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Board OKs selling 320 acres in OR for motorsports park complex; cost \$4.8M



Darryl Kerley

Fire chief to leave dept. for classes

After 43 years of active fire service with four different fire departments and 22 years

BY BEN POUNDS
bpounds@oakridger.com

OAK RIDGE, Tenn. — The Oak Ridge Industrial Board has agreed to sell land to a company interested in developing a motorsports park complex in Oak Ridge.

The resolution states H.E. Bittle of Hardin Valley Land Partners will pay about \$4.8 million for about 320 acres at the Horizon Center. The full resolution is online at <http://oridb.net/motor->

sports-park/, which includes a map of the different parcels of land.

The Oak Ridge Industrial Development Board (IDB) oversees selling land at the Horizon Center, which is the former U.S. Department of Energy-owned land in west Oak Ridge. The resolution to sell the land was approved by a 6-1 vote with member Phil Yager casting the only nay vote.

"I think this is a very good chance to turn this city around,"

IDB member Harold Trapp said at the meeting.

During the meeting, Bittle said the development will include walking and cycling trails, which visitors can use at any time. With the track, he said he hoped to have members use it when they wish but also to rent it out for events.

"We want to have a multitude of events here," he said in response to a question by IDB member Roger Petrie about pos-

sibly allowing cycling events.

Bittle talked about the motorsports park including garages, an RV campground and lodging. He also talked about an amphitheater for concerts, but he said he is not looking to host loud bands. In past presentations, Bittle and David Hinkel, principal for The Outlet Resource Group, have also talked about including restaurants, a conference center and a carting track.

SEE COMPLEX, PAGE 2A

located when he made a 911 call to ORPD to report the vehicle had been stolen. When officers arrived at his residence, the police sergeant stated, he was located at the vehicle. Ordonez-Alvarenga was also seen with what appeared to be blood on his clothing.

Johnston wrote that parts of the vehicle were found in a trash can that was sitting on the street for removal. Also, vehicle parts matching the Ordonez-Alvarenga's Honda were found at the scene of the crash. His vehicle is missing a passenger side window, and the missing window was found on the side of the Turnpike, the officer stated.

Donna Smith be contacted at (865) 220-5514 and follow her on Twitter @ridgernewsd.



Screen capture by Ben Pounds/The Oak Ridger

The Oak Ridge Industrial Development Board agreed to sell several parcels of land to H.E. Bittle of Hardin Valley Land Partners. Bittle, in forefront at right, spoke at the Tuesday meeting at the Municipal Building Courtroom.

COMPLEX:

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1A

Even though the city has discussed providing more electricity to the site, Bittle said during the meeting that power needs are “not a concern for us at this point.” At another point, he said the track will not have lighting.

The IDB vote came after comments from many people, Oak Ridge residents and people from out of town. Proponents, some wearing shirts promoting their position, said the development would draw in

visitors, jobs and revenue to Oak Ridge and help attract automotive research. Some talked of the fondness for motorsports activities.

Opponents who spoke at the meeting said the course will be noisy, that it might harm wildlife and get in the way of people enjoying a nearby greenway route. They also said it might prevent the land from being developed for industry and people getting higher pay for industry than for service jobs.

While IDB has made its decision, the development still faces obstacles. The parcels Bittle plans to buy

are separated in some cases by “permanent natural areas,” which city attorney Ken Krushinski said are owned by the U.S. Department of Energy, not the industrial development board. These natural areas are not part of the nearby Black Oak Ridge Conservation Easement (BORCE). Bittle said he would need to figure out some way to get access routes between the different parcels.

Ben Pounds is a staff reporter for The Oak Ridger. Call him at (865) 441-2317 and follow him on Twitter @Bpoundsjournal.

2 face criminal charges for large Tennessee house party

NASHVILLE, Tenn. (AP) — Two people accused of hosting a house party in Tennessee that attracted hundreds of people have been charged with violating emergency health orders put in place during the coronavirus pandemic, police said.

Jeffrey W. Mathews, 36, and Christopher 'Shi' Eubank, 40, own the properties where the party took place and were charged with misdemeanor counts of violating local emergency health orders in connection with the Aug. 1 party in Nashville, news outlets reported, citing a statement from police.

The men were accused of hosting a gathering in excess of 25 people, not requiring social distancing and not requiring face coverings.

On Tuesday, police said both men were

County Sheriff's Office records. His attorney did not immediately return a request for comment from The Tennessean.

As of Wednesday morning, Eubank, a vocalist for the band Savage After Midnight, had not surrendered to authorities, news outlets reported. It was not immediately clear whether he had an attorney who could comment on his behalf.

Stocks rebound

(AP) — Stocks marched broadly higher on Wall Street Wednesday, briefly nudging the S&P 500 above its all-time closing high set in February, before the coronavirus pandemic led to a historic market plunge. The benchmark index

Tennessee. After 43 years of active fire service, we thank him and applaud him taking the next chapter in his career, which will share this knowledge with current and future generations.”

“The state of Tennessee will greatly benefit from Kerley’s many years of experience and certifications, including his designation as Chief Fire Officer (CFO) and Chief Training Officer (CTO) by the Commission on Fire Accreditation International,” the city news release stated.

“Next Monday, I will transition from servant to teacher as I begin to share my years of experience with our state’s firefighters. I have always been passionate about training and believe that a trained firefighter is a safe firefighter,” said Kerley in the release.

The city of Oak Ridge Fire Department will be led by Fire Marshal Travis Solomon, who will assume the interim chief duties effective Aug. 22.

American novel “Huckleberry Finn” and Homer’s “The Odyssey” and experiencing poetry.

If you enjoy participating in book groups, ORICL has online courses on fiction, nonfiction, mys-

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