

Black teenager fought in Battle of Kings Mountain

Page 4-A

Mountaineers getting ready for baseball season

Page 9-A

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Council begins gas expansion

City Council awarded the first contract for labor in Phase I of a major gas expansion project to M&R Utilities at \$175,425 Tuesday night.

Prior to letting the bid Council heard a progress report by Utilities Supt. Jimmy Maney who reported that a survey of the expansion area revealed that 155 people want to sign up as quickly as possible for natural gas. However, Maney said that only eight potential customers responded to the door-to-door survey in the Midpines Community and this may mean that this area may be excluded until a later expansion.

Maney said that the bids for the initial work were competitive. Other bidders were Appling Boring, \$179,760; A&L Underground, \$188,335; Hall Contracting, \$215,560; and Edwards Pipeline, \$230,281.

"We will go as far as we can with the money available for expansion," said Maney.

Councilman Ralph Grindstaff, who had requested the survey of the expansion area, asked if the city could break-even on the costs with 155 positive customers.

Maney said the payback for 155 customers would be in about six years but he said he anticipated that more people would sign on. He said city workers called at 386 homes and of this group 61 were not interested in buying city gas, 78 were uncertain and 92 others were not at home.

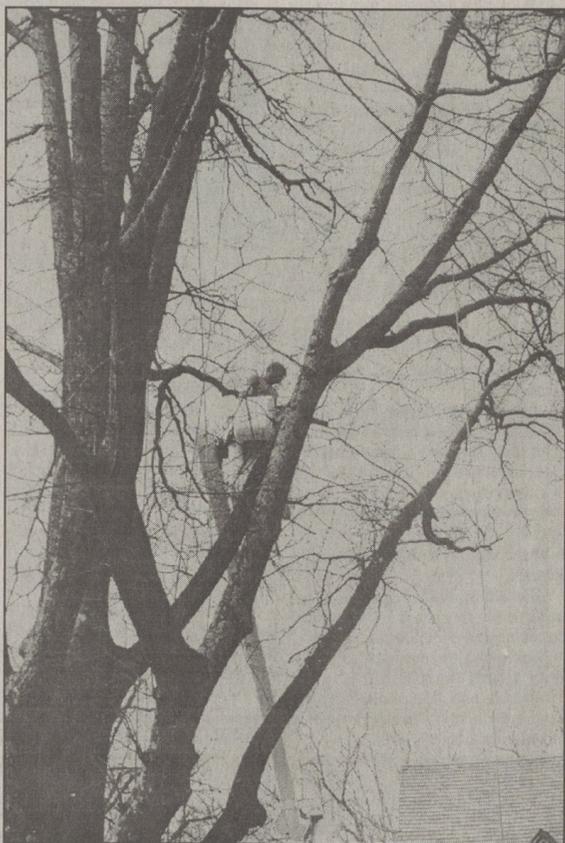
"We have about 40 percent of the area committed which runs from the White Plains area almost to Bethlehem Estates," said Maney.

The board okayed the spending \$302,000 including operating needs which would bring the gas department into state compliance. This would include additional personnel for the remainder of the 1995-96 year; contract labor to repair leaks and valves before road paving gets underway; \$45,000 for a trencher and boring unit and \$9,000 for a computer and plotter for mapping.

In other actions, Council:

Authorized Public Works Supt. Karl Moss to proceed with paving of 30 streets with Powell Bill monies using a prioritized list and \$72,000 additionally for sidewalks on Cansler Street. Moss said water/sewer and gas department crews will need to do some work on leak repairs, valves, etc. before the paving gets underway. Council authorized the purchase of a truck with dump bed at cost of \$45,000 and a 3/4 ton pickup truck at cost of \$15,000 from Powell Bill funds.

See Contract, 2-A



UP A TREE - Larry Watts of Denton's Tree Service trims huge oak trees in the lawn of First Presbyterian Church. The trees, estimated at between 75 and 100 years old, were damaged during the recent ice storm.

City takes first step toward major annexation

A major annexation plan which will take in 758 acres, 150 people and Firestone and major industries got the go-ahead by City Council Tuesday night which set public hearing for May 14.

The effective date to begin rolling services is 13 months away after the city passes an ordinance, June 30, 1997, with June 30, 1999 targeted as the completion of Phase I of the utilities construction.

Richard Flowe of Benchmark Inc. said the step by the board initiates the formal procedure and opens "the window of opportunity for Kings Mountain."

In addition to the Firestone Fibers and Textile Plant and other industries along the Kings Mountain Highway interchange, the annexation would include the Sara Lee plant off N. C. 161 and Bali, Commercial Intertech and South textile plants on Canterbury Road.

A total of 17 businesses, including nine on the Canterbury Road area and eight on Second Street and Kings Mountain Industrial Park, are included.

The annexation would bring in more than \$29 million in property worth more than \$100,000 per year in property taxes to the city.

Council was enthusiastic about the proposals. Councilman Rick Murphrey asked if there was a way to expedite the schedule to move faster.

"We have always felt that these areas were a part of Kings Mountain," said Mayor Scott Neisler.

The city is moving to overcome money shortfalls, the recent loss of revenue by the closing of Clevefont Mills and the forthcoming loss of revenue by new water recycling procedures underway at the Spectrum Industries, the city's largest user of water and natural gas.

The city will probably vote to annex the two areas as soon as 10 days after the public hearing.

The annexation study prepared by Benchmark Inc. had indicated earlier that the annexation would be a good move for the city.

