

TVA Towers back before commission

By Mike Steely
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Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs has called a special meeting of the Knox County Commission for today at 5 p.m. to speak on the negotiations between the county and TVA toward the lease of the TVA East Tower for use by the Knox County School Board Administration.

The University of Tennessee has voiced some interest in using the top floors of the building and Jacobs, like Mayor Tim Burchett

before him, has been pushing for school board and commission approval of the deal.

The commission seems reluctant and has suggested, instead, a feasibility study of the Knoxville Center Mall and its surrounding area for use as county offices. Jacobs may report on the agreement details and possibly make a statement about the state attorney general's opinion on the matter.

No votes are to be taken at tonight's meeting.

Commission meets again next

week on Tuesday and Jacobs has two items on the agenda deferred from December regarding the TVA East Tower and school office move. The first regards a "term easement" agreement with TVA along with a permanent easement for the TVA Summer Place Complex and the Fritts Parking Lot term agreement. Following the possible vote on the TVA Tower agreement is a resolution approving the sale of the Andrew Johnson Building to BNA Associates. Should the TVA Tower agreement fail, the sale of the AJ Building

would disappear or fail as well.

Other items on the agenda for the January 21 work session meeting include adoption of the Greenway Corridor Study which would align corridors in Beaver Creek, Northshore Drive, and portions of John Sevier and Chapman Highway.

A tax break for The Courtland Group LLC may also be discussed for property along East Fifth Avenue and North Central Street.

Vehicle repair and service shops in the CH-Commercial Neighborhood is also on the agenda for

discussion as well as Sidewalk Construction Standards in new commercial and residential developments with more than five lots.

The commission could also discuss adding a new section to the county codes to create a Planned Development approval process.

Approval of a school auditor, Rugh CPA, is on the agenda at a cost of \$113,722 for the current year, which began July 1, 2019. Why the agreement is postponed is a question that may be asked by commissioners.

ONE TO REMEMBER!



Bryson Rouser joins his Bobcats in celebrating Central's first state football championship in the playoff era after a 14-9 win over Henry County at Tennessee Tech in 2018. Rouser resigned as head coach last week for family reasons. Please see story in Sports and Recreation, Section B1.

Million dollar sidewalk project before city council

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While the county wrestles with a sidewalk proposal the city of Knoxville is preparing to consider a \$1 million contract for sidewalks along Wilson Avenue.

Tuesday's first meeting of 2020 will also be the first meeting for newly elected Mayor Indya Kincaid and council members Lynne Fugate, Janet Testerman, Amelia Parker and Charles Thomas. Wilson Avenue runs through a neighborhood in East Knoxville. The city council agenda is asking for council approval of an agreement with Bell & Associates Construction L.P.

Another sidewalk project on the new city council's agenda is a request from the Department of Engineering for an agreement with Design and Construction Services Inc. for the 2020 On-Call Sidewalk Replacement project for \$548,655.

Fulghum MacIndoe & Associates has been approved for \$48,850 to design services of right-of-way drainage improvements along Sevier Avenue. The City South Mixed Use Development may get construction engineering and inspection service for public improvements in an agreement with Wood Environmental for \$197,150.

The council will also look at a lease agreement with SOAR Youth Ministries, Inc., and Thrive Loredale for the lease of part of the property at 1212 New York Avenue for a community center.

Vaughn & Melton Consulting Engineers Inc. may be hired to provide construction administration services for the Urban Wilderness Gateway Park for \$169,120.

Can a home and a business be good neighbors?

Planning Commission hears both sides

By Bill Howard

It's long been observed that good fences (or at least property lines) make good neighbors. Apparently that works far better when the entity on each side is of the same designation: both are residences, both are businesses, both are tracts of farmland.

When the two entities have fundamentally different functions—a residence and a business, say—the “fences” observation is put to the test.

Such was the case Thursday, January 9 at the monthly meeting of Knoxville-Knox County Planning, when applicant Marty Norton sought a rezoning of 3.06 acres of land—from Low Density Residential to Light Industrial—at 3309 Mill Road. Norton wants to build an outside storage expansion of his mulch/materials business.

Christy Anderson lives across the street from the lot, and urged the commission to deny the rezoning. Her objections were those common ones offered by residential people when a business gets too close: noise and activity that might disturb the peace, and possibly crime.

“This is fourth-generation property,” she said. “When my husband and I got this property 33 years ago, we put a two-bedroom trailer on it and raised three children. We never were offered the opportunity to buy the property that Mr. Norton wants to expand into. I don’t want a business in front of my house. And we’re concerned with the noise, about how he would bring trucks in, how customers would come in ... how all that would work during business hours. We hear him over there cutting wood, loading trucks, all kinds

of things.”

“Also I know he’s had an issue with theft, at least one time on his property,” she added. “Right now, before he tore down the house in front of us, we could go outside, my grandson could play in the driveway ... they play basketball, they ride their bikes. Once a business goes in, we might have to deal with someone who might want to rob ... they see our house and all of a sudden they wonder what’s over there.”

“I talked to Christy and I’ve agreed to put up the buffer [of trees], which will protect her from the noise and any dust,” Norton said. “She did have an opportunity to buy this piece of property; all the neighbors had the same opportunity. I’ve done nothing but clean up the property. I keep it mowed and was even mowing the grass in the property in front of her before I even bought it. I need room to grow; if I don’t grow I’ll eventually die out.”

Norton went on to say that the area is already far more commercial than residential. “Eventually it’s all gonna be commercial, there’s only two strips left,” he said. “Christy could eventually rezone and it could be a lot more money for her down the road. I’m just trying to grow my business. I’ve cleared it up and she’s thanked me a hundred times. I’m very careful about making noises. There’s a lot more noise at the (nearby) railroad tracks, and the (nearby) coal yards have been there for 50 years.”

Commission Executive Director Gerald Green made sure Norton was prepared to include a row of trees as a buffer to the noise. “Yes sir,” said Norton. “I’ll plant a row of green giant (evergreen) trees

they grow 30 feet tall and are beautiful for landscaping so that would give Christy plenty of privacy. I’ll plant a buffer along the railroad track, and that would make

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