

COUNCIL | Candidates answer questions about local policies and the economy at the forum Tuesday night at the El Kadir Shrine Club

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chance during the forum to explain her home-made sign.

"I've chosen not to form a committee, and I've chosen not to put up yard signs or spend money that way because [of] the economic times, I really want citizens to keep their money," Chrisman said. "I can't justify spending hundreds or a couple thousand dollars on a campaign for City Council."

Slocum said she would be able to utilize her leadership and decision-making skills in a Council position.

"I deal with a lot of difficult situations every day with my job, and I feel I could pass that along and do the same — do the best job I could for our community," Slocum said.

Before the forum began, she said she was ready to be asked about anything.

"No telling what they're going to ask, but I'm ready," Slocum said.

During her opening statement, Slocum said her credentials include 10 years of employment with the Juvenile Court. She said she has been executive director of the Court-Appointed Special

Advocate program for the past four years.

Slocum is the only candidate to completely support the quarter-cent sales tax.

"Our community deserves, and we need, and we expect good quality law enforcement, and I feel that we must be supportive of them," Slocum said. "If that means paying taxes, obviously the citizens are going to decide if that's the route they want to take."

Slocum said one way the Council could ease financial strain on its citizens would be to attract jobs and businesses through tax incentives. Access to the arts, such as Curtain Call Theater, and other recreational activities, are also ways Slocum said the Council could help.

Slocum was also the only candidate to fully support adding another TIF district.

"After watching what the TIF has done for our downtown improvements, I would say, for our community, we do need to be in support of that," Slocum said. "My understanding is that a TIF on the south end [of Kirksville] would bring signage, which I believe is vital to consumers coming into our community."

After the forum was over, Slocum said she

considered it to be a success.

"I think my fellow candidates and I came out to do what we meant to do," Slocum said.

While waiting at his table before the forum, Schwarz said he's not used to speaking in public.

"As a band teacher, my back was usually to the public, and I'd just wave my arms," Schwarz said. "And we don't get the questions until we start up on stage, so it's not anything you can think about beforehand, so it's going to be all improv."

Schwarz said one of his main concerns should he be elected is ensuring that Kirksville doesn't lose any more jobs.

By luck of the draw, Schwarz was the first to give his opening statement.

On the issue of taxes, Schwarz said he wants people to be paid for their jobs, but does not think citizens will support an increase in sales tax because of the difficult economic times.

In response to the question about adding a TIF district, Schwarz said he is wary because of their history of harming school districts, but he would consider all the circumstances before making a decision.

One issue Schwarz said he would like to see the Council address is the feeling of separation between local residents and students at Truman and A.T. Still University.

"I know that there's a town and gown feeling, and that there are times that students in Kirksville ... feel that they're not appreciated or don't have good rapport with the city," Schwarz said. "I would like to see more done to improve relations."

After the forum, Schwarz said the most important issue they discussed was how to prevent jobs from leaving Kirksville.

Lynn Wagner, who attended the forum, said she thinks these forums are important, but she would like to see more citizens there.

"I think anyone that's lived here for any length of time is vested, and it's only through forums like this that you really get to know the backgrounds and the knowledge of the candidates," Wagner said.

She said she would like to see whoever is elected work with other councilmembers for growth and development within the community, including a working relationship with Truman and A.T. Still.

TURF | Field completion date undecided

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which the field would be usable, by July 18 of last year. If the substantial completion was not finished by that date, GSV would begin receiving damages at a rate of \$500 per day. Final completion was set for Aug. 2, two weeks later. After that time, damages would increase to \$1,500 per day. However, these numbers are difficult to add up, because Truman used the field before it reached substantial completion.

"The definition of substantial completion is that you can use it, and we did," Wells said. "We were really anxious to get on the field, ... so we probably used it under some circumstances where it wasn't in our best interests to do that, but it seemed like a good idea at the time."

Wells said GSV does not want to have a bad project on their record, so they have shown a renewed interest in finishing the job and doing it right.

"Some high-ranked, high placed, corporate officials [from GSV] have been in contact with the president of the University," Wells said. "We're more confident than ever that they're going to complete the project, and it's going to be a good quality project when it's finished."

Although progress is being made, an end date for the project has not been set.

"I expect a favorable resolution, I just don't know when," Wells said.

The turf project not only affects the football field, but also the track around it. John Cochrane, track and field head coach, said the project has hampered practice and meet efforts.

"This would be the normal weekend we'd have our normal meet, and we can't do that," Cochrane said. "[The track] is not back to meet level."

Damages to the track include a section removed on the west end and several other defects on the track's surface.

"We have several sink holes in the track since this project started," Cochrane said. "When you take dirt out of a large area like that, you get ground shift."

The red surface material is sprayed onto the black part of the

track, known as the mat. Cochrane said this structural spray makes the track tighter and gives the surface its spring. The spray eventually wears off, and must be re-applied every eight years.

"They have driven extensively on the track to put turf out," Cochrane said. "When you drive vehicles on [the red surface], you really take it off. They have taken a lot of it off."

Some repairs already have been done to the track so athletes and students could use it. The asphalt base and the mat have been replaced, making the track whole again. Cochrane said the track teams painted lines on the mat to run in lanes for practice. Part of the triple-jump runway also has been replaced, after receiving damage during the turf project.

