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Community Honors Councilman Nick Pavlis

By Pete Gawda

The community came together to honor Nick Pavlis last Friday evening, as he prepares to close a sixteen-year run on the Knoxville City Council. "I'm going to ride my bike, play golf, and enjoy myself," Pavlis said when asked what he would do at the conclusion of his term in December.

Pavlis's many friends, supporters and elected officials gathered together at a popular South Knoxville eatery to wish him well and thank him for his service to the community. Pavlis had been elected to the city council originally as an at-large member, toppling incumbent Ed Bailey to win a spot on the council. After Knoxvilleans instituted term limits Pavlis made history by being the only former councilman to win an election from a seat from another district. To date, Nick Pavlis remains the only former city councilman able to make a political comeback. It was all the more impressive as Pavlis won the right to represent the South Knoxville district when he was not a native of the area. Pavlis ran promising to be an aggressive advocate for South Knoxville and proudly cites the downtown renovations, as well as the numerous

projects and improvements that have come to South Knoxville through his determined insistence upon bringing things south of the river. The Urban Wilderness area has proven to be extraordinarily popular with millennials, just as Pavlis predicted it would be; the area is now open for hiking and biking and draws hundreds of people weekly. Real estate values have risen in South Knoxville and houses are selling quickly, a big turnaround from the time before Nick Pavlis returned to the city council. Pavlis had again predicted just such an impact once the Urban Wilderness area was completed. Many long-time residents of South Knoxville have been astonished by how quickly homes in the area are selling.

Knoxville Mayor Madeline Rogero was among those



Stephanie Welch, Councilman Nick Pavlis and South Knox County Board of Education member Amber Rountree at the gathering to celebrate Pavlis' service to the community.

honoring Nick Pavlis and she introduced the councilman, saying, "I have truly enjoyed working with you. You are a leader." Rogero, herself a resident of South Knoxville, admitted much of the credit for projects and improvements in the community belong to Nick Pavlis. "A lot of the credit for South Knoxville goes to Nick," Rogero said. The mayor chuckled saying she has received complaints "South Knoxville gets everything."

Pavlis was emotional when he stood up in a room packed with friends and supporters. "This is hard," he confessed after being introduced by Mayor Rogero. "I don't really know what to say." Pavlis collected himself and told the audience he had made a series of five promises when he attempted to regain a seat on the Knoxville City Council. Pavlis recounted the promises he made to the people of South Knoxville and proudly announced he

he made when seeking to return to the City Council. The last was being accessible to the people who elected him. For the past eight years, Nick Pavlis has held quarterly "Coffee With the Councilman" meetings where anyone could approach him for help, discuss issues, or even relate a gripe. Those meetings were in addition to the high profile Pavlis kept in regularly attending community, neighborhood and

homeowners' association meetings throughout South Knoxville. The South Haven Neighborhood Association acknowledged Pavlis' commitment by presenting him with a special award last Friday night.

Pavlis returned the compliment paid to him by Mayor Rogero, modestly noting, "Without the help of the administration and the people I serve with, none of this could have happened." Pavlis also was careful to credit a handful of friends and his nephew Tyler for making his return to public office possible, thanking each one graciously.

Nick Pavlis came to the avocation of politics genetically, being the son of Jamie and Bill Pavlis. Bill Pavlis served on the Knox County Commission, including a stint as chairman, as well as the Knoxville City Council. Yet when Nick wanted to run for an at-large seat, father Bill advised against it. Laughing, Nick Pavlis remembered virtually nobody thought he could win a spot in the run off, much less defeat one of the powerful incumbents in an at-large race. Pavlis remembered a scant number of friends believed he could

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Ambulance issue comes up again

By Pete Gawda

The ambulance issue came up again at the Monday, September 25 meeting of the Knox County Commission when Commissioner Charles Busler brought up the recent contract renewal with AMR for ambulance service.

"I understand there are still some concerns about contractual language and fees and how citizens are being charged," Busler said. He had received a complaint that day about a citizen receiving a bill for ambulance services when they were not home. "I just had concerns

for my constituents. I am upset that we have a contract and I don't know if it is being followed. From my answers I don't think it is being followed."

While admitting that improved fire protection led to his having reduced insurance rates Busler said he sent a letter to the legal

department for clarification. He said the contract calls for a five-member board to approve rate increase. He said he was told there was no need for the board since there were no rate increases. He claimed the rate for family service had increased from \$59 to \$75. While admitting \$16

was not much of an increase, he asked, "Who approved the \$75?"

Law director Bud Armstrong offered the opinion that the \$59 was a set floor. If a household met that definition, the fee was \$59. If a household did not meet

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Windfall from state to help Knoxville homeless

By Mike Steely
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The city of Knoxville had budgeted the roughly \$5 million it expected to come back from the state's Hall Income Tax but received twice that amount. The extra \$5 million is going to several projects including \$500,000 in an expanded outreach to the city's homeless population.

Other projects getting some of the windfall monies are the Public Works Complex, the State Street Garage, the World's Fair Park, the Vol Navy Dock, creating a mall cell tower policy, a CSX property purchase, the Fountain City Lake project and the

purchase of a lot on Jackson Avenue.

The homeless project saw the most discussion Tuesday evening during the Knoxville City Council meeting and Police Chief David Rausch said the funds will go toward creating a safe place on Broadway and Magnolia, expanding the outreach program with services and providers, and connecting individuals with resources from the government and organizations.

"It would be an outdoor daytime space with coordinators, landscaping and lighting," Mayor Madeline Rogero said of the proposed safe place. The

space would be in cooperation with the city police department. She added that the city is "creating a space we can control" where the homeless would feel safe.

"It's a pilot, we will see how successful it is," she said.

Rausch said the space, located in the Mission District, would protect people and allow the police to pursue "those who prey on people." He also said the city has a "void of permanent public housing."

Councilman Daniel Brown asked if there are plans to move homeless to other parts of the city and Rausch said "No" but

said the city is looking for other places in the city for housing.

The amendment to the city budget to allocate the \$5 million was approved and Councilman Finbarr Saunders urged his fellow council members to get involved with the Homeless Coalition in an effort to help those people who live on the streets.

Asked about future budgeting of the decreasing state Hall Tax funds Jim York, Finance Director, said that only \$4.5 million has been forecast.

The city's attempt to overhaul the parking regulation saw debate

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Multi-dwellings and Bus Stop access money approved

Two long-promised projects got approval from the Knoxville City Council last week.

The council voted to allow multi-dwelling structures in C-3 and C-6 Commercial Zones, living up to a promise to the Bearden neighborhood. The idea is to permit housing within businesses and create a walkable, multi-use district.

Approval of any "multi-dwellings" in those zones would be subject to an use-on-review by the Metropolitan Planning Commission.

Also approved was \$78,550 as part of KAT's Summit Hill Stop Project. The Transit Authority promised a sheltered bus stop there two years ago for elderly and handicapped residents of Summit Towers Apartments along with a safe way for them to get down the hill to catch the bus and trolley.

The funds are to purchase or condemn property on three tracts between the apartments and the street.



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