

Zoning changes planned to support downtown housing

By Mycca Decker
Staff Writer

Pikeville city officials are moving forward with the process to change the city’s zoning regulations to increase downtown housing options and address long-standing parking requirements limiting residential development.

Pikeville Mayor Jimmy Carter said the change is a response to a larger housing crisis on the statewide and national levels.

“There’s a housing crisis across the country,” Carter said. “There’s not enough affordable housing, or housing in general, to support growing populations. This change is about allowing developers and property owners to use downtown space more effectively.”

Under the previous zoning code, downtown property owners were required to provide 1.5 off-street parking spaces per two-bedroom apartment. Carter

said this discouraged development because many downtown buildings do not have available land to accommodate that requirement.

“For years, property owners downtown have wanted to add apartments, but the parking requirement made it almost impossible,” Carter said. “Now that we have the camera system monitoring parking during business hours, we feel confident we can remove that barrier.”

City Manager Reggie Hickman explained the process began with the city applying to the Joint Planning Commission, which includes representatives from Pike County, Elkhorn City and Pikeville. A public hearing is expected in early June, with the Pikeville City Commission likely to vote on the change by early July.

“This zoning update removes the mandatory parking minimums for residential units downtown,” Hickman said. “It

gives developers and property owners more flexibility to convert underused upper floors into housing.”

City Engineer Brad Slone said most downtown buildings extend to the edge of their lots, making it impossible to create new parking on-site.

“Buildings have sat empty upstairs because they couldn’t meet parking requirements,” Slone said. “Now those spaces can be put to use.”

Officials said parking concerns were taken into account. According to Slone, Pikeville’s downtown has approximately 1,000 public parking spaces. On-street parking is monitored through a camera system from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday. After 5 p.m. and on weekends, the time limits are not in effect.

“There are always around 50 to 100 open spaces in the parking garage during peak hours,” Slone said. “The River-

fill lot is also around 60 to 70 percent full on a normal day.”

Carter added that many downtown residents, especially students, do not rely on their cars daily. “A lot of them walk everywhere,” he said. “If they only use their car once or twice a week, it doesn’t make sense to require them to park right in front of their building.”

Officials noted the zoning change will still require storefronts on the first floor to remain designated for commercial use. Slone said the city has also added architectural requirements to preserve the character of downtown.

“If a developer wants to make major changes, they’ll have to follow design standards,” Slone said. “No vinyl or aluminum siding. We’re requiring brick, stone, or glass.”

The city emphasized that the change does not require any existing property owner to alter their building. The new rules

only apply if someone chooses to remodel or develop a property.

“This is about providing more opportunities,” Carter said. “It’s not a mandate. It’s just removing an unnecessary barrier.”

“Hundreds of people lost their homes in the flood,” Hickman said. “And with the dental school, we’re going to have hundreds of additional students coming into the city.”

Hickman said the University of Pikeville’s campus is expected to host more than 1,000 professional students within the next few years.

“More housing means more businesses, more jobs and more life in our downtown,” Carter said. “This is just one piece of the puzzle.”

The public hearing for the zoning change is expected in early June. If approved, the ordinance could be adopted by the City Commission as early as July.

Va. man arrested on domestic violence, child abuse charges

News-Express
Staff Report

A domestic altercation arising from an argument over directions led to a Virginia man being arrested on multiple charges, according to police.

Jail records show that Roscoe Eric Ware, 34, of Falls Road, Victoria, Virginia, was charged with first-degree strangulation, first-degree strangulation (domestic violence), first-degree criminal abuse (child 12

or under), second-degree possession of a controlled substance and failure to appear.

According to a citation written by Kentucky State Police Trooper Nicholas Howell, Post 9 received a call on Tuesday, May 13, reporting a potential child abuse situation that had happened in the Hardy area.

“The caller stated and sent a video of a male abusing a child in the parking lot of a church and a female get-

ting out crying and vomiting,” Howell wrote in the citation.

