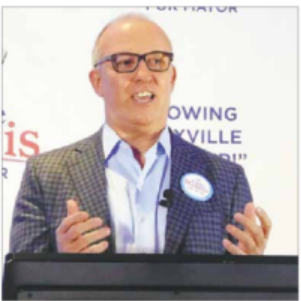




'GROWING KNOXVILLE TOGETHER'

Eddie Mannis kicks off mayoral campaign



By Mike Steely
steelym@knoxfocus.com

"I'm never going to accept that OK is good enough," promised Eddie Mannis as he kicked off his campaign to become Knoxville's next mayor. Mannis praised the city's past three mayors for the progress they fostered but said more needs to be done. Mannis was speaking to a kickoff rally crowd of more than 350 folks last Tuesday evening at the Grand Event Center on Clinton Highway.

Attending the event were supporters, veterans, neighborhood leaders, and county officials including Mayor Glenn Jacobs and several commissioners. Mannis devoted the front row seats to military veterans and many of those wore "HonorAir" caps and sought out the candidate for handshakes and chats before and after he spoke.

Many of the officials and office seekers attend most political announcements and Tuesday's

event saw some sporting the "Mannis" campaign buttons and some not. City council members and Mayor Madeline Rogero were not there because the council was meeting at the same time in the City-County Building.

Eddie Mannis, founder and president of Prestige Cleaners, founder of HonorAir, and former deputy mayor for Madeline Rogero, brings his business and philanthropy background to the race. Mannis is a Republican in a growing Democratic city but is known as a progressive and his blueprint of six items might appeal to voters. Among those points was a focus on the opioid and mental health issues, uniting to serve the needs of all citizens, empowering the city through education and self-improvement, being people focused, and supporting strong and safe neighborhoods.

"Growing Knoxville Together" is the campaign's slogan and

Mannis said Knoxville is at a "pivotal moment" after so much growth and now needs someone with "experience as a visionary."

"Think big, get things done the right way," he said. The Irish native talked about his childhood and the lessons and values his mother and father taught him, noting the presence of his father, two sisters, brother and many nieces and nephews in the room.

"We need to put our differences aside and come together," he said, adding that he would partner with the school board, Greater Schools Partnership, and others to empower children. He added, "We can't just leave it to Knox County and hope for the best" in educating city school children.

He said that the police and fire departments should get the support they need and deserve and added, "I can't do this alone."

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His experience as a visionary was mentioned Tuesday as Eddie Mannis kicked off his campaign to become Knoxville's next mayor. A large crowd attended the event where Mannis highlighted six things he hopes to do when he leads the city.

Design charrette presents Recode Knoxville applied

By Amy Fox Belthoelter

"The code we have now is designed for suburbia, but this is not suburbia," said Fourth District City Councilwoman Lauren Rider, as she pointed to a map of her district at the February 1 Recode Knoxville Design Charrette.

The design meeting held at the Knoxville Public Works Complex, gave The American Institute of Architects (AIA) and East Tennessee Community Design Center (ETCDC) an opportunity to apply Recode Knoxville to example areas in Knoxville for the public's inquiry and viewing.

Six site maps hung on the walls to represent a north, west, east, south, and two downtown edge conditions. Each location gave a realistic example of showing incremental development that wouldn't be possible without Recode Knoxville.

Leslie Fawaz, an architect and ETCDC Studio Design director, explained that each map was designed by



Mary Hickman turns 92 with family and friends at Litton's

By Rose King

Mary Grubb Hickman celebrated her 92nd birthday at a surprise gathering on Saturday, January 26. Thinking she was going for an intimate birthday dinner with long-time friends, state Representative Dave Wright and wife, Pat, Mary brought her famous Hummingbird Cake to

share with her friends after their meal.

"Mary is so gracious and generous that you can hardly do anything for her without her trying to repay the kindness," Pat Wright told The Focus. "So when she told us that she was going to bring a cake for us to enjoy after dinner Dave told her that would be just fine."

When they arrived at her favorite restaurant, Litton's, the back room was filled with family, church and community friends all of whom enjoyed a slice of her cake after a great meal.

Mary Grubb Hickman shared fond memories of being born and raised in the Corryton community. Granddaughter of the late M. D. Grubb, who once owned Little Flat Creek Dairy, she talked

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Mary Grubb Hickman turned 92 last month and celebrated with a crowd of friends and family at Litton's Restaurant. Hickman, center, visits with The Knoxville Focus publisher Steve Hanley, left, and state Representative Dave Wright.

Tax break for Holiday Inn purchase approved by council

By Mike Steely
steelym@knoxfocus.com

A 10-year tax break for the total remodel of the downtown Holiday Inn into a Marriott passed city council Tuesday night but not without three votes against the motion.

Rockbridge Capital LLC intends to totally renovate the hotel starting in about a year and had been working with the city. The idea is to buy the Holiday Inn, which is connected to the World's Fair Exhibition Center, and over the next few years put about \$65

million into the project.

Rockbridge is also purchasing the nearby Tennessee Hotel without any city assistance. Deputy Mayor Bill Lyons told the council that the deal would continue to bring in the current \$165,000 each year now being paid for taxes on the Holiday Inn.

Some council members questioned extending a 10-year tax break on an existing and functioning building but Lyons said the size of the investment and the location of the building will help attract more conventions.

"I don't see this in the 'but for' category," Councilwoman Seema Singh-Perez said. The "but for" is a category the city often uses if a renovation project cannot be financed without city help.

"I'm tired of this type of procedure," she said.

Matt Welch of Rockbridge said that the company has agreed to a 10-year and not a 15-year tax break.

"This is essentially an upgrade — not a big change that warrants this type of public assistance," said Councilman Marshall Star

He noted that such a tax break has been used in the past to help restore blighted properties.

"I'm not comfortable with it either," said Councilwoman Lauren Rider, asking what would happen to the current employees there during a year of the hotel being closed for remodeling.

Matt Welch promised that the remodeling may not happen all at once and parts of the hotel may remain open. He also hinted that some of the employees could

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Dee Canizales

Real Estate Broker

Tel: 865-637-9118 x 100

Tel: 865-686-8335

Fax: 865-637-9119

dcanizales@tennschoice.com

701 N Central St

Knoxville TN 37917

