

2017 N.C. GENERAL ASSEMBLY

County, state lawmakers meet on legislative goals

BY TODD LUCK
THE CHRONICLE

Frictions between urban and rural counties and between cities and counties were at the forefront when county commissioners met with state lawmakers on Thursday, Jan 5.

Forsyth County commissioners meet with the



Howard

local legislative delegation before each session to discuss legislative goals. The state lawmakers in attendance were Sen. Paul Lowe, Rep. Ed Hanes, Rep. Evelyn Terry, Rep. Julia Howard and Rep. Debra Conrad.

Several lawmakers remarked about the legislative struggle between rural and urban counties for distribution of state tax money.

"You better buckle up, because the state is run by the rural counties and the rural centers," said Hanes.

Hanes said that rural lawmakers are often unresponsive to issues in urban counties because they have their own host of problems. He said that became evident on the repeal of HB 2, when rural lawmakers — including some Democrats — didn't support repeal. HB 2 is considered by many to

be a discriminatory state law and has resulted in businesses boycotting North Carolina, which has been felt in urban counties. Lawmakers are expected to try to repeal it again after failing to do so during a special session last month.

Commissioners once again included a stormwater fee exemption for counties in their requests to lawmakers, which Commissioner Walter Marshall voiced concerns about because of its potential environmental impact. Winston-Salem is one of many cities that charges fees on impervious surfaces like roofs and parking lots to fund programs to prevent stormwater pollution, which are federally mandated in larger cities.

The city and county were at odds last year over fees the Smith Reynolds Airport had to pay. The county was considering deannexing the airport to avoid the fees until it came to an agreement where both the city and county would give the airport money for capital development. The local school system, which is under the county, paid \$233,391 in stormwater fees in 2015, which is the highest in the city.

Hanes and Lowe both said that stormwater fees is a matter that needs to be worked out on a local level.

"You do not want to bring that to Raleigh because you don't know what it's going to be," said Lowe.

Commissioner Ted Kaplan proposed starting small by simply giving runways and taxiways at airports the same exemption from the fees that roads are given. Conrad thought that might be an

appealing idea to her colleges and said she'd work with him on it.

When The Chronicle contacted the city for its position on the proposal, Assistant City Manager Greg Turner said the city doesn't support an exemption for runways and taxiways.

Other requests by the county included public policy initiatives supporting the airport, increasing court facilities fees to help with the cost of a new or renovated courthouse, not legislating county tax appraisal standards and various measures to clarify



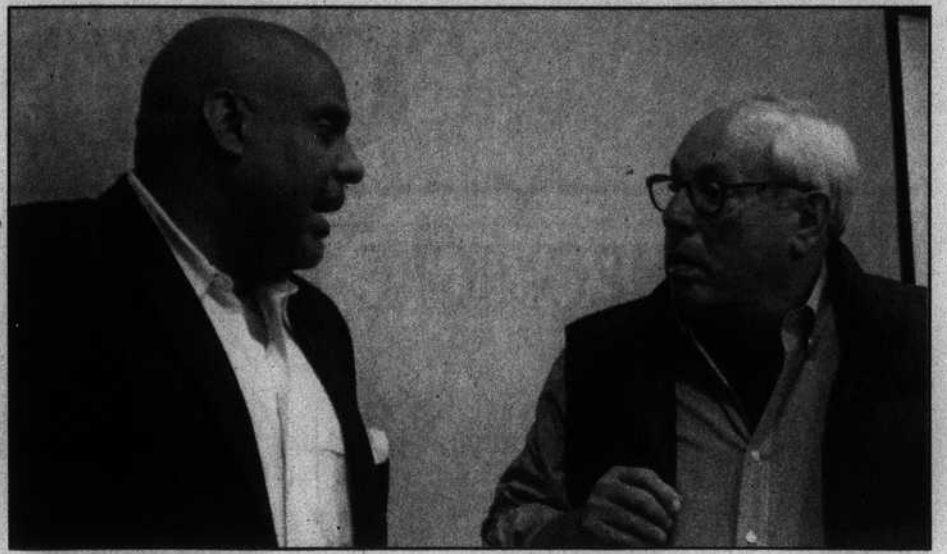
Terry

county authority.

County Commissioner Chair Dave Plyler said he'd like to see the historic tax credit restored to the level it was before 2015. There were also discussions about challenges with educational funding. Hanes lamented that there are local schools that are "failing" and not meeting state standards.

"It's our fault, because it's about our lack of care for people and about our lack of care for poor people, in general," said Hanes.

