Who Is Actually Running Shelbyville?

Shelbyville Civics 101

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USPA NEWS - After a comment made recently by a City Council Member who stated that they were actually opposed to a proposed rezoning Project, the resident was perplexed and asked why they had voted FOR the proposal instead of against, the response baffled them even more...

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SHELBYVILLE, TN, APRIL 4, 2015- In recent weeks, the group of residents of Shelbyville who have organized the "Vote No On Nine"[?] campaign to request the City of Shelbyville City Council deny a request to rezone nine residential lots between Deery Street and Alton Avenue, have had few odd statements. The most troubling came directly from a member of the City Council, who when asked if he or she supported this project in its proposed location, stated that they did not. When one of the organizations members replied with "Then why did you vote yes on its first reading?"[?] the reply was baffling.

The council member stated that because the Planning Commission had already approved it, it was a "done deal"[?] because they get what they want.

The resident, along with many other individuals, were perplexed and confused after hearing this statement, as were we. Anyone who has ever taken a civics class in school knows that every government has an organizational structure, from the Federal level all the way down to the City of Shelbyville. We thought this is the perfect opportunity to review that structure so that others, who may or may not be aware, could better understand the actual structure of our City Government. Especially those who hold any office in it, especially the City Council Members.

Branches of Government

Similar to the State and Federal Government, Shelbyville has separate branches as well. Although these branches for the city, have differing powers and reporting duties than those of the State and Federal Governments. The City of Shelbyville has two main branches, the Executive and the Legislative.

The Executive Branch

The Executive branch of the City of Shelbyville is represented by the elected Mayor of the City of Shelbyville. The Mayor is unofficially classified as the "Chief Executive"[?], but his or her powers are limited by the City Charter of Shelbyville.

The Mayor has the ability to appoint members to boards and commissions, as well as having a seat at all City Council Meetings, though he or she has no vote (except in the case of a tie), or veto, though the Mayor does have a "voice"[?] at these meetings. The Mayor does not have any authority to create or present ordinances (laws) to the City Council for consideration, nor has the power to mandate any Administrative Policy for the city.

The Legislative Branch

The official, and most powerful branch of our city government is the Legislative Branch, in our case the City Council. The City Council Members, six in total, are elected by the eligible voters in each of the six wards of the city. They are empowered to create, modify, and nullify the laws and ordinances of the city in keeping with State and Federal Laws. The City Council is the highest level of Official Government in the City with powers. All Officers, Departments, Commissions, Boards and the like serve below the city Council and most of these are required, by City Charter to report directly to the council or to the representative that the council nominates to handle

it.

The Administrative Branch

The Chief Administrator of the City of Shelbyville if the City Manager, who is Appointed/Hired by the City Council and who reports to the City Council. The City Manager is empowered with all the Administrative Duties in the enforcement of the City´s laws, and the daily operations of every department of the City. Numerous departments within the city, with the exception of a very few, report and are under the authority of the City Manager. These departments which report directly to the City Manager are:

"¢ To supervise and control the work of the City Council Appointed Treasurer, City Judge, Recorder.
"¢ Airport
"¢ Animal Control
"¢ Building & Codes
"¢ Cemetery
"¢ City Recorder
"¢ Fire Department
"¢ Parks & Recreation
"¢ Planning & Community Development
"¢ Police Department
"¢ Public Works
"¢ Purchasing

Boards and Commissions

The City of Shelbyville has a total of fifteen Boards and Commission responsible for the review and recommendation of policies, laws, and ordinances in various fields. Each Board or Commission reserves one seat for a City Council Representative, and is answerable to the Legislative Head of the City (Council) and in many cases they answer directly to the Administrative Head of the City (City Manager).

No Board or Commission has any delegated power equal to or greater than the powers of the Legislative Branch (Shelbyville City Council). A few of the Boards and Commissions are jointly run between the City and County Government. The current Boards and Commissions for the City of Shelbyville include:

"¢ Airport Authority
"¢ Beer Board
"¢ Argie Cooper Library
"¢ Industrial Development Board
"¢ Historic Zoning Commission
"¢ Shelbyville Housing Authority
"¢ Board of Construction Appeals
"¢ Bedford County Joint Economic Development
"¢ Power, Water, and Sewage
"¢ Municipal Planning Commission
"¢ Board of Zoning Appeals
"¢ Bedford Railroad Authority
"¢ Parks and Recreation Board
"¢ Pension Planning Committee
"¢ Safety Committee

So Who is in Charge?

The answer on the Governmental side of the Question, and one our leaders need to remember, is simple, the City Council is our Chief Branch of Government, followed by the City Administrator. They are in Charge of every other Department, Board, Commission, Employee, Agent, and the like of the City of Shelbyville. No other individual outranks these two office, nor does any commission or board have the "final say"⍰ to any decision when it comes to the laws and ordinances of the City of Shelbyville.

But the real answer to this question, and the answer that the City Council Members, Administrative, and Operational Members of the City of Shelbyville need to be made aware of and remember, is simple, we are, the taxpayers and voters of the City of Shelbyville. It is the responsibility of every elected, appointed, hired, or other member of the Government of the City of Shelbyville to remember that they may be the representative of the City of Shelbyville, but without the citizens, voters, and the like, there would be no City for them to run.

Without our votes and tax dollars, many of them would be unemployed or unelected. They need to remember that ever single citizen of this city has a voice, and that voice matters, not just the voice of the "select few"⍰ or the "Good Old Boy Network"⍰. Those days are long past, though it seems many still believe they are still alive and well. Those individuals are sorely mistaken. A large majority of the residents of this city, are not "Natives"⍰, and their voice matters just as much as those that are. Every citizen, regardless of their opinion has the right to be heard and listened to, even if the officials disagree, but they must remember that our voice matters!

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