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City approves proposal for three TIF districts from original

Hoopeston officials plan to triple the number of tax increment financing (TIF) districts but with less property.

At Tuesday's regular meeting, the Hoopeston City Council approved splitting the original TIF into three TIFs. The second one would include the new CVS Pharmacy, the Baer property, including the former trailer park, and land owned by Allen Decker, said TIF consultant Dan Walker of Jacob & Associates, Bloomington. The Community Bank facility at Rtes. 1 and 9 would remain in the original TIF district.

The third TIF would consist of land owned by Larry Petrie east of Euclid which has been earmarked for residential development.

Excluded from any of the TIFs is property on the south side of Rt. 9 on the city's east side.

The council approved setting public hearings for creating the new districts on March 7, at 7 and 7:30 p.m. respectively. A Joint Review Board meeting has been set for Friday, Feb. 4 at 11 and 11:30 a.m., respectively.

The Joint Review Board is comprised of representatives of taxing bodies affected by the TIF.

A special council meeting is expected to be held on March 22 to approve the new TIFs.

Changing the original TIF is necessary because some parcels included in it were not annexed to the city when the TIF was formed, Walker said.

The move will extend the life of the city's TIF districts. Hoopeston is several years into TIF 1, while each of the new districts will have its own life span of up to 23 years.

The move will also bolster the city's TIF fund. By statute, the most recent finalized assessment is used to determine a base level. The new dis-

tricts will use 2003 taxes payable in 2004 as its base.

In TIF districts, taxing bodies receive the same amount of tax money as they did in the base year. The difference between the base and subsequent increases caused by development or other reasons goes into a special TIF fund which the city can use for development in the TIF or special projects in the city. The addition of the new CVS will substantially raise the amount that will be paid into the city's TIF 2 fund.

Much of that money has been earmarked to pay for asbestos cleanup on the CVS property, Walker said.

In unrelated business, the council heard from Beth Totheroh, representing the Hoopeston Chamber of Commerce economic development committee, about the need for a city manager or economic developer in Hoopeston.

Totheroh said the committee researched communities, such as Paris, Gibson City and Rantoul and learned that each has one person who can provide much information about the community. "One of the pieces we found that was a universal trend among those communities was...a 'go-to' person," she said, adding that Hoopeston lacks such a person. "We tend to be fragmented," she said.

She asked that the council consider developing a full-time position and hire someone to handle inquiries about the city who might also perform some accounting functions, make contacts in business and government and who also has strong people and marketing skills. The person could put together incentive packages and work to attract new businesses and retain existing ones.

Alderman Bill Goodwine, city finance committee chairman, said Totheroh's timing was good

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Masengale 1st Addition plat gets Rossville board approval

ROSSVILLE—Village officials hope residential growth will help its ailing economy. The board of trustees on Monday moved one step closer to making the hope a reality.

At Monday's regular meeting, the board unanimously approved the final plat of the Masengale First Addition, a subdivision on the village's southeast side. Ten tracts have been designated on 12.5 acres of the 40-acre subdivision.

The Masengale family has signed off on the final plat, said Mayor Terry Prillaman. Streets must still be dedicated to the village and paperwork filed with the Vermilion County recorder of deeds and clerk and title work must be completed before the village is able to sell property. "We're just waiting on the green light to start selling lots," he said.

The Masengale Addition, along with two others - are being developed by the village, which will pay to install water, sewer and gas lines to lots. Property taxes will repay costs to the village.

The subdivisions are in the village's tax increment financing (TIF) district, formed last year. Under the TIF, increases in property tax, resulting from development, will be paid to a TIF fund. That money may be used for reimbursable development costs, as well as to fund other projects in the TIF district.

Construction on the lots could be underway by spring.

In other business, the board heard from Brian Mihelich of CEC, the firm hired to do site studies at 202 S. and 110 N. Chicago St., sites of two former gas stations.

The village received a \$76,000 grant for Phase 1 and 2 studies which included mostly analytical work and soil borings, Mihelich said. The project will now move to the next phase and the village has requested a \$69,000 brownfields grant to finish the project. When completed, the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency is expected to issue "no further remediation" letters on the properties, intended to make the land more marketable.

Both landowners - Ed Perkins and Scott Sprague - have agreed to pay \$2,500 each. Of that, \$500 each has been paid. The remainder is expected to be paid

to the IEPA for final costs, Mihelich said.

Additionally, the village will, over the next three years, put in \$63,000 worth of work, including marketing, redevelopment and infrastructure improvements, as its part of the grant package.

The project, which started last year, should be wrapped up later this year. "My guess is by summer, we'll have closure on the sites," Mihelich said. "It's moving at a pretty reasonable pace, considering how the state operates."

In unrelated action, trustees:

- approved a \$48,774.03 bid from a Mattoon company for new sanitary sewers on Holmes St. as part of village subdivision plans.

- In related action, Prillaman said a permanent easement will be granted in the area behind the Rossville Church of Christ parsonage to install the sewer lines. A pre-construction conference will be held before any work is done to answer questions anyone may have about the project.

- approved employee evaluation forms, a combination of forms used by other private and public entities. Employees will be evaluated after their probationary period and then annually.

- learned the village gas price will remain at 86 cents per therm.

New Books at the Library



Fiction

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy by Douglas Adams (science fiction)

Invitation to Provence by Elizabeth Adler

A Flame in Hali by Marion Zimmer Bradley (science fiction)

Tanequil by Terry Brooks (science fiction)

Whitehot by Sandra Brown

Murder List by Julie Garwood

Weather



Partly cloudy today and tonight. High 35, low 20. Tomorrow, chance of snow. High 30, low 16.

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

Illinois is number one soybean producer for second straight year

SPRINGFIELD—Illinois leads the nation in soybean production for the second year in a row and ranks number two in corn production, Illinois Agriculture Director Chuck Hartke announced last week. The figures, released by the United States Department of Agriculture in its 2004 Crop Production Report, also show Illinois posting record corn and soybean yields.

According to the report, Illinois produced 399,950,000 bushels of soybeans, compared to Iowa's 497,350,000 bushels. Illinois soybeans yielded 50.5 bushels an acre, up 13 bushels from 2003 and five more than the 45.5-bushel record set in 1994. Illinois corn yielded 180 bushels per acre, up 15 from the 164-bushel record set in 2003.

"The record yield and top production numbers are the result of several factors," Hartke said. "Great growing temperatures in cool weather and rain at the right times in the growing season coupled with some of the richest soil and most experienced farmers in the nation. 2004 proved to be a phenomenal year for Illinois farmers."

For more detailed crop production information,

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