



Observer Corps Report

Observer: Tanya Phillips

Meeting Observed: Knox County Commission

Meeting Date: 12-15-2025

Agenda: [Knox County Commission 12.15.2025](#)

Video Recording: [Knox County Commission Recording 12.15.25](#)

Three Main Observations:

1. First reading of the ordinance to update Knox County Code with a "Real Property" section that prohibits discrimination against United States citizens in the sale or purchase of real property in Knox County. All Commissioners voted in favor of the ordinance, so it will be included on the January agenda for the required second reading.
2. Two members of the public spoke in support of the "Real Property" ordinance. Both speakers likened the ability of foreign nationals to purchase TN property, that they will only sell to other foreigners, as a "conquest" of US land, and it must be prohibited in Knox County with this ordinance.
3. Apply for the 2026 Junior Commissioner program by Thursday, December 18th at 5pm. The program is a unique youth leadership opportunity for students to learn about local government through hands-on public service experience, and it is open to Knox County residents who are high school juniors or seniors enrolled in full-time public, private, or accredited home school. Learn more here: <https://commission.knoxcountyttn.gov/junior-commissioner/>

Feature Evaluated	Yes	No	Comments
Meeting started on time?	X		Started at 5:00; ended around 6:10
All members present?	X		Elected officials present: Mayor Jacobs, Nick McBride, and Jon Rysewyk
Members attentive?	X		
Did members come prepared to discuss agenda items?	X		
Agenda posted 72 hours prior to meeting?	X		

Agenda items clearly described what was to be discussed?	X		
Adequate opportunity given for public input?	X		Two people spoke regarding agenda items in support of ordinance O-25-12-102
Was there an appearance that some action items were discussed in closed rather than open session?		X	
Was background information available to the public?	X		
Facilities adequate (room size, lighting, ventilation, speakers, audible, ADA accessible)?	X		

Were there any issues on the agenda relevant to LWV positions or programs? View the League's [National](#), [State](#), and [LWVKKC](#) policy positions.

***LWVKKC Policy Positions:** Childcare, Land Use, Health, Homeless/Mentally Ill Persons, Urban Forestry, Use of School Facilities by Communities, Teacher Recruitment & Retention*

League Position	Issue

Do you recommend League action on any of these issues?

None currently.

Other notes/concerns?

- [R-25-12-112](#) - Gary Anders was appointed to complete the unfulfilled term of Mr. Corcoran on the Ethics Committee, which expires October 31, 2029.
- [O-25-12-102](#) – First reading of the ordinance to update Knox County Code with a "Real Property" section that prohibits discrimination against United States citizens in the sale or purchase of real property in Knox County.
 - Although there was minimal discussion during the meeting, there were some questions from Commissioners during the agenda review meeting. A few Commissioners were concerned the ordinance is redundant due to the TN state law (SB 122), that already restricts foreign nationals from certain countries from purchasing or owning real property. SB 122 was passed in 2023.

- Commissioner Fox, who is the sponsor of the ordinance, insisted it was not redundant due to the fact the state law only pertains to foreign nationals buying or owning real property instead of the sale of property, and the state law only covers certain adversarial countries but not all countries.
- All Commissioners voted in favor of the ordinance, so it will be included on the January agenda for the required second reading.
- [R-25-12-903](#) – Commission Rules on Voting Procedures was updated due to the new electronic voting system that starts in January 2026. With the new system, there will no longer be a need for a roll call vote since the Chair will open the vote for a specific amount of time and then close the vote when the time has lapsed. During the time the vote is open, Commissioners will vote “Aye”, “Nay”, or “Abstain”.
 - Because there is no longer a roll call vote, there will no longer be a “pass” option.
 - As Commissioners cast their votes, the electronic system will display the votes as they are cast.
 - When the Chair closes the vote, the final totals will be visible to all members. The Chair will announce the results and declare whether the motion is adopted or defeated.
 - Any member who does not vote by the close of the voting period is recorded as having abstained.