

Commissioners ask lawmakers to consider airport de-annexation

Pre-school funding is also discussed

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

Forsyth County commissioners asked state lawmakers to consider de-annexing the Smith Reynolds Airport out of the city during a meeting at the Forsyth County Government Center in order to avoid paying stormwater fees.

The airport was one of several issues that came up during the commissioners' annual meeting with the legislators who represent Forsyth County. Both the City and County hold meetings to let state lawmakers know their legislative needs. Attending legislators were state Reps. Evelyn Terry, Donny Lambeth and Julia Howard and State Senators Paul Lowe and Joyce Krawiec.

County Commissioner Ted Kaplan presented the lawmakers with a resolution to de-annex the airport, which would eliminate stormwater fees, which equal about 20 percent of its annual net income, and eliminate city taxes. He said the taxes and fees are making it less competitive than Piedmont International Airport which doesn't pay city taxes because it's outside of Greensboro's city limits. Commissioners also asked for legislation to eliminate local governments and non-profits from paying stormwater fees.

County Commissioner Walter Marshall didn't support either effort. He felt

the issue should be settled locally and that stormwater fees should be paid, since larger cities are required to have a stormwater management program to prevent water contamination from stormwater that flows off surfaces like parking lots.

"If there's a building there, someone has to pay it," Marshall said at the Thursday, April 14 meeting.

Terry said her concern was for those who live around the airport. She said anything that is done must involve helping the "poverty-ridden" community around it.

"It's a bastion of economic opportunity that sits in a desert of poverty," she said.

The City and County have been working on a compromise on the issue for months. Right now, the City currently has a proposal drafted to give the airport up to \$100,000 annually for 7 to 10 years, contingent that it remains in the city and that the County matches the funds. The money would be used to apply for grants from the N.C. Department of Transportation and the Federal Aviation Administration for capital projects at the airport. There's also a stormwater fee credit being considered in the City public works committee for businesses that install preventative stormwater measures.

Kaplan argued that the airport's growth will help the area around it, as did County Commissioner Everette Witherspoon.

"It's the largest economic opportunity on that side of Winston-Salem," Kaplan said.

Marshall was cynical about that, since the area around the airport remains poor and it would take substantial outreach for those who live near the airport to get the training to work there.

Lambeth also said he hoped for a local solution.

"It would be better if you can work it out with the City but if you can't, just come to us," said Lambeth.

Though the airport was the longest and most heated discussion, other issues were talked about as well.

Witherspoon told lawmakers he felt the county got the "short end of the stick" on pre-school subsidies. He said many parents can't afford pre-school for their children and it's affecting local schools.

"You talk about low performing schools, it doesn't happen by osmosis; what you're having is children coming to school not ready to learn," he said.

Marshall agreed on the need for more local pre-school funding, which Lambeth, a chair of the appropriations committee, said he'd look into.

Marshall also told legislators he'd gotten "calls from all over the county" on HB 2, expressing concerns that North Carolina was regressing. The controversial law, passed last month in a special one-day session, has been called discriminatory by critics and resulted in protests and boycotts of the state. Marshall expressed concerns over the restrictions it puts on local governments on minimum wage and that it eliminated employees' rights to sue for discrimination in state court.

State officials come to W-S looking for ideas for African-American monument

BY TEVIN STINSON
THE CHRONICLE

A monument honoring African-Americans' contributions to North Carolina will soon be added to the State Capitol grounds and the public has the opportunity to decide what it will look like. On Tuesday, April 12, state officials kicked off a month-long series of public hearings to gather feedback from residents about the proposed monument.

According to Suzanne Klutz, secretary of the N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (NCDNCR), input will be taken from residents around the state, and the final decision will be made by members of the N.C. African-American Heritage Commission and N.C. Historical Commission.

"This is not something that will be decided by state staff. It will all come from your ideas," Klutz said.

Currently the state grounds have 14 monuments, none of which feature African-Americans. NCDNCR member Mike Hill said the new monument will be located near Wilmington Street in the southeast corner of the grounds. The finished product will be a stone's throw from First Baptist Church, which opened its doors to those of African descent in 1812. The proposed location of the monument is also near the campus of historically black

university Shaw University.

"We decided on this location because of its historical significance," said Hill. "The area was once known as the black business district of Raleigh."

During the hearing, held at St. Phillips African Moravian Church on South Church Street, a number of residents made suggestions on what they believe the monument should look like



and represent. From monuments that featured water, to others that reached to the sky, those in attendance presented a number of interesting ideas to think about.

Margaret Graham of Winston-Salem said the monument should honor the history of slavery in the state.

"It's impossible to tell the story of African-Americans in this state without including slavery," said Graham. "That is something that has to be included in the monument."

Dr. Donna Benson, a Winston-Salem State University history professor, said because of the many contributions of African-Americans, the monument should show

diversity and the progression the African-American community has made over the years.

"From education to the arts all the way to sports, African-Americans have made contributions in a number of different ways," said Benson. "I feel that having balance and showing the various hardships of people of color should be included."

N.C. African-American Heritage Commission Chairwoman Valerie Johnson, who will be involved in the final decision-making process, said she is excited because this is a very important moment in the state's history. Johnson noted that without the help of the public, this project would not be possible.

"To be able to reflect and show the past, the present and the future is very important to the legacy of African-Americans in this state," said Johnson. "We need your help to make this vision become a reality."

In coming weeks, similar hearings will be held in Asheville, Wilmington and Raleigh. Following those hearings, officials will then decide on a budget and lay out a timetable for finishing the memorial.

For more information on the monument hearings, call 919-807-7290. Individuals or groups wishing to voice opinions or support the new monument can visit ncdcr.gov/monuments-feedback to provide feedback.

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Wake Forest Baptist Health Medical Plaza—Country Club, Diabetes Classroom, 4610 Country Club Road, Winston-Salem

TUESDAY, MAY 17
Smoking Cessation \ 5:30 to 6:30 pm
Wake Forest Baptist Health Medical Plaza—Clemmons, Market Classroom, 2311 Lewisville-Clemmons Road, Clemmons

THURSDAY, MAY 19
Vertigo: Benign Positional 6:30 to 7:30 pm
Wake Forest Baptist Health Medical Plaza—Country Club, Diabetes Classroom, 4610 Country Club Road, Winston-Salem

MONDAY, MAY 23
Cindy Silver on 10 Must-Haves for a Healthy Kitchen \ 6 to 7 pm
Wake Forest Baptist Health Medical Plaza—Country Club, Diabetes Classroom, 4610 Country Club Road, Winston-Salem

SATURDAY, MAY 28
Simply Seafood \ 1 to 2:30 pm
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