



## ***Saying goodbye, but hello to the Future***

The inevitability of change is one of the few certainties of life. Still, it often brings mixed emotions – the sadness of moving on from something that has been cherished, or reluctance to leave the comfort of the familiar; coupled with the excitement of undertaking a fresh challenge or the anticipation of a new beginning.

Such is certainly the case as I prepare to leave my seat on the Memphis City Council for my position as your newly elected Clerk of Shelby County Circuit Court. At the Council's Tuesday, Aug. 9 meeting, I submitted my resignation to the group. My resignation as a voting Council Member (and Council Chair) is effective immediately, while I will continue my duties as the District 4 representative until August 19, in order to wrap up some of the issues on which I have been working.

It is indeed with a heavy heart that I reflect upon departing from the Council after 6 years on this body. Serving alongside my fellow Council Members since 2016 has proven to be the highest, absolute honor of my lifetime. Nevertheless, as I look at the transition before me, I do so with excitement for the challenge of trying to find the best ways to serve as many men, women, children, and families residing within our reach over the next four years.



## Keeping you informed

While my role and relationship with the Memphis City Council may be changing, the mission of the Council will remain the same: To work each day to help improve the lives of our fellow Memphians. One way the Council does that each year is by helping to fund through the Council Community Grant Program local nonprofits that are working to make a positive change in the city.

Although we wish to support as many qualifying organizations as we can, logistical constraints dictate that we must set a limit on the application period for the Grants. To that end, the Council on Tuesday passed an amended Resolution setting the deadline to apply for the Council Community Grant as Sept. 1, 2022. I would encourage any organization that is interested in pursuing funding through the program to check the requirements and submit a qualifying application by that date.

Requirements and applications for the Council Community Grant Program may be found at <https://www.memphistn.gov/government/city-council/grants/>.

Several of the organizations that often apply for the Community Grant have a mission of helping to alleviate poverty, including homelessness. On August 9, the Council gave a \$3-million boost to efforts toward tackling this perennial problem.

The Council awarded this amount of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) money to Hospitality Hub to bring its successful approach to addressing homelessness to the north side of the City. The Hospitality Hub will become the designated project manager and fiscal agent responsible for building a Hub facility in District 1.

Like the newly constructed Hospitality Hub center Downtown, the organization's District 1 Hub will offer emergency shelter, outreach, and wraparound services. The Hospitality Hub's holistic method of addressing homelessness has worked so well that it has garnered national attention.

Finally, one area of the City that many of us feel could use some positive change is Mud Island. Although once a jewel of Memphis' Riverfront, the aging park suffers from a lack of upkeep and updating that has dimmed its gleam. At our Aug. 9 meeting, the Council received a presentation from a group wishing to help restore the park's sparkle.

Backed by a Chicago based company, "The Forge Memphis" Group includes the familiar local names of Doug Carpenter of DCA and Frank Ricks of LRK Architects. Mr. Carpenter and Jeremie Bacon of the Chicago group showed the Council a proposal for a zip line adventure park on the Island.

Although the adventure park would entail a private investment of about \$10 million, it wouldn't require any infrastructure investment from the City beyond the basic renovations and repairs to which we already have committed. The Forge team estimates that the park could draw 100,000-plus visitors per year, bringing in more than \$500,000 in rent and sales taxes from the Mud Island Tourism Development Zone.

As the Memphis River Parks Partnership, which manages Mud Island River Park for the City, works with HR&A Advisors Inc. on a set of scenarios for the Island's future (with a report due around Labor Day), Council Members were excited to hear a proposal that could kickstart the Island's redevelopment. The extended (30-year) lease The Forge is seeking requires Council approval, so we look forward to hearing more details on this idea when it comes back before us.

Stay tuned for future Council updates as we keep you informed regarding the activities taking place here at City Hall. As always, for an archive of meeting recordings, you may visit: <https://www.memphistn.gov/government/watch-public-meetings-online/>

***A moment of reflection – and encouragement:***

In closing, I thank each Council Member, the Council Staff and those across every level of local government for the tireless work they contribute to the betterment of Memphis each day. I congratulate our new Chairman, former Vice Chairman Martavius Jones; and new Vice Chairman JB Smiley. I am fully convinced our city and its diverse citizens remain in the best of care.

Looking ahead, I leave you with one collective charge: Regardless of the spaces within which we may serve, let us utilize our time and energy to propel our community onward and upward, leveraging our unique strengths, varied experiences, and common goals to ensure our shared futures will be transformative for the benefit of all.



Yours in service,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jamita E. Swearengen'.

Jamita Swearengen  
Memphis City Council  
**District 4**