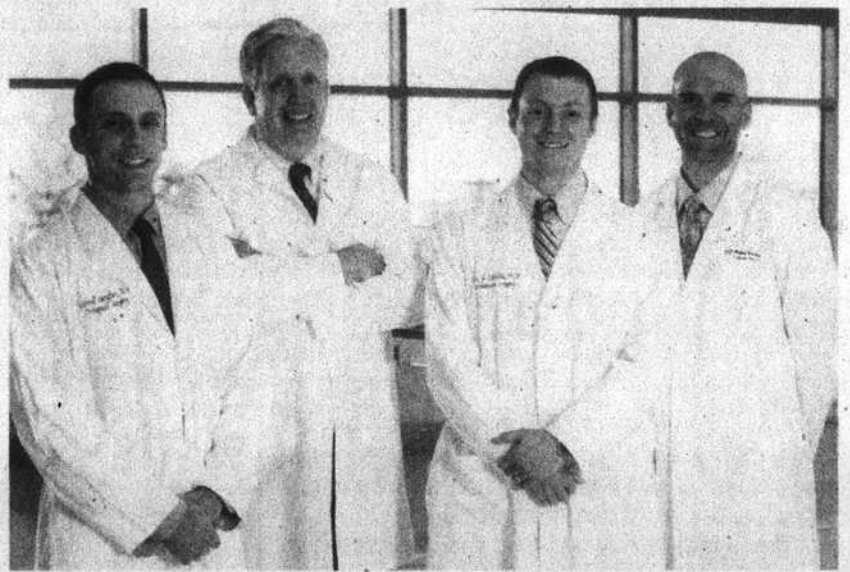
Howard cautioned commissioners and her colleagues to temper their expectations in education and other areas.



State Rep. Ed Hanes and County Commissioner Ted Kaplan chat after a meeting last week.

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COST: Free

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Bishop Todd Fulton

Annual MLK Noon Hour Commemoration moves to Union Baptist

SPECIAL TO THE CHRONICLE

Bishop Todd Fulton, senior pastor of Mount Moriah Outreach Center in Kernersville, will be the keynote speaker at the 37th annual Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Noon Hour Commemoration on Monday, Jan. 16 at noon. It is being moved to Union Baptist Church, 1200 Trade Street, NW in Winston-Salem.

The upper level of Benton Convention Center is undergoing extensive renovations and the lower level is too inconvenient and lacks sufficient access. Bishop Sir Walter Mack Jr., pastor/teacher, consented to the use of Union Baptist Church's facilities for the oldest celebration in Winston-Salem North Carolina. It's a mile away from the convention center.

Since 1981, an observance has been held annually at 12 noon to commemorate the birthday of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. The first five years before the national holiday were on Jan. 15, his birthday; however, beginning in 1986, the event was moved to the official holiday on the third Monday of January. The initial six observances were in three different locations but have been held in the Benton Convention Center since 1988.

Fulton is a native of Winston-Salem and a magna cum laude graduate of Shaw University with a B.A. degree in criminal justice and a minor in the philosophy of religion, as well as a Master of Divinity from Shaw University in 2008. He just completed a two-year term as the president

of the Ministers Conference of Winston-Salem & Vicinity. He has been credited with infusing new energy into this organization.

Dr. King said, "When evil men plot, good men must plan." This thought serves as the theme for his would-be 88th birthday. Joycelyn Johnson, Former Winston-Salem council woman, community activist, and Community Outreach Coordinator at Wake Forest Baptist Medical Center, joins the Who's Who of the scores honored with the MLK "Dare to Make a Difference" Award throughout the years in recognition of her efforts for human and civil rights. A special reflective video tribute to President Obama will be shared as the ultimate example of "Daring to Make a Difference."

A special litany of commemoration and inspirational music will round out the program. As a community service project, the Phi Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc. in collaboration with the MLK Noon Hour Commemoration will provide a meal of soup, bread/crackers, dessert and punch and will "serve" the attendees including invited homeless individuals from the Bethesda Center, Samaritan Ministries and other homeless shelters, after the program.

Doors open at 11 a.m. to the public without charge or reservation; however, an offering will be lifted. The program will conclude by 2 p.m.



Winston-Salem Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.
Winston-Salem Urban League
The Center for Home Ownership



Saturday, January 14, 2017 11am - 2 pm

Winston-Salem Urban League • 201 West Fifth St.

Presenters

- City of Winston-Salem Homeownership Program
- Forsyth County First Time Homebuyer Program
- Center for Home Ownership
- Experiment in Self Reliance IDA
- Simon G. Atkins Community Development Corporation

Register in advance @ www.wsurban.org



Project 13—A Partnership of
The National Urban League
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For Information contact Patricia Sadler 336 725-5614