

## LOCAL

# Council candidates speak out at forum

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Several candidates running for Kings Mountain city council positions attended a forum at the Kings Mountain Woman's Clubhouse Monday night.

Each candidate was given three minutes to state his platform. In the At-Large race, Ric Francis said, "There's five of us running. There's two seats. All I'm asking for is one."

Francis, an Allstate Insurance agent in Kings Mountain, said that he is very interested in seeing the city grow, predicting growth from the expanding Charlotte region over the next eight years. "We want to make sure with these challenges that we have everything going in the right direction," he said. Francis pledged to represent every one in Kings Mountain to the best of his ability and to preserve the town's quality of life for future generations.

Also in the running for an At-Large seat is Curtis Pressley, KM native and former KMHS football player. He said that he would like to support the Kings Mountain Hospital, which he said is working hard to stand out in service. But he would also like to see more recreational activities for the city's youth. He said that he would like to "make sure every kid has the opportunity to play some type of sport or be involved with something. If we're going to continue preaching about obesity, we have to provide some type of outlet for our kids."

Incumbent Dean Spears, for the At-Large seat, spoke next. "I've been with the city a long time," he said. "My priorities for this coming term are the same things I had 14 years ago." Among those, he listed economic development, downtown incentive grants, building infrastructure, and increasing the city's revenue. "Every year that we've been elected, our town has grown," he said. "I think these

upcoming few months, few years will be the best."

Mike Butler, incumbent in the race for Ward II, said that in the 2006-07 budget they authorized about \$85 million for new projects in Kings Mountain. "The city council and I are still working to bring more businesses and restaurants downtown," he said. "My goal for the next two years is to have some kind of incentive program for the police department and the public works people."

His program entails opening the doors to more educational opportunities. "The more education they get, the more they'll make. The police department is way behind in salaries," he said.

Danny McAbee, is also running for the Ward II seat. He promised to put God first in anything and everything he does, while representing the people of KM. He said a lot of work has to be done to change the face of downtown Kings Mountain. "We need to put things in the empty buildings. We need to get things going downtown and remove the trees downtown," McAbee said. "One fact, if I'm elected we'll get the trees removed. I think there will be good results from it."

Incumbent Jerry Mullinax has represented Ward III for the past eight years. Instead of winning the crowd over with detailed action plans, he seemed to have won them over with his charm. He gave credit to Mayor Rick Murphrey for all his efforts in selling the city. "I think he does a great job. He thinks that I don't think that but that's the way I think," he said, as the crowd chuckled. "Vote for old Jerry. Don't write nobody's name in and I'll be so happy." He grinned.

Rodney Gordon is running for another term in the Ward IV seat. "I was born and raised here in Kings Mountain and I have a strong desire to see Kings Mountain grow, prosper, and stand economically strong," he

said.

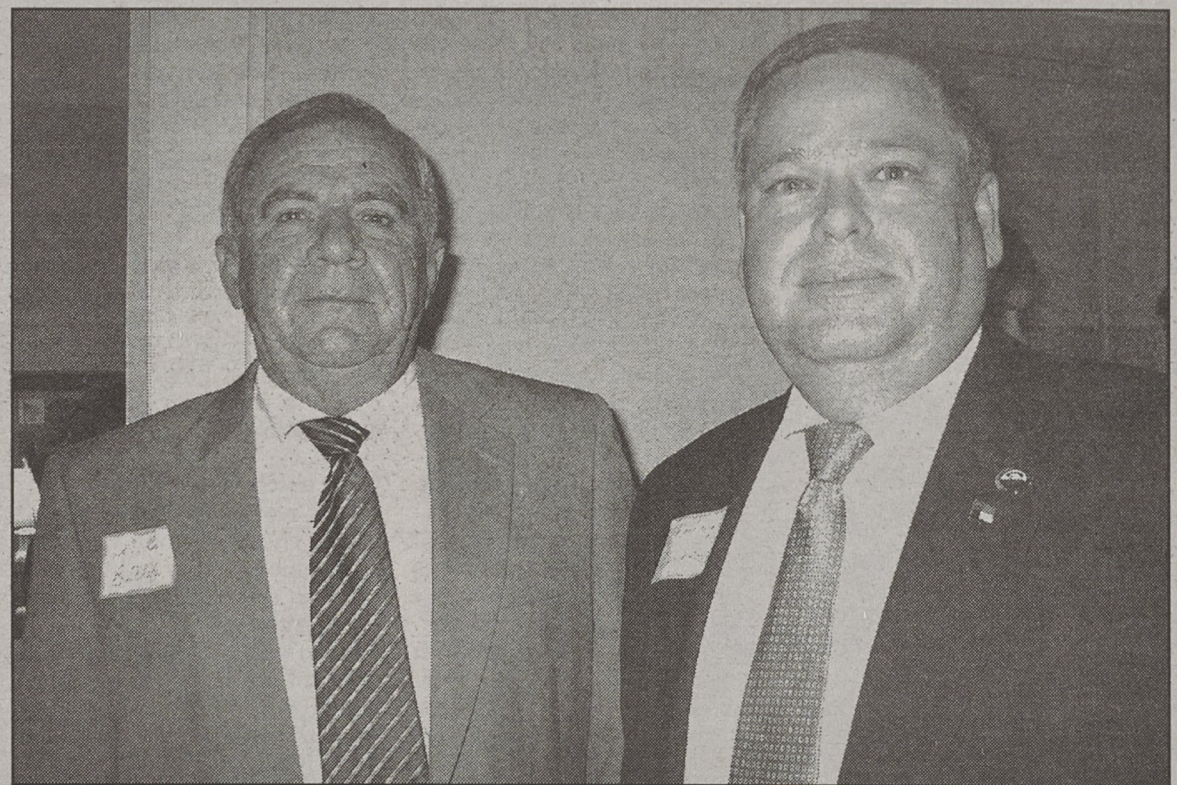
He added that he is committed to being a proactive leader, strengthening KM's economy, promoting strong family values, supporting downtown revitalization, and preserving history. "We need to continue to develop our downtown area. In doing so, we must preserve the historical aspects of our downtown as well as the residential areas in Kings Mountain," he said.

In the race for Ward V, incumbent Keith Miller, focused more on the strategy he employs to complete goals. With research and community involvement, he said, he tries tackle policy issues in a manner that they will not cause council division. "We are working progressively at getting the 36-inch water line completed. We haven't allocated the funds necessary to fund the engineering for that. It's going to take about 12-18 months to get the state approvals necessary to actually break ground," he said. "In the meantime, we'll be working on making sure our finances are in order."



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Curtis Pressley speaks at Monday's candidate forum at Kings Mountain Woman's Club. Below, incumbent Councilmen Mike Butler, left, and Rodney Gordon.



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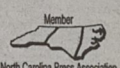
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