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Recode passed on to city council despite complaints

By Nick Skoda

A comprehensive update to the City of Knoxville zoning ordinance, a project dubbed Recode Knoxville, has been met with measured skepticism from several Knoxville neighborhood advocates.

This project has been a work in progress since 2016.

Commissioner Gerald Green, who led the hearing at the Knoxville-Knox County Planning's (formerly known as the Metropolitan Planning Commission) monthly meeting on Wednesday, January 10, said, "Over my years in this profession, I've become a great believer in incrementalism. Taking small steps, seeing how they work and addressing and measuring them as we move forward."

Outreach conducted before and during work on the rezoning included various efforts such as multiple planning commission workshops, fourteen press releases, eighty community and public meetings, fifty media article coverage, two community surveys and the introduction of a website for the project that reached upwards of 61,000 visits.

This skepticism and general feeling that the ordinance is in need of more fine tuning was certainly present at the meeting, as all eight members of the public that were allowed to speak, spoke to why now wasn't the time to pass this ordinance.

Amongst the members of the public that voiced their opinions was Mary Tracy, the president of Scenic Knoxville.

Tracy spoke on the landscaping requirements the Recode mentions.

In fact, landscaping was one of the most heavily discussed topics at the meeting.

Commissioner Art Clancy said, "I have a problem with the way that the codes enforcement people are dealing with our landscape requirements. We put landscaping requirements on developments and they're not getting done."

"And when they get complaints, the people that are complaining about not

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City discusses complicated Tennova purchase

By Mike Steely
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The city's plans to purchase the Tennova Physicians Regional Medical Center are more complicated than first announced with many variables playing into the proposal. Deputy Mayor Bill Lyons and Chief Operating Officer David Brace explained the twists and turns of the deal to relocate the police and fire department to the Oakwood-Lincoln Park neighborhood in a council workshop Thursday.

Although a letter of intent has been sent, the purchase,

demolition, construction and renovation plans hinge on several proposals, all of which both city officials say will involve neighborhood input. Total estimated cost to the city is estimated, on completion, at \$40 million.

The idea is change the 1.6-acre property, located just off Broadway beside Fulton High School, to eventually accommodate not only the police and fire departments but the city municipal court and the city's pension board as well. The city, at this point, has no plans to use all of the structures there and the fate of those

buildings depends on whether or not they can be sold or leased to businesses or organizations.

It was noted that the director of the Knoxville Health Department and the Helen Ross McNabb Center were present and are being consulted about possible interest in using some of the facility. The hospital has been closed and has recently posted signs telling people of the closure. There are hopes that an emergency or medical clinic would locate there. Buildings saved and re-sold on the private market would add to the tax roll.

Lyons said that the original Mary's hospital, hidden within the walls of the facility, will be uncovered and saved if possible.

Architect Glen Richters, hired by the city to do a preliminary cost review of the facility, presented cost estimates within a slide presentation to the packed house in the City-County Building's Small Assembly Room. He said that if the north side of the hospital is included the cost could come to \$46,731. Brace commented that the figures are "preliminary numbers but accurate," adding that

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11-Year-Old Coin Prodigy Shares his Craft



Aaron Rosen shows his Bust Half Dollar coin collection. Aaron hopes to share his hobby with his classmates.

By Amy Fox Belthoelter

"Now this is how you hold a coin," says eleven-year-old Aaron Rosen, coin enthusiast, collector and dealer, holding the outside edge of an 1893 Morgan Dollar with his fingers.

After less than two years of taking an interest in coin collecting, Rosen owns his own store called "Bowtie Kids Coin Store"

and is the youngest member of the Bust Half Hut Club, a 50-year-old nationwide organization dedicated to the advancement and study of Bust Half Dollars.

Ripping through the monthly magazine *The Numismatist*, Rosen says, "I like to find the errors." It's what he finds most fascinating about this trade. He spends at least six hours a week finding mistakes on coins made by the United

States Mint.

Rosen has become a coin collecting prodigy from his own research, learning from the experts, and using books such as the "Cherry-Pickers' Guide to Rare Die Varieties of United States Coins" by Bill Fivaz and J.T. Stanton and "The Ultimate Guide to Attributing Bust Half Dollars" by Dr. Glenn Peterson. "Knowledge is power. Aaron

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Who's going to pay the \$165K bill?

By Mike Steely
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Item 24 on the Knox County Commission January work session agenda simply reads, "Consideration of a Resolution of the Commission of the Commission of Knox County, Tennessee, approving payment of attorney fees in the Pension Board Lawsuit from account _____."

The resolution is requested by the Finance Department and requests the selection of which county department will foot the \$165,000 bill ordered in a settlement between the mayor, commission and retirement and pension board. The funds apply to the three attorneys representing the "Class" of deputies sued, for the outside firm hired by the commission, and for a mediator.

"I wanted a discussion," Finance Director Chris Caldwell told The Focus, adding, "I don't have a dog in the fight and want them to guide me."

Two commissioners *Continued on page 3*

School board examines Career Magnet Academy

By Anne Primm

Chairwoman Terry Hill called the first 2019 Knox County School Board meeting to order at 5:01 p.m. on Wednesday, January 9, 2019. Superintendent Bob Thomas gave his report, welcoming both teachers and students back after the winter break. He announced that Laicee Hatfield, assistant principal of Karna High School, has been chosen as Assistant Principal of the Year by the Tennessee Association of Secondary School Principals. Thomas also related that Scott Bolton has

been chosen to succeed Dr. Kelley Drummond as the interim director of human resources. Lastly, Thomas reminded everyone of the upcoming Martin Luther King Holiday on Monday, January 21, 2019.

There were no comments or discussion on the Items/Contracts or Board Policies on the agenda. When discussing grants, there were a few questions by First District Representative Eretta Satterfield and Fourth District Representative Virginia Babb regarding the Read to Be Ready State Program that takes place in the summer which were answered

by Shannon Jackson of Knox County Schools. The next item under Grants was the proposal for a Watershed Facilitator Position. This position was advocated by Third District Representative Tony Norman. Clean water being one of the urgent health and welfare issues of our day underscores the need for such a staff member to support science teachers across the county in educating students in watershed issues. Movies are already earmarked for this position.

Educational issues at the state level are

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