



October 1, 2018

Dear Mayor & Commission

Former Mayor Ralph Van Brocklin's sudden, untimely death is a major loss for all citizens of Johnson City. As the Commission looks to a short-term appointment to honor his service until the 2020 election, there is no doubt that Dr. Van Brocklin's vision should be reflected by the selection.

Dr. Van Brocklin will always be remembered as a leader who put his time into studying the issues and his passion into improving the City – from our education system to the quality of our neighborhoods and the economic opportunities offered our citizens.

By weaving an inclusive fabric, Dr. Van Brocklin helped build a stronger city, particularly through urging folks to volunteer and partner in our community.

As part of this process, I took a good bit of time to reflect on Dr. Van Brocklin's legacy. With this reflection complete, I humbly offer my services to the citizens of Johnson City in honoring his legacy, chief among those a firm belief that all citizens should have equal opportunities in education, governing and growth.

I too have put in the time to understand the issues facing our communities, neighborhoods and commercial economy.

In fact, since 1991, I have given countless volunteer hours on key city projects as a member and/or past chairman of the Board of Zoning Appeals, Johnson City Regional Planning Commission, the Johnson City Economic & Community Development Advisory Board, and the Bikeway & Greenway Advisory Council. Way back in 1990, I appeared before both the City Commission and the Washington County Commission to oppose the development of 20 acres on Carroll Creek Road for an Industrial Park. Can you imagine what this corridor would like today had industrial development consumed Carroll Creek?

Instead, preserving the Carroll Creek corridor for residential growth later spurred construction of some of the most desirable subdivisions in the City, including Hunters Ridge, Steeplechase, Willows Ridge and Park Place.

Professionally, over the last two decades, I worked together with the City as Chairman of the Community Development Advisory Board to develop low-to-moderate priced housing for first-time home buyers at Preservation Pointe, establish senior housing at King Springs Village, and create homes for first-time home buyers in the moderate price range at Preservation Pointe.

At the appointment of the Commission, I have served on citizen-led committees that have guided our City's growth, added flexibility and common sense to our sidewalk codes and developed mixed-use business zoning regulations that promote in-fill while avoiding costly sprawl. I also served on 6 of the 9 Planning Commission Sub Committees that developed the 20-Year Comprehensive Plan that has guided land use in the City for more than a decade.

Most recently, I also served as a member of the West Walnut Street Task Force that produced redevelopment guidelines for the West Walnut corridor, again applying mixed-use concepts. This plan

connects East Tennessee State University to a downtown area enjoying a renaissance unseen in six decades, while protecting the historic Tree Street Neighborhood and encouraging redevelopment that will be much more pedestrian and bike friendly.

In short, I have been thoroughly vested in the success of Johnson City as both a citizen and a professional for the better part of four decades.

I have served as President of the Johnson City Area Home Builders Association, member of the National Association of Home Builders and Associate Home Builder member. I'm also an active member of the North East Tennessee Association of Realtors and the National Association of Realtors, as well as a benefactor member of the Boones Creek Historical Trust.

As in history gone by, Johnson City's biggest asset is its people. In an evolving technological world where workers can choose where they want to live and work remotely, maintaining the attractiveness of our City to all walks of life must be our top goal.

This requires continuing reinvestment in our schools and retail economy. In addition to West Walnut Street, Boones Creek is an essential commercial growth corridor. This area has an abundance of open farm land, hosts mid and upscale residential neighborhoods including the Ridges, and provides room for growth inside the City.

Further, I am encouraged and fully support efforts to promote regional development within the Tri-Cities, particularly Aerospace Park at Tri-Cities Regional Airport.

While there are many positive foundations in place, particularly through the efforts of the Commission, I do feel we have work to do in continuing to make the City attractive for development.

Much of the residential growth in the past decade has occurred outside City limits, and the Commission must meet this challenge if our City is to remain the crown jewel of the Tri-Cities. Further, we must redouble efforts to develop senior housing, as we lack appropriate housing stock for aging boomers. Meanwhile, the city spends a tremendous amount of time and money on consultants and plans that only gather dust on a shelf. We must put these plans to work to realize the vision of smart growth in a smart City.

In closing, regardless of the Commission's choice, I deeply appreciate the open opportunity afforded all our citizens for consideration of this position and it is my intent to remain engaged at a high level moving forward. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



David Lefemine
Principal Broker & President
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