

Editorials

Board Should Stop Pre-Meeting Meetings

Last week in our editorial opinion, the Herald stated that the city commissioners were not misled by attorneys in their January 24 meeting at which time they called for an ABC referendum.

Since that time, we have been contacted by two city commissioners who said they were "disappointed" in the editorial.

We were right in what we were saying, they said. But they contend that the board was misled.


The misleading, they say, did not take place in the open city board meeting, but instead during a meeting they had with City Attorney George Thomasson prior to that meeting.

According to commissioners Jim Childers and Norman King, Thomasson told the board that the handling of an ABC request is just like receiving a zoning request. Zoning requests are routinely received by the board and forwarded to the Zoning Board for its review and recommendation. It is then returned to the city board and acted upon.

However, such is not the case with an ABC request. ABC referendums may be called by the city board through a formal written request to the City Elections Board, or petitions containing at least 25 percent of the names of the city's registered voters may be presented directly to the Elections Board. Attorney Scott Cloninger, representing Citizens for Legal Control, made those points very clear during the open city board meeting.

The motion to call for a referendum passed 5-1. Commissioner Childers was one of the five to vote for it and says he did so because he was told by Thomasson that the board would merely be passing Cloninger's request on to the Elections Board.

Commissioner King voted against the motion. He asked several questions of Cloninger during the open meeting, and said he did not get clear answers. In that manner, he contends, he was also misled during the open meeting.



Kings Mountain Herald
PUBLISHED EACH THURSDAY

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MEMBER OF NORTH CAROLINA PRESS ASSOCIATION

The Herald is published by Herald Publishing House, P.O. Box 752, Kings Mountain, North Carolina, 28086. Business and editorial offices are located at Canterbury Road-East King Street. Phone 739-7496. Second class postage paid at Kings Mountain, N.C. Single copy 25 cents. Subscription rates: \$10.40 yearly in-state, \$5.20 six months, \$11.44 yearly out of state, \$5.72 six months. Student rates for nine months, \$7.80. USPS 931-040.

Commissioner Jim Dickey told the Herald last week that he, too, understood that the board was merely passing the request on to the Elections Board. The other three commissioners have not made a comment to this paper.

Attorney Thomasson told the Herald that he did not mislead the city board. He claims he explained the law to the board. "They may have not understood, but they were not misled," he said.

Only the board and Thomasson know for sure whether or not there was any misleading. What concerns us now is that they met in secret prior to the regularly scheduled board meeting.

It's been a long-standing practice of this city board to gather in the Mayor's office prior to each board meeting. Reporters from this paper and others who cover the meetings have often interrupted those meetings. When reporters enter, the conversation usually switches to baseball.

We feel that the meeting the city board held prior to the regularly scheduled meeting was in violation of the North Carolina Open Meetings Law, which states that meetings of governing bodies are to be open to the public.

According to Commissioner King, this meeting was held behind closed doors.

The Open Meetings Law permits certain discussions, such as personnel, to be held in executive session. However, according to Doug Johnson of the Attorney General's Office, discussion of an ABC referendum is not an exception to the Open Meetings Law.

There is no penalty for violations of the Open Meetings Law unless a taxpayer is willing to take the board to court. In that case, if a judge rules the board violated the law and if it holds another such meeting in the future, it could be held in contempt of court.

We don't intend to take the city board to court over this matter, but we do feel like it should be brought to the public's attention. The routine gathering of commissioners in the Mayor's office prior to each meeting is not only suspicious but also delays the advertised 7:30 p.m. starting time of the board meeting, usually by as much as 15 to 20 minutes.

We urge the commissioners to spend their free time before the meetings in the lobby and talking to the citizens who attend the meetings. That way, they would erase any question of what is going on in the back rooms and at the same time learn of some of the citizens' concerns.

Congress Should Repeal Interest Withholding Law

If it acts quickly, the new Congress has an opportunity to correct a big mistake in last year's tax law and thereby earn the gratitude of the nation's savers and investors.

It could do this by repealing the provision that would force all banks, savings institutions, corporations, mutual funds and other payers of taxable interest and dividends to withhold federal income tax beginning July 1, 1983. Measures to repeal withholding were introduced in the last Congress and gained wide support. The sponsors are reintroducing the bills in the Congress.

