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Hoopeston to buy 'tree house' property, demolish building

Hoopeston officials are taking action to raze the "tree house" in the 500 block of McCracken.

The council voted 5-3 Tuesday night to purchase the two parcels that comprise the property, then have the house torn down.

The property is comprised of three parcels, two of which were combined into one, Mayor Bill Crusinberry said after the meeting. The city will pay \$640 each for the two parcels after an agreement was made with the Vermilion County tax trustees.

The city had planned to file a lien against heirs of the deceased owner but the tax trustees took possession of it and were going to sell the property at a September tax sale. The city contacted the trustees, who agreed to sell the property to the city for the minimum bid accepted on properties, Crusinberry said.

Once the city owns the property, the house will be torn down. Crusinberry estimated that cost to be about \$5,000 for demolition and disposing of the debris.

Crusinberry, along with council members Sue Comstock, Nancy Stipp, Bill Goodwine and Bill McElhaney, voted in favor of the plan. Aldermen Brandon Hamilton, Jeff Johnson and Carl Ankenbrand voted against it.

Ankenbrand said he "just didn't want to spend the

money," while Hamilton thought there were better options, such as letting the property be sold, then working with the new owner to get the house torn down.

Alderman Ed Lotz was absent from the meeting.

In his comments to the council, Crusinberry said he hopes the city will be able to get help funding repairing the water tower and ground water storage tank.

The city had applied for help from the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency but did not make the cut last year. This year, the project has been assigned to an IEPA project manager. Stimulus funds are still available, and if that fails, the city may apply for a low interest EPA loan. The one-year delay means if the city gets a loan, it will be at a lower interest rate. Last year, the rate was 4 percent but dropped to 2.5 percent this year, he said.

In unrelated business, the council:

- Heard from Ankenbrand about possible changes at the city pool, including adding water slides and changing the baby pool into a sprinkler area, similar to that at water parks.

- Heard from Stipp about the need for residents to "get out and clean your yards up" before the National Sweet

See HOOPESTON on other side

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