

Knoxville Neighborhood Advisory – Vol. 9, No. 33 – Tuesday, September 6, 2016

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Published by the City of Knoxville's Office of Neighborhoods to report news important to Knoxville's residential neighborhoods. Include your neighborhood-related event or meeting in this space. Call 215-4382. News deadline: 5 p.m. Mondays.

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1. Mechanicsville to Celebrate Homecoming Saturday

The **Mechanicsville Community Association** (MCA) on Saturday will stage its 11th annual Mechanicsville Homecoming at Danny Mayfield Park, and everyone is invited to attend and participate.

The day begins with a parade that starts at 10 a.m. from the corner of University and Fifth Avenue and then proceeds down University to the park. Beginning at 11 a.m., the opening program includes remarks by various community leaders.

The event features information booths, food vendors, door prizes, MCA community service awards, a kids' carnival, contests for both teens and adults, and recognition of students who won creative writing awards at Maynard Elementary School.

After the gang-related shooting death of 12-year-old Jajuan Latham in the park last spring, MCA decided to make this year's theme "Stop the Violence and Unify."

"Our annual celebrations are positive," MCA President Charles Wright stated in a recent message about the event. "We reconnect with old friends and family members. The atmosphere is peaceful and charged with lots of energy. This event is fun for all who attend. We look forward every year to facilitating this event!"

Entertainment for this event runs the gamut. A gospel concert from 12:30 p.m. until 2:30 p.m. includes choirs from Rogers Memorial Baptist Church and Eternal Life Harvest Center, as well as Kelle Jolly, who is perhaps more widely known for her jazz renditions. There will be several youth dance performances from 2:45 p.m. to 4 p.m., followed by

various musicians singing gospel, jazz and R&B from 4 p.m. until 8 p.m., when the event ends.

2. CAC's Senior Safety Summit is This Friday

The CAC Office on Aging will hold its 2016 Senior Safety Summit from 9 a.m. until 1 p.m. this Friday, Sept. 9, at the O'Connor Senior Center, 611 Winona Street.

This event --- a tribute to the 9/11 National Day of Service --- will include presentations on Home and Personal Security (9:30-10:15), Fire Safety (10:15- 11:00), and Community Relations (11:30- 12:15). Booths will be available for people to learn more about preparedness.

For more on the fair, contact Eden Slater, coordinator of the Office on Aging's Retired and Senior Volunteer Program (RSVP), at 524-2786 or eden.slater@knoxseniors.org.

For more on preparedness at the neighborhood level, contact Wyatt Pless, the Emergency Preparedness Specialist in the City's Office of Neighborhoods, at wpless@knoxvilletn.gov or 215-3456.

3. City Seeks Candidates for Neighborhood Advisory Council

Applications are due by Monday, Oct. 10, from citizens interested in serving on the Mayor's [Neighborhood Advisory Council](#) (NAC) over a three-year term starting Jan. 1, 2017.

The NAC meets at 4:30 p.m. on the second Wednesday of each month to discuss Knoxville's residential neighborhoods and provide the city with candid viewpoints on how they can best be maintained, supported, improved, rejuvenated and sustained.

The NAC may offer advice to the Mayor or to any city department, either at its own initiative or at the request of a department wanting neighborhood input on a particular matter.

NAC consists of neighborhood leaders who occupy a total of 15 seats --- two in each of the six City Council districts and three at large. Terms are for three years, and members may serve up to two full terms (six years). Members wishing to serve a second three-year term must reapply. [See the current NAC members](#).

The terms of five of the 15 seats expire Dec. 31. These seats, current occupants and general territory are:

*** Seat 1-A (Danny Gray) – South Knoxville and Fort Sanders

*** Seat 2-A (Donnie Ernst) – West Knoxville

*** Seat 3-B (Anna Compton) – Northwest Knoxville

*** Seat 6-B (Kimberley Fowler) – East Knoxville, downtown, Beaumont, Mechanicsville, and Marble City.

*** At large Seat B (Travetta Johnson) – city-wide

In addition, Seat 2-B in West Knoxville is vacant, and someone will be appointed to serve the remaining 18 months of that term, replacing Ashley Williams, who has moved

outside of the city and who is also stepping down as president of West Hills Community Association.

To be appointed to a numbered seat, you must live in that City Council district. For example, the person appointed to Seat 2-B will be a resident in the second City Council district.