It is hard to see anything good about this plan, which was tacked on to the major tax bill and rushed through before the public even realized what was happening. It could not have been authorized at a worse time, when the economy is trying to climb out of a steep recession and more savings are needed to finance home buyers and industrial revitalization.

But this plan would discourage savers and investors by reducing their yield—and by subjecting them to a confusing set of rules that will complicate the tax calculating and filing process, especially for people with a number of sources of interest and dividend income.

It would force people with low taxable incomes in the previous year to file for exemptions with each of their interest and dividend-paying

sources—and of course many would have difficulty doing this, or simply wouldn't bother trying. To obtain exemptions people would also have to give each interest or dividend payer information about their incomes and in many cases their age, unprecedented which is an invasion of privacy.

It would result in over-withholding for millions of Americans, in effect giving the government a tax-free loan of this money. If you were exempt and failed to notify your interest and dividend-paying sources, you could be liable for a fine of up to \$500, a year in prison, or both. It would be your responsibility to keep track of the waiver status for each source of interest during the year as you close one account, open another or transfer accounts between or within institutions.

The costs to financial institutions and other interest and dividend payers to set up and maintain the computer systems needed to keep track of all these payments and exemptions would be staggering - and would have to be passed on to consumers in one way or another. The Treasury's net income gain as a result of this inconvenience, confusion and extra expense would be relatively small, consisting mostly of faster collection of taxes that would have been paid anyhow.

Most important, this scheme isn't even necessary. Treasury studies show that the vast majority of taxpayers report their interest and divi-

dend income, and that for interest payments already subject to full information reporting to the IRS, compliance is about 97 per cent.

The IRS has an extensive computer system capable of tracking down people who fail to report interest and dividend income. Requiring full information reporting on investments not now subject to it, such as the \$250 billion in U.S. Treasury and U.S. agency obligations, and making more efficient use of this computer system would be a far more desirable way of improving interest and dividend compliance than forcing honest taxpayers to cope with this expensive administrative nightmare.

The new Congress should act decisively and put this withholding scheme where it belongs - in the legislative trash heap.

Locally, Home Federal Savings and Loan and First Federal Savings and Loan are providing forms for persons who do not want 10 percent of their dividends withdrawn. Those persons who feel the same as we do are urged to sign those forms and mail them to their legislators, or give the two savings and loans permission to mail them. We salute Home Savings and First Federal for providing this service to their customers.

Letters

Union Helps People Work Together

To The Editor:

Employees at the Chemical Plant of Lithium Corp. of America voted Wednesday, January 26, 1983, to keep the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers International Union, (OCAW), as their bargaining agent by a 172-To-114 Vote.

The move to decertify the Union began in June 1982 when Richard Hildreth of Kings Mountain filed a petition with the National Labor Relations Board in Winston-Salem, N.C.

This was brought on by a mixture of the economy, long contract negotiations and the company's determination to oust the Union as the bargaining agent for Lithium employees. The company hired the Union Bursting Law Firm of Haynsworth, Baldwin, Miles, Johnson, Greaves and Edwards of Greenville, South Carolina. Also during the negotiations, the company has refused to meet with a federal mediator, saying that they are bargaining in good faith.

In February 1982 the company tried to use an average wage increase of 50¢ to 60¢ per hour as bargaining leverage to "Gut The Contract". When this failed, the decertification movement resulted.

Hugh Jacks, an OCAW representative from the Knoxville, Tennessee District office said that the Union's stance is that the company initiated the election during the contract negotiations.

Keefer Ling, the plant's Industrial Relations Manager says that isn't true, but that if the company used a wage increase as leverage for changing the contract language, it was because that was part of the Collective Bargaining Process. "Collective Bargaining is a give-and-take situation," he said. "You're bargaining with what you've got."

The only controversy during the election occurred at 11:30 p.m. on January 26, 1983, when the company would not allow a group of about 75 employees access to the polling area in the plant cafeteria. The NLRB representative said the voters were allowed to vote and that they should be allowed to witness the vote count. The company, however, refused by stating insurance reasons and the disruption of working employees. This was no problem during voting hours when

the company thought they had the election won. One Union Officer, Bill Worthen, Financial Secretary-Treasurer of Local 3-802, was denied permission to re-enter the cafeteria to get his clip-board after the election because of the disappointment of the outcome by the company officials.

