

# Will Kings Mountain Harold predict 6 more weeks of winter? Happy Groundhog Day!



## Kings Mountain Herald

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### Terms limits proposed



Gene White addresses City Council

A proposal to limit terms of office of city officials to two years effective with the upcoming city election in October was proposed Tuesday to City Council by retired city planning director Gene White.

Before the marathon meeting was over at almost 1 a.m. Wednesday, White had fired off several blasts at Councilmen Rick Murphrey, Ralph Grindstaff and Dean Spears, calling for the resignations of Spears and Murphrey for alleged violations of the public trust, and laid the blame for the city's money woes at the feet of City Council which he said had lost credibility and confidence of the citizens.

He also said he would circulate a petition demanding that city officials get the billing system in shape, stop conflicts of

interest and favors, get employees out of politics, change auditors and make no utility adjustments including field estimates unless they are made by Council in open session.

White said that 413 signatures of registered voters is required for a petition to modify the present form of government in which the mayor and seven council members serve four year terms.

Kings Mountain has a total of 4,130 registered voters and state statutes require 10 percent or 413 petitioners to request the change.

"I have checked with the North Carolina League of Municipalities on the legal process and if this is what Kings Mountain citizens want I feel the process can be completed in

See Terms, 2-A

### Members accused of conflict of interest

First term councilmen Rick Murphrey and Dean Spears were accused of conflict of interest by former City Planning Director Gene White Tuesday night and both vehemently denied it.

White said that both commissioners should abstain from voting in Council meetings or utility meetings on discussions that involve Spectrum Dyed Yarns, the city's largest water user of which Murphrey is Vice-President of Sales, and Ruppe Hosiery of which White charged Spears held stock in the company.

Spears said he sold his stock on November 30, 1978 in Ruppe, Dixon and Spears which

operated in the old Lambeth Rope building on Phifer Road for 12 years in the 1970's.

White claimed Murphrey should have also excused himself from the utility committee and board meetings when discussions began about raising water rates and making concessions about gas rates and Spears should have excused himself as a voting member of the utility committee when discussions arose about errors in under-billing of Ruppe and seven other customers for electricity charges.

"Why are we billing Ruppe?" White quoted Spears from his city board meeting notes.

See Conflict, 2-A

### Developer says Gene White had vendetta against him

The city's running of water lines to Downing Street Subdivision and reimbursement of money to the developer drew sharp criticism from former city planning director Gene White Tuesday.

City Commissioner Rick Murphrey labeled the dispute as an ongoing feud between White and developer Jim Lybrand.

Lybrand said after the meeting White had a vendetta against him.

"You brow beat me into making payments which were improper," White told City Councilmen Rick Murphrey and Dean Spears, who promptly denied the accusations.

Murphrey said Council voted unanimously in January 1994 to run the water line the route that White suggested after a meeting they attended with White, Jim Lybrand and then City Manager George Wood soon after the two commissioners took office in 1993.

"We thought taking a short cut would save the city money and George thought so too," said Murphrey.

"This is really a moot point because the board took action on the request."

White said he took the incident as a "screaming personal attack" because he refused to do something that was a violation of sub-division regulations.

"Clean it up anyway you wish but it was wrong," he said to a packed house at Tuesday night's Council meeting.

"You insisted on making the payments and you insisted that I agree with the illegal payments."

We're not talking politics here."

Spears, angry at the insinuations by White of personal attacks against him, said "I ran for Council because money was being spent improperly."

"What is the issue?" asked Spears.

"This is just another example of why we have a credibility problem now," said White who said that sub-division ordinances had been mandated since 1988.

White said at stake was the allocation of 50 percent of cost for installation of water/ sewer lines outside and inside the city to the developer when the policy is that the developer pay 100 percent of the cost of lines run outside the city limits.

White said that the commissioners questioned the policy if the city limits were "nearby" as in the case of the Downing Street development near the Country Club.

White maintains that costs of water/sewer construction must be fair to all and that previous developers wanted the same concessions and had not received them.

White said Council took action on January 25, 1994 on a motion by Murphrey, seconded by Councilman Jerry White to reimburse Lybrand for 50 percent of the total cost of the project and portion of line inside and outside the city limits.

White asked Council members if they understood the situation and if they wanted to rescind their action.

