

Plantation Politics—Alive and Well at Holly Oak Park!!! County Commissioners Pay \$80,000 for Shelby Park!! \$ZERO for County Parks??? Shelby's Black Community should thank Willie Green for Park Upgrade-NOT Shelby & County Officials!! Report and evaluation by Robert A. Williams

The Holly Oak Park property in Shelby had languished, poorly furnished and poorly maintained, for years and years under the Old Shelby And Old Cleveland County tradition of racial discrimination that held that the black community was nothing more than a bunch of second-class citizens. If that. Only now tolerated because of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX, and the concentration of black citizens in the Democrat Party. All us longtime county residents know this is true, although most would deny it. And, for those that still deny that fact, I would remind you of another fact. The fact that Cleveland County was one of 40 counties in NC singled out by the voting rights act which applied restrictions that required DOJ permission for Cleveland County to do anything regarding election procedures. Only recently were these restrictions lifted. And then probably prematurely.

The bottom line here is many "white" Cleveland County Politicians, like "Massa" Eddie Holbrook want those black votes, but, on the cheap. Instead of doing things to help the overall prosperity and equity of the black community, they just find and pay off "Uncle Toms" with "token" amounts and let the Uncle Toms endorse them around election time. It also adds a "buffer zone" between the politicians and the black community so the politician doesn't have to shake too many "black" hands. It's an old-time tradition. A traditional political dirty trick that myself and others call "Plantation Politics." I know it when I see it. Or smell it.

As a reminder of the years of neglect and discrimination regarding Holly Oak Park, Let's look at what facilities Holly Oak Park used to have, but do not have now.

- A swimming pool. Swimming pools used to be a big racial issue. Whites did not want blacks swimming in the same pools that they were swimming in. One of the big reasons the newly integrated Burns and Crest High Schools that were built in 1967-68 without swimming pools. Or auditoriums where crowds of blacks were expected to congregate. The Holly Oak Park swimming pool has been closed and filled in.
- Tennis courts have been plowed under.
- Baseball fields closed.
- Basketball courts closed.
- Other Sports areas that used to exist are now limited.

And I saw it when I happened to see the Star articles titled "Community Leaders celebrate Holly Oak Park Renovations" about the sudden decision to make upgrades to Holly Oak Park's playground equipment and the Activity Center after all these years.

But the renovations at Holly Oak Park were selective and relatively minor. Especially since the City of Shelby spent \$8 Million on the McBrayer Park and \$Millions more on the Shelby City Park. Basically, that spending was One Thousand (1,000)

times more than what was spent on the Holly Oak Park renovations and upgrades that the Shelby Star was so proud of. Think of it this way, for every dollar spent on Holly Oak Park, the other Shelby Parks got a thousand dollars. Is that discrimination or what??? Relative to what the County and City of Shelby spent at Holley Oak Park, such high visibility as the Commissioner's, Shelby City Council and the Star are hardly more than an "Optical Illusion." A "mirage" like a thirsty man in the middle of the desert might see.

On top of that, the Holly Oak Park Nature Trail was allowed to become over-grown. That Nature Trail, now, has become a major safety issue for Holly Oak Park. Liquor bottles, beer cans, used condoms, hypodermic needles and other trash abound and have not been cleaned up. Even though the recent propaganda pictures in the Star show a renovated building with a modern kitchen as well as a picture of a little six-year-old white girl in the playground. Perhaps the Star photographer was afraid to go on the nature trail.

I also saw something else too. Several things.

1. The County Commissioners gave Shelby \$80,000 for one renovation that Shelby only put up \$10,000 on. An \$80,000 expenditure that I can find no record of being approved. And I attend or read the minutes of every Commissioner meeting. Meetings where North Carolina State law says all business shall be conducted in open meetings and fair and accurate minutes of meetings are kept. Obviously laws were broken by the Commissioners here. Criminal acts covered up by secret approvals and more secret manipulations of county budgets and financial accounts. That is bad enough. Much less the fact that \$Millions of County tax money is spent, like the American Legion World Series, on Shelby facilities while folks like us here in Fallston get nothing. Or next to nothing.

