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# Just the Facts

Thursday, August 6, 2020

Hoopeston's only locally-owned daily news publication!

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Brad Hardcastle, Hoopeston Emergency Management director, standing, gives a presentation on locating a new EMA building to aldermen and residents at Tuesday's Hoopeston City Council meeting.

## Mayor casts tie-breaking vote approving new emergency services building in McFerren Park

The location for new office to be used by Hoopeston Auxiliary Police and Hoopeston Emergency Management Agency (HEMA) got the green light at Tuesday's Hoopeston City Council meeting - barely.

With the council split 4-4, Mayor Bill Crusinberry cast the deciding vote to allow the new building to be constructed in McFerren Park, on the site of the current auxiliary police office.

The council approved \$35,000 for a new building in the 2021 budget. HEMA Director Brad Hardcastle, who also serves in the auxiliary, asked that the building be located on the site of the existing office at the park.

Ald. Alex Houmes, parks committee chairman, suggested the new office be located in the park annex. A second possibility was the vacant lot on the northeast corner of Market and Seminary.

At the council meeting, Hardcastle told the council the annex location wasn't workable, as placement would put the building over a sanitary sewer line or abutting the exiting concessions stand. Additionally, city utilities would need to be extended to the area.

As for the second suggestion, Hardcastle said for emergency planning, resources should be spread out, rather than grouped in a small area. A major incident in the downtown area could damage city hall, the Market St. fire station and the new building. Locating the new building in the park would help that scenario, he said.

The parks committee made up of Houmes and aldermen Carl Ankenbrand and Bill Goodwine, had approved the location, Goodwine said.

Houmes then pleaded his case to the public, emailing groups, such as Hoopeston Rotary, which has invested

funds in replacing trees and beautifying areas of the park. He also created a petition concerning the issue. Resident Don Kaeb talked with residents and collected signatures and comments, which he presented to the council. Kaeb spoke his piece and was followed by other residents speaking against the location.

Jary Archer said it is not only the new building that should not be in the park. "Why do we have to have a building in the park - other than the civic center - I'll live with that," he said. "I think the maintenance building shouldn't be there, the Lions Club shouldn't be there, I think the storage for the Jaycees shouldn't be there.

A Rotarian, Archer said the group's tree-planting helped "subvert the nature of the park. Basically we're putting trees in all these play areas, so there is no play

See SERVICES on other side



Services continued from other side

area anymore.” Others spoke of empty buildings around the city that could be used, but Hardcastle said restoring a building would cost more than the \$35,000 paying for a new one. To those who suggested a permanent building in the park was not needed for a five-day festival, Hardcastle said having an office in the park allows auxiliary and HEMA officers to provide a level of service which would not be available without it. The office provides a quiet place for officers to take a lost child while a search for a parent is done. It also

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provides where volunteers from both groups can cool down and relax while on duty during the festival. The office also acts as a cooling station for others. Ald. Carl Ankenbrand made a motion to approve the location, which was seconded by Goodwine. They, along with Bill McElhane and Lourdine Florek voted in favor. On the other side were Houmes, Jeff Wise, Chad Yaden and Robin Lawson, who struggled with the decision. “I don’t know,” she said. “Does that count,” she asked Clerk Gail Lane. Lane replied that her options were yes, no or to abstain. “I have to say no at this point,” Lawson said. HEMA and auxiliary officers will now begin the work of removing the existing building and preparing the site for the new construction. Crusinberry suggested the area be raised to help move rainwater away from the site. The existing building is 10’x20’ and will be replaced

**Weather**

Mostly sunny today. High 77. Tonight, mostly clear. Low 57. Tomorrow, sunny. High 81, low 62. For real time Hoopeston weather, visit [justthefacts.net/weather/](http://justthefacts.net/weather/).

with a 30’x40’ structure. It will be erected and heating/air conditioning/ventilation work done this fall. Over the winter, members of both groups will finish the interior and in the spring, will finish interior work and landscape around the structure. HEMA has 11 volunteers and is responsible for storm spotting, emergency planning, assisting city departments as needed, and maintaining outdoor warning sirens. Hoopeston Auxiliary Police has 12 members, including Hardcastle and Chip Houmes, who are sergeants in the agency. The group provides services to the National Sweetcorn Festival, security at school events, assists

Hoopeston Police Department when called and works other special events during the year. In unrelated business, the council: ● Heard from Crusinberry that an IEPA representative suggested the city hold off cleaning up debris from the wall collapse in the alley off of the 200 block of North Market due to possible asbestos. Building owner Brian Suiter was injured in the incident but Crusinberry said he did not know the extent of those injuries. ● Approved a document with Central Illinois Land Bank to contribute up to \$50,000 to demolish dilapidated residences in the city.

**Classifieds**

**HELP WANTED**

Hoopeston Area CUSD #11 has openings for the following positions:

- \*Part-time Secretary at Maple School (7:30-12:30)
- \*Bus Aide
- \*Custodian

Applications are available online at Hoopeston Area CUSD's website, [www.hoopeston.k12.il.us](http://www.hoopeston.k12.il.us), or may be picked up at the District Office.

Part-time day custodian at the Hoopeston Multi-Agency, 206 S. First Ave. 8-10 hours a week, flexible schedule, \$10/hr. Applications available in the front lobby at the agency – no phone calls please!

Kitchen and delivery persons needed. Apply in person at Pizza King 111 E Main St., Hoopeston.

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