

Co. Commissioners Hear Residents' Tax Woes

By MARK R. MOSS
Chronicle Staff Writer



Jocelyn Johnson, (left) president of the East Winston Restoration Association, Felicia Mack (center) and Wyvetra Carter listen intently to testimony of another E. Winston resident at Monday's Forsyth County Commissioners meeting.

Some East Winston residents, still angry over what they say is a collective devaluation of their property, took their case to the Forsyth County Commissioners Monday night.

Brandishing a map and photographs of homes in the redeveloped area of East Winston, Jocelyn Johnson, president of the East Winston Restoration Association, told the commissioners that East Winston residents took a lot of pride in their homes.

She called the area, which is bounded by Cleveland and Cameron avenues and 10th and 18th streets, a "profit-making center" and that not appraising the homes accurately is "an important revenue loss" for the county.

About 20 residents turned out for Monday night's meeting, a slightly smaller number than turned out for the initial meeting on Feb. 23. That night, residents confronted two officials from the county Tax Collector's Office about the most recent appraisals of their property. In most cases, the county-appraised values of their property had decreased appreciably. That means lower property taxes, but of concern to the residents was the potential loss in profits if they decided to sell their homes.

Johnson pointed out to the commissioners that one home that was appraised at \$82,000 in 1988 is now valued at \$77,000.

"These kind of appraisals affect the total social and economic value

of our neighborhood," she said. She implored the commissioners to put on "their good walking shoes and see what's happening" in East Winston.

Peggy Martin, who lives in Monticello Park, a development of upper middle-class homes off Carver School Road, said the county-appraised value of her home had decreased by about \$10,000.

County Manager Graham Pervier said the process of appraising homes is done on an individual basis, but any information that

would help the board better understand the issue would be forwarded to them by the next meeting.

"We'll get any additional information we can to see if we overlooked any sales," Pervier said.

One of the county tax officials at the initial meeting pointed out that one of the criteria used to determine the value of a house in a community was the number of houses being sold and the prices they fetched. After the meeting, Pervier said in the process of getting one's home reappraised, the commission-

ers is out of the loop. There was another way for the residents to express their frustration.

Commissioner Mark S. Woodruff said she was glad to see that the county had residents who were interested in the county not losing money.

After the meeting, Johnson said she wasn't satisfied with the outcome of the meeting.

"They just gave us the same old bureaucratic answers," she said.

ON THE AVANT GARDE

BY TANG NIVRI

What Shall We Do Now?

Now that King George has been beheaded, Queen Babs exiled to Texas where she will raise her dog Millie's pups, and Prince Dan "The Joker" Quayle has been forced to return to reading and writing "Dick and Jane" spelling books while his patron-saint-wife, Marilyn "Friar Tucker," finally removes her mask revealing her true identity as the puppet master pulling the Joker's strings... what shall we black folks do now?

Now that the mean old Republicans have been put outdoors in a cage where they should be, cast aside, left to carping and screaming, ranting and raving, hollering and otherwise bellyaching like the sore losers some of them are, what shall black folks do with such a splendid opportunity to rule? It is a question that begs to be asked.

Yes, my brother and sister Democrats, now that we have beaten poor old Clarence Thomas to death, and, in the process have managed to elect the first female member of the U.S. Senate, seated some 40 members of Congress, and nationwide, have managed to help elect some 7,000 officials, what difference will any of this make to the future of black folks in general?

Is this an opportunity for real advancement or is this more symbolism than substance? Presumably, with a majority not only in the House and in the Senate but also in the White House, the Washington gridlock is finally over. With such incredible political advantage, how shall we now advance our cause?

But what's this, my goodness gracious, if I don't hear cries from our leadership saying, "We will be watching the Clinton administration like we watched the Carter, Bush and Reagan administrations." Who is kidding whom?

Everybody knows that black folks ain't about to get upset with the Democratic Party about nothing, at least not about anything of substance — especially now that Clinton has appointed so many women and people of color to his cabinet. Are you kidding? It would be unseemly for such a thing to occur. This is check, if not check-mate.

Indeed, you can forget about black people criticizing the Clinton administration for the next four years as long as people of color are in senior administrative positions. Period. Oh sure, Jessie Jackson will holler and lose weight about the Haitians being turned back to their country, but it will not raise the ire of the masses of black folks, who quietly wonder why would anybody want to encourage people who have AIDS to come to this country in the first place, especially when we already have enough problems of our own. No, black people will not riot about the Haitians nor Marge Schott.

And as much as they hate to admit it, black folks absolutely despise the idea of their taxes being raised again! Indeed, I have yet to find the black person who doesn't think that the government has enough money to run on, without asking them for more of their hard-earned dollars.

The irony of all this is that during the recent Republican administration, black folks who routinely condemned the Republicans as being the cause of all of our misery, now find themselves sitting on the political sidelines even quieter than the Republicans themselves, unable to raise questions of any material substance.

Where is all of the rancor and debate about the issues raised during the Republican administration? Where is the give and take that so many black Democrats gave to the black Republicans who were a part of the previous administrations? Is there no room for intellectual discussion on some of the complex issues of governance and policy?

Are white folks the only ones capable of debating global issues? Think! When was the last time we as a community discussed the issues of the budget deficit and how its ballooning out of control will have deleterious effects on the future economic long-term growth of the black community in this country?

One of the hazards of becoming so identified with one political party is that once that party assumes office, you have no place to go. You aren't allowed to raise the legitimate questions which may be viewed by some as being disloyal.

That quiet uneasiness resonating throughout the black community is a realization by the masses that it was a mistake for black folks to base our whole economic and social agenda on the election of Bill Clinton and the defeat of the Republicans.

