

# Bill targets N.C. schools with Indian mascots

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

A North Carolina legislator has introduced a bill in the House of Representatives to establish a panel to study the impact of American Indian mascots in public schools.

Rep. Charles Graham, a business owner, retired educator and a Lumbee Indian, co-sponsored the bill with Rep. Garland E. Pierce and Rep. Marcus Brandon.

H.B. 681 was introduced to the House on April 5, passed a first reading and was referred to the Committee on Rules, Calendar and Operations on April 7. The bill, which is called Study of American Indian Mascots at Schools, would create a 12-member committee with appointees from the House, the Senate, the State Board of Education, the Commission on Indian Affairs, tribal members, and the CEO of the North Carolina Economic Development Initiative. The committee will have support from professional staff at the Legislative Services Office.

The committee's charge is to "study the impact of American Indian sports mas-

cots and logos at the public schools and review current policies and procedures on their use." The bill sets a May 1, 2012 deadline for the committee to file its final report.

Greg Richardson, the executive director of the state Commission of Indian Affairs, told the Charlotte Observer that several years ago his commission passed a resolution and forwarded it to the state Board of Education encouraging local school systems to eliminate American Indian mascots.

"The Indian community obviously feels offended by the use of mascots that do not accurately represent their culture," he said. "On this particular proposal, I am representing the interest of American Indians who are among my constituents."

Richardson said that about half of the 60-plus schools in the state that had Indian mascots when the resolution was submitted several years ago have now eliminated them. Many American Indians are offended by the way they are represented as cartoon characters, jokes on T-shirts, and in advertisements, he said.



Rep. Graham

## Dickenson

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Jamaica-native. "I just kind of celebrated in my house; I was really excited."

Entrants in the contests were challenged to submit videos of their own "Warrior Workouts" as inspired by "Spartacus," a STARZ Network series set in Ancient Rome about a rugged band of gladiators.

The contestant whose "Warrior Workout" receives the most online votes by May 31 will win a walk-on role on the show, a five-day trip for two to the major city nearest the filming location, \$500 in spending money, a one-year supply of MET-Rx and a MET-Rx gym bag.

Creating a "Warrior Workout" was a snap for Dickenson, a certified personal trainer, former body builder and fitness model.

"I just felt like I had the skills, and I love putting together video clips," he related. "I was like, this is a great opportunity to shoot some stuff and show what I can do."

Dickenson's video includes components of his latest fitness loves: parkour and freerunning, two urban acrobatic disciplines that are gaining popularity in America.

"All my life, I've always been the type of person that would attempt to do the stuff that I saw in movies, Jackie Chan movies to be exact," related Dickenson. "When I found out that what he was doing was actually a discipline, I fell in love with it."

About a year ago, Dickenson began training on his own, mastering the



Dickenson, standing, with other members of Vanish Freerun.

moves by watching tutorials on YouTube. He has since connected with others in the Parkour and Freerunning communities who have helped him perfect some of his signature moves.

"It's just freedom and it's something that really clears your mind," he said of the discipline. "There's so many things about it that just captured me. You get to be so creative and everybody interprets it differently."

Nineteen year-old Bryan Sloyer was also practicing Parkour on his own until he saw Dickenson featured on a local news broadcast last fall. He contacted Dickenson, and together with four others, the two formed the Vanish Freerun team. The group gathers weekly to practice new stunts and cheer one another on.

"We sort of just meet up," Sloyer said. "We all come together and sort of collaborate and just grow as a team."

Sloyer says he and his teammates look up to Dickenson.

"When he teaches, he's very direct but he's not harsh," related the high school senior. "He's fun to work with because he brings a certain perspective to Parkour."

Earlier this month, Vanish Freerun created a video of themselves in action, and took home the prize for the Best 30-Second Action Flick at the Action Fest Film Festival. Sloyer and Dickenson traveled to Asheville to accept the honor.

It was Dickenson's second accolade in recent weeks, but the phone call he received last week proved to be the biggest step in his Parkour career to date. He was offered a fulltime position as an entertainer with "Pirates Voyage," an ongoing dinner theater show in Myrtle Beach, S.C. that will open in June. Though Dickenson, who is also an actor, had landed several roles in local theatrical productions and independent films, "Pirates Voyage" is his first full time gig as an entertainer.

"I wasn't planning on making it a career, but I really love it with a massive amount of passion," he said of Parkour. "It's mind blowing actually that I'm doing this for a living. It's a blessing. I'm glad to have it."

Someday, Dickenson hopes to blend his love of fitness and Parkour into a career as a movie stunt man or a spokesperson for a major sporting company. Sloyer believes Dickenson has what it takes to make those dreams come true.

"Especially with the drive and the passion he has for his craft," Sloyer said, "once he gets his foot in the door, it's only a matter of time."

To view and/or vote for Dickenson's Warrior Workout video, visit Met-Rx's Facebook page, [www.facebook.com/officialmetrx](http://www.facebook.com/officialmetrx). For footage of Dickenson in action, visit [www.youtube.com/rrdickenson](http://www.youtube.com/rrdickenson).

## Legacy

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and the degree to which we can sustain our economic future."

