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## Contractors question officials about proposed registration

A plan that would require contractors to work in Hoopeston drew more questions at the second meeting to be held on the matter.

Contractors met with Alderwoman Susan Comstock and Alderman Carl Ankenbrand, chairwoman and member, respectively, of the city's civic improvement committee, Alderman Jeff Johnson and Mayor Bill Crusinberry Tuesday night.

Comstock presented a draft of a contractor registration ordinance that would call for contractors to provide proof of at least \$1 million of insurance; complete a registration form; verify they have not been found guilty of consumer fraud violations; and pay a \$100 annual registration fee or \$25 fee for one project.

A list of all registered contractors would then be made available to the public.

While some contractors complained about the idea of



Brian Lawson, foreground, owner of T&L Lawncare, listens as Bob Charbonneau, of The Christian Handyman, makes a point during Tuesday night's contractor registration meeting.

registration, even those who favor it did not favor the fee.

"How did it get from \$25 the last time we talked to \$100," asked contractor Harry Johnson.

Comstock responded that the fee averages less than \$10 per month.

Crusinberry told contractors that the fee is not as important as the registration, saying the money generated would not add much to the city's multi-million dollar budget. "The whole purpose is to make sure you're insured. We're trying to protect those who don't know how to protect themselves."

See CONTRACTORS on other side




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## Prairie Meadows preliminary plat gets nod from council

In a 6-1 vote, the Hoopeston City Council approved a preliminary plat for Prairie Meadows, an affordable workforce housing development, at a special meeting Tuesday night.

A special meeting was called for the vote so developers could have the approved plat by a January 15 deadline.

Alderman Bill Goodwine was the sole no vote, "for reasons previously stated." Alderman Bill McElhaney was absent.

Goodwine has previously said the housing development could taken tenants away from current landlords and might also attract undesirable people to Hoopeston.

Mayor Bill Crusinberry received council approval to deal with requested variances on ordinances with only one engineering firm, Sodemann & Associates, on a consultation basis.

Currently, the city uses Sodemann for street projects and Foth Engineering for water/sewer related work.

Crusinberry said he chose Sodemann as the sole firm for the housing development because the firm was the

first one he contacted with a question about the project.

Crusinberry said he has received quite a few calls from project engineers about some city ordinances, such as one that calls for iron water mains, which, he said, is no longer the industry standard.

Another question arose about sidewalks in the development. The plat calls for six inches of Portland cement, but Alderman Jeff Johnson, street and alley committee chairman, said he would like to see that changed to include rebar. "I think we'd be shooting ourselves in the foot not to include rebar," he said.

Johnson also questioned the plat's recommended four inches of cement for sidewalks in the development.

Crusinberry will refer questions to Sodemann for input, then take the information to the council, which must approve ordinance variations.

The preliminary plat may be changed to reflect answers to the questions. The final plat will also require council approval.

The council hopes to meet with the development's construction committee as part of Tuesday's meeting.

## Contractors continued from other side

Roofer Doc Wallace said contractors would pass the costs on to consumers, a sentiment shared by Bob Charbonneau, of The Christian Handyman. "Seniors will be penalized," he said. "That \$25 could be medicine. We have to protect the seniors."

Charbonneau also wondered whether the city would open itself up to liability for providing a list of contractors but both Comstock and Crusinberry said the city is not determining a contractor's qualifications, but rather just that they are insured.

Steve Bane, owner of Bane's Tree Service, asked what the penalty will be for violating the ordinance.

"We really haven't determined that," Comstock said.

Bane then asked what would happen if a violator failed to appear in court. "Are you going to ship it to (the Vermilion County State's Attorney office in) Danville,?" he asked. "Danville's not going to do a thing with it."

Some attending wondered if the city would ban a tax-paying homeowner from using a contractor who did not pay the fee. Comstock encouraged contractors to report

those who might not be registered.

Crusinberry said the issue of registering contractors was brought up about four years ago by four local contractors who were concerned about out-of-town contractors. Also, at least one unidentified homeowner was sued after an uninsured contractor fell off the homeowner's roof.

Some contractors suggested the city impose a fee on out-of-town contractors only, or allow in-town contractors to register once but out-of-town firms annually and/or at a higher fee.

Comstock said she will probably hold another meeting with contractors before the issue is brought to a council vote.

## Weather

Chance of freezing drizzle today and tonight. High 35, low 27. Tomorrow, chance of drizzle. High 34, low 27.

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

## Police News



**John K. Schwartz**, 24, of Hoopeston, was arrested at 1:35 p.m. Tuesday in the 800 block of East Seminary. Wanted on a Vermilion County warrant for failure to appear, he was released on \$300 cash bond.

A **62-year-old** Hoopeston man reported at 2:32 p.m. Tuesday that someone had fraudulently written several checks on his bank account.

## Obituaries

**LLOYD** - Ralph Eugene Lloyd, 92, of Sarasota, Fla., formerly of Hoopeston, died at 1:23 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 12, 2010, at Hoopeston Community Memorial Nursing Home. Private family service will be held, followed by a public visitation from 4:30-7 p.m. Thursday at Anderson Funeral Home. Masonic rites will be conducted at 6:45 p.m. Burial will be at a later date. Memorials are suggested to Hoopeston Nursing Home, 701 E. Orange St., Hoopeston, IL 60942; First Christian Church, 502 E. Main St., Hoopeston, IL 60942; or a charity of the donor's choice.

Mr. Lloyd, former owner of The Shack drive-in and Mr. L's, is credited as the originator of the Ranchburger.

**REED** - Helen E. (Compton) Reed, 68, of Hoopeston, died at 4 a.m. Tuesday, Jan. 12 2010, at Carle Foundation Hospital, Urbana. Funeral service will be at 11 a.m. Friday at Chestnut Street Church of Christ, Hoopeston. Burial will be in Floral Hill Cemetery, Hoopeston. Visitation will be 5-8 p.m. Thursday at the funeral home and one hour before service Friday at the church. Memorials may be made to a charity of the donor's choice.

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