



The Knoxville Focus

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March 18, 2019

Con Hunley helps Blake Shelton open Ole Red in Gatlinburg



Con Hunley and Blake Shelton take time for a photo after performing at the grand opening of Ole Red Gatlinburg last week. "Gatlinburg has always been a place where I've had a good time, and it's just awesome for me to get to be a part of this community through Ole Red," said Blake Shelton before the event. "I can't wait to get my band down there to play - it's going to be an amazing night."

By Lisa DeMarsico

Knoxville native and country icon Con Hunley and his family performed at the Grand Opening of the Blake Shelton-inspired Ole Red Gatlinburg bar, restaurant and music venue Wednesday night.

Blake said, "Con is one of my all-time favorite artists and he happens to be from this area." Hunley and family went on to perform three songs during the middle of Blake's set.

During the press conference, earlier in the day, Shelton said he had visited Gatlinburg during New Year's and stayed three days. He and his girlfriend, Gwen Stefani, fell in love with the area. Shelton also told the crowd that Ole Red Gatlinburg was his favorite of the three venues he has opened.



Pictured left to right are Con Hunley, his brother-in-law Burt Akers, Blake Shelton, sister Ruthie Akers, and brother Kenny Hunley. Shelton called Hunley one of his "all time favorite artists" and recalled growing up listening to his music.

Neighbors object to further development at The Gables

By Bill Howard

As usual, rezoning, development, and land use were the topics of debate at the monthly meeting of the Knoxville-Knox Co. Planning Commission on March 14, at the City-County Building.

The meeting began with the customary vote

to postpone certain items, and to approve various others without debate.

The first item of contention concerned The Gables at Westmoreland on the east end of Old Kent Drive in Council District 2. Further development of the area has

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Lonsdale Elementary gas leaks trigger debate at BOE meeting

By Amy Box Felthoelter

The presence of Knox County Commissioner Evelyn Gill and three Knoxville Boy Scout Troop 258 members endeavoring to fulfill their citizenship badge requirements were recognized to commence the mid-March regular session Board of Education meeting. Next, an announcement declared that several board members will be attending the National School Board Association Annual Conference in Philadelphia from March 30 to April 1, 2019, in hope of meeting with other school board members on a national level regarding educational matters.

Special to the meeting was highlighting three teachers who received the outstanding

recognition of Teachers of the Year. As they approached Knox County Superintendent Bob Thomas to receive their awards in the Main Assembly Room of the City-County Building, those in attendance applauded loudly. The recipients were: Briley-McCloud Elementary School teacher Crystal Dougan; Karns Middle School teacher Janet Smith; and Powell High School teacher Alice Carson.

One week prior to the regular session meeting on March 13, board members congregated to review board policies at a work session. A motion carried for every voted board policy with no discussion. They voted to approve the second

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\$15M added to city budget includes Safe Place at Broadway bridge

By Mike Steely
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Knoxville Finance Director Jim York told the City Council Tuesday that \$15,155,694 is needed in new and shifted money for several projects. His request was approved on first reading after he explained the money will go to three categories in the city budget: housekeeping items, quasi-housekeeping changes and other items.

He said that just over \$5 million would be funds transferred from one project to another leaving the new money needed at \$10,057,624.

Among the approved funding is \$95,000 for security services at the Broadway-Magnolia Avenue Safe Place for the homeless and social workers and \$245,000 in city funds to renovate the former Salvation Army Thrift Store

beneath the bridge and next to the "Safe Place."

York explained the former thrift store will serve as an "emergency shelter for the homeless" and funding goes to the Volunteer Ministry Center to renovate and operate the facility. He said the shelter will be a "low barrier," admitting anyone who needs overnight shelter and intended for those homeless that normally don't seek shelter at the mission or who have been banned from there.

Existing Volunteer Ministry activities will " dovetail with the proposed shelter" to connect occupants with resources geared to moving them to permanent housing. The concept is for 48 beds, restrooms, showers and a laundry room and the shelter would also be available during the day as a safe place.

Among the 17 projects receiving additional or transferred funds are Affordable Housing, Historic Preservation, the Knoxville Convention Center, Governor Ned McWherter Park, the Volunteer Navy Docks, Suttree Landing Park, South Waterfront, North Central Streetcapes, the renovation of the 4th and 5th floors in the City-County Building, the Ed Cothran Pool, Augusta Quarry Entrance, Fire Station #4, and ReCode Knoxville.

In other action the city voted to rezone property on Westland Drive northeast of Highway 140 from Agricultural to C-4 Commercial.

A lease amendment was approved with Legacy Parks Foundation for the Gateway Pavilion Building for six months as the city and the foundation work out an agreement.



PHOTO BY MIKA STEELY

The former Salvation Army location at the Broadway Bridge may become a Safe Place for the homeless with 48 beds in a program funded by the city.

Just over \$595,000 was approved in Historic Preservation Grant Funds to support property improvements to historic properties inside the city. The funding is

administered by Knox Heritage and among those considered are the Standard Knitting Mill, the Hull Dobbs building and the Taggart Building.

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