"Until the turf thing gets done, we can't really take care of the track, so it could be a while yet," Cochrane said.

Director of Athletics Jerry Wollmering said the turf has been laid out again for spring football practice and graduation.

"My understanding is after [graduation], some other things are going to have to be done to still make it right," Wollmering said.

Although a completion date is not set, Wollmering is optimistic that the field will be entirely finished by next fall.

"Hopefully we'll be able to use it for spring and get all the bugs worked out over the summer, so when our team comes back in late July, early August to start practicing, everything will be okay," Wollmering said.

Wollmering said the complications with the turf project affected not only the players and coaching staff, but parents who made plans to come watch a home game and were forced to reschedule.

As far as spring training is concerned, Wollmering said he is not worried about the integrity of the field, which now is available for practices.

"The main issue now is rolling [the turf] back out and the field not lining up," Wollmering said. "We don't care if it doesn't line up exactly for spring practice, but to have a game on it in the fall would not be good."



Krista Goodman/Index

Too Talls Two will begin renting out space for private events Friday. Once renovations are complete, the building will seat approximately 100 people and hold 150 people standing room only.

BAR | Too Talls Two closed last Thursday to the public, remodeling for private events

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a PowerPoint or a slideshow of pictures at a graduation party, Page said.

Once all the renovations take place, Too Talls will be able to seat approximately 100 people and hold 150 people in a standing room atmosphere, Page said.

The new tables on the main floor will be transportable so they can be moved to the storage area in the back to make room for a dance floor, he said. Too Talls' lasers still will be in place for the dance floor.

The actual bar area won't undergo any renovations, but some of the bar-type decorations will be removed, Page said.

"We're going to 'de-bar-ize' it a little bit by taking down the beer signs and putting up some really nice rod iron wall sconces just to class up the place a little more," Page said. "And we're going to give it a little more lighting because it's a little dim. So if someone is having a wedding reception they would want more light, so we will have to put in eight to nine more large lights along the walls then with the mirrors."

He said that not all of the renovations will be done by Friday when

Too Talls hosts its first event.

"I really wasn't going to rent it for two weeks, but they called and wanted to rent it, and I said it was OK as long as they don't mind that it looks just like Too Talls did, and they had no problem with it," Page said.

Prices for renting Too Talls on a Friday or Saturday night will run approximately \$500, Page said. The pricing for the event depends on the type of event taking place.

"During the week we've talked about \$200, but it also goes back to how many employees I'll need for the event," Page said. "If they're doing trivia, I'll probably need two employees, so it will be about \$200. If they were going to run a wedding through here that had 100 people, the rate is going to have to be higher because I'll have to employ more people to run the event."

For every event hosted, Too Talls will offer its food service or the possibility to have another food service cater, he said.

"I feel like a lot of our events will get food elsewhere," Page said. "For what we're doing people are going to want more buffet type as opposed to just an order to go. If it's a smaller

event, say we have a day event where business owners come in and use our PowerPoint system there might be only 20 people. In that case, we'd charge less than \$200 for a day event. At that point they might just want to use what we have."

Page said he started this new business endeavor because Kirksville lacked any facility with the same benefits Too Talls can offer, so he wanted to provide the venue people are searching for.

"I think it's something that Kirksville needs," Page said. "Last month, I turned about eight groups away that wanted to rent the facility. We can't just close to the public, then people come to the door and we have to be like, 'Sorry, we're closed' because that would upset people."

Sam Straatmann, Beta Theta Pi alumni chair, said the fraternity plans to have its annual alumni night at Too Talls on April 4 as a private event.

"We've done it there for a number of years on alumni weekend in the spring," Straatmann said. "We hold a trivia night at Too Talls. A Beta is the bartender there, so he usually runs the bar for us."

VOTE | Legislators debate early voting act that would allow Missouri residents to cast ballots before Election Day without providing a reason

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Legislators have come forward saying they have heard from their constituents that lines at the polls are long and that they would like more options.

Even with this change, the process of registering to vote will remain the same, Hobart said. The changes will only affect when and how people vote.

Hobart said he thinks people see early voting as a convenient option. He said other states indicate that about one third of the people use other voting options when they are available.

"It will open up the process and make it as convenient as possible," Hobart said. "We think it is time for Missouri to provide the same services to their voters as other states."

Hobart said poll workers also have responded positively to early voting.

"It will spread out the burden rather than one 16-hour day," Hobart said. "It will be easier over more days than one day."

Hobart said some people might think early voting would open up the system for fraud and make it easier for people to vote under someone else's name. Hobart said he does not see

this as an issue because people are asked for identification when they vote even if they vote early.

"I think this would ensure that people vote properly with the same type of security," Hobart said. "There is no proof or evidence that fraud is going on currently with the system."

Susan Presley, president and co-founder of Vote Local, said she thinks early voting is a way to end transportation issues on Election Day as well as weather issues.

"I think it will encourage people to vote more," Presley said. "Anything that improves

the voting process and removes barriers to people voting, I am in favor of."

Instead of voting by absentee ballot, sophomore Stephen Kuehner registered to vote in Adair County for the election last year. Kuehner said he could see early voting as having the biggest effect on those who work during the day, but that it would not affect his voting habits.

"I think it would be great for the community to have the option of voting early, especially for those that are older," Kuehner said. "Although since it is only one day out of the year, I think I would still vote on election day."

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