See White, 2-A



Huge crowd attends Tuesday night's meeting of Kings Mountain City Council

### Council urged to keep budget

City auditor Darrell Keller, backed by Craig Barfield and Vance Holleman of the state treasurer's office and City Manager Chuck Nance, urged Kings Mountain City Council to stick with the 1994-95 city budget and not roll back rates and cut city taxes as Mayor Scott Neisler pushed.

And representatives of the Local Government Commission said the recent downgrade by bond and security raters is evidence that the city is in the worst financial condition in 40 years.

"Focus on reality and not speculation and stop tearing the city apart with politics," said Keller who challenged the mayor to be a cheerleader and not a divider.

"It's going to take two to three years of a tight conservative budget and cutting of spending to come out of this serious financial condition which did not happen over night," said Keller.

Barfield agreed with Keller's assessment and said Kings Mountain's money problems started in 1989-90 when City Council cut the tax rate from 50 to 38 cents per \$100 valuation.

"This is a serious situation," said Barfield. "We were here in May and we are back here tonight."

Holleman said the city took a

step toward better financial health by upping user fees and taxes and instituting tighter budgetary controls.

But Mayor Scott Neisler said funds were haphazardly mis-handled. Councilman Rick Murphrey immediately objected to his remarks.

"Have you seen my memorandum to Council on my proposal to get the 8 percent back into the general fund?" asked Neisler of Holleman and Barfield.

The mayor pushed the two visitors for responses to five pages of questions but both said they needed more information and would be happy to take the material back to Raleigh with them.

"I feel like I'm on trial here,"

said Barclay.

"I feel like I'm only getting part of the picture from your questions," said Holleman.

"You have been seeing only part of the picture," said Neisler.

"You are talking maybe someday that you'll have money in city coffers but at June 30 you had no cash," said Barclay.

"I see nothing to be overly optimistic about," said Holleman.

Barclay said the city's property tax is way below that of other towns with the average in excess of 47 cents per \$100. Kings Mountain's tax rate is 36 cents per \$100 valuation.

Commissioner Norma  
See Budget, 2-A



Jim Rennirt of Eaton Corporation, City of Kings Mountain Water/Wastewater Director Walt Ollis, making presentation, Mike Killian of Motor Panels, City Pretreatment Director Ronnie Tignor, making presentation, and Bill Thompson of Polygram Manufacturing & Distributing, left to right, are pictured at the first annual industry appreciation breakfast hosted by the city Tuesday.

### Industries cited for good record

Three Kings Mountain industries - Motor Panels, PMDC and Eaton Corporation - were honored Tuesday by the City of Kings Mountain with plaques for complying with all water pretreatment regulations mandated by the Environmental Protection Agency and the state.

Seven other industries - Anvil Knitwear, Clevmont, Spectrum, Mauney Hosiery, Kings Plush, Buckeye Anodizing & Stamping and Dye Masters were honored with certificates after no reportable significant non-compliance was noted for four consecutive reporting periods.

Forty-seven representatives of local industry attended the first annual appreciation breakfast at Holiday Inn. Industry picked up the tab.

Ollis pointed to industry on

the KM water/sewer system as diversified - from producers of truck bodies and transmissions to airplane fabric yarns for famous designers to labels, battery equipment manufacturing, machinery rebuilding, CD manufacturing, finished weaving apparel, boilers, hydraulic components, magnetic conveyors and other military applications.

Eaton Corporation installed its second generation treatment system. Water was processed off site and the permitted discharge reduced to an average of 3,600 gallons per day, a 85.6 percent reduction in the original permit. PMDC's usage dropped from 25,000 gallons per day, permitted, to 2300 gallons every other day through what Ollis termed a "terrific recycling program", squeezing every drop

from a gallon of water from the process.

Motor Panels complied with all categorical requirements. Parameters each month were well below permitted allocations.

Kings Plush began a major cleanup on its own. A portable belt press was used to clean out a lagoon and a diffused air system was installed.

A heat recovery system and new more efficient numeric dyeing machines were installed at Mauney Hosiery. A rotary filtering system removes solids from discharge.

Buckeye Anodizing recycles water. Orders and production have increased.

Combustion Engineering and Commercial Intertech were leaders in waste control.

See Industry, 3-A