Ward 4 Alderman Aubry Brent Jr. was right on the money Monday when he said that the citizens of Yazoo City expect a lot more out of city officials than just showing up twice a month to pay the bills.

Ward 2 Alderman Jack Varner's response was equally encouraging.

"You're exactly right," Varner said to Brent. "I hate to say it in public, but we've got a lot of money that we can use to get some things done this summer. We need to make this city look like it's alive."

This city desperately needs some new signs of life, and it appears that our city leaders may be in a position to make some good things happen.

When it comes to doing something that could create some economic activity and "make this city look like it's alive," the top five priorities are clear:

1. Build the Willie Morris Parkway.
2. Build the Willie Morris Parkway.
3. Build the Willie Morris Parkway.
4. Build the Willie Morris Parkway.
5. Build the Willie Morris Parkway.

I could have made it a top 10 list, but you get the point.

I would have to produce a calculator to add up the number of times I've heard local residents say they wish that we could get some new businesses in this city. About the only thing I hear more than that is why is Yazoo City the only town this size without a Wal-Mart and why haven't our city officials done more to try to attract one.

People often have unreasonably high expectations of elected officials. Even the best politicians don't have magic wands.

But Yazoo City officials are in a position where they can make something happen that truly has the potential to change this city.

Want to get a big business like Wal-Mart here and keep all those tax dollars in Yazoo that leave town every time our citizens drive to Indianola, Jackson, Vicksburg or Madison to shop at their Wal-Marts?

Build the parkway.

Downtown Yazoo City is wonderful, but it isn't right for every business. Parking is limited, and those old buildings won't suit the needs of every business. Jerry Clower Boulevard is great, but it's running out of space. How do we attract those businesses that are passing us by?

Build the parkway.
But attracting business, jobs and tax revenue isn't everything. What about quality of life? Many of us choose to live in Yazoo because we like the small town life, but these days 15th Street seems like we're in New York City some mornings. With people driving kids to two different schools and all the folks heading to work at the federal prison it gets a little backed up. What can our city officials do to help with that problem?
Build the parkway.
The recently constructed Hampton Inn is all the proof it takes to see that business owners believe in the potential development this parkway can bring. Yazoo City wouldn't have been on their radar without the concept of the parkway.
During Monday's City Council meeting, officials seemed unsure of what kind of commitment they wanted to make to the parkway. I hope they decide it's the biggest commitment they can afford. This project has been in the planning stage for so long that many residents don't believe it's ever going to happen.
Certainly Yazoo has other serious challenges that need to be addressed. Continuing to improve our schools and supporting our law enforcement efforts to fight crime are critical. But we've also got to think big if we want big things to happen.
Yazoo shouldn't settle for anything less.