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Candidates share platforms at BPW forum

SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Candidates for seats on the governing board of both Hertford and Winfall gave brief messages about their platforms during the candidates' forum sponsored by the Hertford BPW Monday night.

Voters in both municipalities will go to the polls Monday to elect a mayor and two members of council. Polls in both towns will be open from 6:30 a.m.—7:30 p.m.

And that's where the similarities in the elections stop. In Hertford, there are races for both mayor and council. Sid Eley and Erie Haste are on the ballot for mayor. Incumbent Carlton Davenport and challengers Dan Daneker and Jo Ann Morris want the seats now filled by Davenport and Billy Winslow, a veteran councilman who opted not to seek another term.

Eley is presently a councilman and by law did not have to resign to run for mayor, so win or lose, Eley will remain on council. Should Eley win, council will be charged with the duty of choosing someone to fill the final two years of Eley's four-year term. All terms are four years in Hertford.

In Winfall, there are no races; in fact, there are not as many candidates as available seats. Present Mayor Fred Yates is running unopposed to keep his seat. Likewise, political newcomer Ken Rominger is the sole registered candidate for the seats which will be vacated by Jake Chesson and Carol Cooper, neither of whom chose to run again.

According to both Elections Supervisor Eula Forbes and Board of Elections Chairman Paul Smith Jr., the people who get the top number of votes in Winfall will be certified the winners by the elections board after the official canvass. Smith added that following state statutes and the Winfall

charter, the two people with the highest number of votes will be elected to the Winfall council seats. That actually means that two write-in candidates could be elected. Forbes said if those elected by write-in vote don't want to serve, it will be up to them to step down. Once a candidate is duly elected, the board of elections has no jurisdiction to change the outcome.

Winfall council members are elected to four-year terms, the mayor to two years.

All candidates and all members of the board of elections were on hand for the forum.

Each candidate gave a brief statement about qualifications and concerns.

"As mayor, I would try to lead," said Hertford candidate Sid Eley. "I will have the time to go to Raleigh for you and to Washington, D.C."

Eley is teaching at Perquimans Middle School on a one-year contract. He retired last year with 30 years of service. He will not teach next year.

"After that I will have nothing else to do except serve the town," Eley said.

Eley said Hertford is growing and council must look at all areas that affects so that the growth can be positive for present and future residents.

When Haste came to Hertford to operate Hertford Hardware 40 years ago, the downtown was booming. Things have changed, and residents and elected officials must work together to bring about positive change for the future, Haste said.

"The council and the mayor can only do so much without your support," Haste said. "... some things the council can't do. I plan to bring this local government closer to the people."

Haste ended his comments with what may have surprised some of those in the room.

"I think either one of us (Haste or Eley) could do the job well," Haste said. "I really



PHOTO BY SUSAN HARRIS

Candidates for office in Hertford and Winfall share their platforms with voters at the candidates' forum sponsored by the Hertford BPW Monday night at the Senior Center.

mean that."

Daneker, who has lived in Hertford, his wife's hometown, off and on since 1969, said he has no clear agenda.

"All I bring to it (the council) is a fresh look a fresh point of view."

He said he chooses not to see problems but challenges and opportunities.

"It's up to the people of Hertford to make challenges out of opportunities," he said.

Daneker said he is concerned about all the non-taxed property owned by the county inside the city limits, which in effect cuts the tax base.

"The county should do more to help the city," he said.

"I feel that public service gives you a chance to give back to the town and the community," Davenport said when explaining the reason he wants to be elected in his own right. Davenport is presently serving the unexpired term of former councilman Bill Cox.

Davenport lived in Hertford from 1930-1947, then came back full time in 1988 and plans to stay here. Living in other places and seeing how other towns faced challenges and solved problems gives him a broader perspective to help solve Hertford's problems, Davenport said. His background as a licensed civil engineer also gives him insight in to some planning and infrastructure situations.

Morris moved to Hertford 32 years ago and is retired from the administrative office of the courts. She began attending most meetings of the Hertford Town Council several years ago, and has learned a lot about how the town works from her attendance at the sessions.

Morris named three issues in her campaign: more responsive leadership, improve city services, and progress through preservation.

The candidate said every citizen should be treated with respect and courtesy and be informed about projects in progress. Setting priorities to improve city services with the limited funds available is also important. Finally, economic progress can come through preserving resources.

Rominger sees tremendous opportunities in Winfall's future and think it will take more progressive government to capitalize on those opportunities. He said he was impressed when he moved to Winfall that a town of 500 people could put together a sewer system. And that sewer system can be a boon for residential and business growth, he said.

In addition, the U.S. 17 Bypass around Elizabeth City will bring growth south toward Winfall. The town must plan ahead to meet the growth that can come with sufficient services.

"I just feel council has been slow in addressing some of these issues," Rominger said.

He also said the council needs more "decorum," and shows "a lot of bias" in decision-making.

