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Commissioners Bob Thomas and Ed Brantley prepare to eat at Chandler's Deli as they greet friends and citizens in their 42nd "Night Out" gathering.

PHOTO BY MIKE STEELY

Ed and Bob's Night Out a hoot

By Mike Steely
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Ed Brantley and Bob Thomas go back a few years together. Both were disk jockeys before they teamed up for the popular Ed and Bob Talk Show on the radio. The two are finishing their terms at At-Large Knox County Commissioners and The Focus had a chance to sit down with them recently during their 42nd "Ed and Bob Night Out in Knox County" at Chandler's Deli on Magnolia Avenue.

"I go back to 1975 with WIVK. I wanted a job and kept calling them back every month for a part-time job and one day I got it," Bob said. "Ed was on WIVK FM from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m. and was general manager."

"I got fired," Ed inserted, explaining that the company was reorganizing. Both men laughed as Bob responded. "Ed's not afraid to tell you what he thinks."

Both ended up leaving WIVK: Ed after 42 years and Bob said he was at that station for 20 years. The two combined their efforts at WNOX and their show became a favorite and ran for 2 and 1/2 years.

"Johnny Pirkle called me and said, 'I heard you're looking for a radio job,'" Ed remembered.

"We went from nothing to the number one talk show within a year," Bob added.

"We lived for call-ins. We wanted everyone to have fun," Ed said. Both

said that when the station started having a camera in the control room it changed the whole show.

"We couldn't do things we'd been doing," Ed said.

Bob remembers when Ed got into an argument with a caller and Ed said to the caller, "Why don't you get your ass down here in the parking lot?"

When they went to a commercial Bob said he looked at Ed and said, "What?" Bob said his partner replied, "He ain't coming down here!"

"Remember when they used to throw tomatoes at us?" Ed asked.

"People would drive up in the mornings, it was dark, and throw tomatoes at us," Bob added.

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Jacobs and Haney differ on taxes, immigration

By Mike Steely
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Republican Glenn Jacobs and Democrat Linda Haney agreed on several things during the League of Women Voters candidate forum at Pellissippi State College Friday night. But the forum at the Magnolia Avenue campus also heard some large disagreements from the two people who want to be the next Knox County Mayor.

Moderator Ted Hall read questions that were submitted by the audience and the one about the possibility of raising property taxes saw Haney come down with a firm "maybe." Haney said that for 25 years the county has not raised taxes and is now in debt.

"If you want these things you've got to pay for them," she said, adding that it would have been "totally logical to raise taxes slowly" over the past years.

Jacobs said there's no need to raise taxes because of "organic growth" in the county.

"We have some challenges," he said, adding that some budgets could be reduced.

Asked if they support the "287G" enforcement by the sheriff's department involving undocumented aliens Jacobs drew a groan from the



Linda Haney looks over some notes prior to the LWV forum Friday evening as her opponent, Glenn Jacobs, and WVLT's Ted Hall prepare for the public discussion.

PHOTO BY MIKE STEELY

East Knoxville audience when he replied.

"I do. That's the sheriff's decision," he said but said that he doesn't think the incoming sheriff will heavily enforce it.

"I don't support it in any way, it destroys families and is not something any sheriff's department should be doing," Haney replied. She said

using local law enforcement to help find illegal aliens has been tried other places and it didn't work.

In their statements Jacobs recalled his campaign slogan "Together we win" and said dialog with everyone is important. He promised, "I will always listen."

Haney told the audience she can

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Open house tonight for Magnolia Avenue Streetscape Project

Construction gets underway next month on \$4.18 million first phase

The community is invited to ask questions and learn more about the project at an open house, 5:30 - 7 p.m. Monday, July 23, at the John T. O'Connor Senior Center, 611 Winona St.

City Engineering and Redevelopment staff will be there Monday to talk with stakeholders one on one. Also at this open house will be Vaughn and Melton, which is providing construction engineering and inspection services, and the general contractor, The Franklin Group.

The first of the two-phase streetscape project will make upgrades to a section of Magnolia Avenue between Jessamine Street and Myrtle Street. Improvements will include landscaped center medians with designated left turn lanes, new stamped crosswalks, designated on-street parking, traffic signal upgrades, street trees and landscaping, LED pedestrian and street lighting, and wider

sidewalks and bike lanes.

Work will begin on the north side of Magnolia Avenue at Jessamine Street, and it will progress eastward to Myrtle Street. Then, the work will shift to the south side of Magnolia and move westward back to Jessamine.

One lane of traffic in each direction will be maintained on Magnolia Avenue throughout the project, and pedestrian access through the work zone - and access to businesses - will be maintained at all times.

A groundbreaking ceremony is scheduled for 10 a.m. on Thursday, Aug. 9, in front of the KAT employee parking lot at the northeast corner of Magnolia Avenue and Jessamine Street.

The first phase of the project is scheduled to be finished by fall 2019. At that time, the second phase - a stretch of Magnolia from Myrtle Street to Bertrand Street - will begin.

Text "Magnolia" to 33.33 to receive project updates. For more details and to follow a project blog, visit www.MagnoliaAvenueStreetscapes.com.

City borrows \$40 million from itself for new police and fire complex

By Mike Steely
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In a unanimous roll-call vote the Knoxville City Council agreed to set aside \$40 million of city funds for future projects such as the new headquarters for the police and fire department rather than issuing bonds. The odd move, suggested by finance director Jim York, prompted questions from the council.

Councilwoman Seema Singh-Perez quizzed York about using the funds to which York described the action like an "internal letter of credit." He said

the action will self-fund the city until it needs to borrow money.

Two citizens spoke against the action including Barbara Bridges who said the city is already paying \$5 million a year on its current debt. She said the need for a new police headquarters has yet to be explained and claimed that the decision to relocate the headquarters was "made behind closed doors."

David Brace, the city's chief operating officer, said the next step now is to review the police and fire department needs and find

a facility based on what the city had spent on the new Public Works complex. He said that would include a design team and program review.

"We've needed a larger KPD facility for a number of years," Brace said, adding that the project will include "very in depth community involvement." He also said that building the facility on the campus of Knoxville College has not been finalized, adding, "They came to us."

Councilwoman Lauren Rider asked York where the \$40 million will come from

and York replied said the resolution is not to borrow money but to "repay ourselves from future bonds."

Rider said she is concerned about the number of places now leased across the city for the police department. She said she has toured the current police headquarters on Hill Street and said the building is in poor condition and "bursting at the seams."

"There's lots of discussion about where it will go," Rider said of relocating the headquarters. Councilman

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