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City Council members weigh in on Recode Knoxville ahead of meeting

By Ken Lay

Recode Knoxville is appearing once more before the city council this week, this time as an ordinance on first reading. The agenda entry for the ordinance, which will set regulations on all city residential, commercial, office and industrial zones, reads:

An ordinance of the Council of the City of Knoxville to regulate the location, height, bulk, number of stories and size of buildings

and other structures, the percentage of the lot which may be occupied, the sizes of yards, courts and other open spaces, the density of population, and the uses of buildings, structures and land for trade, industry, residence, recreation, public activities and other purposes; and for such purposes to divide the municipality into districts or zones of such number, shape and areas as it may determine, and regulate the erection,

construction, reconstruction, alteration and uses of buildings and structures and the use of land; to prescribe penalty for the violation of its provisions and to provide for its enforcement; and to repeal Ordinance No. 3369, known and cited as "the Zoning Ordinance of the City of Knoxville, Tennessee" and all amendments thereto, all as the product of a public process known as "Recode Knoxville."

The Focus reached out to council members for their thoughts on Recode prior to the meeting tomorrow night. Council members Gwen McKenzie and Marshall Stair did not have comments before press time.

Councilman George C. Wallace: I'm supportive of it. I feel like, in some workshops, that we made some good revisions, some good changes. We brought some things up for discussion

and some people made amendments and we voted on them.

Some passed unanimously. Some failed. We went through it line by line and article by article. I have some issues that I want to bring back up. For me there are less than six or eight of those and for me, those are not deal breakers. I think it will be fine. You have the Hillside Slope and that applies to all properties. I would like

to see commercial properties exempt from that. Then there's another one that limits how many non-family members can rent a house. I'm going to bring that back up for discussion.

There are some other things that I would like to bring up for discussion.

Finbarr Saunders: I'm in favor of the Recode proposal and I've been up front about that. I hope we can pass something. I don't

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Rep. Bill Dunn speaks in Fountain City

By Ken Lay

State representative Bill Dunn was in Knoxville last week and he spoke at the Fountain City Business and Professional Association's monthly luncheon Wednesday at Central Baptist Church of Fountain City.

Dunn spoke about several topics including the controversy surrounding beleaguered house speaker Glen Casada, the Real I.D., the state of education and the flourishing economy in Tennessee.

He also took a few shots at the Beltway politicians.

"I'm in Nashville and not in Washington, D.C. Washington is dysfunctional," he said. "I don't care if you're a Democrat or a Republican. What they're doing is not good for America. I'm a state representative and I go to Nashville."

The Real I.D. was a prevalent topic and generated several questions and Dunn used that as an example of Beltway inefficiency.

"They said that it is a response to 9/11, and when did 9/11 happen? It happened in 2001," he said. "It's 2019," he said. "It's been 18 years and they're finally getting around to doing something about it."

All Tennesseans must have a Real I.D. before 2020. The Real I.D. is a driver's license or state issued identification with a star. The identification must have a star in order for a person to fly if they don't possess a passport.

On Casada, Dunn had mixed views.

"Glen has great political instincts and he's the Energizer Bunny. We had several freshmen elected and he worked on their campaigns and helped them get elected," Dunn said. "But he used the politics and didn't necessarily do what was right," Dunn said. "Glen is a political animal, and that's a term that he likes. But he used the politics and that's what got him into trouble."

"Glen was voted speaker and that's a very powerful position. You can hire people and you can fire people."

Casada won't have that power much longer. He'll resign next month and Dunn will be interim speaker for the special session to elect the Casada's successor.

He made it clear that he won't be the next speaker.

"I'm not running," Dunn said.



PHOTO BY KEN LAY.

State representative Bill Dunn speaks at the Fountain City Business and Professional Association's monthly luncheon Wednesday. Dunn discussed business, education, the Real I.D. and the Glen Casada controversy.

"I was once a leader and God delivered me from that."

"People think that when you're a leader, that you tell 98 other people what to do. In reality, it's 98 other people telling you what to do."

He also noted that the Casada controversy could have a lasting effect on Tennessee politics.

"I'm concerned because, sometimes people care more about what's in it for me." We have young representatives in Nashville and I'm afraid that they may feel like this is normal," Dunn said. "Unfortunately for Governor [Bill] Lee, we've done some good things with the economy and some good things in education, but those have all been overshadowed by this controversy."

Dunn noted that the state has put

more money in the Rainy Day Fund than ever before and that the state has made great strides in education as well as making the state a desirable place to open a business.

He also spoke of the negative political aspect of social media.

"I like to be a positive person but social media can be negative in politics," he said. "It used to be when somebody was concerned or upset, they would call and we could go through a bill," Dunn said. "Now, it's 'I know what this is because I read it on the internet.'"

"You have a lot of group think and politicians post things that get likes." They also don't say things that they think will make people mad. I'm not on Facebook. I'm not on Twitter and I'm not on the front page and that's a good thing."

Policing Our Children discussed at BOE Work Session

By Amy Box Fellhoelter

After a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, Board Chairwoman Terry Hill introduced City Councilwoman District 1 Stephanie Welch as she walked into the Main Assembly Room of the City County Building.

An announcement was made concerning a special Board of Education meeting set for July 31 at 5:00 p.m. to review and discuss the evaluations of the superintendent. This preceded a board discussion motion approved by Third District Member Tony Norman for a resolution to be presented by First District Member Evetty Satterfield while the first agenda item was discussed. The item concerns the approval of Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with Knox County Sheriff's Office and Knoxville Police Department in regard to school security officers and law enforcement officers.

Chairwoman Hill welcomed Noah Kelley of Karns High School as the BOE Student Representative who was chosen after a long, detailed application and interview process in April. His leadership roles include KHS drum major, Knox County student advisory council representative, Tennessee Technology Student Association president. He placed first in the nation for debate, and tenth in the nation at an engineering and design competition among a list of other accolades.

Following applause for Kelly, Superintendent Bob Thomas presented his report. He announced a pilot program called "Knox Promise" for those students eligible for the Tennessee Promise Scholarship. The funding, provided by TN Achieves, Randy Boyd, SCORE, the Haslam Family, and several area institutions, such as Pellissippi State Community College, is to support high school graduates of Knox County, including students who graduated in the class of 2019 and 2020. The program will provide need-based completion grants to offset the financial burdens students face to complete college. The superintendent spoke about the new teacher academy which will begin on July 24-25 at Cedar Bluff

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