Yates said he's running on his record. He said he was instrumental in putting together the financial package to allow Winfall to put in a sewer system. Further, he said he was open-minded in working with Hertford so that both towns can benefit from its installation.

Both the fire and police departments have been upgraded during his tenure, and phase I of the waterfront park developed with phase II in the works.

In addition to the growth he foresees with the sewer system, both economic and residential growth has also come from the detention center. There are even Winfall signs on U.S. 17 in Edenton and Elizabeth City.

At present, Yates is working through board and committee memberships to bring a COA campus to Perquimans, a recreation facility to Winfall and establish a Winfall Historic District.

"My main concern is to get infrastructure in Winfall and to get a board that will work together," Yates said.

(Editor's note: Hertford candidate profiles are on page 12.)

Change clock, alarm batteries

When you treat yourself to an extra hour of sleep Sunday morning, remember to treat yourself to new smoke alarm batteries, too.

Time changes from Daylight Savings to Eastern Standard Time early Sunday morning.

"More than 12,000 residential fires occur annually in North Carolina, resulting in almost 100 deaths," Long said. "When fire breaks out, a working smoke alarm reduces the risk of dying by nearly 50 percent. It's a simple and inexpensive protection for you and your family."

Tragically, the grave importance of installing and maintaining smoke alarms has not yet been fully realized. Almost half of home fires and three-fifths of fire deaths occur in the share of homes with no alarms. In addition, there are now more homes with smoke alarms that don't work than homes without alarms at all. These poorly maintained units create a false sense of security among occupants.

"The majority of fatal home fires occur at night when people are asleep," Long said. "Contrary to popular belief, the smell of smoke may not wake a sleeping person. In addition, most people who die in home fires are not in the room where the fire starts. Working smoke alarms alert people to fire and give them time to escape in a situation where minutes can mean the difference between life and death."

The first step to home safety is to install smoke detectors on every level of the home - including the basement - and most importantly in all sleeping areas.

Maintain your smoke alarms by:

- Testing them once a month by pushing the test button and listening for the alarm.

- Replace the batteries at least once a year or when the alarm chirps, alerting you that the battery power is low.

- Keep smoke alarms clean from dust and cobwebs. Also, shield the alarm if you are painting around it, and never paint on it.

Finally, the most important thing to remember is to react to the sound of a smoke alarm immediately. Seconds count: make getting out of your home your top priority.

Two vie for Hertford mayor

SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Barring an unforeseen, highly organized write-in campaign, Hertford residents will elect a mayor with experience in local government next Tuesday.

Both Sid Eley and Erie Haste have spent terms on the town's board of commissioners. And both tout their history of service on council and other government and quasi-government boards as a factor in their qualification for the job they seek.

The two candidates for the non-partisan seat were asked the same questions about issues facing the town. Their answers follow.

What is the most pressing problem facing Hertford today? What can elected officials do to overcome this

problem?

Eley: Development of the industrial park (is the most pressing issue facing Hertford today). We need to continue to develop our water, sewer and electrical system upgrades so that we can entice industry to come to our industrial park.

Haste: Upgrading the utilities — and that includes sewer, water and electricity. I think we're going to have to take a real hard look at the budgeting for the funding of the police department improving the infrastructure, particularly of the streets and sidewalks. An increase in ad valorem taxes is not the solution. become better informed about the availability of new and existing grants, the ones we're already getting and the ones we're not tapping and there's some there. There are plenty of them there.



J. Sidney Eley

What role should the town play in economic development? Please discuss the financial aspects of your answer.

Haste: The town should work closer with the county and Winfall in development of the commerce centre. The original agreement when that property was purchased was it was to be a three-way venture.

Eley: We should work with the businesses to get grants and matching funds so that we



T. Erie Haste Jr.

can better stimulate our economy. We should be the ones to go out and seek grants to help businesses and industries, especially historic tourism grants. We should also work on the town-owned properties such as sidewalks and streets to develop them to the fullest and keep them in the best repair. The town should also offer economic incentives to new and expanding businesses.

Please see MAYOR, page 3

Be careful trick-or-treating

When the ghosts and goblins descend on Hertford Sunday evening, police chief Dale Vanscoy hopes they are armed with safety rules.

Vanscoy said the town has set trick-or-treat time as 5-8 p.m. for children age 12 and under.

"Parents, please don't turn the kids loose out on the streets," Vanscoy said he tells parents. "They need adult supervision."

All children should be accompanied by an adult. In addition, children should not walk in the street, and should cross streets only at intersections. Trick-or-treaters should carry flash lights and have reflective tape on costumes. Costumes should not drag the ground, nor should masks impair vision.

WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
High: 69
Low: 44
PARTLY CLOUDY

FRIDAY
High: 67
Low: 49
PARTLY CLOUDY

SATURDAY
High: 68
Low: 49
PARTLY CLOUDY