

Photos by Todd Luck

Democracy NC's Linda Sutton addresses attendees.



Candidates speak at first major forum of election season

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

Voters were courted last Thursday evening as candidates for City Council stated their cases at a forum held at the Forsyth County Behavioral Health Plaza.

Sponsored by the Winston-Salem Urban League, the Winston-Salem Branch of the NAACP and the local Democracy North Carolina affiliate, the forum was hosted by Democracy NC interns Shelby Hart and Charles Gray, who ensured candidates kept their speeches to only a few short minutes.

City Council incumbents touted their past accomplishments and urged voters to give them the opportunity to do more. Mayor Pro Tempore Vivian Burke, who represents the Northeast Ward, said she welcomes those challenging her.

"This is America. We should have more people running and more challenging us," said Burke, whose Democratic primary challengers are Jemisse Bowen and Brenda Diggs, both of whom spoke at the forum. The winner of the primary will face Republican Michael Owens, who was not on hand.

Challengers like Democrat Bill Tatum, who is running in the Southeast Ward against Democratic incumbent James Taylor for a chance to face Republican Mike Hunger in November, told voters why change is good.

"If everything is fine then I shouldn't be running," he said. "But my purpose for running is this: number one, I think we need to look at transparency in the community; I think we need to be involved in the activities the council is putting together."

Democrat Carolyn Highsmith, a neighborhood advocate challenging Democratic incumbent Molly Leight for the South Ward, touted her grassroots credentials. Highsmith said she formed seven neighborhood watch groups to help battle crime and worked with the Ministers Conference of Winston-Salem and Vicinity on its property devaluation appeals project.

"I'm a nurse by profession, so I care about my individual neighbor, my individual citizen in South Winston-Salem," said Highsmith.

Leight said she was proud of her record, which includes helping to attract numerous large employers to the city and working with her colleagues to pass a fiscally-responsible budget. The winner of the primary will face Republican Nathan Jones.

With Northwest Ward incumbent Wanda Merschel deciding not to seek reelection, three Democrats are preparing



Gardenia Henley



Howard Hudson



Donald Shaw



James Lee Knox

to square off in the Sept. 10 primary. The winner will face Republican Lida Hayes Calvert on Nov. 5.

Jeff MacIntosh touted his decades of experience in real estate as a property restoration specialist. Noah Reynolds, who is also employed in the real estate industry, talked about the city's slowing growth in the last few decades; he promised to restore the city to its former glory. Laura Elliott, an ordained minister, cited the work she did for 10 years as an employee at Experiment in Self Reliance,

an agency devoted to helping the working poor and homeless.

Mayor Allen Joines and his Democratic challenger Gardenia Henley also spoke, as did James Lee Knox, the Republican hoping to be mayor.

East Ward incumbent Derwin Montgomery and

his challengers - Joycelyn Johnson and Phil Carter - addressed the crowd, as did Donald Shaw, a Republican running for a chance to face off against Democratic incumbent Dan Besse in the Southwest Ward, and Howard Hudson, one of the Republicans challenging Republican incumbent Robert Clark for his West Ward seat.

The event was also to include messages from State Sen. Earline Parmon and State Rep. Evelyn Terry but both women had to cancel because of a late night session at the General Assembly during which the Republicans passed an elections bill that will, among other things, require a government-issued photo identification to vote, eliminate same day registration and shorten the early voting period.

Democracy NC Local Field Director Linda Sutton told attendees the bill will cause a sharp increase in disfranchisement, but she urged them not to be discouraged from voting.

"Let's disappoint the naysayers, let's vote like never before," she said.

