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Karns commissioner tackles issues

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

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A few weeks ago I briefed you on my conversation with Knox County Commissioner Mark Cawood (Karns) and said I would talk with our other 6th District Commissioner Larry Stephens (Powell) - remember, both represent you.

As with Cawood, I began by asking Stephens his thoughts on the Knoxville Parkway. Stephens told me that he is on record as opposing it and he's still much against the location.

"It's not a bypass, which is what we were sold on, and it will have a tremendous negative impact to the Hardin Valley/ Solway area."

He said studies show that business and population growth after a beltway is constructed takes place "within" the beltline, which is why the present location makes no sense, because it is way too close to the city. When asked his thoughts on how it ever got selected, he said there are some powerful special interest groups and select people who lobbied hard, whereas residents, though greater in number, didn't have the same power and their voices were not heard.

As I said in prior columns, if the proper process was followed, special interests groups could lobby all they want, but the facts would decide, not power. What could be more unfair than to do the wrong thing for the wrong reasons, rather than the right thing for the right reasons? Why, in this democratic society we say we have, do people and groups with money, power and business connections have more clout than the couple out planting flowers and mowing their lawn to make their property beautiful? Why? Perhaps someone should ask the governor.

On other concerns Stephens said a major problem is the proposed road plan and trying to keep up with growth, and that the challenges are getting even more difficult.

Another serious concern is the overcrowding of our schools, which is being addressed. He said the new high school should be placed to properly address current and future need projections and the school board has an organized plan to do this. He mentioned extra land was purchased in Hardin Valley when the Hardin Valley Elementary School was built, and there was an option to purchase more property as well. He said this area would be an ideal place for the school. Stephens agrees with Cawood's thoughts on a Beaver Creek Basin Greenway I mentioned in my previous column.

He said the county is looking into proper permanent placement of the convenience centers, because the Powell and Oak Ridge Highway locations are temporary. The difficult issue is that no one really wants them in their back yard, but he mentioned that a very effective buffer of trees, landscaping and attractive fencing can eliminate the appearance concerns. Stephens said he is always ready to listen to your suggestions and concerns and help whenever he can. You can reach him at 865-947-6282, Ext. 211. Don't hesitate to talk with Stephens or Cawood, for they are our commissioners and are there for us. It's their job, sure, but more important, they're great guys and "want" your participation. Too, they will do all they can for you - use 'em.

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Weekly thought: "My wife, my daughter, and my son are my soul-mates, making me the luckiest man that ever could be." 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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