If you would be interested in serving, please fill out and submit an application, which is [located online here](#). Call David Massey in the Office of Neighborhoods at 215-3232 to have a hard copy mailed to you or to learn more about the position. Mayor Rogero makes the appointments.

To view the exact boundaries of the City Council districts, browse to <http://www.kgis.org/kgismaps/map.htm> and then click on Maps, Political District Maps, and City Council.

4. NAC to Meet at New Public Works Building

The Neighborhood Advisory Council will hold its next monthly meeting at the City of Knoxville's new public works complex, 3131 Morris Avenue, where they will meet Public Works Director David Brace and top staff in the Engineering and Public Service Departments.

The meeting begins at 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 14, and will include a tour of the new building. NAC meetings are open to the public. For more on the NAC, contact Debbie Sharp at 215-4382 or dsharp@knoxville.gov.

5. TDOT to Widen Western Avenue

The Tennessee Department of Transportation (TDOT) is making plans to widen Western Avenue to four lanes and one middle turn lane between Texas Avenue and Major Street.

The resulting changes will improve traffic flow and safety, as well as have impacts on adjoining neighborhoods, including Beaumont, Lonsdale and West View.

Construction could begin as early as December if TDOT is able to go out for bids this month and award a construction contract in October as planned, according to Daniel Oliver, the director of project development for TDOT's Region One.

Due to "a tremendous amount of utility work" and plans to maintain traffic through the corridor during construction, TDOT is expecting that the Western Avenue project could take approximately 36 months to complete, Oliver said. The project is also complicated by the railroad tracks in the area; federal highway funds will assist TDOT in constructing the new roadway so that the crossings are separated in elevation to enhance safety.

The project includes these changes:

*** A bridge will be built over the railroad tracks just east of Texas Avenue and near the former Schaad Lumber Company location.

*** Western Avenue will then take a new route, replacing Schofield Street entirely.

*** Tennessee Avenue, which already dead-ends at the railroad tracks, will be reconnected to Western via Massachusetts Avenue.

*** Maryland, Vermont and Virginia Avenues will also connect to the new Western corridor.

*** North of Western, Keith Avenue will connect with the improved Western Avenue at grade.

*** South of Western, however, because of grade differences, Keith must be rerouted. It will cross a reconfigured Sterchi Street, span the railroad tracks over a new bridge, and connect with Western just west of Major Avenue, where CAC is located.

*** The bypassed section of Western Avenue (from Keith to Tennessee) will be renamed. It will connect to Keith Avenue and to Richmond Avenue, but will not have a west-end connection because of the bridge.

See Western Avenue project drawings, [west end](#) and [east end](#). These are very large files and take several minutes to load.

6. Yet Another Meeting on Proposed Mixed Use Zone

No one can accuse the Metropolitan Planning Commission of rushing the proposed mixed use zone to a vote without lots of public input, as it has now scheduled the fourth public meeting on the subject.

MPC has been drafting a new mixed use zone that allows mixes of office, retail and residential in the same block and even in the same building, with a very different approach to parking, setbacks and landscaping requirements than has been the norm in most areas of town.

The current product is aimed at Bearden, but it is also intended to be a template for other corridors where the C-3 commercial zoning is limiting development and hamstringing neighborhoods with poor quality suburban non-design. Think Broadway, Chapman Highway, and Clinton Highway.

The meeting will be held from 6 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, Sept. 20, in the gymnasium at Bearden United Methodist Church, 4407 Sutherland Avenue. Enter through the rear of the building.

The agenda for the meeting will include an overview of revisions to the proposed zoning regulations, zoning map and height map; detailed discussion on frontage types; and a draft frontage type map for the district. There will be an opportunity to provide feedback on the draft frontage type map at the meeting, and it will be posted online as well.

For the most up-to-date information regarding the proposed Mixed Use District zone, see [this MPC web page](#). Contact [Mike Reynolds](#), 215-2500.

7. Cell Phone Tower Requested for Burlington

Verizon Wireless is seeking a use-on-review to place a 125-foot-tall cell phone tower near the heart of downtown Burlington.

The request will be heard at the monthly meeting of the Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPC) this coming Thursday, Sept. 8, in the Large Assembly Room of the City County Building. The meet begins at 1:30 p.m.

