

"Orderly" River Raft Race Anticipated By Riggio

By Roberta Rebold

ESSEX - After discussing plans for the upcoming raft race with organizer Ken Fischburg, First Selectman Dick Riggio expressed confidence that the event will be safe and orderly.

"The rules are now quite exact and firmed up," said Riggio, who asked for the meeting with Fischburg in order to learn the specific plans of the race organizers. "Everything is set and arranged so it should go smoothly," he added.

According to Fischburg, this year's race will differ from previous contests in that no beer will be sold on Nott's Island and participants will be asked to leave at dark. In addition, those who do not remove rafts from the water immediately after the race will be fined. Required identification of each raft will insure that this is enforced, said Fischburg.

Fischburg said he was pleased with the outcome of his meeting

with the first selectman. "Mr. Riggio wanted to confirm our plans and precautions and I know he was satisfied," said Fischburg. "He might even be out in a boat to watch the race."

Two years ago, complaints were raised by Essex residents who claimed that noise, traffic congestion, drunkenness and litter accompanied the race. Shopkeepers along lower Main Street said they were forced to forfeit a Saturday's business because traffic was blocked from that part of the street.

These complaints prompted Riggio to attempt to halt the race last spring. He claimed that Essex was unprepared for the large crowds attending the event.

Despite Riggio's protests, permission to proceed was granted to

the Raft Race Organization by the state Department of Environmental Protection and the U.S. Coast Guard.

This year's race will be held on July 26 at 1:30 p.m. As in previous years, the course will be from Deep River to Nott's Island. To enter, people must make their own rafts by hand and no rafts smaller than four-by-eight feet or larger than 12-by-36 feet will be accepted. At least three people must be aboard every raft.

A fee of \$25 per raft and an additional \$5 for each participant will be charged. Tickets for spectators on the island are available now for \$3 each from the Connecticut River Raft Race, P.O. Box 110, Old Saybrook, CT 06475. All proceeds will go to local children's charities.

Budget Meeting Is Set

ESSEX — Final budget figures for