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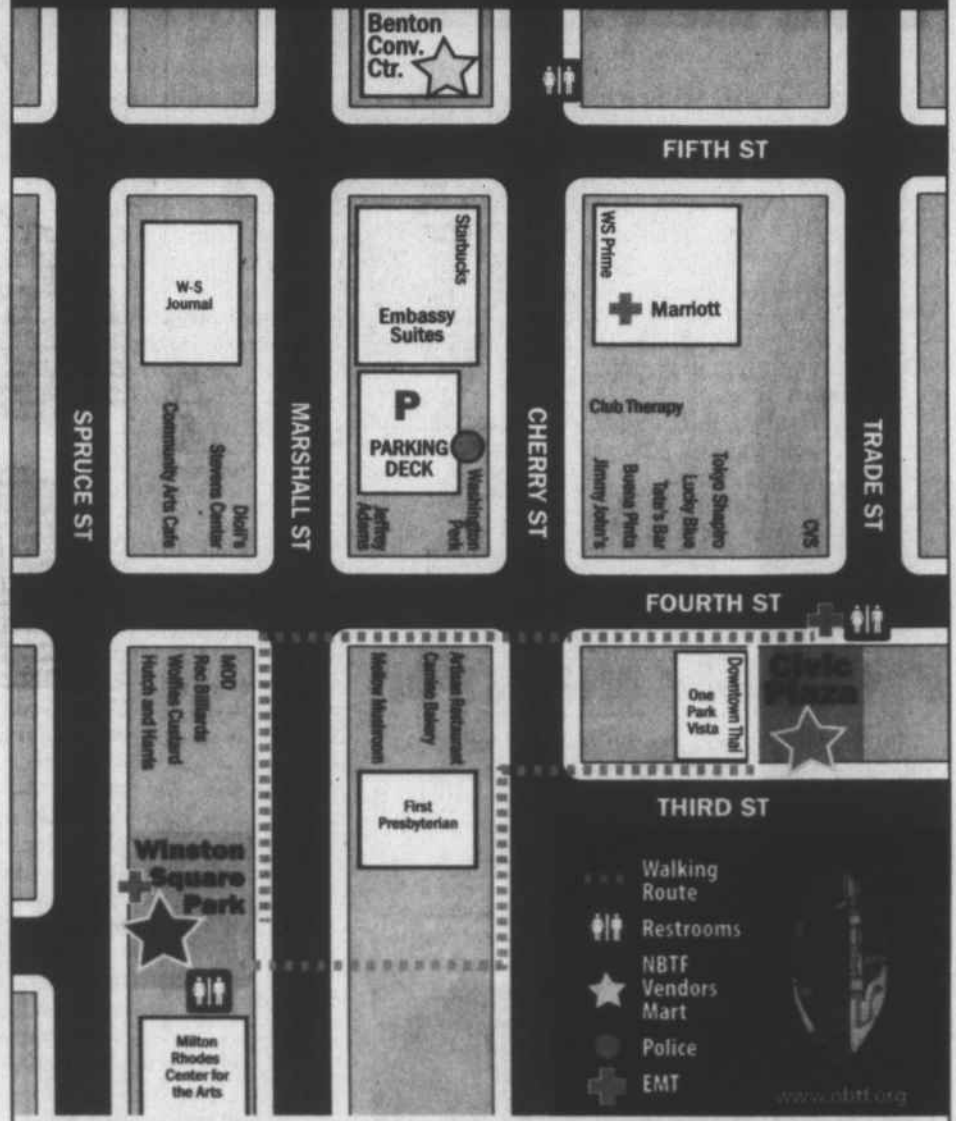
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What's Happening NOW in City Government

CityNOW

national black theatre festival
W-S at Night
NIGHTLY DOWNTOWN WINSTON-SALEM
AUGUST 1-3



TEEN-TASTIC!
8 PM - MIDNIGHT
WINSTON SQUARE PARK

THURSDAY NIGHT
Free gumbo - G.U.M.B.O
Live DJ and JumboTron

FRIDAY NIGHT
Live DJ - Dance Contest
Register for Prizes

SATURDAY NIGHT
Live DJ - Dress to Impress
Purple & White Party
- wear purple/white and register for prizes

OLD SCHOOL BLOCK PARTY

9 PM - MIDNIGHT
CIVIC PLAZA

THURSDAY NIGHT
African Drumming and Dancing
9 p.m. - 10 p.m.

Old School Party Band - Live R&B
10:15 p.m. - midnight

FRIDAY & SATURDAY NIGHTS
African Drumming and Dancing
9 p.m. - 10 p.m.
Lion Tracks - Live Reggae
10:15 p.m. - midnight

Food Available at Both Locations!

COME AND GET IT!

Farmers' Market at the
Dixie Classic Fairgrounds

Saturdays year-round 6 a.m. - 1 p.m.

Your source for local
fruits, vegetables, flowers,
jams, meats, honey, crafts
& baked goods

13
WSTV

SHOWING THIS MONTH ON THE
WARMER CABLE CHANNEL 13:
• Fire Graduation
• Outstanding Women Leaders Reunion
• Pythian Hall Marker Unveiling

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calls, 7 days a week.

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services or activities.

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• MAKE A SUGGESTION • OPEN 24 HRS/7 DAYS

CityLink311

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citylink@cityofws.org

Mayor: Allen Joines City Council: Brian H. Burke, Mayor Pro Tempore, Northwest Ward; Denise G. Adams, North Ward; Dan Brown, Southwest Ward; Robert C. Clark, West Ward; Molly Leight, South Ward; Wanda Merschel, Northwest Ward; Derwin L. Montgomery, East Ward; James Taylor, Jr., Southeast Ward City Manager: Lee Garrity

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