The property --- located at 4105 Holston Drive where Holston branches off from Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. --- is owned by the David G. Brown Marital Trust, represented by Faulk and Foster Real Estate Inc. The parcel is zoned C-3 and is the site of a large parking lot and the Amvets Thrift Store.

Due to the degree to which federal law trumps local law when it comes to cell phone towers, MPC staff is recommending approval of the use-on-review but with seven conditions. The tower could be increased to 150 feet if additional carriers need space for expansion of their coverage areas. See the details in this MPC document: <http://agenda.knoxmpc.org/2016/sep2016/9-B-16-UR.pdf>.

In our memory, only one neighborhood has prevailed in this fight at MPC or beyond MPC. That was the Top of the Ridge Neighborhood Watch, which organized against a cell phone last year, lost at MPC, appealed to City Council, and won on appeal by a vote of 7-1. The applicant, Branch Towers LLC, which builds towers for cell phone providers, appealed the decision to U.S. District Court.

The Court ruled against the City and in favor of Branch Towers in an opinion delivered last July. Given this decision, as well as the weight of federal law, the chances that another neighborhood could prevail against a cell phone are likely very low.

The goal of the federal Telecommunications Act is “to promote competition and higher quality in American telecommunications services and to ‘encourage the rapid deployment of new telecommunications technologies.’” The Act attempts to reduce the impediments imposed by local governments upon the installation of facilities for wireless communications, such as cell towers.

Local governments cannot take actions that “prohibit or have the effect of prohibiting the provision of personal wireless services,” and denial of a request for authorization to locate a wireless facility must “be in writing and supported by substantial evidence contained in a written record.” The Act is stacked in favor of telecommunications companies to make cell tower placement easy.

However, telecommunications companies do have some hurdles to clear. Companies seeking to place cell towers must show that a good faith effort has been made to identify and evaluate less intrusive alternatives. The provider must demonstrate that it has considered less sensitive sites, alternative system designs, alternative tower designs, placement of antennae on existing structures. In the *Branch Towers* case, the

company considered over a dozen sites, including existing structures, raw land alternatives, and all of the alternative sites suggested by neighborhood residents. Many of these sites were unworkable and the City was unable to refute the evidence provided by Branch Towers.

Cell tower companies often have unlimited resources and are able to build a substantial record to argue before a court. On the other hand, opponents to cell towers, often neighborhoods, are more limited in their means to develop a record. If you or your neighborhood has questions about opposing a cell tower installation, it is recommended that you contact a private attorney.

8. Are These Blighted Properties in Your Neighborhood?

Twenty-six properties are on the agenda for the City's next Public Officer Hearing at 9:30 a.m. Friday, Sept. 9.

The Public Officer --- David Brace, director of Public Works for the city --- will hear testimony on buildings that inspectors contend are in violation of the city's building codes. Testimony can also be made by the property owners, neighbors, neighborhood groups, and other stakeholders, such as lien holders.

The Public Officer then decides whether to issue an order requiring that the violations be addressed in a certain period of time. Failure by the owner to cure the problem may result in the boarding or demolition of a structure, or the cleanup of a dirty or overgrown lot, with costs billed to the owner. A property owner may appeal the Public Officer's decision to the Better Building Board and, ultimately, to Chancery Court.

The properties to be heard for repair and/or demolition orders are:

815 Avenue A, 1306 Beaumont, 404 North Bellemeade, 741 North Broadway (commercial), 1620 North Broadway (commercial), 1428 Coker, 2506 Davenport, 510 Georgia, 512 Georgia, 148 Hawthorne (including accessory structure), 3830 Ivy (accessory structure only) 0 East Jackson (confirmation of emergency repair/demolition order),

809 Knoxville College Drive, 829 Knoxville College Drive, 915 Knoxville College Drive (confirmation of emergency repair only order), 1323 Lee (including accessory structure), 5820 Little John, 2607 Sevier (including accessory structure), 3711 Skyline (including accessory structure), 729 Virginia, 1721 Woodbine, and 2815 Woodbine (confirmation of emergency repair/demolition order).

In addition, Codes Enforcement is asking the public officer to approve the board-up of blighted, vacant buildings at 1306 Beaumont Avenue, 1409 Brown Avenue, 800 Graves Street, and 2149 Mississippi Avenue.

