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City budget passes but with some questions

By Mike Steely
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Mayor Madeline Rogero's proposed city budget passed on final reading Tuesday as well as a three percent employee pay raise and funding for the various city departments. The passing of the proposal did not go without questions from citizens and Councilwoman Seema Singh Perez who questioned the issuance of \$36 million in new bonds.

Several people spoke in favor of the budget and several spoke against it. The opposition mainly focused on only budgeting \$2.5 million for Community Development while allocating \$10 million to create a gateway entrance to the Urban Wilderness at the end of James White Parkway.

Perez asked if each item would come back before the council for approval. Finance Director Jim York said that the city will issue \$55 million in new debt bonds next year to include funds for a new "Safety Center" for police and fire departments on Knoxville College property and \$9 million for renovations at the Civic Coliseum and Auditorium.

Mayor Madeline Rogero said the funding won't all be spent in the coming year and the approval allows the city to get started on those projects.

"That's a great deal of money, I just wanted to confirm that we will be involved," Perez said.

"There are a lot of steps along the way," York said.

Perez joined the other council members in approving the budget once she

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Matlock opens Knoxville campaign office



State Representative Jimmy Matlock and his wife, Dean, give thumbs up at the opening of the Matlock for Congress Campaign office Saturday morning at 1645 Downtown West in Knoxville. Dozens of people including elected office holders and candidates came by to hear the candidate and celebrate the opening. The campaign announced earlier this month that outgoing Congressman Jimmy Duncan is endorsing Matlock in the race to replace him in Washington. Photos by Mike Steely.



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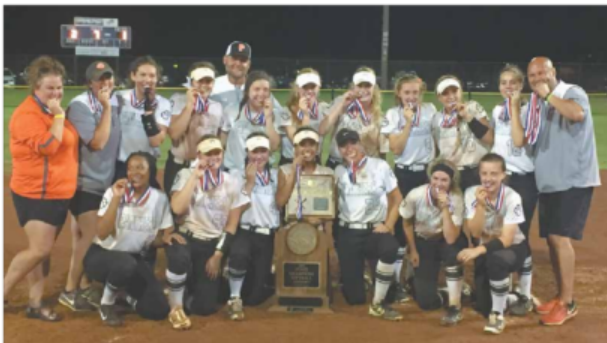


PHOTO BY CHRISTY DAUGHERTY

Hungry for Gold! The Powell Lady Panthers playfully bite down on their championship medals to see if they're for real after defeating Walker Valley 2-1 in the TSSAA state softball tournament Friday night in Marietta. See story on Powell and other coverage from Spring Fling XXV in Sports & Recreation, Section C.

Parkridge historic expansion might not be dead

By Mike Steely
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The failed plan to extend the historic overlay zoning to all of Parkridge was on the agenda Tuesday at city council. Because the council had voted to postpone any decision for 120 days the item automatically reappeared on their agenda but was dead on arrival.

City Attorney Charles Swanson told the council that any planning commission request must be acted on in 120 days and that it

had been 222 days since the MPC voted to extend the historic overlay there.

"This matter is dead and will have to start all over again with the planning commission," he said. The proposal may not be as dead as some thought.

Councilwoman Lauren Rider said she lives in an H-1 historic overlay neighborhood and said that the Parkridge neighborhood is being pummeled with offers to buy up property there.

"H-1 can address that

and something needs to be done," she said.

"What happens is that they buy small homes for \$50,000, bump it out and sell it for \$300,000," Rider said, adding that the renovated and expanded homes are not compatible with the historic neighborhood.

Opponents feared expanding the historic designation to the entire neighborhood would harm small home renters on fixed incomes. Three citizens spoke in favor of the

designation and three spoke against.

Swanson also said the prohibition of demolition in Parkridge expires next month and may come back for renewal.

Mayor Madeline Rogero recalled the original historic overlay proposal and the division it caused in the neighborhood. She said the city has had eight meetings with residents in Parkridge along with Councilwoman Gwen McKenzie and Debbie Sharp, director

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Expanding the historic overlay in the Parkridge Neighborhood in East Knoxville returned to the agenda of city council Tuesday but time has expired and the matter can't be approved.

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