

LOCAL

Patrick Center recertified as Senior Center of Excellence

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Kings Mountain's H. Lawrence Patrick Senior Life and Conference Center has been crowned, once again, a "Senior Center of Excellence."

The prestigious designation will help the center reign supreme garnering three times the state's general funding for non-certified centers. Senior Center Director Monty Thornburg said that they will receive about \$21,000 or more in funds from the state due to their certification and that money was one of the main reasons why they sought the recognition.

"The money will go right back into our operation, upgrading equipment and buying new equipment," he said. The center recently purchased new computers for its lab and plans to purchase new exercise equipment for the workout room.

Thornburg said that one of the things they have been looking into this year is installing a data software program, in which seniors can come in, swipe their cards and choose the activities they plan to participate in that day, through a touchscreen menu. There are also preliminary plans for expansion of the center.

Certification is sought through the North Carolina Division of Aging's SCOPE (Senior Center Operations and Program Evaluation) program. SCOPE is a voluntary certification program offered to NC's senior centers. "It takes a lot of work to do it and it gives us more credibility," Thornburg said.

A lot of work indeed. Staff members at the center had to go through all of the programs offered in the past three years, showing documentation of the programs and how many attended each. The center had 17 pages of programs they have provided. "They said it was more than they've ever seen before," Thornburg said. "The programming section is probably the most intense."

Other data was also tediously collected and organized, filling six boxes in anticipation for the volunteer review board. The review came on November 30, 2007. "On the day of the visit,

the team usually reviews documentation during the morning has lunch with the advisory board, reviews more documentation in the afternoon, asks us to clarify any concerns they may find and then announces their decision late in the afternoon," Thornburg said. But that schedule wasn't followed on November 30.

"The team was so impressed with our documentation that for the first time during a site visit, they announced their decision before lunch because our work was so organized," he said. "This is a tremendous credit to our staff! They have worked extremely hard to achieve this goal."

This is the first recertification the Patrick Senior Center has undergone. They received their first certification of Excellence in 2004. This recertification will last until November 30, 2010. "We were tickled. It was a nice early Christmas present for us," Thornburg said. "We've already kicked-off SCOPE plans for 2010, divided up the sections and assigned the responsibilities."

The review board stated, "We commend you for: 1) the center's involvement in intergenerational programs including an Easter Egg hunt; the birthday party with an elementary school; the director's mentorship of a high school student who developed a local senior tar heel discount program; and hosting an event for Children's Homes of Cleveland County to help children find adoptive homes; 2) the director's numerous mentoring activities for other senior centers in NC; and 3) providing notary public services, on-site mail drop off, stamps for purchase, copies, fax, clerical work and legal forms/assistance (e.g.: living wills, powers of attorney) for seniors at the center."

The program looks at five major operational areas: "outreach and access to services; programs and activities; planning, evaluation, and input from older adults; staffing; and operations and physical plant."

NCDA describes Centers of Excellence as those that "provide exemplary services and opportunities to their communities and serve as mentors and models to developing centers."

Walgreens rezoning denied

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Walgreens will not be coming to W. Mountain Street, or at least not anytime soon.

Prudential Carolinas Realty, representing Tribek Properties, LLC, who is representing Walgreens, requested for the petition of rezoning on W. Mountain and W. King streets be withdrawn at the KM City council meeting Tuesday night.

In the formal letter of request for withdrawal Prudential Broker Marlene Peeler stated, "We would like to have some time to address the objections raised at the Planning Board meeting, work on improvements to our site plan and have enough time for Walgreens to consider and approve any changes."

Councilman Jerry Mullinax motioned the request for the withdrawal petition be denied after Councilman Dean Spears motioned for the withdrawal to be approved. The council voted 6-1 for the withdrawal to be denied. Spears voted for it to be approved.

Mullinax then motioned for

the rezoning request to be denied with a second from Councilman Houston Corn. The council voted unanimously. The request was denied.

But the matter may still not be closed. According to City Planning Director Steve Killian, if Tribek Properties makes a "significant change" in their site plans or rezoning request, they can reapply for rezoning at any time. Mayor Rick Murphrey said that if they make no changes in their plans, Tribek will have to wait four months before reapplying. The request would once again go before the Planning and Zoning Board for recommendations and the city council for approval or denial.

Tribek Properties, LLC, out of Charlotte, had requested the properties (two houses on King Street, two houses on W. Mountain Street and one day-care facility) be rezoned from Residential to Conditional Use Office so that they could clear the land for a Walgreens-owned pharmacy.

Neighbors and concerned citizens packed the council chambers ready to express their opinions on the matter. Twelve people signed up to speak against

the rezoning. None signed up to speak in favor. Much like the previous Planning and Zoning Board meeting on January 8, those for the rezoning were far outnumbered by those against it.

Before the public hearing was closed, Councilman Rodney Gordon asked Peeler, "If we honor your request to withdraw (this petition), is Tribek considering another location in Kings Mountain or are they only considering the current location on W. Mountain Street and King Street properties?"

"At this time, there is not another site under consideration," she said.

"So they're going to reevaluate the (site plan) and meet with the neighbors and that type of thing?" Gordon asked.

"That would be their preference," she said.

Helen Hatch, spokeswoman for the West End neighborhood of W. Mountain and other side streets cautioned the council, saying "Walgreens will be here as long as they think there is a market in Kings Mountain. I heard they are already looking at other locations on King Street."

Cheryl Green may come home soon

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Day by day, Cheryl Green grows a little stronger in the hospital bed of a Charlotte rehabilitation clinic. With each passing moment, she recovers some of the time she has lost.

"Cheryl is doing great," said her mother Ann Robinson. "I'm really impressed. We're still looking at a long process. But she's really improving."

She said that she is still having a little trouble with her equilibrium and being able to stay on her feet for a period of time. But her communication is improving. She is both answering and asking questions now. Her two youngest children Sara and Connor went to see her on Saturday.

Sara took her mom a coloring book in case she gets bored. "We colored with her," she told her grandmother. They were very happy to see her.

As Mrs. Green continues to recover she grows more antsy, wanting more than anything to be out of the hospital and home

with her children, husband and parents. One night, Mrs. Green called her mother and asked her to come take her home. "She sounded down," Mrs. Robinson said.

She had a friend take her to see her daughter and in the hospital room, they spoke for hours about the horrible accident that almost took her life. "We talked about what happened," she

said. "How much of that she recalls, as far as the fine points, I don't know."

On Christmas morning, Mrs. Green was flung from the hood of an Isuzu as she was attempting to stop two shoplifters at the Wilco Travel Plaza in Grover, where she worked.

Doctors have said that she may get to come home on February 8.

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