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New city council members speak up

By Mike Steely
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When the City Beer Board convened Tuesday afternoon Stephanie Welch, the new 1st District member, was left out of the roll call. This was brought to immediate attention and Board Chairman George Wallace

and the other members laughed when he said his name was, until now, the last name called on the roll and he had forgotten that "Welch" comes after "Wallace." Welch was noted as being present.

"Here we go," Wallace said as the first regularly

scheduled meeting of the new council got underway.

The five new city council members had no hesitation in speaking up during their first regular council meeting Tuesday. Each of them not only made motions in the beer board but also in the regular and

zoning requests with new Councilwoman Seema Singh Perez speaking up to question two affordable housing grants.

Perez told the director of Helen Ross McNabb she was disappointed with a structure at 3720 Middlebrook Pike being torn down

so 10 units for homeless veterans could be built. The city is awarding \$300,000 in a grant, which Perez said she supports but wanted to know why the demolition took place.

Director Jerry Vagnier responded that restoring the building would have

cost more than tearing it down and building a new facility. He said the project will cost about \$1.7 million and supplies independence for mental health. Perez noted that \$800,000 of the funds are coming from the state and voted

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HOLIDAY HELPERS



Central High School junior cheerleader LeAnna Rogers enjoys face-painting at the Fantasy of Trees. High school student-athletes have stepped up again during the holiday season this year. See story and more photos in Sports & Recreation, Section C.

Ms. Senior United States



Royalty appeared at the Frank R. Strang Senior Center on Wednesday, Dec. 13 in the form of three Senior Pageants Group queens. Left to right are, Ms. Senior Universe Donna McGuffie, Ms. Senior United States Lauren Monahan, Cole Monahan, and Ms. Senior Tennessee Debbie Watts.

Royalty is crowned in Knoxville

By Pete Gawda

History was made December 13 at the Frank R. Strang Senior Center when Lauren Monahan, coordinator of the center and former Ms. Senior Tennessee, was crowned as the first Ms. Senior United States. She was crowned by Donna McGuffie, the reigning Ms. Senior Universe, who is a friend of Ms. Monahan. "This is so special," Ms. McGuffie said as she crowned Monahan. McGuffie was representing the Ms. Senior Pageants Group which seeks to honor the women and daughters of "The Greatest Generation" through Ms. Senior Universe and other pageants. The Ms. Senior Universe Pageant is for ladies 60 and over and has been presented for a number of years. However, Monahan is the first Ms. Senior United States, which is a new category open to ladies 50 years of age and older.

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Unusual year for Angelic Ministries

By Mike Steely
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It's been quite a year for Angelic Ministries. The needs of destitute families keep growing and the ministry continues to serve them. Earlier in the year the ministry bought the former Salem Baptist Church building in Halls and it took months to convince the community there that Executive Director Tony Earl wasn't going to operate a homeless center there.

"God opened the door for us to buy the Halls church. We were granted \$100,000 to do so and borrowed another \$200,000.

We're doing a needs analysis in the Halls community with leaders there. It could become a facility for adult education, seniors, school arts, a wedding venue, a community garden or have a computer lab," he said of the former church.

Since then the ministry has had two "Christmas Mails" at the new location where needy families could come and pick gifts, toys, clothing etc. for free. The Angelic Ministries location on Central held the same "mail" through December. Also within the items available to impoverished families were Christmas

trees and decorations.

"We served 99 individuals yesterday, 67 of them for Christmas items," Reverend Earl told The Focus earlier this month.

Having given the promise not to house recovering men in the Halls facility, Earl said they are now looking for a piece of property solely for that purpose. There's a waiting list to get into the men's program, which trains men in various job skills like garage work, wood shop, etc. He said that dorm-type housing is best for men who enter the program and they would spend the first three months there.

Earl said the program is "going well" and told of several men who have moved on to employment. "We call it Life Retraining." He added that the ministry is looking into getting some of the men special driver licenses so they can drive back and forth to work.

"We're selling two of our nine houses toward paying off the Halls property. Our vision is to pay it off in two years," he said. Of those ministry-owned houses which currently house men in the program he said, "There has never been a police officer called to our houses."

Angelic Ministries relies on

donations and prayers to achieve its goals. Two years ago they badly needed a large truck and someone stepped up and donated enough money for the ministry to buy a 28-foot truck.

"As a ministry God opens up a door for the needs of the community," he said.

"We serve 50 families each week with three to five members each. They are referred to us by churches, agencies, landlords, CAC, the Salvation Army, KARM and the public schools," Earl continued.

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