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Just the Facts

Tuesday, June 12, 2018

Hoopeston's only locally-owned daily news publication!
 P.O. Box 441, Hoopeston IL 60942 www.justthefacts.net

Council asked for \$3 million for development infrastructure

A lack of money and infrastructure has brought economic development planned by Hoopeston Retirement Village Foundation to a halt.

HRVF representatives hope help from Hoopeston on the former will fund the latter.

Harry Brockus and Russ Leigh, of HRVF, met with a majority of Hoopeston City Council on Wednesday evening to ask the city to pay the \$3 million price tag for infrastructure installation.

The foundation plans a hotel/restaurant/strip mall/storage - and possibly a water park - between Marathon and Hoopeston Chrysler on Rt. 9 and a truck stop on the former Dick Jones property on the southeast corner of Rtes. 1 and 9.

Infrastructure upgrades are also needed on the southwest corner of Rtes. 1 and 9 where the new First Farmers Bank and Trust facility will be constructed.

The \$3 million also includes parking lot, curbs and street lighting at Heritage Park, the name given to the area where the hotel is planned, Brockus said.

Engineer Tracy Billings of C2 Engineering, presented plans for the infrastructure, which will also include a detention pond near the planned Cobblestone hotel, as well as a new lift station.

Ald. Bill Goodwine, finance committee chairman, expressed concern about asking taxpayers to foot the bill, especially in light of the recently-imposed \$9 per month dispatching fee enacted to balance the city budget.

Brockus replied that the dispatch fee was implemented "because you didn't want to tell people 'no.'"

"Oh no," said Ald. Chad Yaden. (Vermilion County dispatch) "provided a terrible service."

Payment methods suggested included using tax increment financing money, city reserves, possible USDA loans, a bond issue or doing the work in stages.

Goodwine said there is currently \$305,000 in Hoopeston TIF fund, but that more than a good por-

tion of that is already earmarked. An estimated \$229,000 is expected from property taxes paid this year, he added.

He has publicly stated previously that the city has about six months' of reserves to use in case of an emergency.

If the city has to borrow money, \$3 million at three percent for 20 years will result in an annual payment just short of \$200,000, with citizens paying almost \$1 million in interest over the term.

Adding one percentage point would raise the payment to \$218,000 per year and \$1.4 million in interest.

See DEVELOPMENT on other side

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0516-507HC-23540-6/7/2018




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Development continued from other side

Brockus offered to put \$1 million in the bank or deed over foundation-owned properties (HRVF has purchased 30 houses in Hoopeston with a value of \$1.5 million, Brockus said) to allay concerns.

Also, he said, as the foundation recoups money spent on the projects, anything left over will be given to the city.

Mayor Bill Crusinberry said the city would be able to repay the debt from increased property taxes on the parcels. He estimated taxes on the hotel would be \$35,000 to \$50,000 per year, while Brockus estimated

\$15,000 to \$20,000 in taxes for the restaurant.

Crusinberry projected taxes from a truck stop could be in the \$45,000 to \$50,000 range.

Goodwine cautioned that it would be two years after construction before Hoopeston sees increased property taxes from the developments and that the city would be responsible for making loan payments on existing city revenue.

Brockus and Leigh said investors have signed on to the hotel complex project, leading Goodwine to question why, when studies have shown Hoopeston cannot support one. "Do we know more than the hotel industry," he asked.

Leigh said a 45 percent average occupancy rate is needed for success and that "the hotel would be full all the time if we had a water park."

The men hoped to get infrastructure in place by the end of the year but Billings said getting Illinois EPA and IDOT approval will take some time, projecting nothing could be done until spring 2019.

While much information was provided, some was not. Leigh said letters of intent have been signed for the truck stop, hotel and restaurant but neither he nor Brockus would reveal the restaurant's name in an open meeting.

The men declined to name project investors. Also, although they said letters of intent have been signed, during discussion on the truck stop and a planned Super Casey's for Hoopeston, Leigh said "if it is a Casey's."

Brockus said development is part of his vision of making Hoopeston a bedroom community for current residents of places like Danville and Champaign, and would complement current draws, such as a lower cost of living and "a good school system - a very financially stable school district."

Also, "We're trying to draw people back to Hoopeston," he said. "We've easily brought 12 people back to Hoopeston."

Crusinberry talked about upgrades made by existing companies, including McDonald's and IGA, local people buying local businesses, like Hoopeston Coin Laundry and Sheridan's, and planned upgrades at Teasdale Foods. "We need to keep the ball rolling," he said.

"There's always a chance of failing," Brockus said, "but I'd rather go down swinging."

In other discussion, Brockus said a new foundation, Hoopeston Land Improvement Foundation, has been started and has taken ownership of the former Vermilion Iron property, and has plans to tear it down.

Court Dispositions

May 3

Michael Winland, Hoopeston, found guilty of assault, fined \$200; status hearing June 7.

Mona Perez, Hoopeston, new trial date set for June 7.

Sabbin Jackson, Hoopeston, failed to appear for disobeying police, found guilty by default, fined \$260; status hearing June 7.

Aura Nelson, Hoopeston, found guilty of disobeying police, fined \$200; status hearing June 7.

Robert Ferrell, Hoopeston, status check June 7.

Nichole Hansen, Milford, status check June 7.

Francisco Arce, Hoopeston, status check June 7.

Sandra Woods, Hoopeston, status check June 7.

Nathaniel Sims, Hoopeston, status check June 7.

Jackie Carswell, Hoopeston, given 30-day notice for payment or case will be sent to Illinois Comptroller's office for further enforcement.

Sherard Jones, Hoopeston, status check June 7.

Kayla Petty, Hoopeston, given 30-day notice for payment or case will be sent to Illinois Comptroller's office for further enforcement.

Bradley David, Hoopeston, status check June 7.

Ashley Graves, Hoopeston, status check June 7.

Andy Alkire, Hoopeston, status check June 7.

Gerardo Torres, Hoopeston, status check June 7.

Rogelio Rivera, Hoopeston, status check June 7.

Haley Edwards, Hoopeston, given 30-day notice for payment or case will be sent to Illinois Comptroller's

office for further enforcement.

Bridget Strawser, Hoopeston, given 30-day notice for payment or case will be sent to Illinois Comptroller's office for further enforcement.

Dawn Rogers, Hoopeston, given 30-day notice for payment or case will be sent to Illinois Comptroller's office for further enforcement.

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From the Blotter

Jason K. Simonton, 36, of Hoopeston, was arrested after police were called at 7:35 p.m. Sunday about a battery in the 500 block of East Wyman.

Simonton was charged with domestic battery and was taken to the Public Safety Building in Danville to await arraignment.

Fire Calls

Hoopeston Fire Department was called at 4:59 a.m. Sunday for a fire alarm at Carle Hoopeston, 701 E. Orange. No fire was located. The alarm was reset.

Weather

Chance of thunderstorms today, tonight. High 87, low 67. Tomorrow, mostly sunny. High 85, low 63.