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## Jack Huddleston Day



PHOTO BY KNOX COUNTY

Jack Huddleston, with his wife Joyce, displays the proclamation declaring Friday "Jack Huddleston Appreciation Day." Pictured left to right are Knoxville Focus Publisher Steve Hunley, Gibbs Home Federal Bank Branch Manager Billy Mason, Knox County School Board member Mike McMillan, Knox County Commission Chair Dave Wright, Commissioner Ed Brantley, Knox County Mayor Tim Burchett, Commissioner Bob Thomas, former Commissioner Jack Huddleston, Knox County Trustee Ed Shouse, Joyce Huddleston, State Representative Harry Brooks and Knox County Law Director Bud Armstrong.

By Mike Steely  
steelym@knoxfocus.com

The turnout Friday to honor former commissioner and community advocate Jack Huddleston was a gathering of "Who's Who" of Knox County elected officials. Burchett organized the

effort and dozens of current and former officials gathered at Harbison Crossroads at Emory Road and Tazewell Pike to thank Huddleston for his efforts on behalf of Gibbs, Coryton and North Knox County.

Harry Brooks told the group, "Jack called me and said he had an idea." That idea led to the updating and expansion of the intersection of those two busy highways. Brooks looked at Huddleston in the audience and said, "Jack, this is your intersection."

Burchett declared the day "Jack Huddleston Appreciation Day" and noted Huddleston's many years of service.

"Jack helped secure the funding to get the signalization of this intersection started and to start working

toward other improvements to the roadway," Burchett said. When a vehicle with a loud muffler passed by the mayor paused and said, "That's commerce."

Burchett went on to say that Harbison Crossroads is safer today, businesses

can operate without worry and parents and children going to Gibbs Elementary and High School can pass through with ease. He added that the road and intersection improvements cut

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PHOTO BY MIKE STEELY

Answering questions about the proposed Emerald Youth Foundation facility proposed for Lonsdale were Steven Diggs and Kevin DuBose of Emerald Youth and Mayor Madeline Rogers.

## Lonsdale wants input on the proposed Emerald Youth facility

By Mike Steely  
steelym@knoxfocus.com

It is obvious that the residents of Lonsdale will welcome a \$10 million Emerald Youth facility in their community but many of the citizens are asking that the neighborhood be included in planning and running the project.

"We must have a buy-in," one of the residents told the public meeting Thursday evening at the Lonsdale Elementary School.

Knoxville Mayor Madeline

Rogers hosted the meeting along with Steven Diggs, President of Emerald Youth Foundation. Diggs told the sizable crowd that the foundation has its own board of directors but said he would take the suggestion of an advisory council for consideration.

"It's not out of the question. You can't put a facility in a community and not include the community," Diggs said.

Rogers asked Diggs to "develop a partnership with the community."

The proposal, which involves the donation or sale of about a block of city-owned and county school land as well as a \$1 million streetscape project with lighted sidewalks in that area of Lonsdale, will require approval by the Knoxville City Council, Board of Education and Knox County Commission. The details are being worked out, hence the public meeting.

Rogers said that Emerald Youth Foundation approached the city

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## Proposed BMX Park draws strong support

By Ken Lay

Knox County's proposed BMX track met with strong support from leaders and residents in South Knoxville Thursday night.

Members of the community were largely positive about the proposed \$750,000 project, which would be built in South-Doyle Middle School's football stadium. Should the construction of the track move forward, it would be undertaken and supervised by Knox County Parks and Recreation Department.

Several officials attended the meeting in the South-Doyle Middle School Auditorium. Those leaders included school board member Amber Rountree, County Commissioners Bob Thomas and Carson Dailey and Tennessee State Representative Rick Staples.

Should the BMX Stadium and track be installed at South-Doyle, the track at the football stadium would stay in place while the field would become a track.

BMX officials voiced the need for the track when they

met with Knox County Parks and Recreation Senior Director Doug Bataille.

"It would be a unique facility," Bataille told the community members in attendance at Thursday's meeting. "It would be the first track in the country that would be on a middle school campus."

The proposed BMX track would also benefit SDMS as part of the project's funding would include provisions for school renovations and improvements.

Knoxville once hosted a BMX National race during the 1982 World's Fair and that event was held at Bearden High school, according to Bataille.

There was also previously a BMX track in 1977 in the West Hills Community.

Since then, bicycle racing has grown exponentially, yet there's no racing facility within 60 miles of the Knoxville Area.

BMX, which has grown 15 percent since 2013, became an Olympic sport in 2008. And should the proposed track come to the school, it would

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