Area newspapers and tv stations were notified of the election results by Hugh Jacks OCAW representative, Helen de Haven, OCAW Lawyer, Austin Harris, President of Local 3-802 and Bill Worthen, Financial Secretary-Treasurer of Local 3-802, but due to their Anti-Union stanced failed to report on the election. Had the union been decertified, it would have been the headlines of every newspaper in the area and broadcast on every television and radio station.

A lot of people and even some union members don't understand what a union is. It is simply bringing together the interest for two or more for the purpose of being one which results in unity. This is the same goal that we try to reach in our churches, boy scouts or any other organization that we may be a part of. It takes unity to survive and accomplish the goals we set in life, no matter how strong we may be, we will always need the help of someone. No man's an island. When we work together and pull together we can accomplish what we set out to do.

William W. Worthen

She's Against ABC

Dear citizens:

Again we face the issue of voting for our city to be wet or dry. A decision that will affect every life in the city of Kings Mountain.

From my understanding, Mr. Dickey said, quote, "Everyone has the right to vote," and true it is. But we must always consider the source and condition of the voter.

Of course, if someone wants a drink, they will get it one way or the other; but why make it easy when it affects other lives around them; to be abused, children to go hungry, families to go without Christmas, without clothes, medicine, and etc.

People do have their own right to choose whether or not to drink and that is their business, but I think it becomes our business when it affects us as citizens of Kings Mountain.

Have we not had enough tragedies in Kings Mountain just in the last few years without asking to put it in the stores and on the streets of Kings Mountain?

Look at the other cities such as Charlotte, Gastonia, state of South Carolina. What has it done for them?

Sure, you always have the argument of how taxes can help and should be put in our pockets rather than other towns. But I ask you, can we live with ourselves knowing what it cost those who are hurting from alcohol? Besides, it takes more tax to build rehabilitation clinics for the alcoholics than taxes could ever come in.

I as a concerned citizen, just ask you to think and pray about your vote, and you should vote and remember we are all going to give an account for our actions one day.

Thank you,
Diane Barrett
Kings Mountain



Photo by Gary Stewart

A.T. CHARACTERS - Academically talented students at East Elementary School recently read books about famous people, then dressed as the characters they studied and had classmates guess who they were. Pictured, front row, left to right are Susan Sanders as Betsy Ross, Heather Calhoun as John Paul Jones, Kimberly Sutherland as Mark Twain, Danielle Nolen as Nancy Lopez, Michelle

Corn as Dorothy Hamill, Vania Elliott as Dolly Madison, Jennifer Weidaw as Florence Nightingale and Holly Harmon as Betsy Ross. Back row, Allison Barnette as Richard Chase, Adella Robertson as Helen Keller, Rubin Orr as Enoch Crosby, Steven Robbins as Mickey Mantle, Jerry Moore as Babe Ruth, Michael Weld as Mark Spitz and Dustin Lee as Mohammad Ali.



GROVER CHARACTERS - Students in the Academically Talented classes at Grover School read books about famous people recently and reported on them Tuesday. As a part of the report, they dressed as the characters they read about. Pictured above are, front row, left to right, Brad Melton as Abe Lincoln, Shane Crocker as Magic Johnson, Vandy Sexton as Larry Mahan, Stephan Black as Curt Thomas, Brandon Morgan as John F. Kennedy and Shea Horton as George

Washington. Secod row, Angela Hawkins as Pochahontas, J.J. Wells as Clara Barton, Dena Ramsey as Marie Tall Chief, Kelli Broome as Betsy Ross, Sharon Horton as Tracy Austin, Chris Brown as Renaldo Nehemiah and Leigh Anne Stewart as Clara Barton. Back row, Tonya McCree as Betsy Ross, Charlene Hardin as Rosalyn Carter, Kelli Herndon as Florence Nightingale, Dawn Hardin as Nellie Blye, Crystal Grant as Hellen Keller and Charlene Martin as Laura Ingalls.