The Knoxville Focus
www.knoxfocus.com
SUBSCRIPTIONS AVAILABLE - $40.00/YEAR
FREE Take One!
December 23, 2019
Phone: 865-686-9970 | PO Box 18377, Knoxville, TN 37928 | Located at 4109 Central Avenue Pike, Knoxville, Tennessee 37912

ADVERTISEMENT AUCTION
JANUARY 4TH at NOON
DOORS OPEN at 8 AM
Fountain City Auction
(865)474-9931

Pension Board may be added to lawsuit

By Mike Steely
Senior Writer
steelym@knoxfocus.com

Chancery Judge John Weaver quizzed attorney John Owings Thursday morning about the Knox County Retirement and Pension Board entering the lawsuit between Knox County Citizens and Knox County. The suit, which doesn't include the pension board as a party, is being delayed for 30 days.

Judge Weaver said that Owings should have included a "pleading" as to why the board should be allowed to take part. John Valliant, the outside attorney hired to defend the county mayor and commission, said he had no objection to the pension board being included.

"The real party should be the pension board, they need to be a party."

Tom McFarland, representing the citizens' class action suit, said he was ready to go ahead with the case but Weaver asked him what party would be responsible for penalties if the class action suit prevails. McFarland replied it would be the county but Weaver indicated that the liable party would be the pension board.

Owings was told to complete a pleading and return it to the court before the next hearing.

McFarland told the court that the county charter clearly states that the pension board has no authority to up retiree pay.

Weaver asked McFarland if the citizens won the suit who would enforce it, asking that, as the pension board writes the retirement, does the calculations, writes

Continue on page 3

Study of Knoxville Center Mall approved, extended to entire area

By Mike Steely
Senior Writer
steelym@knoxfocus.com

"I'm going to veto it," Mayor Glenn Jacobs told the media following the first vote by the Knox County Commission to authorize a feasibility study on Knoxville Center Mall. The motion, introduced by Commissioner Justin Biggs, would include taking bids on a study of the suitability of the empty mall to house much of Knox County Government.

Prior to the regular meeting of Knox County Commission, Mayor Jacobs announced he would be asking for postponement moving the school offices to the TVA Tower and to postpone the sale of the Andrew Johnson Building. He promises a vote of the commission in January but it is becoming obvious that the commission may not approve those deals.

Opponents of the mall idea have cited the City of Knoxville not being interested in joining the county there. Deputy Knoxville Mayor Bill Lyons clarified that statement during public forum by saying the city "has not invested" in pursuing a study.

A quick survey of commissioners by The Focus indicates a majority of the members oppose the TVA Tower agreement.

Commissioner Charles Busler's original motion on mall was to "explore the possibility of purchasing" the mall. The Biggs motion built on Busler's idea but deleted "purchasing" until a study could be done on the building, grounds, and transportation in the area.

Commissioners Randy Smith, Brad Anders, Larsen Jay, Evelyn Gill and Chairman Hugh Nystrom opposed the study motion with Gill saying the entire area needs such a study. Busler and Commissioner Michele Carringer said they met with the mall owners and the owners are willing to consider selling the complex. Busler proposed several possible uses and said he was simply asking for a study.

Jacobs told the commission the cost per square

Continue on page 2

The colors of Christmas!

BJ Edwards slams a shot for Knoxville Catholic High School early in the season and his basketball shoes are perfect for this time of the year. Please check out a variety of high school sports coverage in this week's Sports and Recreation, Section C.

No microbreweries permitted in county neighborhood commercial zones

By Mike Steely
Senior Writer
steelym@knoxfocus.com

The Knox County Commission voted, after much debate in the late hours of a long meeting last week, to effectively kill allowing microbreweries in Neighborhood Commercial zones.

Allowing breweries on a "use on review" in those zones split the commission in a 7 to 3 vote with Commissioner Richie Beeler passing on the vote.

Commissioners John Schoonmaker and Michele Carringer spoke against the 2nd reading of the proposed ordinance. Schoonmaker said having breweries in CN zones would hurt neighborhoods. Carringer said passing the ordinance would "open ourselves to loopholes."

Planning Director Gerald Green told the commission that while bars are not allowed, restaurants serving beer are permitted. He also said that an establishment might qualify for a state liquor license and sell microbrewed beer legally in the zones.

Green also said that a restaurant in those zones can legally have a microbrewery inside and not violate the county laws.

Commissioner Larsen Jay said, "It's time to evolve as a county and embrace microbreweries." He noted that the ordinance change passed the planning commission with a unanimous vote.

Only Jay, Evelyn Gill and Hugh Nystrom voted in favor of allowing the breweries in the neighborhood commercial zones. The change failed with the majority of commission opposing the change.

Elks Lodge 160 make veterans' holiday season merrier

By Bill Howard

The Christmas holidays can be a happy and joyous time with family and friends. Or they can be anything but, for those who are alone, or need regular care. It can be an especially difficult time for the elderly or infirm.

Because of the generosity of the Knoxville Elks Lodge members and others from the community, some 140 retired veterans in Knoxville will have a Christmas this year much more merry than they otherwise would.

On Tuesday night, Dec. 17, members of the lodge, along with volunteers from the National Guard, hauled hundreds of gift bags from the Elks Lodge No. 160 on Lonas Dr. to the Ben Atchley Tennessee State Veterans Home in the Karns area. The bags were filled with wish-list items the veterans requested. It's been an annual event since the home opened.

"For the last 14 years we've done this on a yearly basis," said Gary Ellis, Exalted Ruler of Elks Lodge 160. "We have 50 to 60 veterans that we take. We tell the facility how many veterans we can take and they get the list together. When they established the veteran's home, we started taking gifts to them every Christmas."

Typical items in the bags are common daily things, mostly clothing and toiletries. Occasionally something extra like a DVD player or CD player is requested. Ellis said the Elks have never yet failed to meet a request. "We've never had an instance where we couldn't fill it, so their lists are filled," he said.

"We go to each one of our residents and ask, 'hey, what would you like for Christmas' and it's

Continued on page 3

BeeHive Homes of Knoxville
• Residential Assisted Living
• Only 16 Residents
• Delicious Home-Cooked Meals
The Next Best Place to Home
1001 W. Beaver Creek Drive
Powell, TN 37849
865-806-0881
www.BeeHivehomes.com
Facebook at
BeeHive Homes of Knoxville

Merry Christmas
from all of us at
The Knoxville Focus

Don't miss the final days of our Built for the Holidays Sales Event!
Save thousands
Ford
RAY VARNER
2026 N Charles G Seviers Blvd - Clinton, TN
865.457.0704
www.rayvarnerford.com