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By EARL WATT

• Daily Leader

Charles Craig is blunt about the way his first stint as a Liberal City Commissioner came to an end.

"I was fired," he said with a smile, referring to the vote that did not result in his re-election two years ago.

At that time, the key issues facing the commission were the purchase of the First National Bank and the sale of the former fire department to Walgreens and the construction of a new fire department.

Those projects may be viewed differently today.

"I am very proud of what we accomplished," Craig said of his four years on the commission from 2003 to 2007.

"The new fire station did not cost the taxpayers one red cent. We got enough money from Walgreens that we didn't have to pay anything for it. My problem is the location. We moved it east. We had been approached by some that we could have sold that property for \$500,000. It is a prime piece of real estate for business. But as far as the fire station, it was a good move. We have a big new business on the corner paying taxes, and that brings a substantial amount of money we would not have otherwise.

The relocation of City Hall to the former First National Bank location was also a good decision according to Craig.

"There was talk about a new City Hall for 15 years," Craig said. "We were able to buy that for \$45 a square foot. Expanding the existing City Hall would have cost \$200 per square foot. The police department was bursting at the seams. This solved the problems for both City Hall and the police department, and we have something that will last 50 years. Look at what that is going to save the taxpayers."

Craig said he would like to see a new approach to economic development. But he said that there's more to improving the community than simply criticizing the status quo.

"There are some that complain all the time, but they don't offer any solutions," he said. "There are some changes that need to be made, and I think I can bring some ideas that may help."

Craig owned Liberal Harley Davidson for a number of years before selling his business and retiring.

Craig believed there was room for the city and county to work more closely together that could result in significant tax savings to the residents.

Craig joined Joe Denoyer, Don Rash and Bob Carlile as candidates for

three open seats.

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