What will we do, and to whom will we turn, if the latest emperor is found to have no clothes?

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Two Groups Differ on Lending

business loans. Grace, who heads the group, embraced a proposal by CRA Services and said CRA is attempting to serve all residents of East Winston. He said the Urban League, and others in doubt, will better understand when they get all the information.

"All these meetings always start out with beating on the same old problems," Grace said after the meeting. "(Doubters) come from a perspective where they don't have all the information, and you can't debate on half truths and innuendos."

The luncheon, held last Thursday at the Anderson Conference

Center at Winston-Salem State University, was sponsored by CRA Services, a Charlotte-based mortgage-brokerage company that has established a partnership with Southern National Bank to facilitate the mortgage-loan process for minorities.

The CRA was founded in 1991 by two former bankers — C. Ray Kennedy, formerly of Southern National Bank, and Clayton C. Lovell, formerly of Wachovia. CRA has contracts with 24 financial institutions in North Carolina and Washington, D.C.

At the meeting, Kennedy explained what CRA had to do to

convince Southern National that they could generate more mortgage-loan business from the minority community.

Their traditional ways of doing business didn't make sense," he said. He explained that Southern National didn't understand the black market in Winston-Salem, and therefore didn't know how to go about making loans to minorities.

"What sets us apart from most consulting firms is that we are bona fide mortgage brokers licensed by North Carolina," he said.

He said CRA has convinced Southern National to relax its loan criteria. But if an applicant still is

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unable to meet the credit guidelines, CRA has 23 other banks as options, Kennedy said.

Lovell presented slides with maps of Winston-Salem that showed where most of the city's blacks live and their median incomes. The map also pointed out that there was not a branch of Southern National in East Winston.

"That's the kind of thing they want to know," Lovell said.

Grace said the CDC will work closely with CRA to identify those who qualify for mortgage loans.

"Their mission is similar to ours," Grace said. "It's an eye for eye idea."

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Morgan, however, said she thought most of the problems with Johnson's son, Joseph, came from who "frequently visited" the Wachovia Hill apartment complex, who helped Hauser with the chores, said he was involved in a confrontation in December with another tenants — an elderly white woman, Leslie filed assault charges against the woman, but the charges were dismissed in January.

Johnson said that if she could continue to live with her father, she finds another apartment.

Polio Victim "Harassed"

the complex, four are occupied by African Americans. She said no other complaints have been lodged against Morrow.

Morgan said she had entrusted Morrow with the keys to everyone's apartment because his first-floor apartment is close to the main door.

"He was one of the original tenants in the building and he's a little nosy," she said. "People feel more secure knowing he's watching."

She said that because of Hauser's complaints against Morrow, he is no longer in charge of the

keys. Although Hauser has never caught Morrow inside her apartment, she claims he has been inside several times and has vandalized it. Shortly after she first moved in, she said, a bag of rotten tomatoes and other garbage was left in front of her door. One time she said she left and returned to find that someone had used her bathroom. On yet another occasion, she said she awoke to find the "bug man" spraying her living room. She said she never called the police to complain

about the incidents. She a stinking, black liar," Morrow said, when asked about Hauser's allegations.

Ernestine Johnson, who lives at 2115 N. Trade St., said she has been helping Terry ever since she was a child. This week, Johnson produced a copy of a letter sent to Morrow from a previous building manager asking Morrow to stop harassing Hauser.

Every time that man upsets her, I tell Terry to come stay over here," Johnson said.

Entrepreneurs Form New Business Organization

A brand new business organization, The Triad Business Network, recently announced plans to help expand and create new business opportunities in the Piedmont Triad area by formulating a support structure for new existing businesses.

Organized by a dozen area business owners and entrepreneurs, the Triad Business Network is a support group that provides technical assistance and business information to established businesses as well as interested individuals who would like to start their own business.

"The basic idea behind TBN is for us to help one another. Information is a valuable commodity in today's business environment," said John Raye, one of the organizers of the new organization.

TBN brings together new and existing businesses and those eager to start a business by stressing the advantages of business ownership.

TBN is a strong advocate of the free enterprise system. One of the goals of the new organization is to

help increase business entrepreneurship in the black community.

TBN members will visit area schools, conduct workshops and seminars and serve as role models and mentors to aspiring young entrepreneurs.

"Our young people must know that they have options. All of us cannot dribble a basketball, run to glory with a football or moonwalk with Michael Jackson," said Raye. "And all of us do not have to be job takers; we can become job makers, yes, some of us certainly need to become business owners so that we can make jobs for the masses of our people," he said.

One of the advantages of TBN is the frequency of its meetings. Currently, the group holds "power networking breakfasts" every Wednesday morning from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

"TBN operates a system that is designed to build and promote each member's business, product or service. We generate leads and provide referrals for our members. In fact, what we are really doing is acting as a sales agent for all of our

members by referring all contracts we make during the course of our regular business day to TBN attorneys, accountants, contractors, real estate persons.

"The idea behind TBN is to promote everyone's business," said Raye. TBN was conceived as a networking organization where like-minded people gather on a weekly basis to exchange information, provide business leads and to buy and sell among one another.

TBN represents a cross section of the Piedmont Triad business community. The Wednesday morn-

ing network breakfast is an expanding effort to help improve the community by encouraging total participation in the free enterprise system.

Membership is open to anyone with a business, product or service or to those who may harbor an idea regarding business, product or service to those who may harbor an idea regarding business ownership. The group meets at 7 a.m.

For more information, contact Terri Moore at (919) 996-2047, ext. 2047.

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