Building owner dies from injuries, mayor issues emergency order

Mayor Bill Crusinberry announced Tuesday that he has issued an emergency order concerning the former Hoopston Plumbing and Heating Building at 219 S. Market. The north wall of the building collapsed the evening of August 1, sending bricks cascading into the alley. Building owner, Brian Suiter, who was working in the building, was injured in the collapse and was taken to Carle Foundation Hospital, Urbana. He died August 15 of injuries received in the building failure, Crusinberry said.

In his order, Crusinberry outlines the building’s long history of neglect and subsequent decay and the danger it poses to pedestrian and vehicular traffic. “Due to the apparent instability of the structure, the collapse of portions of the interior, and danger of further collapse, I will not allow city employees or others to enter the building for any reason,” the order states.

Crusinberry plans to have the remainder of the north wall pushed into the building to avoid further collapse. “Hopefully, (Mr. Suiter’s) family will contact me about what they want to do with that property and we’ll go from there,” he said.

The state of downtown buildings has been a point of discussion in coffee shops and on social media since the collapse. Ald. Robin Lawson said residents want the council to chuckle. Crusinberry said the new owner probably decided to purchase the hotel based on a picture on the internet from “about 15 years ago,” and doesn’t show the motel in its current shape. “He also wants us to recommend contractors,” the mayor added.

Crusinberry said he was put in contact with a licensed building inspector, who has talked to him about a vacant building ordinance and rental registration ordinance, both of which could help reduce the number of abandoned and dilapidated buildings in the future.

In other discussion, Crusinberry said an engineer ker-fuffle will push back work on the Thompson St. resurfacing project. In July, the council approved a proposal from Donohue & Associates engineering of Champaign to partner with Cummings Engineering Cummings Engineering Corp., of Springfield. Donohue wanted to partner because Cummings has more experience in federal contracts. While Cummings verbally indicated a willingness to partner, the Cummings management had more experience in federal contracts. While Cummings verbally indicated a willingness to partner, the Cummings Engineering Cummings Engineering Corp., of Springfield. Donohue wanted to partner because Cummings has more experience in federal contracts. While Cummings verbally indicated a willingness to partner, the Cummings Engineering Cummings Engineering Corp., of Springfield. Donohue wanted to partner because Cummings has more experience in federal contracts. While Cummings verbally indicated a willingness to partner, the Cummings Engineering Cummings Engineering Corp., of Springfield. Donohue wanted to partner because Cummings has more experience in federal contracts. While Cummings verbally indicated a willingness to partner, the Cummings Engineering Cummings Engineering Corp., of Springfield. Donohue wanted to partner because Cummings has more experience in federal contracts. While Cummings verbally indicated a willingness to partner, the Cummings Engineering Cummings Engineering Corp., of Springfield. Donohue wanted to partner because Cummings has more experience in federal contracts. While Cummings verbally indicated a willingness to partner, the Cummings Engineering Cummings Engineering Corp., of Springfield.

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company chose not to, Crainberry said.

Instead, Donohue will seek requests for qualifications from engineering firms and the city will choose one, much like it would accept a bid for a service. The glitch means construction would not begin until early in 2022, he said.

In other business, the council:

- Heard from Ald. Carl Ankenbrand that a final draft of an ordinance, which would allow residents to raise chickens, is completed. It will be posted at cityofhoopeston.com residents may look at it prior to council action.
- Approved not holding bulk garbage day on Saturday, Sept. 5, during the Labor Day weekend.
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In other business, the council:

- Heard from Florek that the splash pad will be open at least through Labor Day weekend, but may be extended beyond that, depending on the weather.
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