2. The Willie Green Lawsuit against the City of Shelby and Rick Howell personally.

Over the year Mr. Willie Green, with two Superbowl Rings and much more experience in sports than all the Shelby City Council and Commissioners combined has purchased property between Holly Oak Park and the Shelby High School baseball field where the American Legion World series is played. Mr. Green has also offered, to both the Shelby City Council as well as the Commissioners, to build a sports complex on this property and offer the complex to both Shelby and the County as a public-private partnership. Basically a win-win situation for everybody.

But Willie Green is a black man and both Shelby and the County have turned down Mr. Green's proposals. And, in Shelby's case the discrimination and defamation against Mr. Green has unfortunately led to a Federal lawsuit. I have published copies of Mr. Green's lawsuit against Shelby in previous articles. This lawsuit is well documented and based on so much fact that the City of Shelby and Rick Howell are, in my opinion, bound to lose. And lose big. The evidence is so great and the guilt is so obvious that Shelby's lawyers keep on filing frivolous motions to dismiss that keep on getting rejected by the Federal Judge. To the point that the Judge has ordered Shelby and Howell to file their lawsuit paperwork under threat of contempt of court.

And, only now has Shelby and the County decided to spend some money on Holly Oak Park. In an election year for Shelby officials who are likely to be found guilty by a Federal Court Jury in the near future.

So, what we obviously have here for both Shelby and the County is a publicity stunt. Shelby is looking for favorable coverage to try to hide the fact that they are guilty of racial discrimination in their lawsuit. And the County is trying to avoid such a lawsuit, although they have done almost exactly the same thing. Racial discrimination from both Shelby and the County, although the county was fortunate enough to not get caught with written documents like Shelby and Howell did.

All this shows obvious conclusions:

- The Holly Oak Park renovations would NOT have happened except for Mr. Willie Green.
- Plantation Politics are alive and well in Shelby and Cleveland County.
- Racial discrimination and defamation are alive and well in Cleveland County.
- Class discrimination is alive and well in Cleveland County as shown by the inequity of funding for Shelby facilities relative to county facilities-or the lack thereof.

Now, the biggest scandal of all in regard to the inequity and discrimination coverup in regard to Shelby's parks involves the so-called "Friends of the Parks" that the Shelby Star reported to have donated \$10,000 to the Holly Oak Park renovations. Only a 10% share of the total renovation cost per the Star article. Note that I googled "Friends of the Parks Shelby NC" and found this information about Friends of the Parks as related to the City of Shelby. That information states:

"In the fall of 2010, a group of interested citizens met with City of Shelby officials to discuss the feasibility of **forming a group to financially support Shelby Parks and Recreation programs and facilities outside of the normal operating budget of the City.**

Because of traditions and the importance of the parks to our community, they decided to create the "Friends Of The Parks" organization with the full support of Mayor and Shelby City Council.

This information was on the City of Shelby's official website and indicates a special group that can operate **OUTSIDE THE NORMAL OPERATING BUDGET OF THE CITY.** And WITH THE FULL SUPPORT OF THE MAYOR AND CITY COUNCIL.

These "Friends" of the Parks are just "interested citizens" they say. But in reality they are a special interest group of un-elected people operating as a City of Shelby "Department"

outside of City required legal rules and regulations. They are non-city employees with their own rules and regulations, donating money to the Shelby City Parks. But obviously leveraging their small donations, small relative to the overall cost of the project, into a major role in deciding who gets what within the parks budget. The kind of folks NOT interested in doing business with a black man or anybody else not running in their Country Club social circles.

What a formula for disaster. A not so subtle scheme, probably highly illegal, to provide and falsely justify a way to get around Federal and State laws regarding discrimination and public records keeping. Wait until Willie Green's lawyers hear about this. Worse yet, wait until the Federal Judge and Jury hears about this. No wonder Shelby and Rick Howell are fighting so hard to get Mr. Green's lawsuit dismissed on a technicality. They are afraid their little cover-up scheme will be discovered and somebody might go to prison. Maybe for conspiracy. Maybe for tax evasion too as there appears to be no 401(c)(3) non-profit corporation associated with this group. So the donated money would not be tax deductible. And these so-called "Friends" are in the economic category of folks most likely looking for tax write-offs and charitable contributions. What a mess this might turn out to be.

Stay tuned folks. Read my articles and sooner or later YOU too can figure out the propaganda and Bull-loney from the truth in the goings on within the present Cleveland County Leadership. The so-called leadership that can be replaced at the upcoming elections in 2019 as well as in 2020. CCS too.