He said that after watching the video and patrolling Belfry, Hardy, and the surrounding communities, a silver Dodge minivan, which matched the vehicle seen in the video, was spotted in the parking lot of the South Williamson Food City, located along U.S. 119 in Goody.

Howell wrote in the citation that he identified himself to a woman



Roscoe Ware

sitting in the passenger’s seat and informed her he had received a tip of a possible child abuse that had occurred in Hardy.

“(The woman) stated the incident took place on May 10 (the previous Saturday),” the citation

states. “(The woman) stated that she and her husband, Roscoe Eric Ware, got into a verbal altercation about him going in the wrong direction. (She) stated that Eric choked her to the point that she began to vomit.”

Howell wrote in the citation that injuries on her chest and neck were observed and photographed.

Howell petitioned for an arrest warrant for Ware, which was granted

by Pike District Judge Tommy May. In that warrant, Howell also wrote: “Eric grabbed ahold of his 1-year-old child and threw the child into the back of the van.”

The woman, according to the citation, was asked why she had not reported the incident.

“(She) stated she was scared and had nowhere else to go.”

Ware was lodged in the Pike County Detention Center, where he remained as of presstime.

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“We also have Food Truck Fridays downtown that coincide with Main Street Live,” Dotson said. “They open at 11 a.m. and go all evening until the event ends.” Food trucks will be located in the adjacent parking lot.

Dotson said there will not be craft vendors during Main Street Live, though the city is looking at reviving its night market series later in the summer.

Information on specific theme nights and performers is available on the City of Pikeville Tourism

website.

Dotson said city officials and members of the Pikeville 200 Committee, which planned the city’s bicentennial celebration, are excited to finally be able to present the drone show.

“The gates will open at 7 p.m.,” Dotson said.

“The drone show will start around 9 p.m., once it’s dark enough. Over 300 drones will fly above Hambley and tell a visual story of Pikeville’s 200-year history.”

The drone show will be followed by a fireworks display sponsored by Pikeville Medical Center.

“The fireworks will be launched from Bear Mountain. The best viewing spot is the bleachers at the Hambley Athletic Complex,” Dotson said. “People can also bring a lawn chair and sit on the concrete or stay in their vehicle in the parking lot.”

Dotson added that

Pikeville Medical Center will distribute water, cookies and commemorative cups to attendees while supplies last.

Dotson said there will be free parking available around the high school, baseball field and farmer’s market lot.

May

Pike County Public Library (Lee Avenue)

informationplace.org

*Registration required.

606-437-6001
MWFS 9:00-6:00
TT 10:00-7:00

Find us on Pike County Libraries

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
4 All library calendars 	5	6 Adult Guitar Class* 5:00 SSSnakes at the Story Trail 5:00	7 Teen Guitar Class* 4:30	1 Story Time 11:00 Story Time 2:00 Kids Guitar Class* 3:00 Music Theory* 5:00	2	3 Story Time 11:00 Chess Club 4:00
11 	12 Music Theory Class* 2:00 Teen Activity Club 4:00	13 Adult Guitar Class* 5:00 Book Talks 5:00	14 Basic Computer Skills 10:30 Teen Guitar Class* 4:30	15 Kids Guitar Class* 3:00 Music Theory* 5:00	16 Author Visit: Nicki Jacobsmeyer 4:30-5:30	17 Chess Club 4:00
18 	19	20 Adult Guitar Class* 5:00 Astronaut for a Day 4:30	21 Teen Guitar Class* 4:30	22 Kids Guitar Class* 3:00 Music Theory* 5:00 Dungeons & Dragons 5:00	23	24 Quilters Group 11:00 Ham Radio Info & Testing 3:30 Scales and Technique for Guitar* 4:00
25 	26 CLOSED 	27 Adult Guitar Class* 5:00 Book Talks 5:00	28 Basic Computer Skills 10:30 Teen Guitar Class* 4:30	29 Kids Guitar Class* 3:00 Music Theory* 5:00 Painting Workshop: Hydrangeas Door Hanger* 5:00	30	31 Chess Club 4:00