

A statement concerning the proposed Community Wellness Center project

I saw the segment on our local tv station with regard to the most recent actions concerning the proposed Wellness Center in Paducah. I wanted to clarify some things from my perspective.

I think it is clear that both of my opponents for the upcoming election of Paducah's mayor have now turned what is meant to be a community project designed to improve the health and wellness of the citizens in not only our city, but our entire community, into a political controversy. It could not be more apparent to me as well as to many citizens I have spoken with throughout this process that both of my opponents are seeking attention by creating negativity with regard to this project—and in most cases without the utilization of any facts. When one candidate says, “everyone is against this,” it begs the question from journalists, “Where is your data on that assumption? How do you support that statement?”

Your city leaders (staff, mayor, city commissioners) have spent nearly two years vetting and creating this project to build a state-of-the-art facility that would serve to elevate the health and longevity of our friends and neighbors in the place we all live and work. We have consulted with healthcare professionals, past city leaders, interested citizens, national experts, professional bond counsel and local businesses to define and to initiate a project that would serve this community far into the future.

To literally pluck a candidate's Facebook post and present it to viewers with no regard to the details of the project or without comment from the other two mayoral candidates, is not only journalistically unprofessional, it's truly, very disappointing.

The decisions made by the city commission along with the decades long experience of our professional staff at city hall have never been taken lightly. Jim Arndt had the authority to make the decision to postpone the completed designs of this project, but because he is a strong, conscientious leader, chose to ask for input from his cohorts on the commission. This move by the city manager will allow us to step back and use a data-driven decision making process, instead of an emotional one.

At a time when everyone involved with Paducah's leadership is working day and night to face the crisis our community is going through, I would sincerely ask that you take your responsibility, as this city's media representatives, to thoroughly secure data, information, facts, and multiple viewpoints when it comes to the projects and programs that your city government is working to implement.

Our city needs unity now more than ever.