If any of these properties are in your neighborhood, you or a representative of your organization may wish to attend the meeting to submit testimony about the impact of the property on the neighborhood. The full Sept. 9 agenda, with details on each property, can be found at www.cityofknoxville.org/plansreview/agenda_poh.pdf.

This Sept. 9 meeting combined the regularly scheduled meetings for August and September. After this, the next Public Officer hearing is slated for Oct. 28.

9. BZA Decisions Can Impact Your Neighborhood

Ten properties are on the agenda for next week's meeting of the Board of Zoning Appeals (BZA).

Established by city ordinance, BZA hears appeals of denials of building permits by the city's Building Inspections Department. The board, consisting of five citizens appointed by the Mayor, meets at 4 p.m. on the third Thursday of each month in the Small Assembly Room of the City County Building.

BZA meets next Thursday, Sept. 15. Addresses on the agenda are 5656 Lyons View Pike, 204 Gore Road, 1215 Snowdon Drive, 4647 Newcom Avenue, 2932 Alcoa Highway, 319 W. Depot Avenue, 9049 Kingston Pike, 3429 Lansing Avenue, 5616 Merchants Center Blvd., and 1830 Cumberland Avenue.

Keep up with how the BZA might impact your neighborhood. Watch for the black and white signs indicating that there is a pending decision on a particular piece of property. Most signs are for Metropolitan Planning Commission issues --- which are also important --- but signs with the word "variance" are BZA items.

The BZA agenda is posted on the city website. Browse to www.knoxvilletn.gov/boards and click on Board of Zoning Appeals.

A neighborhood group that keeps track of BZA will call the Plans Review & Inspections Department at 215-3669 to request and study the paperwork on a particular appeal, decide whether to take a position on the appeal, and then attend the BZA meeting to voice the group's support or objections. A group can also request a postponement to allow time to meet with the applicant.

Decisions of the BZA can be appealed within 15 days of the BZA decision to Knoxville City Council. Appeals of a City Council decision are made to Chancery Court within 60 days of a City Council decision related to BZA.

10. Impact a Life: Volunteer for Tennessee Achieves

City Council Attorney and former City Council Member Rob Frost is urging citizens to get involved in Tennessee Achieves, the statewide program that provides scholarships and mentoring services to high school and college students who lack sufficient support at home.

"I became involved in the Tennessee Achieves/ Tennessee Promise program as a mentor last year," Frost stated recently. "Briefly, the program provides two years of scholarship money to attend some colleges in Tennessee. The program allows many high school kids the chance to attend college who would otherwise be unable to afford it."

Volunteers provide mentoring, not money. “I’m currently mentoring two students, and they both started their college classes in the past week or so. They are probably first generation college students, and they were raised in difficult circumstances.”

Tennessee Achieves is looking for mentors for 2017. Having a college degree is not a requirement to be a mentor, Frost notes. “Many of these students just need additional guidance and encouragement from another adult,” he added.

Moreover, the training and time investment are not demanding. “There’s a training class one evening that last a little more than an hour. There are probably two to three other hour-long meetings over the course of the year. Most time is spent talking over the phone and texting back in forth with the students.”

To learn more and fill out an application, visit <https://tnachieves.org/>.

11. Neighborhood and Government Calendar (clickable to online calendar)

Call 215-4382 to include your neighborhood event or meeting in [this Google calendar](#).

If you are a person with a disability who requires an accommodation in order to attend a City of Knoxville public meeting, please contact Stephanie Brewer Cook at scook@knoxvilletn.gov or 215-2034 no less than 72 hours prior to the meeting you wish to attend. For an English interpreter, contact David Massey at 215-3232 or dmassey@knoxvilletn.gov.

Other Calendars

Here are several other online calendars that cover events outside of the neighborhood realm:

- [Arts & Culture Alliance](#) (There’s More to Knoxville)
- [Arts & Fine Crafts Center Classes](#) (City of Knoxville)
- [Birdhouse Community Center](#)
- [City of Knoxville General Calendar](#)
- [Knoxville Mercury](#) (weekly community paper)

About This Newsletter

*** This Advisory is produced on most Tuesdays of the year.*

*** Ideas and contributions are welcome. We reserve the right to edit submissions.*

*** Deadline for news & calendar items: 5 p.m. Mondays*

*** May be copied and forwarded via neighborhood e-mail lists and newsletters.*

*** See past issues at our Website: <http://www.knoxvilletn.gov/neighborhoods>*

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