

Senior Center, W. King greenway projects approved

By BEN LEDBETTER
Staff Writer

The new City of Kings Mountain Senior Center received more support from the Kings Mountain City Council at its monthly meeting Tuesday.

Council passed a motion awarding a contract to Office Supply Services for \$46,191.64 for providing furniture for the new building being built near the intersection of East King St. and U.S. Highway 74 Bypass.

Currently, the Senior Center is housed in the former depot building on Piedmont Avenue.

City of Kings Mountain Aging Director Monty Thornburg said he was pleased with the progress the new building was making.

"It is moving along very fast and very quickly," Thornburg said.

Mayor Rick Murphrey said the new center can be used by more groups in the city.

"It's going to be a good place for community

events," Murphrey said.

The building is expected to be finished by the first week of September.

Construction manifested itself in other parts of the meeting as council awarded a contract to Pavilon Construction for construction and grading at a new greenway for the area near Watterson St.

Pavilon's bid came in just over \$60,000 and the council passed an amendment to pay for it.

Al Moretz, with Moretz Engineering, said bids were opened on the new playground, which is set to be built in September, but there was no discussion of it Tuesday night.

Council member Howard Shipp, who said he has been in touch with churches in the area, said the community is behind the project.

In other business, the council:

- Approved an agreement with a company known as NVR and Potts Creek LLC. to build a

3,000 foot gas line by the end of October. City Manager Jimmy Maney said NVR is a prospective customer who will be identified later. Under the agreement, the city will operate and maintain the lines and will waive all tap fees for water, sewer and gas lines.

- Approved the purchase of an \$80,000 roll-off container truck from Carolina Environmental Systems. Currently, Kings Mountain pays Cleveland County \$30,000 to pick up garbage containers. Since the \$30,000 is already in the budget, the council approved a \$50,016.5 budget amendment to pay for the truck. Maney said no additional personnel will be needed, and the truck is expected to be paid in approximately three years.

- Adopted a proposed fee schedule changes for the Building Codes and Zoning Enforcement Office. Holly Galloway, Building Codes and Zoning Enforcement Director said the last time fees were changed were in 1998.

One of the increases was a \$30 increase in the minimum permit fee, from \$20 to \$50. Other additions to the schedule included a \$50 fee for day-care inspections and a \$25 fee for minimum housing.

- Approved a motion for Christina Jones to withdraw her application with the chance to re-submit a request for rezoning from Residential R-8 to General Business (G-B) at 808 North Piedmont Avenue.

- Honored the Kings Mountain All-Star Dixie Youth baseball team. The team won the state tournament in Biscoe and will represent North Carolina in the Dixie Youth AAA World Series on August 13 in Bedford, Va.

Mayor Murphrey read a proclamation and presented the players and coaches with copies of the announcement. Council also approved a \$1,500 appropriation for expenses to the tournament.

Study

From 1A

itors," minutes from the November 2, 1992 Board of Commissioners meeting said.

The redistricting committee recommended two at-large commissioners be added to the

five-member board with the proposed change to district elections.

For the change to occur, four commissioners would have had to be elected in 1994.

"...Many counties in North Carolina now have larger commissions, some even have nine

members," minutes from the November 2, 1992 meeting said.

Although he initially voted for it in 1992, former commissioner Ralph Gilbert said he is against any proposed county elections based on districts.

"I'm opposed to it," Gilbert said. "I think five people is

enough. I don't think any county commissioner should serve on the commission to serve their political group. You're supposed to serve people in all the county."

If district representation is approved, it is expected to be implemented in three years.

Fire

From 1A

it could have gone undetected for a longer period of time and there would have been more damage," he said.

Burns said smoke detectors or a sprinkler system would have helped, but when the school was built in 1966 they were not required.

Burns, who graduated from the school and has been a KM firefighter since 1974, said this is

the first time he's seen a fire this large at a school.

"We've had some minor incidents such as a transformer catching fire, or a motor on a heating unit, but this is the first time we've had a fire like this," he said.

Burns cautioned homes and businesses from leaving computer monitors on for an extended period of time.

"You should turn the monitors off, as well as other electrical appliances. Electrical equipment can get damaged from an electrical spike or a lightning storm. A

lot of things can go wrong and create a fire," he said.

KMHS Principal John Yarbro said the school's insurance adjuster was scheduled to arrive yesterday and begin assessing damage. Drafting classes will go on as scheduled when school opens Monday, but most likely at another location.

"We don't know how much damage we'll find from the electrical and smoke and water damage," Yarbro said. "We'll see how the clean-up process goes. We're trying to get the smoke out and get the area cleaned up today."

Yarbro said damage to the ceiling was evident, but it was a cement block classroom and the only damage to the walls may be just smoke.

"We were real lucky that the emergency folks were here promptly and did a great job of taking care of it and getting the smoke out," Yarbro said. "We haven't had a situation like this before and we feel fortunate that it wasn't any worse. We were fortunate it happened during the school day and we had somebody that noticed the smell and got it corrected."

Filing

From 1A

that vision," he said. "By working close with council members and the citizens we can strive to make Kings Mountain a great city to live, work and play in."

Hamrick said his ultimate goal would be to make the city free of crime and drugs, keep utility rates as low as possible, and not raise taxes.

DeVane said the city has made tremendous progress during the past two years and he wants to see it continue.

"We made extremely good progress in beautifying the city and doing things for the elderly

and children," he said. "I want to see that progress continue."

