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Checking in on the Behavioral Urgent Care Center

By Mike Steely
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The Knoxville Focus recently asked Jerry Vagrier, president and CEO of Helen Ross McNabb Center, how things are going at the Behavioral Health Urgent Care Center. The facility, located just off Western Avenue at 5203 Ball Camp Pike, opened in March following a well-attended ribbon cutting.

Funded by the state, county and city the Urgent Care Center occupies part of a renovated building that once served as a

church. The creation of the center came after several years of effort by citizens who wanted diversion, not jail, for mentally ill offenders and those with a drug addiction.

Jessica Hill, director of community relations for Helen Ross McNabb, responded to The Focus inquiry with answers from Vagrier.

"The Helen Ross McNabb Center is pleased with the progress of the Behavioral Health Urgent Care Center. From opening on March 19 through May 24,

10 weeks of operation, we have seen roughly 90 clients. While the Behavioral Health Urgent Care Center contains 16 beds, we have been intentional in slowly increasing the number of clients to ensure we are providing the best possible services," Vagrier said.

"Intake, discharge and follow up continue to go smoothly. Approximately 80 percent of the people referred to us by the police and sheriff's departments have been accepted into treatment at this facility. This shows we are

appropriately assessing whether a person needs treatment or needs to go to jail. About 82 percent of our referrals are from the Knoxville Police Department," he added.

Adjoining the Urgent Care Center is a separate facility which houses and treats a different client who is there voluntarily.

"The second half of the facility houses our crisis services, which includes the Mobile Crisis Unit and Crisis Stabilization Unit. The Mobile Crisis Unit

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PHOTO BY MIKE STEELY

Open since March the Behavioral Health Urgent Care Center provides 72 hours of diversion from jail for mentally ill and drug offenders. Most of the 90 clients served there so far have been brought to the center by the Knoxville Police Department.

Second Saturday Concert series lineups announced

First shows kick off June 9 at The Cove and New Harvest Park

Knox County is again hosting its Second Saturday Concerts series this summer as the parks and recreation department will oversee live entertainment for the whole family at The Cove and - for the second year in a row - at New Harvest Park.

The free concerts, held June through August on the second Saturday of each month, run from 6 to 8 p.m. Attendees are encouraged to bring their own blankets or lawn chairs. Please note: No alcohol is allowed.

The dates and bands for summer 2018 are:

- June 9 - Rockin'ellarz (The Cove) and Wild Blue Yonder (New Harvest)

- July 14 - The Jennings Street Band (The Cove) and

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Goat grazing, sidewalk sound, mall changes on City Council agenda

By Mike Steely
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The Knoxville City Council meets in regular session Tuesday at 6 p.m. in the City-County Building's main assembly room and, among other agenda items, they will discuss permitting goat grazing, controlling sound on sidewalks and two changes involving both malls.

The city code may be changed in a vote to allow temporary goat grazing in the city to control invasive plants on private property. Goats have been used in recent years to control kudzu at Fort Dickerson Park and other places. Now the code may be changed to allow, with a permit, the animals on private lots. The request comes from the office of Sustainability and

Councilman Mark Campen.

Communications Director Jesse Mayshark told The Focus that several requests have been made to permit goats on private property. He said doing so would require a permit and be permitted for 90 days in a fenced lot.

Amplified sound on city sidewalks and nights-of-way might also be prohibited if an agenda item requested by the Office of Redevelopment passes. Mayshark said some street performers have been using amplifiers, either battery powered or plugged into outside outlets. The prohibition will not affect business patio music which is already regulated.

Two items are on the agenda that could involve

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PHOTO BY MIKE STEELY

Boy Scout Troop 55 of the Fountain City Methodist Church presented the colors during the beginning of Honor Fountain City Day.

Rain did not deter Honor Fountain City Day

By Mike Steely
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It may have rained most of Memorial Day but that didn't deter the ceremonies at Honor Fountain City Day. Although some politicians and vendors cleared out by the time the 3 p.m. program got underway, many residents stayed and watched the patriotic program and presentation of honors to citizens who contributed time and effort to the community.

The ceremonies began as members of Boy Scout Troop 55 of the Fountain City Methodist Church presented the flag and Rev. Jeff Lane of Smithwood Baptist Church gave the devotional. Lynn Bennett sang the national anthem. Members

of the East Tennessee Volunteer Honor Guard fired a 21-gun salute in honor of fallen heroes.

Sponsored by the Fountain City Town Hall, the 43rd Annual Honor Fountain City Day was surprised with a visit by former Governor Phil Bredesen, who spoke briefly following great applause from the crowd. Bredesen is a candidate for U. S. Senator.

"This is the kind of event I love to go to with all kinds of people, politics, and backgrounds. That's what America is supposed to be about," he said.

Congressional candidate and Knox County Mayor Tim Burchett also spoke briefly and honored fallen military and veterans and

said that the "best hamburgers in the world are right here at Litter's."

Town Hall Chair Kelly Ellenburg hosted the event, noting that "A Walk in the Park" was the theme.

Each year local citizens are honored for their efforts and Bill Dohm and Patty Cooper received the Town Hall Chair's Award for their purchase and restoration of Savage Garden and efforts at the Garden Montessori School.

Knoxville Vice Mayor Finbarr Saunders was honored and received the Friend of Fountain City Award.

Carol Evans, director of Legacy Parks, was the keynote speaker and was recognized as Fountain

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