

# Commissioners plan to vote on 'Ban the Box'

BY TODD LUCK  
THE CHRONICLE

Forsyth County commissioners plan to vote on a request for the county to join the "Ban the Box" movement and remove the criminal record question from job applications.

The county recently received letters requesting that the policy be changed from a coalition of about 100 people from various churches, nonprofits and civic organizations coordinated by the All God's Children Ministry Team at Knollwood Baptist Church. The group is asking that the question not be asked up front, to avoid prejudging an applicant, and to instead rely on the criminal background check that's done after an applicant's qualifications are considered.

Lisa Sykes and former

Chamber of Commerce President Gayle Anderson spoke in favor of the move during the commissioners' Thursday, March 29, meeting.

"We're not asking the county to not have positions where it would not hire someone with a conviction, but simply to give people the opportunity to apply for a position, and if what they have done in the past does not affect their ability to do the job, to at least be considered for it," said Anderson.

County Commissioner Vice Chair Don Martin said he'd like to vote on the measure in their next formal meeting. Commissioners Everett Witherspoon and Fleming El-Amin have already said they support it. Commissioner Gloria Whisenhunt said she did have an issue with the last

line of the proposed resolution that said the county encourages private businesses to adopt the same policy. Whisenhunt said commissioners shouldn't be telling private employers who to hire.

Also during the meeting, there was a 5-2 vote to approve a resolution asking the General Assembly to declare open session for hunting coyotes and foxes along with a trapping season for both animals. Several surrounding counties have enacted similar local laws.

Currently, no fox trapping by individuals is allowed in the county and foxes can be hunted from late November through Jan. 1. Coyotes can be hunted anytime and trapped November through February. This would put both animals in the same hunting and trapping sea-



Anderson

sons.

Scott McNeely, president of McNeely Pest Control and director of N.C. Trappers Association, told commissioners that the inclusion of foxes will help encourage trappers to pursue coyotes because they'll be able to take the foxes that will get caught in their traps instead of releasing them. Trapping and hunting would only be done with the property owner's permission.

Coyotes are becoming an issue in some parts of the state. A girl in Advance was attacked by a coyote last week. McNeely said that there are missing pets in Rural Hall that are believed to be the work of coyotes.

Ted Kaplan and Richard Linville were the two "no" votes. Kaplan said foxes shouldn't be included in the resolution because they aren't a problem in the county. Linville was unconvinced the resolution was needed, saying foxes weren't an issue and coyotes are uncommon in the county. He said increased trapping can also have unintended consequences like pets getting caught in the traps. Several commissioners said they'd received emails expressing concerns about the effects of trapping on pets.

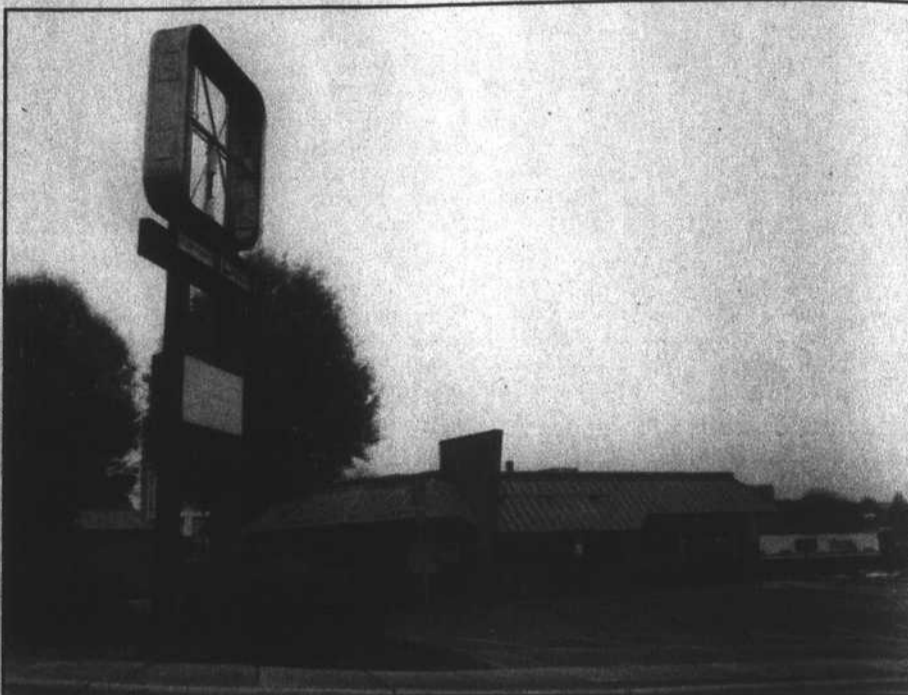
Also during the meeting:

\* Commissioners agreed to pay \$35,000 for 0.2 acres of land located next to the North Cherry Street site where the county plans to build a new courthouse. This eliminates a small easement that the courthouse would've had to build around.

\* Commissioners authorized a refund for a \$204,000 mishap with an excise tax on an e-closing real estate transaction. There was an error when the price of the house was accidentally put in the field for the tax before sending it to the Forsyth County Register of Deeds office, where the mistake was caught. The actual excise tax on the transaction was \$408.



There is a planned cell phone tower that'll be located behind this Family Dollar at College Plaza Shopping Center.



The Burger King on Martin Luther King Drive continues to be closed as the franchise owner is attempting to acquire the property.

**"The franchise owners who own the Burger King franchise within the Winston-Salem market have had issues and challenges with the property owner, which is Burger King Corporate Office."**

## MLK Burger King construction still delayed

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The Burger King on Martin Luther King Drive will continue to be shuttered as the City Council delayed its rezoning until August.

During an April 2 meeting, the council voted to continue the item again. The rezoning is connected to planned renovations at the restaurant, but was delayed again at the petitioner's request.

The Burger King location closed late last year in preparation for rebuilding the restaurant. That's been put on hold as Carrols LLC, which owns and operates it, is

still negotiating to buy the property.

"The franchise owners who own the Burger King franchise within the Winston-Salem market have had issues and challenges with the property owner, which is Burger King Corporate Office," said East Ward City Council Member Derwin Montgomery, who is one of the Chronicle's owners.

He said Carrols LLC is still committed to remaining in the community and is looking at other land in that area if it cannot acquire the current property.

Also during the meeting, the City Council approved reductions for the setback requirements for a planned cell



Montgomery

tower that'll be located behind Family Dollar at the College Plaza Shopping Center. The tower did not meet the setback requirements for an adjacent plaza parking lot and Carriage Drive, which is primarily used by residents of a nearby development. The City Council granted a 35-foot reduction in the setback from the parking lot and a 40-foot setback reduction from Carriage Drive. Northwest Ward City Council Member Jeff MacIntosh said he'd heard no objections from nearby residents to the tower.

Also during the meeting, a 1.2-acre property on Old Lexington Road was rezoned to help facilitate the replacement of the Speedway gas station that's located there.

**Will the law come tumbling down?**  
See the Opinions Forum pages A4-5

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