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Bicycle lane marking, Jackson Avenue ramps, Arthur Seymour honors

By Mike Steely
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The Knoxville City Council meets at 6 p.m. Tuesday to vote on a variety of items including honors for the well-respected late attorney Arthur Seymour, Jr. He appeared before the council every time over the years and earned the respect of both city and county officials.

The council may also authorize \$99,421 in an agreement with Superior Pavement Marking, Inc. for the 2019 Bicycle and Pedestrian Pavement Marking Program. The council will also vote on an agreement with the state on adding additional funding for the replacement of the Jackson Avenue ramps at Gay Street. The Ed Shouse Drive Bridge

Replacement Project may get \$48,830 in an agreement with Volkert, Inc. for repairs in Phase II of the effort. Also on the agenda is \$115,000 for the purchase or condemnation plus moving expenses on 23 tracts of property for the Wilson Avenue Sidewalk Project. The council may also adopt the One Year Plan prepared by

Knoxville-Knox County Planning and add an ordinance permitting the mayor to adopt any seal, insignia, coat of arms, emblem, sign or logo used by the city and its various departments. Two appeals are before the board: one from Brian Ewers over a Board of Zoning Appeals decision prohibiting a three-story building on West Blount Avenue.

Primos Land Company is appealing a planning commission decision to rezone property on Strawberry Plains Pike. Knoxville Utilities Board is asking for a settlement with the city in lieu of taxes for the electric and gas system. The police department is asking for an agreement with

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Members of Amherst Elementary School's Special Olympics track and field team took second place in the banner competition last week at Hardin Valley Academy. Photo Submitted.

HVA senior Moro learns by organizing Special Olympics Track Meet

By Ken Lay

Noah Moro and members of the Hardin Valley Academy student-mentor program saw the fruits of their labor on Monday, April 15. Moro oversaw the running of the 2019 Special Olympics track meet on a

cool but sunny day at HVA. It was a project that began to take shape back in the dog days of August, shortly after Moro began his senior year and his final year of high school football. The event lasted two days and began in the

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Above, Hardin Valley Academy senior Noah Moro organized the 2019 Greater Knoxville Special Olympics Track and Field Meet. Moro, a football player for the Hawks, also competes on the school's Unified Track Meet, which teams high school athletes with Special Olympians. Photo by Ken Lay. Left, Athletes compete in the 100-meter dash at the 2019 Special Olympics Track Meet last week at Hardin Valley Academy.



Heated exchange explodes between commissioners

By Mike Steely
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Sparks flew as Knox County Commissioners Larsen Jay and Evelyn Gill faced off in the Knox County Commission work session last week, with Jay leveling misconduct charges against Gill and Gill calling the allegations by Jay "unacceptable." Jay, who co-chairs the Joint Education Committee along with board of education member Evette Satterfield, said Gill should be ousted from her seat on that committee because of her history as a Knox County Special Education teacher. He cited a civil suit against her involving charges she abused an autistic student.

At times the confrontation grew heated and, during the argument, Jay said that if his charges were untrue, "Then, by God, vote it down." Gill called on Knox County Law Director Bud Armstrong who, for several instances during the discussion, told the commission that charges against Gill were unsubstantiated. Armstrong reminded the commission that Gill was investigated and not found guilty by the state, her teacher's license was reinstated and she had been offered her job back with the school system.

Jay cited Gill's name in a civil lawsuit against her which the law department settled out of court for a reported \$93,000. Armstrong rebutted by reminding the commission that the lawsuit also included the superintendent of schools and the principal at the school. He said it might cost more to defend the case than the settlement and he didn't want to harm the autistic child by putting it on the stand to testify.

The law director again reminded the commission that the charges against Gill resulted in "no indictment" and said she was exonerated. Gill had resigned her teaching position following the charges.

When Jay brought up what he said was Gill's personnel record of other misconduct while a school employee Gill said Jay was going too far and that Jay was "bringing up legal issues" by introducing her work history. Jay said his information came

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Commission may change zoning procedure

By Mike Steely
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Almost unnoticed in last week's long Knox County Commission work session was a move to require zoning changes to come to that body first instead of starting with the Knoxville-Knox Planning Authority. The additional step, which could add at least 30 days to the process

of rezoning, is another attempt to pull the county further away from current procedures. Over the past few years the discussion on the commission has ranged from disagreeing with decisions of the planners to threats to withdraw completely from the city-county organization. Commissioner John Schoonmaker's resolution

"to require all text amendments to the Zoning Ordinance be initiated by resolution of the Knox County Commission" was passed on for a vote at tonight's regular meeting. Currently zoning changes begin with an application to the planning commission where a decision is made and the change goes to the county commission for a decision.

"I'm not sure what problem you are trying to fix," said Knoxville-Knox Planning Transportation Planning Manager Jeff Welch. Welch said the current process is "working well" and said the proposed change could back up zoning changes 60 to 90 days. Schoonmaker said zoning changes should "come to us first" but

Commissioner Larsen Jay said the change might "force us to be experts on zoning." Commissioner Randy Smith called the proposal "a solution looking for a problem." Commissioner Charles Buster said the change would "add an additional step" and Chairman Hugh Nystrom compared the change to "Which came first, the chicken or the egg?"

Commissioner Carson Dailey said the idea could shorten requests and sidestep two incidents in the past where rezoning could have been expedited. Law Director Richard Armstrong said the proposed process adds "thirty days on the back or front end."

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