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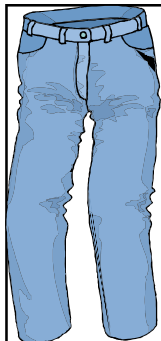


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Heirs' signatures will allow movement on corner development

Signatures by heirs to the Baer Motel and Trailer Park property will allow development to move forward.

"It's my understanding that the heirs to the Baer estate - all six of them - have signed an agreement with the developer," Mayor Chalmers Flint said at Tuesday's Hoopeston City Council meeting.

In return for a waiver on a water bill totaling more than \$50,000, the heirs have agreed to sign the property, at the intersection of Routes 1 and 9, over to developer Tim Gallagher, located in the Chicago suburbs.

Gallagher, of Gallagher Commercial, did not immediately return phone calls after Tuesday's meeting.

In return for signing the property over to the developer, the city will pay for demolishing the trailer park, motel and the former Carnival Video building. Demolition specifications have been drawn up free of charge by Envirogen, the company that applied for an Illinois Environmental Protection Agency grant for a brownfields survey. The city will seek bids for asbestos removal and structure removal on all the properties together and separately, Flint said. Bids will be opened Jan. 5.

The city expects to use tax increment financing (TIF) money to pay for tearing down the buildings, Flint said, adding that the city is not making commitments of TIF money to other businesses until officials know the scope of demolition costs.

Flint praised the council for its willingness to follow through with "tough decisions we had to make...I commend you for that," he said. The decision to waive the water bill drew criticism from some "made a big difference" in the outcome, he said.

Flint said Gallagher has spoken with a motel owner but added it is too soon to announce more details. "We have some pluses coming for Hoopeston and I think it's time we announce that," he said.

Development is not expected to come quickly. "If it

comes it will be a year from next spring," Flint said. "We're looking a year from this coming March."

In unrelated action, the council unanimously approved a 20 cent-per-hour raise for employees, effective Jan. 1, 2004.

The raise is being given to offset an insurance cost increase which also becomes effective Jan. 1. "Our goal was to help with the difference," said Alderman Bill Goodwine, city finance committee chairman.

Last year, the city adopted a two-tier insurance plan, one with minimal benefits at less cost and one with increased benefits and premiums. The two-tier offering was good only for one year, with the city choosing the second plan for 2004.

Goodwine said the new plan will cost single workers 13 cents per hour and 34 cents for workers with a family plan. The 20-cent raise will give single workers a seven cent-per-hour increase in take-home pay, while those under the family plan will see a 14 cent decrease per hour in their checks.

Pay raises are normally given at the start of the fiscal year in May. The mid-year increase "will be a consideration when we talk about the normal increases next May," Goodwine said.

In other business, the council:

- learned a public hearing will be held at 6 p.m. Jan. 6, 2004 about changing parking in front of Price Less Foods, 317 S. Market. The hearing is being held by the Illinois Department of Transportation, and will be used to determine if the straight parking in front of the store is changed to parallel parking, Flint said.

- heard from Alderman Carl Ankenbrand, who said bids for a new furnace at the McFerren Park Civic Center will be opened at 4 p.m. Dec. 19.

- learned a new 4 wheel drive police vehicle is expected to be delivered Wednesday.

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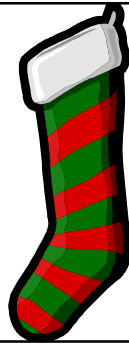
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Rossville board approve extra days off, holiday bonuses

ROSSVILLE— A public hearing on a proposed Tax Increment Financing district may have given a boost to the village's plan.

At Monday's village board meeting, trustees heard an impromptu presentation from TIF consultant Robert Vancil.

An exuberant Vancil interrupted the meeting to tell trustees that the public hearing prompted an invitation to Vancil for a brief meeting with the school board. He later clarified that the meeting was with an unnamed school board member.

School board president Dennis Price and member Roger Satterwhite both serve on a Joint Review Board, made up of representatives of taxing bodies who decide whether the village's plan meets TIF guidelines. On Dec. 9, the board voted against the proposal, saying not enough information had been provided.

In related discussion, Mayor Terry Prillaman said he received a written document from the Dec. 9 meeting, signed "Joint Review Board," but said he and some other members of the joint review board are unsure who wrote the letter. "We don't know who sent it," he said.

Another meeting of the Joint Review Board is expected to be scheduled to provide additional information, Prillaman said.

In unrelated action, village trustees:

- unanimously approved giving workers Christmas Eve off and shutting down business at noon New Year's Eve. Annual Christmas bonuses were also approved, with \$100 for each full time employee and \$50 for part time workers.
- approved a \$20,536 tax levy, which is the same as last year.
- approved spending a maximum of \$600 on tools for a truck for village Superintendent Randy Lusk.
- learned police officers are now certified to use tasers.
- learned the gas price will remain at 74 cents per therm.
- heard from zoning board member Gene Roach on the TIF. Roach said he believes discussion about development in Rossville may cause growth with or without the TIF. "I believe the attention that it has caused has primed the pump and may spur development," he said. "It's been my observation that when land becomes available for development, people will build."



Police News



April A. Yanders, 24, of 2172 Galaxy Dr., Franklin, Ind., turned herself in to police at 3:55 p.m. Sunday.

Yanders, wanted on a Vermilion County traffic warrant for failure to appear for status hearing, was released on \$298 cash bond.

A **car CD player** was found in the parking lot behind 314 E. Main. The owner may identify and claim it at the police station.

A **16-year-old** Hoopeston girl reported Monday that her purse was taken from a locker at Hoopeston Area High School, 615 E. Orange.

Lanette M. Cunningham, 37, of 204 E. Young, was arrested at 9:57 p.m. Monday in the 200 block of East Young. Cunningham, wanted on a Vermilion County traffic warrant for failure to appear, was taken to the Public Safety Building in Danville in lieu of \$593.50 bond.

Tony G. Bailey, 31, of 617 Plum, Danville, was

arrested at 11:20 p.m. Monday in the 300 block of West Penn.

Bailey was charged on Vermilion County warrants for failure to appear for jury trial and failure to appear for a status check and was also charged with possession of a controlled substance and obstructing justice after police alleged Bailey gave officers a false name.

Bailey was taken to the Public Safety Building in Danville for arraignment on the possession and obstruction charges and in lieu of \$20,210 bond for the warrants.

Weather



Partly cloudy today. High 32. Tonight, snow likely. Low 22. Tomorrow, chance of snow. High 31, low 22.

For current weather conditions, call **Hoopeston Weather Service, (217) 283-6221**.

Residents get information on proposed TIF at public hearing

ROSSVILLE—Village residents were able to ask questions about a planned tax increment financing (TIF) district at a public hearing Monday night.

An estimated 60 residents attended the meeting at the Rossville-Alvin High School gym.

Mayor Terry Prillaman said the meeting was "favorable" to the proposal. "A lot of good questions were asked," he said."

Village officials hope to put a TIF in place to draw more people to Rossville by focusing on developing single-family homes. More residents will hopefully translate into more sales tax dollars for the village and increased state aid for the school district.

Prillaman believes people will move to Rossville for the quality of life and will commute to jobs elsewhere.

The public hearing was adjourned to 7 p.m. Jan. 15.

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