

# City sets eyes on future of crumbling building

BY NIKKI STANLEY  
Reporter

The Barbourville City Council meeting this month resulted in some informative discussion that many Knox Countians may be very excited to hear: the Parker Mercantile Building (often referred to as the Dixon Building) that sits at the corner of Liberty Street and Knox Street in a state of partial collapse since June 2021, is finally approaching it's due date for demolition.

Bob Perkins, Senior Hydrogeologist of Environmental Compliance and Consulting firm Linebach and Funkhouser, Inc. spoke to the council about the approaching timeline. Perkins explained the Brownfield Grant – it's a grant that offers 5 years to spend the entirety of the awarded funds and is lauded for being an incredible, multi-purpose grant that can go towards more than just one, rigid project.



Above, Bob Perkins, Senior Hydrogeologist of Environmental Compliance and Consulting firm Linebach and Funkhouser, Inc., addresses the Barbourville City Council.

PHOTO BY NIKKI STANLEY

For this demolition project, the City of Barbourville was awarded \$1,000,000. He shared that the demolition project is nearing its start date, as all the funding is in place and they're looking to start receiving bids.

Perkins stated they should be able to get requests for proposals out within a month's time, and then, by federal statutes, they legally must post it for at minimum 30 days. Perkins calculates that after those two months have

passed, it would likely require only a few weeks to select a company to do the project. He speculated that after work physically begins on taking the crumbling building down, it should only be about two months to complete.

The council voiced some concerns about street obstructions overlapping with the Daniel Boone Festival, which occurs during the first full week of October, but Perkins assured him the project should likely be complete before then.

Mayor Thompson also signed an Autism Awareness Month Proclamation, which he admitted had gone undone for too long, and was righting the times by announcing the proclamation and signing that day.

In other business, ordinances amending the June 30, 2025 budget, Ordinance 2025-3, and Ordinance 2025-4, adopting the June 30, 2026 budget, had their first readings, as well as ordinance 2025-5, an ordinance establishing Alcohol Regulatory Fees for June 20, 2026.

The council went into executive session before adjourning.

## Opinions & Letters

*"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances."*

—First Amendment to the United States Constitution

## Our news comes from real people

BY CHARLES MYRICK  
Publisher

Last week all the newspapers in our shared family here at Nolan Group Media shared our new corporate policy regarding artificial intelligence.

The tools available to today's world are growing exponentially, and since A.I. as we know it now burst on the scene just a few short years ago, it has morphed, blown up and transcended in ways we never imagined.

There's much to be concerned about when it comes to A.I., especially in the world of journalism. How would it get used? How *does* it get used? What do we plan to do with it? I'll be frank... I am scared of it. Not the technology itself, but people using it unfettered.

Those of us who pride ourselves in factual reporting would use the tool of A.I. carefully as any other source. But, I worry more about those who we see popping up on social media claiming to be journalists, without any training or bonefides to back up their peddling of, at times, misinformation. For the real journalists in the room, I am not worried.

How do I use it? Simple. It's a great tool for help with proofreading. We use Grammarly primarily. A *lot* of people use it. From emails to text messages to books, Grammarly can be a valuable source when it comes to catching those



simple things that may slip our mind from time to time. After all, it's been quite a while since I was in a classroom.

What I will never use A.I. for is to completely generate a story for me. It will never do my job. I will never use it to grossly manipulate or fabricate a photo. Many of the tools we already use, such as Photoshop, have intelligent editing tools built in that can be considered A.I., but we always maintain control, such as our policy states.

Every day I am inundated on social media with images,

videos and more that are very well done, but also very fake. Quite frankly, it bothers me. And what bothers me even more is the predatory nature of it. Many people cannot distinguish what's real and not, and some of it is *very good*.

You will never have to worry about this newspaper producing fake or misleading information or graphics. Everything we publish is something we have put our own time and effort into. Rest assured, your local newspaper is just that — local. And, we're *real*.

## Scripture talks about people who are big babies

A man making his first skydive was falling through the air, unable to get his parachute to open. Try as he might, it wasn't budging. In a panic, he yelled to a fellow who was flying up toward him: "Hey buddy, do you know anything about parachutes?"

"No," the fellow responded. "Do you know anything about propane stoves?"

Sounds like the fellows in that old joke needed to read the instructions before they strapped on the parachute or struck the match to light that stove.

Too often, we want to ignore instructions and do things our way, even when



**AIN'T IT THE TRUTH**

**Roger Alford**  
COLUMNIST

we have no idea whatsoever what we're doing. Remember

when your kids were small, and you dumped that box of nuts and bolts and pipes and chains and various other parts onto the driveway and set about putting together a swing set, ignoring the instructions altogether.

Then, when you had gotten thoroughly stumped as to what to do next, you finally reached for the instructions.

At times like those, we can feel like what we really need isn't written instructions but a teacher to walk us through the project step by step.

The toughest of life's challenges are easier when we have someone to provide needed guidance and help-

ful insights. That's especially true when it comes to spiritual challenges. That's when solid Bible teachers are worth their weight in gold.

According to Scripture, solid Bible teachers aren't easy to find. In fact, the Apostle Paul said we have too many people in our churches who are big babies, instead of teachers.

"For when for the time ye ought to be teachers, ye have need that one teach you again the basic principles of the oracles of God; and are become such as have need of milk, and not of strong meat" (Hebrews 5:12).

Did you get that? The Apostle Paul said these men

and women need baby food, not solid food. He was saying, in essence, that they're big babies.

I'm guessing you may have encountered people like that. What they need is someone who can challenge them to grow up. Good teachers will challenge us. Good teachers will even anger us at times at times. But good teachers are so very necessary.

In matters of eternity, nothing can get us into deeper trouble than not knowing the Bible. The truth is, understanding the basics of the Bible can mean the difference between Heaven and Hell.

If people aren't taught that the gift of salvation is avail-

able free to whosoever will ask, they will never receive it. If they aren't taught that Jesus is the way, the truth and the life, they may look for another.

That's why it's vital that big babies grow up, that they put aside their milk bottles and move on to solid foods. That's why it's vital that they reach maturity and take their rightful positions in this world as capable teachers.

That way, they can impart to others the good sense they need to stay out of the kind of trouble the skydiver and the propane stove user got themselves into.

Reach Roger Alford at 502-514-6857 or rogeralford1@gmail.com.

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— U.S. Supreme Court Justice Hugo Black  
New York Times v. United States

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