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Residents make suggestions to improve Christmas light show

Residents whose homes undergo an extreme make-over for Christmas urged the city council to increase public awareness of Light Up McFerrer Park.

Chad Thomas and Keith Catron addressed aldermen at Tuesday night's Hoopeston City Council meeting with questions and suggestions about the light program.

Thomas, whose Penn Street home is festooned in holiday lights, said he handed out 400 candy canes on Saturday night, the first night the park was lit for the season. The top question asked by out-of-town visitors was how to get into the park, he said.

Mayor Bill Crusinberry said that some members of the

lighting committee, which is separate from the city, thought perhaps last year's signage was "over the top." This year's was significantly scaled back for opening night but that will be remedied soon, with a flashing sign and arrows pointing to the Elm Street park entrance.

Thomas also asked about a map that was supposed to point out decorated homes so visitors could drive throughout the city.

Crusinberry said Vermilion Advantage helped with a map that included local businesses - but omitted some and had to be reprinted. A list of decorated homes was

See LIGHT on other side

**Roxie's Annual
 Open House & Craft Sale**
 Friday, Dec. 4, 8-4 Saturday, Dec. 5, 8-2
 1027 W. Thompson Ave., Hoopeston
 Avon, jewelry, wreaths,
 new gift items & clothing
 Reasonable prices • Door prizes

Here's what's showing at the
Little Lorraine
90 Minutes in Heaven

Fri. 7 p.m. Sat. 4:30 & 7 p.m.
 Sun. 2 & 4:30 p.m.
 Suggested donation \$2-16 & under, \$5-adults.
Don't forget the Dippin Dots!
 Proceeds to Save the Lorraine Theatre Foundation

Need a gift?
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 305 E. Main, Hoopeston
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- Oral Communication, Wednesdays 6-8:40 pm
- Rhetoric I, Wednesdays from 6-8:40 pm

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 Line - Thursday, December 17, 2015 from 6-8 pm
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Light continued from other side

not included this year but may be in the future, he said. "I'm not trying to toot my own horn," Thomas said. We could really make this something. It's too late now to do it. Maybe we can do it next year. We just need to work together on this."

Thomas said visitors on Saturday came from as far as the Canadian border and from every town in a 60-mile radius of Hoopeston.

Thomas added that he spent about \$80 on posters, which he took to communities within 50 miles of Hoopeston to let them know of the light displays.

Catron talked about the light show in the Texas town he lived in before moving to Hoopeston. The event, which had been held for 12 years, included carriage rides through the park and the entire town pulled together to draw guests to the town.

He suggested that people be allowed to make memorial donations to purchase their own lights in memory of loved ones.

In unrelated business, the council unanimously approved the 2015 tax levy, payable in 2016. The \$707,402 levy is 4.87 percent more than last year, said Alderman Bill Goodwine, finance committee chairman.

The 2014 levy was \$700,071. While the levy as a whole is up, those parts funded by taxes, such as ESDA and road and bridge, are down because Hoopeston's equalized assessed valuation is down, resulting in fewer dollars for those areas where the maximum percent of dollars that can be used for those areas is capped.

The largest increase in the levy comes in the area of payroll withholding, up 27.6 percent.

On a positive note, Goodwine said he talked with

someone from the state's Department of Insurance. That person tracks more than 600 public pension funds in the state and of those, Hoopeston's is only six are 100 percent funded.

The council also approved a resolution allowing Crusberry to sign a liability insurance/workers' compensation insurance contract. The cost is down 10.5 percent, with most of the decreasing coming in the workers' compensation area.

The contract will include \$1,682 for new coverage of cyber liability. Alderman Randy Carter questioned the need for such coverage. Goodwine said it was too late to change it this year but the council can discuss it for future years.

In other financial matters, Hoopeston is having a difficult time finding affordable employee health insurance.

Goodwine said to renew coverage with Coventry will cost 24.3 percent more than last year, which increased 26.4 percent from the previous year.

Part of the problem, he said, is employees have large claims. "I don't know why," he said. "We need to find out."

He is hoping to get proposals from at least one more company before he brings information to the council. One company that won't be providing coverage is

Obituaries

MARSHALL - Kareem Jamell Marshall, 35, of Hoopeston, died at 6:08 a.m. Sunday, Nov. 29, 2015, at home. He will be cremated. Anderson Funeral Home is handling arrangements.

MOULDEN - Roger Dale "Catnip" Moulden, 71, of Rossville, formerly of Potomac, died at 8:20 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 26, 2015, at Heartland Healthcare, Paxton. He will be cremated. Graveside service will be at 10 a.m. Saturday at Potomac Cemetery. Memorial service will be at 11 a.m. Saturday at Morningstar Church, Rossville. Memorials are suggested to the family. Blurton Funeral Home is in charge of arrangements.

Weather

Mostly sunny today. High 41. Tonight, mostly clear. Low 28. Tomorrow, sunny. High 48, low 28.

Health Alliance, which declined to bid on coverage. "They didn't even give us a high proposal," he said.

Goodwine said he broke down insurance costs into a per man-hour worked basis and found the city pays a range of from \$5.32 per hour worked for single coverage to \$15 per hour for family coverage. "Insurance has become, for families, at least as much as a full time job," he said.

In unrelated business, Alderman Chad Yaden, cemetery committee chairman, said the department is seeking bids on a new mower. Specs are available at city hall. Bids will be opened at 2 p.m. December 29.

Yaden said he provided his department employees with lunch recently as a token of appreciation for their work.

From the Blotter

Police are investigating a hit-and-run accident reported at 6:22 p.m. Tuesday at Penn and Ninth Ave. An unknown vehicle hit a parked but occupied 2009 Chrysler convertible, then fled the scene.

VFW Menu
 Orange & 4th Ave., Hoopeston
Tacos by Norma
 Thursdays 11a - 2p & 5p - 8p
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VFW Post 4826 Members:
 New meeting time
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