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Recode work session raises more questions

By Mike Steely
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As Knoxville's Recode effort moves into its fifth draft several neighborhood leaders and some city council members are continuing to question the necessity of changing all the zoning regulations. The two-year effort to revise 50-year-old rules regarding residential property saw a long council work session Wednesday evening with even more questions being presented.

Requested by Mayor Madeline Rogers and the 2017 city council, the task fell to the planning commission

staff and an outside consultant group to rewrite the zoning regulations, create new categories and redraw the zoning map. After some 80 public meetings and more than 60,000 hits on the Recode Knoxville website Knoxville-Knox County Planning Director Gerald Green and Peter Ahrens, Knoxville's Plans Review and Inspections Director, gave a brief review of the progress.

Vice Mayor Finbar Saunders chaired the work session and it became obvious that the 5th revision may not be the final document. The main concerns

from council members and several citizens center on allowing duplexes in some neighborhoods, accessory buildings being allowed in all residential zones, parking availability, increased density in neighborhoods and lotsizes.

Green explained all the new residential zoning categories, from RH-1 to RH-7, range from single family residential to apartments. He said that under the proposed changes accessory dwellings would be permitted in all residential zones as long as the owner occupies one of the homes on

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Gerald Green and Peter Ahrens basically negotiated with city council members and citizens Wednesday as they worked on the fifth draft of the Recode proposal. Photo by Mike Steely.

Commission again talks of creating a county growth plan

By Mike Steely
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While the city of Knoxville is looking to revise its aging zoning regulations to create more mixed-use and secondary dwellings on residential sites the Knox County Commission appears to be moving to do exactly the opposite. For a couple of years some commissioners have discussed pulling away from the current restrictive planning and opening up more land for development.

The commission recently voted to ask the state and local state representatives to look into pulling Knox County from the state-required Urban Growth Plan. That plan may end or "sunset" in 2020 but the legislature may renew it, requiring the county to again work with Knoxville and Farragut to create and oversee the local version.

Last week's work session saw the commission talk about funding the updates of the County Growth and General Plans. The agenda item had a blank space for the amount of funding. Chairman Hugh Nystrom called on Knoxville-Knox County Planning Director Gerald Green to speak on the idea.

Green told the commission that developing a separate county growth plan, with or without the state required

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Roger Kane suddenly resigns as the Education Liaison

By Mike Steely
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The morning after Roger Kane spoke about his efforts as Mayor Glenn Jacob's liaison for county education, the former state representative resigned the post.

The Knoxville Focus has contacted Kane for a statement and he replied "I have to refer you to Rob Link in the Mayor's office. Sorry." What happened and why Kane resigned may come to light soon.

Kane's address before the commission Tuesday evening about visiting public and private schools in the county emphasized the county must do something to up student's reading levels. He described

his coordination with the board of education as a "good relationship."

In his presentation before the commission's work session Kane mentioned working with public and private schools and said he's trying to take education in Knox County "in a different direction." He said he had been working with Johnson University to have their students become teachers' aides in schools.

The former state representative has been a supporter of vouchers to allow parents to use taxpayer funds for private school education. Two board of education members told The Focus that Kane "was not a good fit" in the position.



HIGH AND MIGHTY

CAK junior Hannah Carroll (4) battles insides against University School of Jackson Friday night in the Division II-A state quarterfinal game at Christian Academy of Knoxville. The Lady Warriors pulled out a 62-59 overtime win and will advance to the state semifinal round Friday in Nashville. Please see game story on CAK and other high school basketball tournament coverage in Sports & Recreation, Section C. Photo By Katrina Wiens / K. Wiens Photography

Joint Education Committee examines proposed budget

By Ken Lay

The Knoxville County Joint Education Committee got its first look at the proposed Knox County Schools budget for the 2020 fiscal year last week.

The committee, comprised of members of the Knoxville County Board of Education and Knox County Commissioners, met Wednesday afternoon at the Andrew Johnson Building and Knox County Schools Budget Director Joe Snyder presented a possible budget for next year.

Snyder outlined the expenditures

in a Budget 101 presentation, where he discussed where KCS received its funding, how those funds are allocated and the budgetary outlook for next school year. In his presentation, Snyder highlighted areas such as categories of revenue, revenue history by category, the revenue allocation process, budgeted expenditures by category, teacher compensation and text book purchases.

The budget director broke down expenditures for the current 2019 fiscal budget into seven categories

including: salaries and wages (which is 63.7 percent of the current budget); Payroll and taxes (17.6 percent); contracted services (6.5 percent); supplies and materials (5.0 percent); other uses (3.7 percent); debt services and capital leases (3.2 percent) and capital outlays (0.1 percent).

Snyder also broke down how the school district is funded. The local funds come from sales tax and property tax.

He said that the school district

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