Ten years ago, all nine jurisdictions countywide adopted the Legacy Development Guide, which set forth a vision and guidelines for development and growth. Now, planners say it's time to update Legacy to reflect the present conditions in the county and prepare for the future.

"We figured it was time," said Judy Hunt, principal planner for the City-County Planning department. "We have new data from the Census, and a lot of the actions from the (previous) plan we've already accomplished, so we were looking for more guidance in all of our work."

During the kickoff programs, which were held at 2 p.m. and 7 p.m., members of the City-County Planning staff and Board educated residents on the purpose, vision and scope of the Legacy Update.

The Legacy Update plan is divided into 15 chapters, which address various components of growth and development in the area. Like its predecessors, which date back to the 1990s, the Legacy Update will rely heavily on the input of community members, Hunt said.

"(Last time) we had more than 100 people come

together and put together a vision for the county," she stated. "We're going to keep the community's vision, but move forward with new action items, new strategies."

Changes in local and national trends have shifted the focus from suburban sprawl to concentrated, pedestrian friendly urban centers with mixed use buildings and a wide variety of services and

goods available. In addition, Forsyth County is quickly running out of undeveloped land, and won't have the means to support the significantly larger population unless it takes a different approach to planning and development, explained City-County Planning Director Paul Norby.

"Our rate of land consumption is actually exceeding our rate of population growth," Norby said. "...The Triad area is the second most sprawling region in the nation."

The Legacy Update will be introduced to the community in stages, with opportunities for citizen input and direction as the plan is developed. Officials expect it to be complete and ready to be adopted by county townships in 2012.

Michael Suggs, chair of the Downtown Winston-Salem Partnership, said

most of the citizens he's spoken with are pleased to learn the county is expected to grow significantly. He urged all those who have a stake in the county, and especially those in the African American community, to get involved and give their input to the Legacy Update.

"This whole planning process is going to determine where commerce happens, and if we don't have that in our community, it's

not going to be an inviting situation for businesses that are coming to the area," said Suggs, who also chairs the Goler CDC board. "I invite people to come out, it's an open invitation and, believe it or not, people really want to hear what you have to say."

For more information about the Legacy 2030 Update, visit [www.legacy2030.com](http://www.legacy2030.com).



Hunt

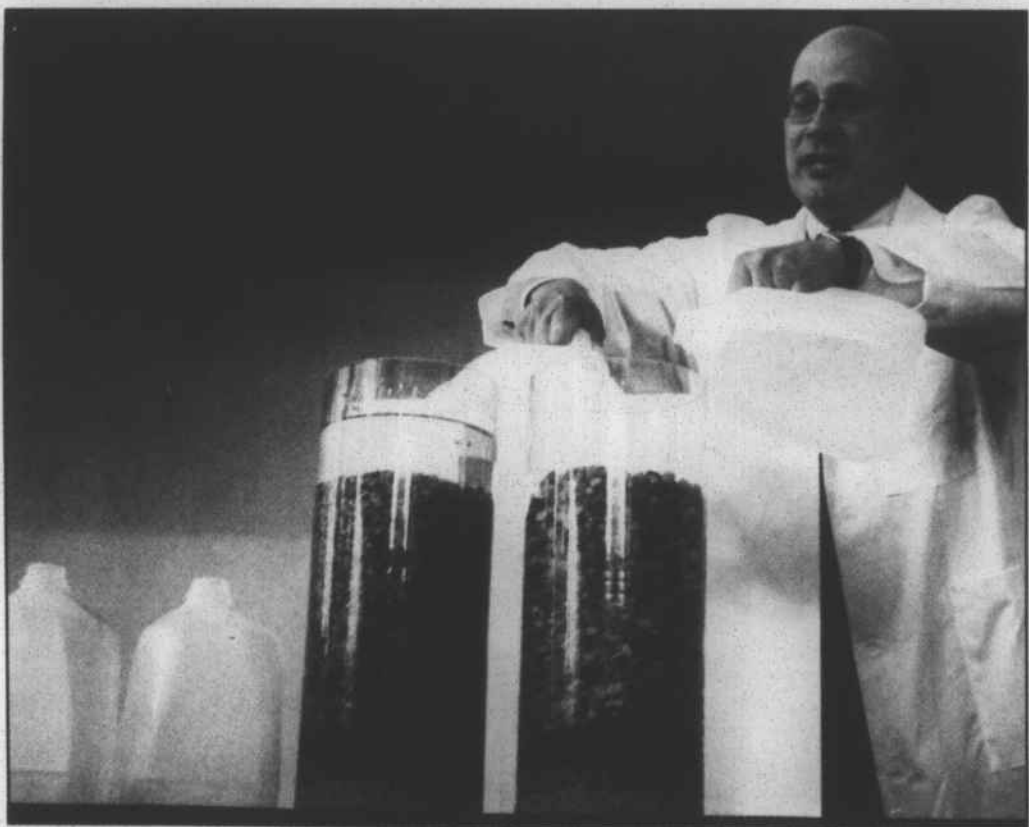


Photo by Layla Farmer

City-County Planning Director Paul Norby conducts a demonstration to illustrate the importance of using available land wisely.

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