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KM officials say this is not a 'wise' idea

Gaston commissioner wants to abolish ET jurisdiction

City officials are not happy about a piece of legislation being proposed by former Bessemer City Mayor Bill Wise that would abolish a city's extra-territorial jurisdiction and restrict annexation.

The Gaston County commissioner has faxed a copy of his proposed bill to Mayor Scott Neisler.

The Gaston County board conducted a first reading of the proposed bill at last Thursday's meeting and is expected to take a vote on it at the April 10 meeting.

Wise says if his proposal is favorable to Gaston County Commissioners and then it fails to become state law that he hopes Gaston County

Commissioners will introduce a local bill for Gaston County only. Kings Mountain is part of Gaston County.

"This is a terrible idea for cities because it would hamper everything you try to put in place that promotes the best growth and development possible," said Kings Mountain Planning Director Steve Killian.

Mayor Neisler agreed, saying that he is opposed to local initiatives on an issue which should be statewide.

"I have a real problem that a county would try to put restrictions on annexation," he said. Neisler says the present state law works well for all mu-

nicipalities.

"It is healthy for cities to annex, although I agree that some folks don't want it," he said.

Wise's bill would abolish the extra territorial jurisdiction in all municipalities in counties that enforce a county-wide zoning ordinance and other land use regulations. Wise said he is proposing the bill because of a growing controversy and concern expressed by citizens opposed to land use regulations imposed by local governments.

"There are valid arguments on both sides of the issue both from a municipal standpoint for planning for future growth to the citizen standpoint that citizens who are regulated by government

units can't participate in electing the decision makers," Wise said.

But Killian says representatives of extra territorial areas sit on all boards, noting that Gaston County has representatives on both the city planning board and the board of adjustments.

A second bill that Wise wants Gaston County to introduce would require unanimous city council action to approve any annexation. Neisler says the present state statutes do not require unanimous action of a governing body.

Wise says if either of the two bills fail to pass in the General Assembly he'd like to see Gaston County introduce a local bill for Gaston County only.

Holiday Inn Express gets okay for tower

Holiday Inn Express got the green light Tuesday morning for its building plans for an estimated \$3 million dollar three story 79-unit complex from the Kings Mountain Board of Adjustment.

The board approved a request from architect F. Thomas Murphy for a hip roof to be placed on a tower that will exceed the 50 feet minimum height requirements in the city building codes. Only the roof part will exceed by eight feet four inches the height requirements.

The rest of the structure complies with the building codes, according to Planning Director Steve Killian and Building Inspector Jeff Putnam.

Holiday Inn Express plans to build on Highway 161 South across from Falls Exxon in the city's one mile perimeter. No construction projection has been announced and as of Tuesday no building permits had been purchased by the developers.

Putnam said the city questioned only the hip roof portion of the building. He said the roof line falls within the 50 feet requirement but the elevation is in the tower portion of the roof. "It will look like a steeple or tower at the top of the building and protrudes higher than 50 feet," he told members of the board which included Chairman Bob Myers, Herman Greene, Lou Ballew, Bud Ballard and Jim Belt. Member Clayvon Kelly was absent due to the death of his mother and Roger Goforth was absent.

Myers said the 50 feet stipulation applies only to buildings in the general business district, noting that Firestone's new building on I-85 rises 120 feet in height but is in an industrial district.

Killian said that it's possible that the Holiday Inn Express and any other developments in the area of 161 South could be annexed by the city and the zoning changed to industrial in future years.

Builders of the new Holiday Inn Express said in their application for a variance that the tower would enhance the visibility of the new business.



SPRINGTIME SCENE - Tom and Martha Meacham relax in their yard where Mrs. Meacham's green thumb is showing. Hundreds of flowering plants are in bloom this springtime season.

Meachams have green thumbs

Retirement for Martha and Tom Meacham is watching their garden grow.

The Meacham yards at 803 Rhodes Avenue is picture perfect this spring with 190 pink, white, and brilliant red azalea bushes, colorful pansy beds, thrift, roses, white dogwoods, crab apple and irises in abundance.

Tom, 79, gives all the credit for the green thumb to his wife of 22 years. Tom built the house in 1958 and met Martha Hope, a widow, seven years before they decided to tie the knot in 1975.

Marriage the second time around has been good for the Meachams who have enjoyed traveling with Willard's Tours, gardening, and enjoying their family.

"We met at an American Legion dance and then never missed a dance or bingo game for years until Tom fell and broke his hip in 1994," said Mrs. Meacham.

Tom said The Kings Mountain Herald he bought at

a vending machine turned out to be expensive for him one Wednesday evening about 9 p.m.

"I drove up to Harris-Teeter to get a paper and just slipped and the next thing I knew Chief Bob Hayes was getting an ambulance to take me to the hospital," said Meacham.

The hip injury has curtailed his dancing fun but hasn't curbed his love for going to the beach. But he says he has been homebound due to the injury and was in the hospital four weeks and in rehabilitation another four weeks before he could return home.

"Martha wanted to work in the yard this week or we'd probably be at the beach," said Tom.

Martha has always loved flowers but found a perfect place for her hobby in the large back yard and front yard of their home where she fertilizes her plants with 10-10-10 in February and then waters when needed.

Tom admits that he is the chief supervisor of the gardening projects. Occasionally he will drive to the store to get something his wife needs for the yard. He says he loves to see the flowers bloom in the spring and enjoys walking the block and looking at the beauty of springtime in the Linwood section of the city.

