

Teenage drinking hot topic

**WHS principal:
School shouldn't
be policing parties**

By Susan Morse
smorse@seacoastonline.com

HAMPTON — It is not the job of school administrators to police the Internet or investigate criminal student behavior that occurs off-site and during nonschool hours.

That was the opinion of most parents who spoke during a Winnacunnet Community Council meeting Monday night.

"I'm recommending the school not do investigations for activities outside of the

**Cases jam
local court**

By Elizabeth Dinan
edinan@seacoastonline.com

PORTSMOUTH — The local District Court was clogged with underage-drinking cases Monday, when an Islington Street man was charged with hosting minors during a Friday night party and eight other minors were sentenced for drinking at previous parties.

Steven Thompson, 24, of 392 Islington St., was brought to the court in police custody after spend-

See DRINKING, Page A7

See COURT, Page A7

FROM PAGE ONE

Court bogged down in underage-drinking cases

COURT, from Page A1

ing the weekend in jail on two counts of prohibited sales, a charge of hindering apprehension and for breach of bail conditions.

According to an affidavit by Officer Rochelle Jones, she was dispatched to Thompson's apartment at 12:05 a.m. Saturday for a noise complaint, and when she arrived, she saw Thompson directing four minors to hide. Jones reported to the court that Thompson allowed her entry into his apartment, where she saw four minors in possession of alcohol.

After he was booked for the alcohol-related charges, Jones reported, a check of

Thompson's criminal history revealed he was arrested four days earlier for a motor vehicle charge and was on bail requiring him to remain on good behavior. Because he was on bail at the time of Saturday's arrest, Judge Sawako Gardner set Thompson's new bail at \$1,500 cash.

All of the charges are

Class A misdemeanors, and because Thompson requested a court-appointed attorney, pleas of not guilty were entered by the court on his behalf.

Thompson, who reported to the court that he works for a Maine landscaping company, said he expected to post the cash bail. He was also court-ordered to observe a

10 p.m. curfew and to return to the court on July 31 for a probable cause hearing.

Thompson's four guests, all Maine minors, were issued summonses for alleged unlawful possession of alcohol.

Also appearing in Portsmouth District Court Monday were eight minors who pleaded guilty to unlaw-

ful-possession charges stemming from two recent parties at South and Union streets. All of the minors pleaded guilty to the charges and were fined \$300 plus a \$60 penalty assessment.

In a separate case, Zachary Canner, 17, of 18 Baybridge Road, Greenland, was charged with resisting arrest at the May 19 keg party at

1347 South St. Police said, when officers arrived, some teens were on the roof and others fled through windows.

Through a negotiated plea agreement, the charge was placed on file for a year without a finding, pending Canner's good behavior for one year and completion of community service.

Teenage booze parties hot topic

DRINKING, from Page A1

school," said Principal Randy Zito. "If it's criminal behavior, I turn it over to the police, they do an A-to-Z investigation."

An estimated 50 parents, teachers and School Board members attended the public meeting to give Zito input for a new athletic contract. The contract is expected to be discussed and potentially changed by the Winnacunnet Cooperative High School Board.

Zito has yet to recommend what will go into a new contract, but he said it will include procedure, as well as policy on suspensions and loss of privileges for athletes who take part in drinking or other illegal behavior.

The meeting was prompted by the suspension of 17 student-athletes who admitted they were either drinking or present at an after-prom party where alcohol was present. Zito learned of the activity through a School Board member who saw photos of the party on a Web site and reported them.

Last week, parents protested what some termed "unethical" behavior by the board member, citing personal motives. The board member was not named.

Parents want to be notified," said Community Council member Paula Wood of Seabrook.

Police Officer Steve Henderson said Zito was going in the right direction, using the Police Department and resource officer for investigations.

Tammy Knowles of Seabrook said there needs to be a policy set that students shouldn't even attend a party where there's drinking.

Selectwoman Ginny Bridle said the policy is there for a reason. Zito agreed, saying that a policy could keep someone from ending up in the morgue next week.

Some parents said there should be a substance abuse education component, using \$60,000 budgeted for substance abuse education.

Eddie Edwards, who heads liquor enforcement, said community involvement is vital, and student drinking is an issue for adults.

"Where are they getting alcohol from? They're partying in our homes," he said to applause.

College counselor Doran Morford agreed it's hard to enforce a code that involves the entire community.

Coach Don Lamprey said a 10-day suspension for a first offense may be seen as only an inconvenience. Coach Jay McKenna agreed.