

LOCAL

City, school board elections Tuesday

GARY STEWART

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Kings Mountain, Grover and Cleveland County citizens will go to the polls Tuesday to elect City Council and School Board members.

Based on the recent City of Shelby election which drew only a 12 percent voter turnout, County Elections Board Director Debra Blanton predicts a 15 percent turnout, but urges higher numbers.

"It may be that people are thinking that everything is focused on next year's Presidential election and they're thinking 'why vote this year, I'm going to vote next year'" she said. "But the local candidates are the ones that will affect you more than who will be president."

Blanton said no excuse absentee early voting is available today and Friday from 10 a.m.-5 p.m. and Saturday from 8 a.m.-1 p.m. at the Elections Board, 215 Patton Dr., Shelby.

Voters may want to check their voter regis-

tration card to make sure which precinct they're in. If anyone has a question, they are welcome to call the Board of Elections at 484-4858, Blanton said.

Polls will be open Tuesday from 6:30 a.m.-7:30 p.m. Blanton said votes should be posted by 9 p.m. on the Elections Board website at www.clevelandcounty.com. Kings Mountain City Council results will also be posted on a board at City Hall. The lobby of city hall will be open by 7 p.m. and a representative of the city will be on hand at the Elections Board to phone in the results to Kings Mountain.

In Kings Mountain, Mayor Rick Murphrey and Ward 1 Councilman Howard Shipp are unopposed but all other councilmen face opposition.

No one filed against Ward 3 Councilman Jerry Mullinax, but since filing ended Wayne Worcester has launched a write-in campaign.

Some of the 16 people running in Kings Mountain will be awarded four-year terms in a new staggered election set-up that was approved by the U.S. Justice Department ear-

lier this year. The winners of the mayor, Ward 1, 4 and 5 races and the top vote-getter in the At-Large race will receive four-year terms ending in 2011. All others elected will have two-year terms ending in 2009. After the 2009 election all office-holders in Kings Mountain will serve four-year terms.

There are six seats available on the Cleveland County Board of Education, five of which will be for four years. Kings Mountain residents running for a seat are incumbents Terry McClain and Shearra Miller and former educators Bobby Scoggins and Connie Phifer Savell.

The City of Grover has a unique situation in that only one person filed for the two open seats on Town Council. Incumbent Jackie Bennett is seeking re-election but Barry Toney chose not to run. The second seat will be filled by a write-in winner. Former councilman Bill Willis has launched a write-in campaign, and there may be others.

Incumbent mayor Robbie Sides is being opposed by longtime Grover resident Sam Stevenson.

LOCAL CANDIDATES

Candidates who are running for Kings Mountain City Council:

Mayor

Rick Murphrey (I).

Ward 1

Howard Shipp (I).

Ward 2

Mike Butler (I).

Brenda Ross
Danny McAbee

Ward 3

Jerry Mullinax (I).

Wayne Worcester (write-in)

Ward 4

Rodney Gordon (I).

Kay Hambright

Ward 5

Rick Moore

Keith Miller (I).

At Large

Dean Spears (I).

Houston Corn (I).

Ric Francis

Curtis O. Pressley

James Emmett Carroll

Candidates who have filed for Cleveland County Board of Education:

Connie Phifer Savell

S. Dale Oliver

Shearra B. Miller (I)

Terry B. McClain (I)

Tommy C. Greene (I)

Burney Drake

Richard Hooker Jr. (I)

Kenneth A. Ledford

Bobby N. Scoggins

John C. "Jack" Hamrick Jr. (I)

Candidates who have filed for Grover Town Council:

Mayor

Sammy "Sam" N. Stevenson

Robert Sides (I).

Council*

Jackie Bennett

*There are two seats available on Grover Council, those held currently by Jackie Bennett and Barry Toney. Since only one person filed, the second seat will be determined by write-in votes.

First Gateway Trails meeting draws big crowd

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Sixty-one people attended the first public meeting of the Gateway Trails last Monday night at the H. Lawrence Patrick Senior Life and Conference Center.

The group was divided among several round tables, each headed by a captain from Gateway Trails Inc. Jonathan Wood, senior associate of HadenStanziale, a planning, landscape architecture and civil engineering firm out of Charlotte, asked everyone a list of questions. The eight questions were discussed and answered by each table, then presented to the room, according to vice president of the trails committee Shirley Brutko.

The first question was: "What can the Gateway Trail mean to the Kings Mountain region?" Common responses among the groups were: an increase in travel and tourism, a KM connection to area parks, promoting health and wellness and economic development.

The second question asked, "What can the Gateway Trail mean to you, as a user?" The general consensus was that the trail will create more opportunities for fitness and nature explorations and a connection to the parks. The third question asked the public what kind of amenities should be located along the trail or at the trailhead.

Responses included, an amphitheater, shelters, benches, rest rooms, trash cans, water

access, call boxes for phone access, directional and/or mileage signs, an educational facility, lighting, designated camping areas, wildlife information, play areas for children, coding to identify difficulty of trail, mountain bike trails, parking, fencing, fitness stations and concessions.

"Where should connections and linkages occur?" Downtown Kings Mountain, I-85, Galilee Church Road, Alex D. Owens Road, rest area and parks were common answers.

The fifth questions asked, "What imagery defines the character of the Gateway Trail?" The groups had different responses: varied terrains, boulders, history, wildlife, nature, gems and minerals or geology. The next question, which asked if everyone knew where the three parks were located, was answered with a short "yes."

Other concerns addressed were safety and emergency situation issues, trail maintenance, whether or not animals will be allowed, security, the possibility of a mineral museum downtown and an amphitheater at Boulder's Access in Crowders Mountain State Park, shuttle service, liability, the need to keep people from wandering off the trail, width of trail, and littering.

"I thought the turnout was very good, especially for a Monday night," Wood said, adding that he felt very positive about the public's feedback. "Many are looking forward to connecting Kings Mountain to

the State Parks and other regional trail systems. Many of the attendees see the trail as an opportunity to improve their health and well being and spend more family time together."

Dwayne Stutzman, mountain region trails specialist for the state, said that utilizing public input is very important when crafting a master plan. "A good master plan is only good if it reflects the public's opinions," he said.

Wood said that he thinks the community's responses "will help identify potential amenities and activities that might occur or be located along the trail." He added that suggestions could also "potentially shape future routes."

Stutzman said that he feels very good about where the trail process is at the moment. "Everything continues to fall into place. We call that 'trail magic' when it happens - when things just seem to fall into place," he said.

Although the competition for grants can be rather competitive, Wood said, "I feel that Gateway Trails stands a very good chance of receiving a grant or two along the way."

The proposed path that may one day be very significant to Kings Mountain, is already unique in its own right. "The significant difference about the Gateway Trail is that it is one of a number of huge trail systems that are going to tie into the historic aspect of a region," Stutzman said. With the trail's

proposed connectability, alone, the Gateway Trail stands out as unique.

Wood said that HadenStanziale joined the KM Gateway Trails Inc. effort in August. "He has been hired to do the Master Plan and apply for the PARTF grant for the trails," Brutko said. Stutzman has been working with Gateway Trails Inc. since the concept for it began years ago.

HOW TO REACH US

Report your news to The Herald by mail at P.O. Box 769, Kings Mountain, NC 28086; You may also bring it by our office at 824-1 East King St.; call 704-739-7496. fax 704-739-0611 or Email gstewart@kingsmountainherald.com



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