its investigation.

But during the following town board meeting many residents spoke up letting the board know that they felt that serious issues remained.

Businessman Mike Sendlebeck said "the District Attorney's Office said that the files were tampered with but the person who has been blamed for it denies it. Could this be the same person who..." and he went on to recite a long list of charges against the Zoning Inspector Sam Long saying "there is a loose cannon on Grand Island and you have condoned it." The charges included overstepping his authority by soliciting complaints from neighbors against one another, building code violations such as building a two family house on a paper road without proper curbs, building a three bedroom home on a lot with a 10 year old septic system rated only for two bedrooms and a zoning code violation of running a business out of his house.

"Although the letter places no blame it does admit to wrong doing," said John Lexo, candidate for Supervisor. "This would give a lot of support and credibility to civil action against the town board and the town of Grand Island."

He then went on to give a list of file security faults such as too many keys distributed, unlocked files, open access to files, no log-in sheets, and a system that "seemed designed to protect those who wish to invade the privacy of our citizens."

Later Councilwoman Mary Cooke said the DA's letter "absolutely closed the criminal

School speed zones get approved

by Christopher Caile

There was progress this week after years of frustration over repeated efforts to establish Island school speed zones and denial by the State DOT because Island roads failed to meet certain criteria.

Monday there was a critical meeting to discuss school zone safety on the Island. It was held in the County Legislative Chambers and attending were representatives from the state, county, Traffic Safety Chairman, Dorothy Binner along with Supervisor James Pax, Councilman Dick Crawford and Legislator Chuck Swanick.

In the meeting it was agreed that two flashing beacons on school warning signs be installed at all schools on the Island.

Monday night at the Grand Island town board meeting two resolutions were adopted to get the process underway. The first requested a permit from the Erie County Department of Public Works for installation of flashing beacons on country roads at Huth (Huth Road), Sidway (Baseline) and St. Stephen’s (Baseline) schools. The second resolution called for installation on town roads at Conner Middle School and the High School on Ransom Road.

The town board also agreed that forms again be submitted requesting speed zone studies for Kaegebein and Huth Road school zones.

A "School bus ahead" signs would also be installed at major intersections and on the "S" curve on Stony Point.

Monday’s meeting was the result of a letter sent by Councilman Dick Crawford to Erie County Legislator Chuck Swanick, State Assemblyman Sam Hoyt and State Senator Hanula. In the letter Crawford noted past efforts trying to get speed zones established and asked for their help.