

Ashe Commissioners Deal with Gun Issue

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“There will come a day, a point in time, when that frog is cooked, and all our rights and all our freedoms and all our liberties are going to be gone, folks,” comments made by Ashe County Commissioner, Gerald Price, in support of a motion he had made to not ban the carrying of concealed weapons on county property.

His motion was made after listening to nineteen speakers share their beliefs, pro or con, during a public hearing on the issue. Rita Prevette, director of Ashe County Parks and Recreation Department, was one of three speakers who encouraged the Commissioners to ban carrying concealed weapons in areas where sporting events were held due to the potential for people to lose their tempers and act irrationally during those type events. However, the other sixteen speakers encouraged the Commissioners not to exercise the option the state had provided local governments allowing them to ban carrying concealed weapons on County property. Tom Pope, being one of those, “It’s better to be judged by twelve than to be carried by six.”

Following Commissioner Price’s motion the others weighed in on the topic. All the Commissioners expressed support of, and belief in, the Second Amendment with three stating they had a permit to carry a concealed weapon. Following his comments Commissioner William Sands asked Mr. Price if he would amend his motion to allow the banning of concealed weapons during sporting events on county property. Commissioner Price would not accept the suggested revision to his motion resulting in it failing to pass with a vote of two in favor and three against. Following this Commissioner Larry Rhodes made a motion calling for the motion, “regulate concealed weapons in the following locations; Beaver Creek Industrial Park practice field; Family Central Gym; Family Central Ball Field; and Ashe County Park while attending an organized event by the county,” with his motion not calling for regulating concealed weapons in county parks and walking trails. It passed with a vote of three in favor and two against. The public hearing was attended by North Carolina Senator, Dan Soucek, who shared his observation about the process stating, “I personally feel quite strongly in favor of our second amendment rights. And my greatest concern restricting rights in parks is that it creates a patchwork across the state where a trained, law-abiding citizen can inadvertently step into a place where they can become a criminal.”