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Commissioners ready and willing to help you

By **TIMOTHY JOSEPH**, twjoseph@comcast.net

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We have two 6th District Knox County Commissioners representing us: Mark Cawood, from Karns and Larry Stephens, from Powell. I thought you might like to hear what they see as some of the major concerns in our communities. I talked with Cawood for this column and will talk to Stephens later to get his thoughts.

My first question to Cawood was about the Orange Route bypass, (now called The Knoxville Parkway). Cawood is solidly against it because he understands it will not accomplish what a bypass should. I asked if he would be at the Feb. 16 meeting (I had just heard about) with TDOT to discuss the public comments.

"I didn't know there was a meeting scheduled. This has been a continuing problem, the state does not keep the commissioners informed."

This is not the way it should work. It certainly isn't the professional thing to do and does not speak well of the process or the state's concern for the public representation. No, these are not state representatives, but they are commissioners, who represent the people, and the state has an innate responsibility to keep them informed on major projects - it sure isn't hard to mail a notice.

Cawood addressed the problem of school overcrowding. He said the commission is allocating \$40 million for a new high school, and the school board is looking at various locations. He mentioned the county owns property near the new Hardin Valley Elementary School that could be used if a little more property could be purchased. He didn't know when the decision would be made, but said soon. Being a former teacher in a high school that was next to an elementary school I can tell you there are advantages to having them together. The real benefit is the sharing that can take place in facilities and teachers, as well as programs and events. I'll talk to the school board and see what I can find out.

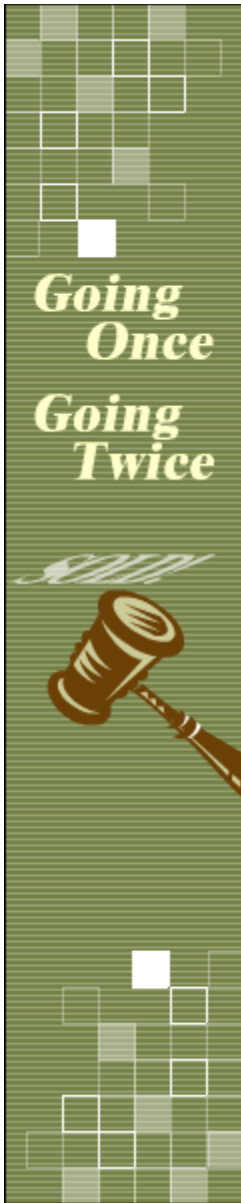
Recreation is important to Cawood. He'd like to see more small community parks and greenway walking trails. He believes greenways are very real community assets and I certainly agree. He proposes that a given number of miles of greenways be built each year. One proposal he mentioned was a greenway that follows Beaver Creek through Karns. Ideally, he said, different city greenways would connect making long continuous nature walks.

Cawood mentioned my column last week on the traffic problem in Solway and said since 1984 they've asked for a light in Solway but because of the reasons I mentioned, it won't be allowed. He said in 1988 they did a study on how long school buses have to wait to turn left onto Pellissippi Parkway from Burchfield Heights. You'll never guess. The "average" time was 22 minutes. Think what it is today. He's very concerned about the Solway traffic problems.

Cawood said he is there for us and always willing and ready to listen and share. If you have a concern or need information, don't hesitate to call him. That's what he's there for. His number is 865-690-3250.

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- Weekly thought: "Only the foolish live day-to-day ignoring opportunity to move toward love." From "Reflections on Love," by Timothy Joseph.



Timothy Joseph writes about Hardin Valley, Karns, Pellissippi Parkway and Solway. He may be reached at 865-927-3584 or twjoseph@comcast.net.

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