

Democrats cast vote in favor of ward system

By KENNETH RAYMOND
Chronicle Staff Writer

The Forsyth County Democratic Party voted to support the change of the current county-wide election system to a ward system, which would give Afro-Americans more voting strength to elect officials to the Forsyth County Board of Commissioners and the Board of Education.

The issue was debated during the annual Forsyth County Democratic Convention at Parkland High School last Saturday.

The proposal was submitted by the 14th Street Democratic Precinct Committee. Harold Kennedy III, who made the presentation, said that it has been difficult for Afro-American candidates to be elected in the past because of the current system.

"We need to have more equity in the voting process so that all segments of society will have a chance to win and not just a chance to run for office," he said.

Kennedy, a member of the law

firm of Kennedy, Kennedy, Kennedy, and Kennedy, also said that history supported the view that the present election process was unfair.

"During the past 20 years, most black candidates running in a county-wide race for those positions have lost because of the current system," he said. "From a historical viewpoint, blacks do better in the city than out in the county," Kennedy said. "Because so few blacks live out in the county, the black vote is very weak."

Kennedy said that, not only would the ward system make the elections fairer, but it would encourage more Afro-Americans to run for county offices.

"It's important that the black community be represented, but they won't be with the current system," he said. "The opportunity to win would not only exist, but more might get involved and try for an office."

James Jones, who represented precinct 12-3, opposed the resolution. He said that a ward system

would allow Republicans a better chance to win the positions.

"If we change to a ward system the Republicans would use it to slip through the back door and take these offices," he said. "We'd have them sitting on the Board of Education and the Board of Commissioners and they'd have a firm hold on them in the long run."

"It was the black vote through our current system which allowed Democrats to win the offices we have in the past," Jones said. "Using a ward system would weaken the democratic vote as a whole and allow more Republicans to seep in."

Jones' comments infuriated some of the Afro-American party members and many of them wanted to challenge his statements.

"To present such an argument to intelligent people is ridiculous," said Flemming El-Amin. "Apathy stems from lack of interest and if the party doesn't show any interest in the black community, then it's on the verge of becoming absolutely indifferent to it."

Alderman Vivian H. Burke said

that it would be wrong for the party to oppose the resolution because of the support given by the Afro-American community.

"Blacks have been loyal, dedicated, and committed to the Democratic Party and it bothers me that it would even consider not supporting the resolution for such a ridiculous reason," she said. "If you want us for just our votes and not the contribution we can make, then you don't want us at all."

Mike Wells, party chairman, said that he believed minority representation on the Board of County Commissioners and the Board of Education was very important and that some would be elected this year.

"I think black representation on these boards should be top priority," he said. "I think it's great that the resolution was passed and I believe there will be some blacks elected this year."

The party members voted on the resolution and it was passed. The proposal now must go through state legislation to be established.

Justice nominee criticized for all-white club membership

WASHINGTON (AP) -- Attorney General Edwin Meese's choice to become the No. 2 official in the Justice Department is under fire for his membership in an all-male athletic club and an all-white country club.

"It makes it hard to imagine he'll be able to administer justice in government in a way that's non-discriminatory when in his own personal life he doesn't live up to that," Patricia Ireland, executive vice president of the National Organization for Women, said of John C. Shepherd.

The Senate Judiciary Committee will vote on whether to confirm Shepherd as deputy attorney general, if President Reagan goes ahead and nominates him. Committee members said Thursday that it is too soon to comment on Shepherd's membership in the Missouri Athletic Club, which has no female members, and the Belleverie Country Club, which has no blacks. Both are in the St. Louis area.

Shepherd, 62, a St. Louis attorney, could not be reached for comment Thursday. He was not in his office, and his home phone number is unlisted. But on Wednesday he told the St. Louis Post-Dispatch he had not yet decided whether he should resign from the clubs.

"I haven't made up my mind on whether that would be necessary," he told the newspaper. "I am going to Washington for nine months to help the attorney general as his deputy."

Shepherd said he told Meese and other Justice Department officials about his club memberships in conversations in Washington earlier this week. He added that the FBI "is aware of this."

In the same interview, Shepherd

also said he was confident he would be cleared by the FBI of allegations that he had an affair with a former bookkeeper at his firm and that he had authorized her to write \$147,000 in checks to herself.

He added that the allegations by Denise Sinner, 29, of St. Peters, Mo., "are absolutely untrue and unfounded."

Sinner was convicted last month in St. Louis Circuit Court on charges of making false statements and stealing more than \$100,000 from Shepherd's law firm, Shepherd, Sandberg & Phoenix.

Sinner's attorney, Darrill S. Beebe, said Thursday he was surprised when he heard that Meese had chosen Shepherd for a top

Justice Department post. However, he said he and Sinner would testify before the Senate Judiciary Committee about Shepherd "only if we're subpoenaed. We're not volunteering."

Shepherd was tapped by Meese on Tuesday to fill the deputy attorney general's job following the resignation of Arnold Burns.

Open Government

Bert Grisard
County Commissioner
DEMOCRAT

For The People

Look No More -- "The Ultimate"

SUPER KINGS
INNER MAN™ INNER WOMAN™

HIGH POTENCY FORMULA!

IRON,
GINSENG,
VITAMIN E,
& ZINC

NATURE'S
HELPER



FOR TODAY'S PEOPLE ON-THE-GO!
MODEL PHARMACY
724-5052 1225 E. Fifth St. 723-7332

For Fare Quotes That Will Be Music To Your Ears, Get On The Horn.



Call Now For Piedmont's Lowest Fares.

To see how you can fly for a song, call your travel agent or Piedmont at 1-800-251-5720 right away.

A Subsidiary of USAir Group, Inc.

© Piedmont Airlines, 1988

PUT DIAMONDS IN HER EARS FOR \$9⁹⁹ and up

KAY JEWELERS

The diamond people
Four ways to buy: Cash, Kay Charge, Bankcard, Interest-Free Layaway

NORTHSIDE HANES MALL Become a Member of Our Searing Club