



MAYOR'S EDITORIAL – JULY 2019

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MAYOR'S MONTHLY MINUTES JULY 2019

It is vacation time and I know a lot of Douglas citizens are out of town the first week of July – enjoying the beach, the mountains, or traveling elsewhere. I would like to remind everyone to stay safe and be cautious around large bodies of water.

We have begun construction at JC Adams Municipal Park beginning with road upgrades into the stadium area. Bonwell Royal Road is temporarily closed as well as Van Davis Road. Take the alternate route on Herbert Batten Road to enter the stadium area for the Light Up the Sky Over Jardine fireworks and activities. If you get frustrated, please keep in mind that soon we will have a fantastic facility for our youth to play sports in!

Let me give a shout out to our Recreation Softball teams! What a way to represent our city - awesome job at the GRPA State Softball Tournament! As you are aware, I love the Parks and Recreation Department and all the activities they provide for our youth. Coming up on July 19, 2019, the Recreation Department is throwing a celebration for all participants, coaches, sponsors, and parents! Come out to the Weir Center from 11am-2pm and enjoy free food and cokes as well as waterslides and other activities.

I leave you with a re-run of the special edition editorial about the TAD that I put out about mid-month in June. Our community held a Town Hall to discuss the Tax Allocation District (TAD), on Thursday, June 6, 2019 at the C.E. Weir Center. The meeting was well attended by citizens of our city and county. Our citizens were engaging and asked numerous questions. As the Mayor of Douglas, I would like to extend a BIG thank you to Mr. Robert Preston and the Douglas Now staff. As of Sunday evening, the Douglas Now LIVE streaming of the TAD meeting had over 8.2K views. Our community continues to amaze me with their displayed excitement and support of the development of the old high school property. Operation Boom-Boom is meant to establish an open dialogue within our community about the opportunity for a Chick-fil-A, Cook Out, Hobby Lobby, Marshall's, and Starbucks. This is our moment! My objective is clear and simple. Let's Talk About It!

We have been attempting to develop the old high school property for approximately two years. The first investment group decided not to participate in the development project. Our

community leaders had invested countless hours with the previous investment group, but the previous investment group financial projections were about \$2.5 million dollars short of the financial requirements. Again, our community does not know the meaning of quit. As a community, we made adjustments and ascertained the interest of the current investment and development group. With inflation, the project financials are currently about \$2.7 million dollars short of the financial requirements. The TAD bridges the gap between the project financial shortfalls and our community having Hobby Lobby, Chick-fil-A, Marshall's, Cookout, and Starbucks. This project creates about 200 new jobs, with 93 of those being full-time. I am thinking our elderly and teenagers can increase their opportunity to have part-time jobs. I talked to a college student over the weekend and he said, "Cookout is for college students. It's really good, they give you a lot of food, and it's cheap!" Again, this is our moment!

Two years ago, our community had the opportunity to bring companies like Hobby Lobby, Cookout, Starbucks, Marshall's and Chick-fil-A to our community. Because the previous developers' financial projections were \$2.5 million dollars short of the financial requirements, the project did not happen. I am prayerful that our community will rise to the challenge, attend the next TAD meeting, and educate ourselves about the TAD. I hope all would realize, this is our moment!

I am excited about the TAD, but our citizens are amazing. I am talking to citizens all over the community about the TAD. Last week, I was in Lowe's talking to a group of citizens about the TAD. It does not matter where I go. The opportunity for the TAD dominates the discussion. From Church to Walgreens, from Walmart to Holt's Bakery, and from Northcutt's Soul Food to Lil Mike's the TAD dominates the conversation. Our entire community is excited about this opportunity. Here it is again, this is our moment!

During the TAD meeting, one citizen suggested that the community hold another Town Hall meeting to discuss the TAD and include the Coffee County Commission, Board of Education, and City Council. Although, only the citizens of Douglas will vote on November 5, 2019. The residents in the Broxton, Ambrose, Nicholls, West Green, and County have a voice in this process through the Coffee County Commissioners and Board of Education. I have directed Mr. Charlie Davis, City Manager, to coordinate with Mr. Wesley Vickers, County Administrator, and Dr. Morris Leis, Board of Education Superintendent, to establish the next TAD Town Hall meeting. Amazingly, this is our moment.

As the Mayor of Douglas, I have invested numerous hours researching the TAD in order to educate myself. I am a member of the Economic Development Authority (EDA) and this is the only deal on the table. No other developers are looking at our community to bring this collective caliber of companies to our community, at the same time. For those reading this article, I hope you realize by now that, this truly is our moment! We must continue this journey together, seek a better understanding, and make an informed decision on Tuesday, November 5, 2019. I am supporting this TAD because my job as mayor is to do what is best for the economic growth of our city. Voting and supporting the TAD is what is best for our community. Say it with me, "This is our moment!" Go Trojans Go!