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Complaints about recycling center create sparks at council meeting

By Bill Howard

From the looks of its agenda, it appeared the Knoxville City Council's July 2 meeting would be a rather ho-hum affair. In fact, it ended – fittingly perhaps on July 4 week – with a bit of fireworks.

After the meeting's usual formalities, several members of the Oakwood-Lincoln Park Neighborhood Association took to the podium to voice their complaints. One – Wes Breitenbach - did so in a most demonstrable way.

At issue was Fort Loudon Waste and Recycling on Hancock St., a business that was very much in the news when it caught fire on May 1. The fire burned for two days, forced evacuations, and threatened the health of nearby residents. According to Breitenbach, the place should have been shut down some time ago.

At the podium, Breitenbach chided the council for its inaction, and asked how long his association would have to wait. To dramatize his frustration, he ascended the steps from the podium with a garbage bag, then dumped its contents - a variety of cardboard boxes and pieces - on the floor.

"People drive their stuff over (North) road, dump it, then go away," Breitenbach said. "Last year OSHA said they were in danger of having a fire, and then a year later they had a fire. No one has yet been able to come up with a business license. They owe back taxes to the city and county. They've also been fined by OSHA and by TOSHA."

Investigations have confirmed that violations and lawsuits have

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Expand KAT bus service into the county? Council Seat C candidates respond

By Mike Steely
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The Knoxville Focus has been asking candidates for At-Large Seat C several questions. Their answers are being shared with our readers. We've been focusing on the five candidates for the seat currently held by Councilman and Vice Mayor Finbarr Saunders because only two of them will emerge from the August 27th Primary and advance to the November General Election.

Following the primary The Focus will be asking all the Knox County Council candidates questions as well. Here's this week's question to the five Seat C candidates:

Would you favor expanding KAT bus service into the county? Please explain.

Amelia Parker: Yes, it is an investment that should be shared between the county and the city because both city and county residents would benefit. Additional public transportation options should be explored as well such as light rail. As Knoxville looks to the future and the growth anticipated, we must expand our vision of the possibilities. How is it possible to grow but still move around a city with ease? What makes sense for the blueprint of our city? What will best preserve our environment and lower our carbon emissions? What investments do we want to make now that could be a game changer in the quality of life our residents are able to lead 50 years from now? How we plan for and invest in mass transit now and as we go through Recode and other planning processes will have a significant impact on the

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PHOTO BY KEN LAY

Knoxville City Mayor Madeline Rogero and other dignitaries cut the ribbon marking the re-opening of the newly-renovated Performance Lawn at World's Fair Park. The lawn was opened for Thursday's Festival on the Fourth but closed afterwards. It will be re-opened on Aug. 1.

Ceremony marks the re-opening of World's Fair Park Performance Lawn

By Ken Lay

The City of Knoxville hosted a ribbon-cutting Wednesday afternoon to celebrate the renovation of the Performance Lawn at World's Fair Park.

The ceremony was held just one day before the lawn temporarily opened for Knoxville's annual Festival on the Fourth, a staple in East Tennessee for years.

After the July 4 festivities, the park closed and Knoxville City Mayor Madeline Rogero said that the lawn is projected to re-open on Aug. 1.

The lawn had been closed for renovation since January as a $2.5 million effort to update water and electrical services.

New sod and pervious paver hardscaping were also added and the area around the entry gates was expanded.

Rogero and Vice Mayor Finbarr Saunders were present on the hot afternoon ceremony along with representatives from the Public Building Authority, the city's Special Events Office and the various contractors who worked on the project.

"We're extremely blessed to have a park like this in Downtown Knoxville," Rogero said. "Most cities don't have a place like this downtown. It's close to [the University of Tennessee's] campus.

"Last year, 158,000 people came to events here and that's not counting friends and families that came here to just enjoy the park, to throw Frisbees or football or those who used it for fitness activities. We're happy to have this open for the Festival on the Fourth. After the festival, the lawn will close so the construction can be completed and it will open again on Aug.1. We have some more things to

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Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs: Jobs are First and Foremost

By Amy Box Fellhoelter

If there is one thing the East Knoxville Community Meeting does well, it's keeping its members and community well informed of the priorities and initiatives of elected officials those candidates running for city offices. In a series of candidate-highlighted events, Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs was welcomed to the fourth meeting of its kind by moderator Michael Covington at the Burlington Public Library last Monday.

The mayor's message was about the priority of creating and retaining jobs in Knoxville. He explained, "The reason I believe that is so important is because good jobs solve a lot of other problems." He spoke for more than 30 minutes primarily about this topic but touched on the issues of education, literacy, substance abuse, and detention and jail populations also.

"Jobs is the key to creating an environment which is friendly to business, promotes entrepreneurship, and rewards success. The best way to do that -- especially in attracting and retaining quality businesses -- is through workforce developments ... which is education and getting people ready to go into jobs and to go into life," said Mayor Jacobs.

"We have the world's foremost research laboratory at ORNL in our backyard, University of Tennessee here in Knoxville itself, and TVA .... that combination is unmatched virtually around the world ... so we can compete with anyone from the Silicon Valley to the Research Triangle in North Carolina. We have the capability to more than compete in that market," stated the mayor. He clarified the big driver for these areas is innovation and our area has the capability of doing just that, especially since the world is moving more toward an innovative economy and less toward a manufacturing economy.

An example the mayor gave of this innovation created in Knoxville is the world's first-ever 4D printed car which sits in a showroom floor off of Hardin Valley Road because of the technology achieved from ORNL. Knoxville has companies making the theoretical become practical as with Manufacturing Demonstration Facility, and Mayor Jacobs fully expects the creation of a 4D printed house to follow suit in the future.

He outlined that one way to move our economy in this direction is looking at our curriculum for young people to be sure it includes a broad range of Career Technical Education (CTE) courses, particularly coding and

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