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## Perkins Campaign Is Right On Schedule

by John Hammer

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Greensboro City Councilmember Robbie Perkins made it official on Tuesday, May 31. He is running for mayor.

Perkins made the announcement before a group of about 40 in the Greensboro Regional Realtors Association office at 11 a.m. on Tuesday. If the announcement is any indication of how he is going to run his campaign, Perkins is going to be difficult to beat. He picked a great time, the Tuesday after the Memorial Day holiday, which is usually a dead news day. As Perkins said, "The bear is the only person in town who doesn't know why we're here today."

Perkins had made no secret of his intention to run for mayor, but this made it official.

Having been a councilmember for 16 years and spoken to groups all over town, Perkins is at home behind the microphone, and he spoke for about 15 minutes about why he is running and what he wants to accomplish. He didn't read a speech written by someone else, as so many of our mayors have done. He simply stood in front of the audience with the home page of his website projected on the screen behind him and spoke mainly about his love of and vision for Greensboro. He's a good speaker and would certainly represent Greensboro well.

He spoke on the same themes as he has on the City Council. He spoke of the need for jobs, development and regionalism, and said it was time for someone who understood the development process to be in the mayor's seat. He said, "I'm in this to try to bring the 'we' back to Greensboro." Perkins spoke at a council meeting recently about how he hears too much "I" at meetings and not enough "we."

In 2009, for the first time ever, the voters elected a Republican majority to the City Council. Although Perkins is a Republican he has not agreed with the conservative majority and has sided with the two Democrats, Councilmembers Dianne Bellamy-Small and Jim Kee. He has been on the losing side of many votes.

Perkins is president of NAI Piedmont Triad Commercial Real Estate Services, so he is a developer, and as such a big part of his job is to sell Greensboro to companies that are looking for a place to do business. It also happens to be a big part of the mayor's job. When Keith Holliday was mayor he said that people had no idea how much of his time was spent trying to recruit industry. Perkins understands development and selling Greensboro, which, particularly in this economy, can be a real plus.

Perkins said, "The number one thing that everyone identifies is the need to create jobs."

One of his constant themes as a councilmember has been regional cooperation, and he said corporations aren't looking at jurisdictional lines but looking at regions and that this region needed to work together to attract industry instead of each trying to do it individually.

Perkins noted that Greensboro, because it has the most reliable electricity in the country, is a prime location for data centers like the ones American Express is building. But he said the city needs to go out and get the data centers because the big guys are looking for sites now and only so many will be built.