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Hoopeston aldermen tentatively approve gift of building

Hoopeston officials will move forward with a plan to accept the Willdon Building with the intent of selling it.

The Hoopeston City Council on Tuesday approved Capstone Bank's plan to donate the building to the city contingent upon Tad Ballantyne's offer to purchase it for \$1 and make apartments in third through fifth floors.

Ballantyne is a principle in Hoopeston Foods, Inc.

The city's acceptance will hinge on whether the city can legally sell the building for \$1 without first seeking bids.

At a meeting with residents prior to the council meeting, Flint said Ballantyne plans to spend \$100,000 to \$200,000 creating four apartments on each of the floors. Those on the fifth floor will be kept for visitors to Hoopeston Foods.

Current tenants in the building, including the Vermilion County Health Department and Hoopeston Chamber of Commerce, would be able to keep their offices, Flint said.

Witch school plans to open in former township building

Hold on to your broomsticks, a witch school is coming to Hoopeston.

Officials of the school plan to open their internet-based school in the former Grant Township building at 200 E. Penn, said director Ed Hubbard.

The sale is expected to close July 7 and the transfer of school property from Chicago is expected to begin shortly after.

The school is being promoted on the internet at www.witchschool.com to attract on-line students. Tuition from those students will help pay for the building.

Hubbard and other school officials chose Hoopeston as the site for the school because of its proximity to Chicago, St. Louis and Indianapolis. Also, several of the

In other business, the council heard from Kristi Hudson, local Keep Vermilion County Beautiful coordinator, about a pilot program that will begin Saturday. Called "Trash Walkers," the program will use volunteers to spend an hour each Saturday picking up trash in a designated area. The program will begin at 9 a.m. this Saturday at Honeywell School.

Hudson hopes the program will spread to the county and state levels of the beautification program, encouraging people to be "trash walkers instead of trash talkers."

The council also:

- approved a \$3,407 bid from Silver Brothers for the Hoopeston Coin Laundry sidewalk.
- learned Playground Project 2000 will install new playground equipment at McFerren Park on July 19-20.
- learned the cemetery committee will review fees. Chairman John Haughee also suggested Sunday burials be stopped to allow employees to have more time off. The committee will meet at 6 p.m. Tuesday.

school's approximate 60,000 students are from the Danville area, and because more space was needed to store business-related items, he said.

It was the recent addition of high speed internet that attracted school officials to Hoopeston. With that available, "we'll build nice 21st century systems for us to work on," he said.

Along with teaching Wicca, Hubbard said the business will also offer classes in buying and selling on E-Bay and other topics. "One of the things we're teaching is real world sciences," he said.

Contrary to stereotype, the school will not have animal sacrifices, drug use or orgies, Hubbard said. "That's old

See WITCH on other side

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visitors each weekend when students and others come to view the school's library of books, some 200 years old.

Building owners said they did not know a Wicca school was planned for the site. "From what I was told, he does websites," said co-owner Larry Tobeck. "They make websites and film them and do this kind of thing there."

Whether the knowledge about the witches' school will affect the sale is unknown. "I've never run into this,"