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INSIDE:

See page 6 to find out what some St. Mary’s Catholic School students have done to spruce up the area.

INSIDE:

The Fort Scott Area Chamber of Commerce is accepting entries for the Good Ol’ Days Parade. Details are on page 4.

SPORTS:

Fort Scott swimmers competed in a league meet. See page 8.



Jason E. Silvers/Tribune photo

Members of a zoning advisory committee listen to citizen concerns during a public forum on zoning Wednesday evening at the Uniontown Community Center. From left are Brian Wade, Pete Owenby, Bourbon County Commissioner Brandon Whisenhunt, Jason Yount, Jim Banwart and Mike Hueston. Also attending but not pictured is board member Mary Pemberton.

Zoning advisory committee holds first public forum

BY JASON E. SILVERS

The Fort Scott Tribune

A zoning advisory committee discussed its purpose and role and heard concerns from the public during the first of three forums Wednesday evening at the Uniontown Community Center.

Six of the nine members of the advisory board were present; Brian Wade, Mary Pemberton, Pete Owenby, Jason Yount, Jim Banwart and Mike Hueston. About 40-50 people attended the forum.

Wade said the purpose of the forum was for attendees to learn “what is and is not being discussed” if the Bourbon County Commission chooses to enact zoning in the county. There was also information about zoning as well as the points the board has discussed and plans to propose to the commission.

The committee was appointed and formed in April to make recommendations to the commission “in developing a resolution in accordance with Kansas statutes on zoning,” the board’s bylaws state.

“We haven’t made a decision whether to advise the county to enact zoning or not,” Wade said. “That decision will come after these forums when we hear what residents want. But we have informally agreed that even if we advise against zoning, we are going to submit a list of things we believe are very important to consider if they choose to move forward with zoning.”

Wade said committee members planned to listen to and consider feedback from community members when formulating recommendations which will be presented to commission-

ers June 2. Attendees had the chance to voice their thoughts for the committee and commission to consider as the process moves forward.

Six attendees shared their thoughts in opposition or support of zoning proposals. At the request of the committee, attendees were asked to vote to indicate their stance on zoning. About six people showed support, a few were undecided and the remainder showed they were opposed.

Concerns raised included the costs and effects of zoning, property rights and government control, lack of transparency from commissioners, and the economic benefits. Some citizens said the issue of zoning came about due to solar and wind energy projects coming to the county in recent years, and zoning should be placed on a ballot for voters to decide.

Pemberton said the committee has researched zoning, evaluated several counties and determined guidelines to be recommended to the commission.

“We will have a couple of meetings after the forums to consider all feedback from the public in our presentation to the commission,” she said, adding the committee is “split” in terms of members in favor of zoning and those who are opposed.

“At least half see both sides and haven’t made up their minds,” she said.

The committee determined the purpose of zoning in Bourbon County would include the following items: “To conserve productive farm and ranch lands for future generations and protect such land from the impacts of unfettered development of large scale industrial and commercial uses; to protect property values

and conserve our natural resources; to protect Bourbon County from external or foreign exploitation; to create a landscape where residential, agricultural, commercial and industrial zones can coexist harmoniously without conflict; to promote and encourage economic growth in the county; and to put in a place a process that provides more transparency of large scale industrial land use.”

Pemberton explained the differences between codes and zoning. She said codes refers to “specific regulations that must be adhered to,” and can apply to building a structure such as a house or business building. Codes can also dictate such items as electrical, plumbing, structural safety, and what the size or height of a building can be.

“Codes also defines whether you’re allowed to store 10 inoperable vehicles in your front yard or keep chickens or pigs in your backyard, and how often you need to mow your yard,” she said.

Pemberton said codes regulations are “more or less limited just by the imagination of the elected officials and community members, and they can become quite onerous and costly to enact and enforce.”

Pemberton said zoning is “much more defined and simpler.” She presented some facts and recommendations on zoning in Bourbon County, as outlined by the committee.

“Zoning is the classification of land according to how it is used and defines how it can be used in the future – it is planning where certain industries can locate,” according to the document.

SEE ZONING ON PAGE 6

Tri-Valley’s greenhouse nurtures more than flora

BY MARTI WELLS-SMITH
Special to the Tribune

A large variety of plants and flowers continue to flourish under the watchful care of Tri-Valley Horticulture Director and Therapist Austin Bolinger.

New species and projects are regularly introduced at the Fort Scott greenhouse to provide residents with hands-on experience in planting and maintaining the foliage and blooms on a year-round basis.

Bolinger, a Fort Scott native, has been with the Tri-County Developmental Services program since 2020 and replaced Barb McCord, the founder of the greenhouse, upon her retirement in 2021.

“I’ve always enjoyed working in this industry and had prior experience at floral shops before receiving this position. I credit Barb McCord for her excellent training and continued mentorship that’s made a big difference in helping me to carry on her vision,” Bolinger said. “The participating residents choose the plants they want to cultivate and grow and I’m here to guide them and oversee the process. An example of this is the blackberry patch, which the residents wanted to plant in an outside garden area and use a trellis.”

The greenhouse, which has operated since 2008, is one of many employment, learning and socialization options at Tri-Valley, which also includes employment specialists who help residents find local employment in Fort Scott as well as the Tri-Valley center. Work opportunities at Tri-Valley include shredding documents for community businesses and individuals, janitorial work at Tri-Valley. Residents are also paid to help in the greenhouse to get ready for an upcoming sale.



Marti Wells-Smith/Special to the Tribune

Austin Bolinger is the Tri-Valley Horticulture director and therapist. He manages the greenhouse, which serves as a place of employment for Tri-Valley clients and also a source of fundraising.

“We try to focus on individual needs and where our clients and residents will thrive,” Bolinger said.

Although the greenhouse isn’t open to the public on a daily basis, there are seasonal promotions held as fundraisers. The most recent greenhouse sale was held on May 9. It will offer autumn and Christmas sales next, with mums and handcrafted wreaths among their sale items.

Many Tri-Valley residents live in group homes in the community, with full-time attendant care. Others live at home with their families and attend the day services and programs, which focus on self-care, learning and adapting, living independently, understanding and using language, mobility, economic self-sufficiency and self-direction in setting and accomplishing goals.

For residents with an interest in nature, the greenhouse is their destination point. The location is at the Fort Scott Industrial Park at 4305 Campbell Drive. All proceeds go toward maintaining the greenhouse and helping Tri-Valley participants.

Honoring Normand



Jason E. Silvers/Tribune photo

Marcel Normand, center, retired Fort Scott Community College instructor, hugs Ronda Bailey, FSCC Board of Trustees member, prior to Normand’s remarks during the afternoon commencement ceremony for FSCC graduates Friday in the Danny and Willa Ellis Family Fine Arts Center. Normand was the recipient of an Honorary Degree during the ceremony.

WEATHER

Increasing clouds, with a high near 79. West wind 5 to 7 mph becoming northeast in the afternoon.



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