Martha and Tom Meacham became Mr. and Mrs. February 20, 1975 in a home wedding. A Methodist minister from Bessemer City heard the exchange of vows but didn't arrive for the ceremony until about 9 p.m. so the couple postponed their honeymoon until the next day when they headed for the beach. Tom has two sons and a grandson by a former marriage, Harold and Leland Meacham, and Martha has a daughter, Dottie White and a son, Dennis Hope, four grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Martha is a

See Meacham, 3A

Public hearing set on school budget

Public hearing by the Kings Mountain Board of Education on the proposed \$4.4 million current expense budget for 1997-98 will feature Monday's 7 p.m. meeting at Central School.

The budget calls for a one cent supplemental tax hike - from 18 cents to 19 cents per \$100 valuation - if approved as expected by the Cleveland County Board of Commissioners.

The tax hike would help implement a non-certified salary schedule estimated to cost \$200,000. The increased taxes would bring in approximately \$90,000.

The budget also calls for an increase of 8.8 percent - or \$2.1 million - from county appropriations which Supt. Dr. Bob McRae will ask for in a meeting with county commissioners later this month.

The proposed budget also provides for employment of a system-wide technology assistant at cost of \$25,000 and no new teaching positions. The budget would provide for custodial uniforms, a \$2 per child increase for instructional supplies, and \$36,000 for a limited English program, a non-funded federal mandate that requires school systems to make the primary language available to every student. The system will also fund from local funds the salary of a school resource officer who had been paid for two years through a grant that provided 75 percent of his salary.

The proposed budget also provides for matching benefits if the General Assembly approves a proposed 8 percent hike in pay for the certified staff next year.

Anticipated revenues in the budget include \$5,000 from the ABC Board; \$1.690 million from the supplemental tax; \$100,000 from local government sales tax; \$2.1 million from county appropriations; \$80,634 from inventory tax; \$134,085 from Gaston County tax; \$14,000 from tuition; \$120,000

See Hearing, 3A

Graduation policy adds more credits

New graduation requirements under consideration by the school board include minimum requirements set by the state and an additional level of diploma.

The new policy would require a student to complete 27 units of study to graduate from the Class of '99 and thereafter at Kings Mountain High School.

The Kings Mountain Board of Education will hear a first reading of the policy at Monday's 7 p.m. meeting at Central School.

The policy stipulates that a graduating senior in 1999 and thereafter would complete five units of English, including composition, three each of math, science, and social studies, one unit of PE/Health, one unit of PE or three years of marching band, and 11 electives.

In addition to the required units, a student must make a passing score or be exempt (students who are exempt receive a certificate) from the North Carolina Competency Test in math, reading and writing. Beginning with the Class of 1998 students must pass the new North Carolina Competency test in reading and math.

Seniors in the Class of 1998 would complete 24 units, four of English, three each of math, science and social studies, one each of PE/Health and PE or three years of marching band and nine electives.

The policy stipulates that beginning with the Class of '99 a student must complete his or her maximum potential credits minus five units in order to graduate from Kings Mountain High School. Maximum potential credit is defined as the individuals' opportunity to earn all high school credits available within each academic year. Maximum credits available for the Class of '98 total 30 while maximum credits available in

See Graduation, 3A

Sign project hits roadblock

"You'll get someone killed," warned Sgt. Bob Myers Tuesday morning about a proposed new sign the Kings Mountain Aging Department wants up at the city-owned Senior Center on North Piedmont Avenue.

Myers, chairman of the city's Board of Adjustment meeting at City Hall, said one pedestrian was killed crossing the street from the busy Center some years ago and that an eight foot sign would block visibility.

"North Battleground is a straight shot to King Street and a sign would be hazardous to people entering traffic at the south side of the building because they would be unable to see oncoming traffic," he said.

Myers said although the Police Department is cracking down on speeders, that truck traffic is extremely high in the area and speeding at that intersection directly across from the Center remains a problem.

The five members of the board tabled the matter until the May meeting to get more input on traffic concerns.

City Building Inspector Jeff Putnam agreed with Myers that a primary concern in placement of a new sign is poor visibility of drivers.

Aging Director Monty Thornburg said a problem is that visitors to the Center use the entrance at the traffic light on Piedmont to also exit the parking area.

"If everyone would observe the speed limit and use the entrance at the light only for entrance that would take the hazard concern out of it," said Myers. "But getting them to do that is another thing."

Jim Belt suggested that if the city removes one cross tie from a flower bed and redraws the sign design that the sign could be put up in conformance with the sign requirements.

Closing the entrance on the south side of the Depot Center to make entrance only on the east side with the exit from the parking lot at the south of the building past the red caboose was also an idea expressed by members of the board of adjustments.

But Myers said motorists incur a large drainage ditch at the south end of the lot and that even exiting at the correct place causes traffic problems.

"If we can prevent accidents, that's what we need to do," the KMPD officer said.

Herman Greene agreed that with the trees on the lot in front of the Senior Center there is poor visibility but Thornburg said the city wants to put the sign inside the present flower bed at the front of the building.

Putnam said the sign must be placed no closer than five feet

See Sign, 3A



NEW SIGN PROPOSED - The Kings Mountain Senior Center's plans for a new sign hit a snag Tuesday morning when members of the Kings Mountain Board of Adjustment tabled until May action on the request. Increased traffic at the site and poor visibility could keep the sign from going up.