Bostic could not be reached for comment.

Fletcher and Leonard are both making their first bid for public office.

Leonard, a former employee of the city recreation department and now a program director for the West Gastonia Boys and Girls Club, said he'd "like to see the city continue to grow with new business and industry."

Fletcher said he will work for "everybody, not just a select group of people."

And, he added, "I'm putting out a challenge to the rest of the people that's running to donate their commissioners' salaries to

help pay the elderly and poor people's power bills."

Blanton, who was appointed to the School Board in February to fill the unexpired term of Supt. Larry Allen, said he filed for office because he feels Kings Mountain School District is still worth fighting for.

"We're not sure yet what's going to happen with merger, but I'm still hopeful that we can beat it," he said. "That right now is the number one thing we have to get settled so we can get on with keeping our schools improving."

Falls, who has been attending School Board meetings for years and who has children enrolled in KM schools, said she wants to

see that all children receive the best possible education.

"I want to see our school system stay as it is. I don't think merger is right," she said. "I have children that have attended the system for a very long time, and I want to see what is best for the school system."

McClain could not be reached for comment.

In other area races, Max D. Rollins and John Harry filed for Grover Town Council, and Jerry T. Roberts of 700 Bell Road, Kings Mountain, filed for the Cleveland County Sanitary Board of Commissioners.

Filing for those offices also ends Friday at noon.

Merger

From 1A

Appeals, and Shaw said that should help the school system's argument.

"It's a final judgement," Shaw said. "An appeal is clearly available."

The Kings Mountain Schools is not the only anti merger group that has taken legal action. A group of Kings Mountain parents have hired Charlotte attorney Lou Lesenne to represent it.

The group has a suit filed with the Office of Administrative Hearings in Raleigh and Gaston County Superior Court.

Jerry Ledford, who is part of the parent's lawsuit said the cases have not been scheduled to be heard.

"We want to stop the merger," Ledford said. "Kings Mountain has nothing to gain and everything to lose with the merger."

While both sides of the merger issue are talking about their next options, Cleveland County Board of Commissioners Chairperson Wille McIntosh said it's time to stop the merger issue.

"I think it's time to get on with county business," McIntosh said. "Both sides fought for what they thought was right. Both sides have spent a lot of the citizens' money."

McIntosh said it's time to move on from merger discussions since many people are out of work from layoffs this year.

Although county officials said the item is not on the August 6 agenda, a discussion on whether to stop spending

money on the merger debate may occur.

Asheville attorney Walter Currie, who has been arguing for the Shelby City Schools and the pro merger side, could not be reached for comment.

One issue yet to be resolved is the status of the interim school board.

The interim board of the proposed merged Cleveland County Schools system consists of two members from Cleveland County, Kings Mountain and the Shelby school systems.

One Kings Mountain slot is open since former board member Larry Allen took the superintendent's position.

Cleveland County School Board member George Litton was nominated to serve as chairperson of the proposed merged Cleveland County

School District.

Litton said the interim board is not a governing body yet.

"According to that merger plan, as the merger plan is officially adopted, we are to serve as an advisory capacity."

Litton said the interim board is an advisory board which is to act as a planning body before the proposed merger is effective.

Three members of the interim board would be up for re-election in the fall, but, Cleveland County Board of Elections Director Debra Blanton said she has not seen a plan to elect members of the proposed merged Cleveland County School System.

"If it's in there, there will be more of a clear direction to what we need to do here," Blanton said.

Robbery

From 1A

federal bank robbery.

Davis estimated the suspect was apprehended within "three

to five minutes" after the robbery.

Davis said Pratt had no previous record "of any consequence."

This is the second time in two months that First Charter has been robbed.

Country Breakfast & Bake Sale
El Bethel United Methodist Church
 El Bethel Rd., Kings Mountain
Saturday, August 4
6:30-10am

2nd Anniversary Celebration
Aunt Nellie's Kids
 Children's & Maternity Wear
 3836 Tryon Courthouse, Cherryville
All Summer Clothing Currently
55% OFF
Come Layaway Your Fall Selections
 Girls Sizes: Newborn to 14
 Boys Sizes: Newborn to 7
 Hours: Wed. & Fri. 10am - 5:30pm
 Thurs. 10am - 6:00pm
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1998 Jeep Cherokee Sport C4162, Red, Auto, 6 Cyl. LIST \$13,995 SALE \$12,500	1998 Jeep Cherokee Sport 4x4 C4164, Green, Air, Auto. LIST \$15,995 SALE \$14,350
1999 Jeep Cherokee Sport A4184, White, Auto, Only 18,700 mi. LIST \$14,995 SALE \$13,700	1998 Jeep Grand Cherokee 3 in Stock, Auto, Loaded, Laredo LIST \$15,995 SALE \$14,500
4x4 1998 Jeep Grand Cherokee Laredo 5 in Stock, Auto, Loaded. LIST \$17,995 SALE \$16,400	4x4 1998 Jeep Grand Cherokee Limited 3 in Stock, Leather, Loaded. LIST \$19,995 SALE \$18,375

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REWARD

On June 29, 2001 the First National Bank in Besemer City was robbed by two African-American males driving a silver Ford Escort.

The money taken should be stained with red dye. The American Bankers Association offers a reward up to \$5000.00 for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the persons responsible. If you have any information call:

Gaston County Police Detective Mauney
 704-866-3377