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Gibbs Middle Project is Ahead of Schedule



Gibbs Middle School Principal Cindy White (far right, front row) and Donnie Fawver of Knox County Purchasing Department (far left, back row) hosted elected officials, Knox County Schools personnel, and community leaders on a construction progress tour of the new Gibbs Middle School this past Friday. The Gibbs Middle Project is 74% complete and within budget. The new school is scheduled to open in August for the 2018 school year.

MPC delays sidewalk requirement

By Pete Gawda

At their meeting Thursday, Dec. 14 the Knoxville-Knox County Metropolitan Planning Commission revisited the sidewalk issue. After considerable discussion on the issue at the October MPC meeting, the commission voted 7 to 6 to require developers to put

in sidewalks. The new requirements were to go into effect Feb. 1, 2018.

At last week's meeting the MPC, upon recommendation of staff, voted to delay implementation of the new regulations for one year. Staff offered several reasons for the delay including

developing a master plan, formulating sidewalk construction standards and developing a procedures for processing waivers.

Commissioner Janice Tocher noted that it is difficult for developers when they hear at the last minute sidewalks are required. She wanted to give them advance

notice

"We have to look 20 years down the road and see where this county is going," was the opinion of MPC Chair Rebecca Longmire.

Commissioner Art Clancy stated that it was unfair for a developer to come up with

sidewalks without any connectivity to existing sidewalks. "We need a plan in place," he asserted, adding that there are a lot of details to be worked out.

Robert Whaley's request for final plat approval for a two lot subdivision on N. Broadway at

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New council members face first regular meeting

By Mike Steely
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The five new members of Knoxville City Council join that body Tuesday evening and encounter an agenda full of items such as rehiring a Nashville legislative lobbyist, grants for 22 units of affordable housing, an urban greenway project and upping the funds for a streetscape project and renovation of an old building.

The law department is asking the council to renew an agreement with Fred D. (Tony) Thompson Jr., the son of former Senator Fred Thompson, to represent the city in Nashville. The annual agreement is for \$55,000.

The Community Development Department is asking the council to award \$180,000 in an affordable housing grant to Restoration House of East Tennessee to develop 12 affordable housing units for low income single mothers at 2205 Village Place Way. A similar grant is being requested by the Helen Ross McNabb Center to develop 10 housing units for homeless veterans at 3720 Middlebrook Pike.

Council may also authorize Mayor Madeline Rogero to send a letter to the state director of transportation outlining the city's on-going ADA compliance efforts.

The Department of Engineering is asking for \$184,500 for the Urban Wilderness Greenway Project in a contract with Vaughn & Melton and for the contract with CDM Smith, Inc. for design modifications to the Old City Streetscapes Project on West Jackson Avenue from State to Central Street, to be increased by \$71,900.

Increasing the contract funds for the Sanitary Laundry Building roof repairs for removing windows and concrete panels is also on the agenda. The ongoing contract with Anderson Lumber Company would fund an additional \$49,362 bringing the total cost to just over \$613,000.

Other items on the new council's agenda include an agreement with Rogers Petroleum for fuel for city vehicles managed by Fleet Services and to lease property in the Regency Business Park at 900 East Hill Avenue for the Fire Department. The lease is for suites 140 and 439, including storage spaces.

A contract for repair of Fire Station #18 could also be approved between the city and Herley Roofing Solutions. Another contract might be increase between the city and Base-line Sports Construction for the Tensman Tennis Courts Project.

The Public Service Department is asking for approval of a continuing agreement with Waste Connections for collection and disposal of residential waste and with Knoxville Landfills, LLC, for waste disposal of construction and demolition waste.

On first reading are two items: amending the city code dealing with interest and penalties on delinquent taxes and giving \$12,769 from the Save Our Sore fund to support a 10 week YMCA Project Reach program for service-oriented internships.

The new council may also approve appointments to the Audit Committee and several appointments and reappointments to city boards and KUB Board.



PHOTO BY MIKE STEELY

The new First District City Council member, Stephanie Welch, chats with Councilman-At-Large Finbarr Saunders shortly after taking the oath of office. The new Sixth District member, Gwen McKenzie, and Councilman-At-Large Marshall Stair make some notes and newly-elected Fourth District member Lauren Rider chats with City Council Attorney Rob Frost.

Saunders elected vice mayor

By Mike Steely
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In their first votes as new members of the Knoxville City Council the five newly elected members voted unanimously with the remaining four members to select Councilman Finbarr Saunders as Vice Mayor.

The five members split on the election of a Beer Board Chairman with Gwen McKenzie, Seema Perez, Marshall Stair and Andrew

Roberto voting for Roberto. Councilman George Wallace was chosen in the 5-4 vote with the support of Mark Campen, Lauren Rider, Finbarr Saunders, George Wallace and Stephanie Welch.

The council unanimously elected McKenzie as their representative on the Knoxville Transit Authority.

A full house packed the main assembly room of the City-County Building for the oath taking and all the newly

elected members brought family members. Outgoing Vice Mayor Duane Grieve was master-of-ceremonies. Mayor Madeline Rogero spoke and praised the term-limited members of council and welcomed the new members by giving them some advice. At the end of the special session Rogero got a laugh.

"This is the shortest meeting you will have ever had," the mayor said.

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