

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

July 10, 2017

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Jennifer Montgomery for City Council, District 6

Economic Development for the Sixth District

Jennifer Montgomery believes that jobs and economic opportunity are the keys to the future of the Sixth District. As a real estate professional with a Masters degree in Urban and Regional Planning, Jennifer is the right person at the right time to represent the interests of the Sixth District on City Council.

Jennifer's Economic Development Program has several core components:

- Create Redevelopment Districts along Magnolia Avenue and Sutherland Avenue to build on the success of downtown redevelopment efforts.
- Prioritize Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) projects that incorporate either 15% workforce housing eligible residential units or affordable retail and light manufacturing space.
- Reduce impact of rising property values on senior citizens by adopting the Property Tax Freeze program currently in place for Knox County seniors.

Redevelopment Districts

Redevelopment districts enable tax incentives for new development and redevelopment of existing structures. These districts have proven to be extremely successful tools in several parts of Knoxville. Downtown, the South Waterfront and Cumberland Avenue are all textbook examples of the significant private investment that can result from the availability of tax incentives including TIF's and PILOT's.

Jennifer wants to create new redevelopment districts that extend from downtown out Magnolia Avenue to Burlington and along Sutherland Avenue from Cherokee Mills to Pond Gap. These new districts will encourage private investment and allow the benefits of tax incentives to be shared by residents throughout the Sixth District.

Tax Incentives for Affordability

Tax Increment Financing allows a portion of the new property taxes generated by a project to go toward paying off the loans used to build the project. Payment In Lieu of Taxes provides for freezing property taxes at the pre-development amount for a period of years after the project is completed. This improves the financial performance and improves the chances of obtaining construction loans.

Developers seeking these incentives must demonstrate the viability of the project and the need for incentives to make the project work. The City can negotiate with the developer to ensure that the project accomplishes other goals for the taxpayers. In recent years, that has resulted in projects that include on site parking garages, avoiding the need for taxpayer dollars to be used to build public garages.

Jennifer believes that the time has come to utilize these tools to incentivize residential and mixed use development projects that include affordable and workforce housing units. Requiring 15% of the residential units to be affordable will increase the supply of workforce housing in market rate developments. This will reduce the concentration of residents in dedicated affordable housing projects by distributing workforce housing in projects throughout the city. Stockyard Lofts, a 152-room apartment project planned for the Old City, has committed to set aside a certain number of apartments with discounted rents for qualified workforce housing. "Tax incentives should help solve the affordability crisis. Increasing the supply of affordable and workforce housing has to be a priority for City Council.", says Montgomery.

The City's partnership with Smart Growth America is focused on bringing light manufacturing jobs to the Magnolia Warehouse Redevelopment District. Tax incentives should be applied in this area to ensure the availability of affordable maker space to encourage light manufacturing job growth.

Property Tax Freeze for seniors

The massive investment in downtown redevelopment has driven up property values in the core of the city and has begun to impact the neighborhoods surrounding downtown. While this increase in values can be a positive development for many people whose homes are their largest single investment, it can also create a burden for senior citizens on a fixed income. Rising values result in rising property taxes, raising the fear that long term homeowners may not be able to afford the higher cost.

The State of Tennessee passed legislation that allows cities and counties to freeze property taxes for low income senior citizens. Knox County has implemented this program and has thousands of seniors participating in the program. Currently, the City of Knoxville has not implemented the Tax Freeze Program. If elected to City Council, Jennifer will work to implement this program for the City's low income senior citizens. "This is a proven program that helps thousands of senior citizens in the County each year", said Montgomery. "It's time to provide City residents the same benefit."

For more information on Jennifer Montgomery's positions, go to votejmo.com or call Jennifer at (865) 406-4364.