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Residents question \$3 million requested for development

A recent request from Hoopeston Retirement Village Foundation that Hoopeston approve a \$3 million bond issue for infrastructure work brought questions from some citizens at Tuesday's Hoopeston City Council meeting.

During the public comment portion of the meeting, Don Jackson got the ball rolling, asking what the status was of the project.

Mayor Bill Crusinberry said the foundation requested that amount. "It's easy to ask for a lot when you want something," he said, adding officials are reviewing the city's infrastructure "and what we think we may be able to provide." No decision has been made on the request nor was a deadline set, he said.

Next up was Marty Parsons. "I have been a part of the See DEVELOPMENT continued on other side



A little at a time

Howard Hughes, of Spear Corp., of Roachdale, Ind., removes the damaged liner Tuesday at the Hoopeston Swimming Pool at McFerren Park. Hughes, and his supervisor, Darrin Clore, expect repairs to take about a week. The pool is then expected to be filled and open. Ald. Alex Houmes announced at Tuesday's Hoopeston City Council meeting that pool officials are hoping to keep the pool open into September this year.

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Development continued from other side

Hoopeston community since 1965, a large part of that time spent in retail business,” he said, reading from a prepared statement. “I have a history of doing anything that will strengthen our city as a whole.”

Parsons said his primary concern is the city “does not have \$3 million to invest in long-term, high risk ventures” and that the money would have to be borrowed. “The taxpayers are the ones who will wind up paying the bill.” The issue should be put on a ballot to allow the people to commit to the project “rather than eight people deciding their future.”

Parsons urged the council to be transparent to gain citizens’ trust and said three questions must be answered before the council considers a vote that “will commit every property owner in Hoopeston to this long-term obligation,” including:

- Where will the funds to pay the interest on such a loan come from? What are the plans for repayment?
- Who are the developers of the projects being proposed?
- A letter of intent is a non-binding agreement. Are there signed agreements for construction of a motel, truck stop and water park that will guarantee completion of the projects?

“These are things that have run past me and I think should be considered,” he said.

Stan Steiner was the final resident to express his thoughts on the request. “Why don’t they ask those investors for just a penny more,” he asked. Then officials could sign an agreement with investors that, whenever the city starts receiving property tax money from the development, a percentage could be rebated back. “Let them hold the bag,” he said.

Steiner also suggested that the city insist on having first mortgage on the developments in case something goes wrong. “Put some teeth into it,” he advised.

In other business, the council:

- Approved, in a 6-0 vote, a \$49,196 bid from Ribbe Trucking of Tilton for Motor Fuel Tax repairs in the city. Aldermen Bill Goodwine and Carl Ankenbrand were absent.
- Approved, 6-0, an ordinance regulating peddlers and merchants who go door-to-door., requiring registration with the city, an appearance before the city council, registration fees and penalties for violating the ordinance.
- Heard from Fire Chief Joel Bird that the department

will do hydrant testing on Mondays, July 9, 16, 23 and, if necessary, 30. Testing will begin at 6 p.m. each evening and may stir up rust in water lines.

It is suggested that residents not do laundry during testing.

● Heard from Crusinberry that work is moving ahead for a new First Farmers facility at Rtes. 1 and 9. He said a bank official said groundbreaking could happen before July 1.

● Also heard from Crusinberry that restructuring and personnel changes were made in park personnel. The superintendent position was eliminated and pool operations was transferred to Water Supt. Steve Baker. Paul Tutwiler will continue overseeing pool maintenance and will report to Baker. Park buildings and grounds was transferred to the street/alley department and will be overseen by Supt. Wade Gocking. Pool managers and staff will report to Dawn Layden, administrative coordinator.

Alex Houmes, parks committee chairman, will continue in that role until the city’s committee structure is reorganized.

The changes are expected to save money and city resources, he said.

● Learned Hoopeston’s second part time officer has been hired. Ald. Brandon Hamilton, police committee chairman, said Michael Vice was started last week. He joins Marvin Dobkins, the first part time officer added to the department.

● Heard from Ald. Bill McElhaney that a hard fence will be put around a downtown building owned by Ray Williams to keep people away from the dangerous structure.

Obituaries

HARI - Nancy (Nease) Hari, 75, of Rankin died Sunday, June 17, 2018 at Carle Foundation Hospital, Urbana. Visitation will be 4-7 p.m. Thursday at Knapp Funeral Home, Cissna Park and 9 a.m. until the 10 a.m. funeral Friday at Rankin United Methodist Church. Burial will be in Rankin Union Cemetery. Memorials are suggested to Rankin Library or Rankin United Methodist Church.

Weather

Thunderstorms likely today, tonight, tomorrow. High today 76, low 65. Tomorrow, high 76, low 63.

Classifieds

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Hoopeston handyman wanted. Indoor painting and misc. Call (217) 274-2039 afternoons.

Small Wonders Preschool: Resumes for our Assistant Teacher position can be sent to First Presbyterian Church, P.O. Box 297, Hoopeston, by July 15. This is a part-time position, 8 – 11:30 a.m. M-F, beginning September 1. Qualifications include being high school graduate and having a love of kids!

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