

Mall bus policy under fire

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Woodyatt said she had her first meeting with Hanes Mall manager Thomas Winstead a week ago. She took over as WSTA manager just a few months ago, replacing Jim Ritchey who resigned to take another mass transit position in another city.

She said the meeting with Winstead lasted about 30 minutes and that they mainly got to know each other. She said they agreed to negotiate with each other in good faith to find solutions to accommodate everyone.

"What he (Winstead) and I decided to do is start all over again on this issue. So we discussed what the mall's needs were and what WSTA's needs were," Woodyatt said. "We agreed to brainstorm some ideas to see what can be done. I honestly think at this point we will come together on something that will please everyone."

But indications are that such negotiations may bear little or no fruit. Aside from Winstead's original comments to WSTA officials about the weight of the buses as cause for denial of a second stop, he has declined to make further comment.

At least one other mall owned by the same company that partially owns Hanes Mall has also had some troublesome encounters with transit buses transporting African-Americans to the mall. The Chronicle

reported last week that Hanes Mall and Columbia Mall in Columbia, S.C., are both owned by Jacobs, Visconsi & Jacobs, a Cleveland, Ohio based firm specializing in shopping malls.

Several disturbances and some crimes committed a year ago at the Columbia Mall resulted in cuts of bus service from African-American neighborhoods. Mall officials there said the action was taken to cut down on loitering at the mall.

The Columbia chapter of the South Carolina NAACP filed a discrimination suit against the mall.

But that suit was settled out of court. In that situation African-Americans were reported to have been fingerprinted, photographed and detained.

Trouble also occurred at the Crabtree Valley Mall in Raleigh because of an attempt by the mall to eliminate bus service. African-Americans boycotted the mall, many interpreting the mall's action as a way to cut down on African-American access to the mall. Crabtree is not owned by Jacobs, Visconsi & Jacobs.

Some bus riders in Winston-Salem believe that the management at Hanes Mall is attempting the same thing in here. "I don't think they want all of those young folks hanging around the mall," said one lady as she stood waiting on

the bus Tuesday. "But its not just blacks making trouble. You ought see how some of them white children act out here sometimes."

An African-American high school student described how he was kicked out of the mall after he was refused the use of a restroom because it was being cleaned at the time he needed to use it. "I went to another restroom," he said, "but a little later, this security guard walks up and tells me I have to leave for the rest of the day. I couldn't understand that because I hadn't done anything."

Some employees at the mall said the real problems occur on the weekends when students are out of school and come to the mall to find their friends. "Sometimes on Friday and Saturday night around here it seems more like a zoo. You got the brothers off the block, skinheads, and rednecks. And they come in bunches, sometimes they stay in their own groups and sometimes they mix with each other," said one food service handler.

An employee at J.C. Penny, who chose not to be identified, said a second stop in the newer section of the mall might not be a bad idea because it would keep the J.C. Penny store from being the conduit for traffic coming from the older section of the mall to the new section. "All the kids raising Cain,

police running all over the place. Some nights its like a war zone," the employee said.

Still for other employees that is not a good enough reason to try and eliminate service or not establish another bus stop.

"My mother brings me to work now, but if her car breaks down then the only way I can get to work is on the bus," she said. "I certainly would like another stop near the new section of the mall, so would other people who work in the new section and who shop here because it's a long haul if you have only a little time to catch the bus and the mall happens to be crowded."

One woman getting off a bus, when asked about the situation said, "We need more stops out here because sometimes the buses are real crowded."

Currently two routes, numbers 18 and 20 pick-up and deliver more than 1700 passengers daily to and from the mall. Both can only stop at the old mall entrance near Annabelle's restaurant. One mall proposal would eliminate route 18 which uses roads throughout the mall as it heads toward another stop on Healy drive.

Bill Fullington, director of marketing for Jacobs, Visconsi & Jacobs, did not return the Chronicle's phone calls about the situation at Hanes Mall.

Need for foster homes chronic

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Patricia Minter, recruitment/retention coordinator in the Foster Homes Service unit of the county social services department, said the main idea of the foster care program is to reunite children with their original birthparents if possible.

Minter said the children coming into foster care come primarily because their parents are unable to provide for them. "The reason can be abuse either physical or sexual. It could be because they were neglected or because a parent is incarcerated or on drugs or alcohol," Minter said. She points out the foster care parents work in conjunction with the DSS to one day reunite them with their parents.

She said adoption is a last resort when children cannot be reunited. But that has not been a certainty for those who have sought to adopt children in these situations. "The courts give the original birthparents every possible opportunity to be reunited with their children," said Minter. "Adoption could take two years or longer before a parents' rights to their children are terminated. And sometimes don't always work out."

Minter said the foster care program staff does whatever it can to provide the volunteers of the parents association the aid and support it needs. "That is part of retaining parents and attracting others. And we really do need more than we have right now," Minter said.

At present there are more than

70 homes in Forsyth County licensed by the state to operate as foster care homes for over 300 children. Minter said each household is averaging about three children in each home and that some families already have one or more children of their own.

Minter explained that the state requires that a number of rules must be met by people interested in providing foster care for these children. One of those requirements is that there must be a certain amount of space in the home. Another is that there can be no more than seven children in the home even if a person has the space for them.

DSS officials said some people put off the idea of providing foster care or adoption for a needy child because they are afraid that they or their families may not be able to handle successfully the increased economic impact that a child would bring. But officials say, costs should not be the overriding concern because subsidies are provided to those families qualifying for the program to help pay for the care of the child.

"One of the big things this program does is to provide the child with the best environment possible while they go through a difficult period in their young lives," said Minter.

She said children often bring with them the emotional baggage associated with their experiences in their original homes, and that a sta-

ble environment is a key to transition from a traumatic situation.

Children now in foster care can range in age from newborns to 18.

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NCAA

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aired commentaries protesting the treatment of the black media during the Final Four tournament.

"The NCAA has put up roadblocks and arbitrary guidelines that no black media can meet, in the path of the Indianapolis black media. Both WTLC and The Indianapolis Recorder wished to have the credentials necessary to cover the Final Four - a major news event in our city. We were denied and rebuffed," Brown said.

Despite the ban of the NCAA's credentials committee, The Indi-

anapolis Recorder has been able to cover regional tournaments of the NCAA basketball championships which were held in Indianapolis in previous years.

Housel suggested after the tournament was over that members of the black media and David Cawood, assistant executive director for communications for the NCAA, sit down and try to resolve the problem that denies access to the black press.

Nelson responded by saying, "By then it will be too late."

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