



The Knoxville Focus

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Welcome to our new columnist, **Jimmy Duncan.**
Read Duncan's column this week on A2.

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August 31, 2020

Knox County Board of Health discusses public forum, mask mandate

By Mike Steely
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As some Knox County Commissioners consider removing Health Board members the board met Wednesday to hear Deputy Knox County Law Director David Sanders tell them they must include a public forum at each meeting.

Mayor Glenn Jacobs has been pushing for public input and the board did have one Zoom meeting that included public comments. The board agreed to have a public forum portion once a month but Sanders said that they operate under the rules of the Knox County Commission and must have the public comments as part of

each meeting. Sanders said he could look at adopting rules for Health Board meetings similar to the commission rules but omitting the public forum requirement. He said that without such adopted rules, the board must operate under the same rules as the commission. Several of the medical members of the board

noted they get input daily in letters, emails, telephone calls and in-person comments.

Mayor Jacobs then asked when the county-wide mask mandate will end. Dr. Jack Gotcher replied that the mask mandate might be reviewed when the cases come down to 5% and asked Dr. Martha Buchanan to look around

to see when the mandate might end. Buchanan said the local campaign of mask wearing and other safety measures are working and the declining case numbers are the result.

Maria Hurt noted that when restrictions are lifted "people get sick."

"People are frustrated and tired but we've got to hold the line—it's the

prudent thing to do," Hurt said.

It was also suggested, due to public complaint, extending the 10 p.m. bar curfew to restaurants. The policy was mentioned as unfair to some businesses and it was noted that large crowds are migrating from directly to restaurants after the curfew closes the bars. Attorney Sanders said



PHOTO BY KEN LAY

Knoxville City Mayor Indya Kincannon and other dignitaries cut the ribbon to signify the official opening of the Baker Creek Bike Park at Baker Creek Preserve, 3700 Lancaster Drive, in South Knoxville Thursday.

City celebrates opening of Baker Creek Bike Park

By Ken Lay

The City of Knoxville celebrated the opening of a South Knoxville bike park Thursday morning. The ribbon-cutting and opening ceremony culminated a project nearly two decades in the making.

The newly-opened Baker Creek Bike Park is the first new feature to be completed as part of the Urban Wilderness Gateway Park project.

Knoxville City Mayor Indya Kincannon said she was pleased to see the park opened. The property was first

purchased when Victor Ashe was city mayor 17 years ago and the groundbreaking happened back in 2014.

"I see Mayor Ashe and he was mayor when the city purchased the property. I want to acknowledge our other past leaders and all the people,

and the team that made this happen," Kincannon said. "This is a park unique to Knoxville. It is for the people of South Knoxville and it is for all Knoxvilleans, but it's also for our visitors. This is for walkers, bike riders and hikers. It

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Elected county officials to take oath

By Mike Steely
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The newly elected and re-elected local officials will gather at the Tennessee Theater Tuesday at 9 a.m. for the swearing-in ceremony hosted by Knox County Mayor Glenn Jacobs. The winners of the August Knox County general election races will be taking their oaths. The 9 a.m. ceremonies include the following re-elected or newly elected officials: Criminal Court Judge Jule Hixson, Law Director David Buick, Public Defender Eric M. Lutton and Assessor of Property John R. Whitehead.

Commissioners to take the oath are Dasha Lundy, Courtney Durrett, Kyle Ward, John Schoonmaker, Terry Hill, Richie Beeler and Carson Dailey. School board members to be sworn in include Jennifer Owen, Daniel Watson, Susan Horn, Mike McMillan and student representative Abigail Lee.

Certification of the ballots was announced Tuesday morning after more than 75,600 people voted in the August 6th local general election and state and federal primary.

The new Knox County Commission will then meet in person or via Zoom at 4 p.m. to select their chair and vice chair. They will also select members for the Rules Committee, Court Subcommittee, Incumbency Board, Legislative Affairs Committee and various other committees and boards.

Can the Board of Health be replaced?

By Mike Steely
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The powers of the Knox County Board of Health were questioned again last week by several citizens during Public Forum at the Knox County Commission. The regular meeting was held via Zoom because of three commissioners were in self-quarantine due to COVID-19.

Commissioner Richie Beeler, who had tested positive, took part in most of the Zoom meeting and left about halfway through the session. The two commissioners who sat next to him at the last in-person commission meeting, Carson Dailey

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Dave Wright speaks to Center City Republicans

By Ken Lay

When state Representative Dave Wright spoke to some local Republicans late last week, he spent much of his time lauding Elaine Davis, candidate for Tennessee State House District 13.

But Davis didn't hear his remarks because she was visiting with potential voters. She's running for the seat now held by Democrat Gloria Johnson in state House District 13.

Davis was scheduled to speak at the Center City Knoxville Republican Club meeting on Thursday night at S&S Cafeteria, but was busy fulfilling campaign commitments.

"I was out going door-to-door tonight and it ran a little long," said Davis, who hung around to talk to the people who attended the meeting.

She was grateful for the support and she was also thankful for Dave Wright standing in for her and his kind words.

Davis said, "I've been out of public life for a while because both of my parents have recently passed away from cancer and I appreciate Dave and I appreciate those who have encouraged me and support me."

Davis said that she wanted the people to have a choice for District 13. Her campaign slogan is "Your Choice for an Effective Voice" and she said that's exactly what she's hoping to give the voters in the district.

Wright, who represents District 19 in the Tennessee House of Representatives, urged those present to champion Davis' campaign as he has.

Even though the state legislature isn't in session at this time, Wright said he's busy planning for the next legislative session.

"We're planning for January," Wright said. "We're not in session right now,



PHOTO BY KEN LAY

State Representative Dave Wright addressed members of the Center City Chapter of the Knoxville Republican Club Thursday night.

but it's never too early to plan. "Right now, I'm doing a lot over the phone and I'm having some Zoom meetings."

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