

# City Attorney Makes SpringFest Inquiry

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Springfest, Inc. is currently being questioned by the City of Charlotte's Attorney's Office. "We have been asked by Attorney Wayne Alexander (Carolyn Mason's lawyer) to look into the matter and consult with Springfest officers," said Henry Underhill, a lawyer for the city.

He also mentioned that Liz Mills, the MWBE (Minority and Women Business Enterprise) coordinator for the city, asked for a review of Springfest activities, especially as they relate to minority vendors. "We wrote a letter to the chairman of Springfest, Inc. as to why the request of Carolyn Mason was denied," said Underhill. His office received the information from Springfest on Tuesday. Underhill disclosed the fact that the City of Charlotte negotiates a contract with Springfest each year. The contract specifies the City's support to Springfest with the agreement to close down certain streets, permit the sale of beer and wine and "a number of other things."

The contract between Springfest and the City of Charlotte, has not yet been negotiated for this year's festival, scheduled to be held the weekend of April 28 - April 30, said Underhill. Part of the investigation from his office will be to determine if, in past contracts with the City, Springfest complied with all local ordinances, rules and regulations.

Nancy Elliott of the City's Budget Department says the City has provided Springfest "certain in-kind services," such as: setups for portable stages, setups for electrical outlets, portable public address systems, clean up or trash pick-up, and appropriate police and fire control. She also mentioned the fact that the City of Charlotte one year carried

Springfest on its insurance. In consideration of the city's support to the downtown festival, MWBE coordinator, Liz Mills, expressed regret that there are no statistics or policies in place regarding black or minority participation in Springfest.

Also, said Mills, "I'm disappointed that a black vendor has to go to this extent to feel that she is being treated fairly. This has nothing to do with preferential treatment. I hope we can work this out."

Sam Young, chairman of WestFest, Inc., the organization that yearly sponsors a westside community festival, says it would be a mistake for blacks to boycott Springfest based on the black vendor dilemma. "Springfest is a city festival. It is not a white festival. You don't boycott an institution that benefits the entire community. You move decisively to make it better and get your fair share," said Young. He believes if Springfest had more black involvement on its various boards, the incident of the exclusion of Carolyn Mason may not have happened.

"Policy changes are the right of any organization," Young pointed out. "Springfest, Inc. made the new policy without being fully cognizant of its ramifications. They didn't consider the fact that the only black vendor would be affected by that change."

"If Springfest had more people of color on its board they could have been alerted and sensitized to minority concerns."

With the recent resignation of Gloria Duval, Springfest Inc. has no blacks serving on any of its boards.

Springfest apparently lacks a sensitivity towards minority concerns, Young inferred. "I

hope the current situation will sensitize Springfest's board members and they'll move quickly and sincerely to correct the problems."

Also, said Young, "It is inherent upon us, the black citizens, to let it be known that there are talented black individuals who want to be actively involved in Springfest. These individuals would be assets to the Springfest organization and there definitely should be more black vendors."

Meanwhile, the negative ramifications that have come about as the result of Mason's exclu-

sion from vendor sales at Springfest '89 are being felt at the office of Springfest, Inc. "Based on my conversations with members of the black community, we've become very aware of the concerns in the community," Executive Director Steve Kaufman said Tuesday.

"Right now, we're trying to arrange to put together a meeting of Springfest board members and members of the black community. We are indeed trying to institute steps to make aware of the specifics of these concerns."

"It would be to everyone's best interest to arrange a meeting."



Robert Maxwell (l) helped sponsor a surprise luncheon Wednesday in honor of Rose Marie Cotton, who retired from the U.S. Small Business Administration. Cotton's former position was that of Assistant Director. She worked for the government for 33 years. The luncheon was also sponsored by Elizabeth Mills and Pat Grigg. Cotton intends to spend more time on the business, Express Line, which she partly owns and do some consulting.

# GOP Reaches To Blacks

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The Republican Party communicate that the doors are open to blacks, Hispanics, native Americans, women and other minorities.

The door may be open, but only to the Republican agenda of opening the market for economic development, Cobb maintains.

"The Republican Party is not going to change its basic position," he said, adding that those positions may be best received among working-class blacks. "There is a substantial middle class that is developing in the black community, and that's what the Republican Party is trying to reach."

Although African-Americans vote heavily in favor of Democrats, black patience with the party may be waning, Cobb said. The Republican strategy is to push its accomplishments to gain black support.

"I think a lot of blacks are tired of having promises broken," he said. "But what we're guilty of in the Republican Party is we've written off the black vote."

Increasing sophistication among black voters is a hopeful trend for GOP candidates, Cobb said. Although African-Americans as a group tend to vote Democrat, blacks have shown a willingness to split the ticket.

"There were days when there were black leaders who could

literally deliver votes," Cobb said. "Those days, frankly, have long since passed. Blacks are becoming more independent and that's where the Republican Party should realize that."

Cobb admits there will be skeptics to the GOP's outreach to minorities, so the results of the party's efforts may not be seen in the immediate future.

"That's not going to happen in the 1990 elections," he said. "It's going to be a long-term project."


Many blacks see the GOP as the party of the affluent "country club" types, Cobb said. And with the recent election of Republican Louisiana state Rep. David Duke, a former Grand Dragon of the Ku Klux Klan, some see it as the party of racists.

"We've got to explain that," Cobb said. "Some of the original Democrats who moved to the Republican Party years ago did so for racially motivated reasons, but that's in the past."

Noting that it is unlikely that the GOP will regain the majority of black support it held before Franklin Roosevelt wooed African-Americans to the Democrats, Cobb said the Republicans only want to be a viable option to those who agree with their principles.

"You're not talking about winning 55 percent of the black vote," he said. "The party should have a broad appeal, not necessarily a majority appeal in the black community."

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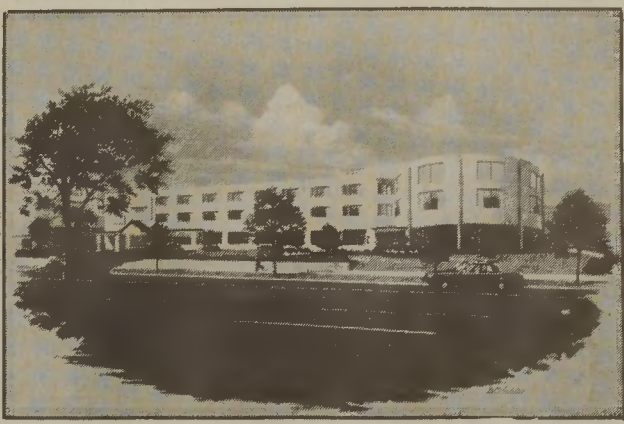
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