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Caswell Park land decision postponed

By Mike Steely
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The one issue that drew a large crowd to the City Council meeting Tuesday was tossed over to the new city council. Councilwoman Gwen McKenzie, who represents West Knoxville, moved to delay any vote on giving a small strip of land at Caswell Park to Volunteer Ministry Center for construction of apartments for the homeless.

McKenzie cited the differences of opinion voiced by neighbors on the issue and said she was "not comfortable" in voting on it that evening. Several citizens had signed up to speak on the issue, four against it and five in support, and they did at the end of the meeting.

Even before the city can discuss donating this strip of land along East Fifth Avenue, the

property faces rounds of voting on rezoning, to change it from Park and Open Space to Planned Residential. The matter will need to pass two readings and Mayor Madeline Rogers is suggesting that the opponents might accept a different open space donation in the neighborhood as an alternative.

"We are all about parks but we have a need for permanent

housing. There's an opportunity there for VMC," Mayor Madeline Rogers told the crowd. She said that if the city can add park space elsewhere in the neighborhood, it would be "a win-win" for both sides. She then said she is disappointed with sharp attacks on herself and her staff for promoting the proposal.

The mayor called on the opponents to "ratchet it down and

discuss" the issue.

"Step back from the hostilities and see whether or not there's a compromise," she said.

Councilwoman Seema Singh, the only vote against postponing the vote, said she's been getting hostile e-mails and even visits to her house.

IN OTHER BUSINESS The city council voted unanimously to opt

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Local winners of the A.F. Bridges awards are honored at a ceremony last week at Hardin Valley Academy. Winners include Dr. Mike Winstead, Rob Spas, Bobby Clark, Sarah Bailey, Matt Buckner, Justin Pratt and Steve Williams.

Williams receives A.F. Bridges Award

By Ken Lay

The awards just keep coming for Knoxville Focus sportswriter Steve Williams.

Williams, who has been with the paper since 2008, recently received an A.F. Bridges Award from the Tennessee Secondary Schools Athletic Association.

The veteran sportswriter and sports official received the award in a ceremony conducted by the TSSAA Board of Control at its meeting on Monday, Nov. 4 at Hardin Valley Academy.

Williams, who was named CARE-acter Star Sportswriter of the Year

in 2018, received the A.F. Bridges Award for his contributions to high school sports during his career that has spanned more than half a century.

He was one of seven A.F. Bridges Award recipients from Region 2 at last week's ceremony. The others included Farragut High School baseball coach Matt Buckner, Alcoa High softball coach Sarah Bailey, Hardin Valley Academy principal Rob Spas, Dr. Mike Winstead of Maryville City Schools, Knoxville sports official Justin Pratt and Bobby Clark, Harman High School athletic director.

Williams said that he was honored

to receive the award.

"After many years in the newspaper business, I'm not used to being on this side of the story," Williams said.

"But I'm very honored and appreciative of this award. I've enjoyed a professional relationship with three outstanding TSSAA Executive Directors — Gil Gideon, Ronnie Carter and Bernard Childress — and their great staffs over the years.

"And receiving this award, which is named after A.F. Bridges, the TSSAA's first full-time executive secretary makes this honor even more special. I would like to thank the

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Women carry the day in close City Election

By Mike Steely
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Tuesday's city election saw Indya Kircannon become Knoxville's second female mayor-elect and victory for women across the ballot. Most of the races for city council were tight but when the ballots were counted, Lynne Fugate, Janet Testerman, and Amelia Parker were triumphant.

The three new councilwomen will join current members Stephanie Welch, Seema Singh, Lauren Rider and Gwen McKenzie, Knoxville will, for the first time, have a female majority on council serving with a woman mayor.

Charles Thomas defeated Charles Al-Bawi in the District Five race to replace Councilman Mark Campen with 62% of the vote. He will join Councilman Andrew Roberto as the only two men on the new council.

Kircannon, a former school board member of 10 years, captured 13,291 votes, or 52% of the vote, over businessman and Honor Air founder Eddie Mannis. Some 25,360 people voted with Kircannon carrying the day. Mannis had led in absentee and early voting but Kircannon prevailed on Election Day, topping Mannis with about 1,500 votes.

Close races for council included Fugate defeating Charles F. Lomax, Jr., by only 80 votes, or 50.17% of the vote. Amelia Parker bested Amy Midda by 410 votes or 50.8% Tuesday. Midda pulled more absentee and early votes but, again, the Election Day turnout found Parker the winner.

Parker was the only City Council Movement candidate to be victorious. The East Knoxville organization of activists fielded David Hayes, who lost to Testerman 55%-44%, and Al-Bawi who lost to Thomas 62%-37% last week.

All of the results will need to be certified by the election commission, but, as of the unofficial count, Knoxville is about to enter a new and different city government.

The new officeholders will be sworn in December 21.

Knox Co. Schools to get hybrid teacher evaluation model next year

By Bill Howard

Any schoolteacher will tell you that being evaluated by the principal or other school administrators can be a bit unnerving. A teacher's evaluation can affect his or her reputation, status, and even employment.

Knox County currently has two teacher evaluation models — TEAM (Tennessee Educator Acceleration Model) and TIGER

(Teacher Instructional Growth for Effectiveness and Results) — and currently schools are free to choose which they prefer.

On Nov. 6 at a work session of the Knox Co. School Board, board member Tony Norman asked Jon Rysewsky, chief academic officer of Knox Co. Schools, to give an update on the "TEAM-TIGER situation." Rysewsky told the board that eight of the county's 88 schools use TIGER,

while the other 80 use TEAM. Next year, however, they'll all have to use the same model.

"The state requires that all teachers be evaluated," said Rysewsky. "There are a couple of accepted models by the state. So TEAM, there's a rubric they're evaluated off of, there's a process. Knox Co. has used that one for probably the last 10 years. There are other models. TIGER is one of those models. It uses

the same rubric but there are some different things in the process."

Rysewsky explained the difference between the two. "On a TEAM evaluation, that one class you get evaluated on, you're given scores in each of these categories (standards and objectives, lesson structure and pacing, activities and materials, many others) When you do the TIGER rubric you're not

don't get a score till the end of the year. TEAM averages those scores throughout the year. Sometimes there's some pushback. Getting those scores all the time, it's harder on teachers. They'd rather wait till the end of the year."

"Schools that are TIGER schools have liked that freedom to not have their scores till the end and really work on their craft," Rysewsky went on.

"On the flip side some of the schools have really liked the TEAM model and gotten used to it."

Superintendent of Schools Bob Thomas is a fan of TIGER.

"What I like about the TIGER model is that it's not scored till the end," he said.

"It's a growth model. It's not a one-time, one-shot score. For the teacher it's something that builds over the year. It may be a little

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