See Annexation, 3-A

Fired city employee to get his job back

Former fired city employee Franklin Brackett, 60, is a happy man.

He sued the city to get his job back and an out-of-court settlement reached between the city and



BRACKETT

Brackett will return him to work and give him a cash settlement.

City Personnel Director Bud Rhea confirmed Wednesday that Brackett will be offered a job with the city as soon as one becomes available for which he is qualified.

Brackett filed a suit against the city alleging that his freedom of speech was violated after he was fired from the Public Works Department in 1991.

Brackett said he was offered a job by the city this week as a garbage puller but he turned it down.

"I have been told that as soon as another job comes open that I will given the first choice and will be paid my former salary," he said.

City Council went into closed session at 9:15 p.m. Tuesday to discuss a personnel matter, reportedly involving Brackett, but Mayor Scott Neisler announced that no action was taken.

See Brackett, 3-A

Business association is off and running

A six-member committee was formed Thursday by a newly-organized Kings Mountain Business Association to formalize a mission statement and serve as the nominating committee for new officers to be elected March 19.

Joe Smith, Darrell Austin, Gary Cook, Kathy Neilly, Linda Allen and Amy Smith were chosen by the 15 people who attended the first meeting at Ashley's on Railroad Avenue.

"I'm tickled to death that someone's doing this," said Joe Smith,

who is associated with Foust Textiles.

Two new business owners, McNeilly of Hope Chest Interiors and Allen of Ashley's, sponsored the meeting and sent out 68 letters last week to local merchants and businessmen and women inviting them to attend. Both Allen and McNeilly said they were pleased with the response.

During the meeting the group agreed that the promotion of Kings Mountain businesses and increased shopping at home will be goals.

"We've got to get that small town pride back," said Stella Putnam of Neisler Brothers. "It's hard to get people in this town to realize what's here."

Putnam suggested that all members of the new group make a commitment to visit each other and send customers to the various stores.

Amy Smith, who just opened Secret Garden on East King Street, said she was impressed with the friendliness of this town. Smith and her husband will host the

March 19 meeting of the group at 7 p.m.

But Shirley Allen, a longtime resident and owner of Christmas Emporium, warned that it took her new business at least six years to get up and going.

"Just don't give up. You are right on track and I support you," she said.

Jeannie Moore, executive director of the Kings Mountain Chamber, was enthusiastic about the new venture to attract business to the community.

"There is no limit to what can be accomplished if we all work together and don't care who gets the credit," she said.

Neely, of Grover, said she moved her business to Kings Mountain because of the town's charm and character and its potential to attract a thriving business. She called for business owners to work at getting "that small town feeling back."

Amy Smith suggested that the

See Business 2-A

Moss Lake Commission to study fee increase

Roof repair bids too high

The old post office roof may not be replaced by City Council in the near future.

Bids came back higher than the \$14,000 figure Council budgeted in November to make the repairs and now Council, by vote of 4-3 Tuesday night, is authorizing the city manager to talk with members of the Kings Mountain Historical Association in the hopes that grant

money can be used to help fix it.

Both interim city manager Gary Hicks and Councilman Ralph Grindstaff said the city had more critical priorities.

"We have a leaking roof at Moss Lake and we had to borrow money to repair the Police Department and we have just inherited a bunch of problems since the city gave the

See Post Office, 2-A

A proposal by the city staff to increase fees at Moss Lake for the 1996-97 year was referred to Moss Lake Commission for further study Tuesday after Mayor Scott Neisler was joined by several Council members in questioning the increase particularly for fishermen and boaters which the mayor termed "excessive."

Finance Director Maxine Parsons proposed that the family plan, which covers land lease, boating, and fishing permits, pier and ramp, be increased from \$200

to \$300; the land lease fee from \$150 to \$250; pier dock fees from \$25 to \$50, ramp and pump permit renewal, all from \$25 to \$50, boat permit for outside residents from \$25 to \$50, fishing permits for outside residents from \$30 to \$50, fishing permits from \$10 to \$25 and guest fishing permits from \$10 to \$25. Inside city residents would pay half the permit costs.

The Moss Lake Commission heard a proposal from Parsons at the recent meeting and voted unanimously to look at it further before

making a recommendation to Council.

The city last raised the annual lease fee \$25 on March 7, 1994 for the 1994-95 fiscal year.

In a related action, Council approved the fiscal year change for Moss Lake to make the 1996-97 fiscal year run 14 months from May 1, 1996 to June 30, 1997 to coincide with the City's fiscal year. Parsons said that the invoices need to go out April 1 and statements printed if the new changes are to go into effect in May.



New Kings Mountain police officers were administered the oath of office during a ceremony Thursday afternoon at City Hall. Pictured, front row, left to right, are Police Chief Bob Hayes, Mayor Scott Neisler, and new officers Penny Fulton and Scott Daves. Back row, new officers Tony Reeves, Mike Kahn, Brent Harp and Jimmy Buff.

Inside at a glance

Inside

- Birthdays.....5B
- Church News.....3B
- Classifieds.....6-7A
- Obituaries.....2A
- Opinions.....4A
- Police.....10B
- Schools.....6-9B
- Senior Citizens.....4B

Outside

Cooler today with highs near 50. Turning colder tonight. Chance of freezing rain Friday and Saturday.



Kings Mountain High students fill the stage for a rehearsal of "You Ain't Nothing But a Hound Dog," one of the nine dance numbers from the hit musical "Grease" which will be presented this weekend at B.N. Barnes Auditorium. See story and another picture on page 6-B