

Consolidation comes up short again

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Charlotte-Mecklenburg school board.

But county commissioner Darrel Williams and city council member Greene live in the same precinct and would have to compete against each other.

Under the current plan, the number of "guaranteed" black seats on the smaller governing body would be reduced from five to three.

Consolidation supporters, including some African Americans, say a merged government will be more efficient, removing layers of bureaucracy and permitting the county to speak with one voice on issues which now often divide city and county.

Outside the westside and northwest corridor where admittedly most African Americans in Charlotte live today, there are a growing number of African Americans not as tied to the decades old competition upon which much of today's black-white politics in Charlotte is based.

These African Americans - upwardly mobile, middle and upper middle class professionals - favor the efficiencies allegedly the product of merging two governments into one.

"I think it is senseless to have two governments," said Leroy Hill, an African American who owns a computer sales firm and was a member of the joint City-County Planning Commission. "One government can save a lot of taxpayers dollars. It makes more sense to have one set of people and one management group that would be responsible for all the city and county employees."

However, opponents, among them Bob Davis, chairman of the N.C. and local Black Political Caucus, said consolidation would dilute black voting strength.

Three of eight districts in the plan approved by county commissioners would have African American majorities.

Davis and other African American opponents, most from among the traditional westside communities represented by the Black Political Caucus and the quasi-official Tuesday Morning Breakfast Club, say consolidation, even with three majority black districts, would not be fair to African Americans.

"I plan to campaign against it," said Davis. "If caucus goes with me, fine; if not, I plan to do it individually. I will stand up and say this is wrong..."

Scarborough, who would face

a lower black ratio in a county-wide at large race, said she opposed consolidation because the current system provides checks and balances.

"I do not believe in consolidation," Scarborough said. "I think we have a check-and-balance system with the county and the city (governments)."

The board of county commissioners is controlled by Republicans, who hold five of nine seats, while the council is controlled by Democrats, who hold six of 11 seats.

In addition to African Americans, opposition to consolidation has also come from small towns, such as Matthews and Huntersville. Voters in those areas are worried about a loss of sovereignty and the burden of big-city hassles.

The latest effort has tried to deal with much of the previous opposition and a 25-member charter commission considered several proposals, but recommended a 13-member council, with nine districts, three of them majority-black.



Scarborough

NAACP audit on hold for now

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NAACP accounts and the Kelly M. Alexander Sr. Leadership Institute account at Farmers & Mechanics Bank. Those transactions involved monies donated by businesses, including the R.J. Reynolds Foundation and Sprint/Carolina Telephone, for scholarships in the name of Kelly Alexander's father and mother.

Other concerns include purchases made by Alexander since his suspension, which Alexander blamed on the mistaken use of an NAACP credit card still in his possession.

During the National NAACP convention held in Charlotte in July, Alexander and his brother Alfred, president of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg NAACP chapter, tried unsuccessfully to convince the national board to reinstate Kelly Alexander, but the board refused to do so.

Alston has taken over the running of the state

chapter, including making some changes in committee appointments and closing the state's office space in the Alexander Funeral Home, also home to the local chapter's offices.

Two state chapter employees working out of that office were also fired.

Further changes are on hold, at the request of NAACP chief executive officer and president Kweisi Mfume, but Alston is proceeding with plans for the state conference's annual convention.

The convention will be held at the Benton Convention Center and Adam's Mark Hotel in Winston-Salem Oct. 30-Nov. 2, Alston said.

He said there will be an executive board meeting of the state conference in Goldsboro on Sept. 7.



Alexander

Farrakhan request puts U.S. on spot

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against terrorism. He could rekindle controversy by appearing to help Farrakhan, a divisive figure who has been criticized in the past for anti-Semitic remarks.

Clearing the way for the donation also could help Ghadhafi, who has been laboring for years to improve his standing.

But the rules against doing business with Libya are aimed at preventing economic benefits from flowing to an outlaw state, and it may be politically difficult to deny a gift with the stated purpose of helping American minorities.

Gadhafi pledged the gift when Farrakhan visited Libya as part of his foreign tour last January, which also included stops in Iran, Nigeria and Sudan. Farrakhan also needs separate approval for an upcoming trip to Libya to receive a \$250,000 humanitarian award Gadhafi donates each year.

Farrakhan, organizer of last year's Million Man March, has said he would use the money to mobilize black voters and promote economic opportunity for blacks by building schools and factories, and for charitable purposes.

The Nation of Islam leader formally applied for the necessary exemptions last week, according to a federal official who spoke on condition of anonymity.

An Associated Press reporter who went to the Nation of Islam's Chicago headquarters seeking comment was turned away by staff members, who said spokesman James Muhammed was too busy to talk. Telephone calls to the religious organization were not returned.

During Farrakhan's meeting with Gadhafi, the two men also discussed how to increase the influence of U.S. minorities in this election year and agreed to work together to mobilize "oppressed minorities to play a significant role in American political life," Libya's official

news agency reported.

Gadhafi said then that after years of confronting the U.S. from outside, the plan would provide "a loophole to enter the fortress and to confront it from within."

Farrakhan drew criticism for the trip, which included meetings with Gadhafi, Iraqi President Saddam Hussein and Nigerian ruler Gen. Sani Abacha. White House spokesman Mike McCurry referred to it as "a thugfest tour."

McCurry characterized

Farrakhan's meeting with the Libyan leader as part of an effort by Gadhafi "to worm his way back into the good graces of the world" without turning over two Libyan suspects in the 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland.

After Farrakhan returned to the United States last winter, the Justice Department warned him that he would have to register as a foreign agent if he was carrying out directions from Libya or any other foreign government. Farrakhan denied in a letter that he was doing so.

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Minority members of the charter commission, including Malcolm Graham, Louise Shackelford, Willie Stratford Jr., Mary Maxwell, Jim Ross and Arthur Moore, opposed that plan, favoring one with as many as 15 members to insure adequate black representation.

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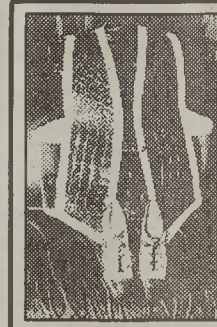
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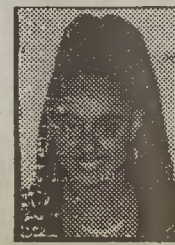
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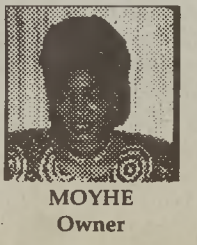
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