



The Knoxville Focus

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ROAD BLOCKED

Parking reduced at New Harvest early voting location

By Steve Hunley,
 Publisher
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It is a shame how few people vote in City of Knoxville elections. That trend has been spiraling steadily downward in recent years. Considering that, you'd think the Knox County Election Commission would try and make early voting as convenient as possible for folks. That certainly wasn't the case when I went to New Harvest Park last Thursday afternoon. I was astonished to see a plethora of folks selling produce, as well as food trucks taking up parking spaces on the upper tier of parking right next to the building where the voting was taking place. With a Knox County Parks and Recreation vehicle blocking another exit, with the added precaution of having set out traffic cones, it left little room



Canopy tents and food trucks block the west outlet on the upper tier of the New Harvest Park early voting location on Thursday afternoon. Thirty-nine of 68 parking spaces, including several handicap-accessible parking spaces, were taken for produce vendors, eliminating through-way, ingress and egress. Also the set up encroached upon the fire lane shown with the yellow stripe markings above.

for cars to maneuver in the area where the voting was occurring. On the lower tier the parking lot, a canopy

tent was set up for mayoral candidate Eddie Mannis which was well outside the 100 foot marker where

candidates are allowed to greet voters. When compared to the tents occupied by the produce people,

the Mannis tent looked like a small outpost in the desert. Cliff Rodgers, administrator of elections

for Knox County, personally came out to the view the situation while I was there. Much to my surprise, Rodgers stated there had been no complaints, except about the location of the Mannis tent. Considering the produce folks were occupying a vast territory on the upper tier where voting was taking place compared to the couple of spaces taken up by the Mannis tent, I wondered if Cliff was seeing the same thing I was.

It was clear to me in the couple of hours I was there before Cliff arrived that some folks coming to vote, especially elderly folks, were overwhelmed or otherwise put off by the difficulty of parking near the building where voting was taking place. There is a wonderful pavilion which was unused on the site, as well as other

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Don't miss the history fair Saturday!



PHOTO BY BONNIE COLLINS

General Grant, President Lincoln, Davy Crockett: Who knows who you might meet at the East Tennessee History Fair. The annual event on Saturday in downtown Knoxville is a celebration of our region's past and a fun and educational experience for the entire family. Plus, it's free!

By Mike Steely
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History comes alive Saturday in and around downtown Knoxville during the East Tennessee History Fair. The free event draws hundreds, if not thousands, of people to the one-of-a-kind gathering of historians, reenactors, authors, vendors, organizations, and musicians.

You might even meet and speak with the likes of Abraham and Mary Todd Lincoln, Union General U. S. Grant, and maybe even Davy Crockett. There's free parking in the city garages and free trolley service to various events. While much of the activity takes place downtown and around the East Tennessee History Museum there's also a Historic Homes Bus Tour to Blount Mansion, James White Fort, the Mabry-Hazen House, Bethel Cemetery and Museum, the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame and the Beck

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Rezoning and much ado about nothing for Knoxville-Knox County Planning

By Ken Lay

The most heavily discussed request at the monthly Knoxville/Knox County Planning Commission Thursday turned out to be much ado about nothing.

It was an effort by Carter McCall/Fulgmur MacIndoe & Associates to rezone a portion of Hardin Valley Road from planned residential area with a population density from less than three units per acre to a population density of 4.8 units per acre.

The issue was heavily discussed and debated by those who requested the alteration to those who opposed it based upon traffic flow problems around Hardin Valley Elementary School, Hardin Valley Middle School and Hardin Valley Academy.

Those who opposed the measure included Dawn Walsh, a homeowners advocate in the area.

She and others noted that the property had been rezoned several

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Smooth take-off for 2019-2020 school year

By Anne Primm

Sixth District Chair Terry Hill called the August 7, 2019 Knox County Schools work session to order at 5:01 p.m. All nine district representatives were present for the meeting. The moment of silence and Pledge of Allegiance were led by First District Representative Evetty Satterfield.

Chair Hill began by complimenting everyone on a near flawless start to a new school year. Hill continued with an announcement for board members about the upcoming Tennessee School Board Association meeting at Maryville High School on September 17, 2019. Members wishing to attend should contact Terry Coatsy so she can make reservations.

Next, Chairperson Hill asked for changes to the agenda. Being no changes, a motion was made by

Third District Representative Norman and seconded by Fifth District Representative Susan Horn to accept the day's agenda. The motion carried.

Superintendent Thomas' Report followed. Thomas shared that he, too, was pleased with the uneventful start to the new school year. Thomas said he had visited several schools during the first days and he was really impressed with what he saw. He visited a middle school that was gearing up to do 3-D printing of prosthetic hands and an elementary school where a family lemonade stand along with online giving had raised \$500 for the school. Thomas reminded everyone that the Partners in Education Breakfast will take place at the University of Tennessee Medical Center on August 20, 2019 at 7:30 a.m. He also mentioned

that schools will be closed on August 27, 2019 as this is election day in Knoxville and many schools are voting locations. Also, schools will be closed on September 2, 2019 in celebration of Labor Day.

Moving on to the Items and Contracts part of the agenda, Second District Representative Jennifer Owen asked about the cost of building a pedestrian bridge over Tipton Station Road to unite the two campuses of South-Doyle High School. Mr. Russ Oakes responded that the anticipated cost is \$1.3 million.

Next, the board considered second readings of several Board Policies. Third District Representative Tony Norman objected to the current cell phone policy and advocated for a policy that does not allow for cell phone use at all from 8:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m.

Regular agenda items were last to be considered. Additions and renovations to Powell High School were discussed. Vice Chair Susan Horn asked about the time table for this project. Doug Dillingham answered her question by stating that he thinks the start date will be after the first of the year depending on the architect's schedule. Fourth District Representative Virginia Babb inquired of Mr. Dillingham about the amount of disruption to school operation there would be during the construction period at Powell High School. Dillingham responded that disruption would be kept to a minimum. Seventh District Representative Patti Bounds related that she had spoken with Dr. Smith, principal at Powell High School, and that he is on board and excited about this project.

No one was signed up for Public Forum and Board Forum included comments from Norman, in words of thanks and blessings for Knox County teachers and staff for another great year to come. Bounds wanted to thank Mayor Jacobs and sponsors for a wonderful Back to School Party, "School Mania," held August 5 at Chilhowee Park. This event was free to Knox County students and loaded with fun and lots of giveaways.

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