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Redevelopment authority welcomes new member

By Amy Zalar, Herald-Standard
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The Fayette County Redevelopment Authority Tuesday welcomed newly appointed member Dee John by voting her secretary of the board during her first meeting.

John was appointed last month by the Fayette County commissioners to replace Paul Bortz Jr., who served one five-year term, and was also secretary of the board.

In making the appointment at last month's meeting, Commissioner Vincent A. Vicites said John has a real estate and municipal background that will serve her well as a member of the authority. Her term will expire July 8, 2011.

Chairman Kenneth M. Finney Jr. welcomed John and directed Executive Director Andrew French to send Bortz a thank-you note thanking Bortz for his five years of service.

"His experience with real estate and land development made his comments and suggestions invaluable," Finney said.

French reported that development continues at the Fayette County Business Park along Route 40 in South Union Township.

He said Cedarwood Development Inc. continues the work on Fayette Crossing, which will hold a Wal-Mart Super Center, Chili's Restaurant and other stores. French said Cedarwood is working with prospective tenants for the site and announcements will be made identifying the tenants in the future.

The business park already contains the Super 8 Motel, McMillen Engineering, Career Link, Fayette County Mental Health Mental Retardation, Laurel Pediatrics and Preferred Primary Care Physicians and work is underway for other medical offices.

"They have been blowing things up and moving massive amounts of dirt," French said. He said plans are to have the "pad" for the Wal-Mart on line by December and have the store open by the end of 2007. French said plans are to also open Matthew Drive Extension by the end of 2007 as well. Last month the state Department of Environmental Protection issued a permit to allow construction of Matthew Drive Extension through the business park.

Construction of the road was delayed after the DEP failed to issue a permit because of a lack of a solution to a wetlands issue.

The issue was resolved when the authority agreed to a stream mitigation project as well as maintained of a tributary and construction and maintenance of a one-half acre wetland in the Redstone Creek Watershed.

Additionally, French said the authority is also working with Synergy Real Estate Corporation regarding Synergy's interest in property at the business park.

In agenda items, the board took French's recommendation and voted to hire Jeannine Kifus of Fairbank as community development specialist at an annual salary of \$25,000. French said he received 30 letters of interest and resumes for the position. Kifus will fill the position left vacant by the resignation of Todd Walters.

French reported that the authority has surpassed the 50th participant in the first time homebuyers program and plans to mark the occasion in the near future.

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