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Board of education surpluses lot for proposed Lonsdale center



PHOTO BY PETE GAWDA.

Pastor Joe Smith addressed the Wednesday evening meeting of the Knox County Board of Education urging the board to surplus property to be used for the proposed youth recreation facility in Lonsdale.

By Pete Gawda

At a rather lengthy Knox County Board of Education meeting last Wednesday, board members, other government officials, interested citizens and parents expressed their opinions on discipline policies, the proposed Lonsdale youth recreation facility, school rezoning and transgender issues.

The board apparently had second thoughts about changes to school system policies on discipline. They voted to delay for 30 days the first reading of revised policies Policy J-191 Misbehavior and Disciplinary Options, Policy J-193 Student Suspension, Policy J-194 Zero Tolerance and Policy J-211 Harassment, Intimidation,

Bullying and Cyber Bullying.

"I am afraid the policy will start to erode the discretion of the principal and the classroom teacher," was the opinion of Tony Norman. He felt that more input was needed from teachers and principals.

"We don't need to rush into anything until we are sure we are doing something beneficial," stated Mike McMillan.

Gloria Deatridge was the only board member to vote against delaying the first reading for 30 days in order to get input from principals and teachers.

There was also lengthy discussion about surplus school operated property that is owned by the county. The property is to be used for the

proposed youth recreation facility in Lonsdale.

"All we are doing is surplusing a lot because the county asked us to do it," asserted Lynne Fugate. "This resolution further states that if nothing happens the property is transferred back to school."

"Communication from people in that area has been very opposed," stated Jennifer Owen. "People who are much further away have been not only very supportive but almost aggressively supportive. That alone for me is reason to pause and take a look at things." She expressed concern that the property would go to a

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The Cove, Gov. Sevier Parkway and Lonsdale on county agenda

By Mike Steely

steelym@knoxfocus.com

The storm damage at The Cove at Concord Park may be discussed when the Knox County Commission meets in work session next Monday at 5 p.m. in the City-County Building. The storm on May 27 downed trees, power lines and damaged the playground at the popular West Knoxville park.

A report on the expenses related to the storm damage may be given by the finance department. Early estimates just after the storm were for around \$150,000 or possibly higher. Knox County Parks and Recreation were hoping to cover the cost without asking for additional funds. Legacy Parks Foundation has established a fund for repairs there.

Responding to the downed power lines there, LUCB is establishing underground power lines to the park. The Cove was closed following the storms and during repairs there and a concert by a local band was cancelled.

The Knox County Parks and Recreation Department reopened The Cove Friday afternoon. The department is busy replacing benches, re-stripping the parking lot, fixing fences, etc.

Commissioner John Schoonmaker is asking for a report from the Knox County Emergency Management about the response from the Emergency Management team to The Cove and Concord Park following the damage.

The Cove is located at 11808 South Northshore Drive, on the banks of the Tennessee River. It features a walking trail, playground, pavilion, swimming area, picnic tables with grills, and a sand volleyball court. The Cove also offers kayak, canoe and paddleboard rentals.

Also on the agenda for the June 19 work session is a motion by Commissioner Carson Dailey to ask the planning commission to conduct a survey to develop an approach and policies for managing the development along John Sevier Scenic Highway and present the results to the commission.

Dailey told The Focus that in at least two incidents people have obtained a building permit for a house and then turned the house into a business. He said that commercial businesses are only permitted along John Sevier Highway at the intersections.

"It's designated as a historic highway but the only regulation on that is that buildings can't be more than 35-feet tall and no billboards are allowed," he said.

"The community is concerned about the development there," he said.

The Knox County School Board is asking the commission to accept surplus property located at Sam

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PHOTO BY MIKE STEELY

Stephanie Welch addresses supporters as the Island Home resident kicks off her campaign for Knoxville's First District City Council seat.

Welch kicks off First District campaign

By Mike Steely

steelym@knoxfocus.com

She organized the first "Walk to School Day" and has been involved on various organization boards such as YMCA, Ijams Nature Center, Leadership Knoxville, and serves on the new Recode Knoxville Advisory Board.

These are just some of the qualifications that First District Candidate Stephanie Welch mentioned to about 100 supporters during her campaign kick-off Thursday at Candoro Marble Works in Vestal.

Four candidates are vying for the seat, which covers South Knoxville and Fort Sanders, to replace Councilman and former Vice Mayor Nick Pavlis, who introduced Welch and called on voters to not only support her candidacy but also to contribute to her campaign.

"These experiences have

positioned me well to serve the First District and Knoxville," she told the supporters. Welch serves as an Army Reserve officer and said that the city has "unprecedented forward momentum" and added, "It takes careful planning, strategic investment and strong relationship skills."

"I take a moderate bridge-building approach," she said, noting that her strong work ethic comes from her father, who flew in from New Hampshire to surprise her at the campaign event.

She spoke of her experience, passion and work ethic and her ability to work with various people.

Welch has lived in the First District for 18 years and loves to bike and hike from her Island Home Park neighborhood. She has three rescue dogs. She serves as vice president of operations at Great Schools Partnership.

"She's been a public servant for the past 17 or so years. You have to pay your dues, get involved and understand government when you walk in," Councilman Pavlis told the supporters.

"I support her 100% and hope you will as well," he said.

"We've got four really good candidates but the one thing that convinced me was Stephanie's background," Pavlis said.

Among the supporters who attended were various city and county officials and many of Welch's First District neighbors. She's adopted the "Welch Grape Juice" colors for her campaign and the juice was featured among the snacks offered at the event.

Welch said she came to Knoxville to complete her graduate work at UT and decided to stay and become active in the city.

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