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# Just the Facts

Phone/Fax: (217) 283-9348

Lourdine Florek, Owner

**Thursday, March 25, 2021**

*Hoopeston's only locally-owned daily news publication!*

P.O. Box 441, Hoopeston IL 60942

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## Candidates talk issues at informational forum Monday

School board and city candidates were featured at a virtual forum Monday, hosted by Hoopeston Education Association and Save the Lorraine Foundation.

Candidates for the part of Hoopeston Area inside the congressional township and Mayor Bill Crusinberry answered preselected questions on issues.

Mayoral candidate Mike Bane announced last week that, due to a previously scheduled family commitment, he would be unable to attend.

Aldermanic candidates for city council talked about themselves and why they are running.

Incumbent Debbie Klaber and newcomers Elizabeth Silver and Sharon Zorns are seeking two seats on the Hoopeston Area School Board. All agreed on the need to continue to offer the best education possible to local students and find ways to continue to fund the district, including a willingness to try a third time to pass one percent school facilities sales tax.

Vermilion County voters defeated the tax in 2018 and 2020.

During the segment for city candidates, Crusinberry was asked about discussion at a recent city council meeting about the possibility of closing the city pool. He said the pool has run at a loss of more than \$775,000 over the last 10 years, but that like many other city departments, don't create income but are funded through taxes. No decision has been made on the issue and will not be made until further discussion.

He also discussed improvements that have happened during his tenure, including new water infrastructure, a plan to replace old infrastructure, residents buying existing businesses and others opening new businesses.

Alderman candidates who were featured include:

Ward 1: incumbent Bill McElhaney and challenger Kyle Richards

Ward 2: incumbent Carl Ankenbrand and challenger Kellie Ferrell

Ward 3: Joe Garrett, recently appointed to the seat formerly held by Alex Houmes. He is running for the unexpired term

Ward 4: Bob Porth and Chris Small, both newcomers.

Ward 3 candidate Jeff Keith, running against Garrett, did not attend.

There is no race for two city seats: Ward 3, where Lourdine Florek is running unopposed, and Ward 1, where no one filed for the seat formerly held by Chad Yaden.

**See FORUM on other side**

*Photos by Ginger Gonzalez*

**Mayor Bill Crusinberry, right, and below, Hoopeston Area School District candidates Elizabeth Silver, Sharon Zorns and incumbent Debbie Klaber, take part in a forum Monday, sponsored by Hoopeston Education Association and Save the Lorraine Foundation.**





Obituaries



LUCAS DAVIS

**DAVIS** - Lucas James Davis, 35, of Lafayette, IN, formerly of Hoopeston, IL, passed away Friday March 19, 2021. He was born April 27, 1985, in Watseka, IL, the son of David and Lonnette (McCray) Davis who survive in Lafayette, IN.

He is also survived by one daughter, Jayda Davis of Lafayette, IN; one son, Greyy James Davis of Lafayette, IN; two brothers, Logan (Emily) Davis

of Bloomington, IL and Tyler (Morgan) Davis of Lafayette, IN; his grandmothers, Carolyn McCray and Jane Bivans both of Hoopeston, IL; five nieces and nephews, Rowan, Oakley, Zayden, McKinley, and Sienna Davis; and his dog, Kane.

He was preceded in death by his maternal grandfather, Wayne McCray; two aunts, Paula Hiser and Connie Young; and one uncle, John “JB” Bartmess. Lucas worked at Wabash National in Lafayette. He enjoyed fishing, wood working, and working on older vehicles.

A visitation will be held 3:00 – 6:00 P.M. CDT Friday March 26, 2021 at Anderson Funeral Home 427 E. Main St. Hoopeston, IL. The funeral service will follow the visitation and will begin at 6:00 P.M. CDT Friday at the funeral home with Scott Andrews officiating.

Following the funeral service, cremation rites will be accorded, and no burial will be held.

Memorials may be made to the donor’s choice.

Please visit [www.anderson-funeral-home.com](http://www.anderson-funeral-home.com) to view Lucas’ eternal tribute page and to send the family condolences.

Anderson Funeral Home in Hoopeston is handling the arrangements.

**EELLS** - Kevin Nye Eells, 60, of Hoopeston, died at 5:58 p.m. Tuesday, March 2, 2021, at home. He was cremated. Visitation will be held from noon-2 p.m. Saturday at Anderson Funeral Home, Hoopeston. Graveside service will be held at 2:30 p.m. Saturday at Amity Cemetery, Goodwine. Memorials are suggested to donor’s choice. Condolences may be left at [www.anderson-funeral-home.com](http://www.anderson-funeral-home.com).

Fire Calls

Hoopeston Fire Department was called at 8:08 a.m. Tuesday after a man at Centennial Manor complained about a severe headache he thought might have been caused by carbon monoxide. Levels were checked and no carbon monoxide found. A housing authority representative on scene took over from there.

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Forum continued from other side

Stephen Eyrich was recently appointed to that seat until the end of the term. An appointment will be made again after the April 6 election.

The school board election also has two candidates running unopposed for two seats in the out-of-congressional district area, Cheryl Steiner and Travis Field.

The forum may be viewed at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJS6HVkybQs](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJS6HVkybQs).

Weather

Rain today, rain and breezy tonight. High 58, low 40. Tomorrow, partly sunny, chance of rain late. High 56, low 43.

For real time Hoopeston weather, visit [justthefacts.net/weather/](http://justthefacts.net/weather/).

**If you listen to all the rhetoric on Facebook and other sources about the lack of action on dilapidated properties, you would think it's easy as pie to force people to repair their buildings or for the City to take over the properties. Anyone involved with those situations knows better.**

- You can condemn a building, but that doesn't mean the owner will do anything.
- You can fine people all you want. That doesn't mean they will pay. They will either let the property go back for taxes or file bankruptcy.
- The courts do not look favorably upon governments taking over people's properties (which is probably a good thing). It is a long, drawn out process.
- Anyone thinking you can bully your way into obtaining a property without proper legal procedures, can expect a mountain of problems in return.
- There are properties tied up in bankruptcy or have issues with heirs.
- Some properties have EPA issues which almost always prolongs remediation.
- Some properties need clearance from the State Historical Society.
- If a building is obtained, then funds must be found to remediate it, plus the City takes on the liability.

For those who say nothing is being done about dilapidated housing, the Mayor and his staff working in partnership with the Central Illinois Land Bank Authority have spent countless hours gathering information for the IDHA application. The application process is complex. Because of this work, there is now a fund of \$275,000 available for demolition work. Three houses have been obtained by the Land Bank and are slated for demolition this spring. An additional property is expected to be donated for demolition. Once these properties are remediated, additional houses will be evaluated for possession and demolition.

Additionally, the Mayor is working with the Land Bank to develop a legal process to pursue abandonment of properties which includes working with the Council to update the ordinances. On top of that, the Mayor is working to develop a rehab grant program instead of tearing everything down.

So, if you want to blame someone for the “mess”, blame the irresponsible owners, especially those out-of-town owners who buy the properties at the tax sale for \$800 and let them rot or worse yet, rent them out. They are the ones who don't give a damn about our town.

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