

Bike trail put on hold, new ordinance adopted

Written by Chris Lee

Application for a grant for the first phase of a bike/pedestrian trail will be put on hold after city council members decided at their Oct. 20 meeting that everything isn't in place to move forward.

Councilman Ray Bailey, along with City Clerk Kathy Olofson and City Supt. Mark Brown, have all been working on the project with the help of others around town.

The application was to be submitted by Monday, Nov. 2. Councilman Orville Tonsing raised the question about easements on right-of-way. He also mentioned the entire plan should be laid out before moving forward.

Bailey said the project has received cooperation from all residents involved along the path. He also said a lot of people are in favor of the path around town. He mentioned the involved homeowners will not be happy to hear the project has been delayed.

All council members are in favor of the project but feel they aren't quite ready to move forward with the project and the Nov. 2 deadline is too soon.

Olofson said the cycle to apply for the grant comes only once a year so they will have to wait until next year to apply again. She also noted it would take until about March to find out who is awarded grant money and then by the time contracts are signed it could be nearly August before any work starts.

The first stage would begin on E. Johnson St. and move toward the hospital. It would contain only the path and not the enhancements such as lights and landscaping.

Bailey said there are about four different parts of the project. There is the actual path, the enhancements, curb and gutter and then the drainage.

City Attorney Al Wall gave a brief report about the proposed ordinance of the city declaring a moratorium on review of applications for the dispensaries of medical marijuana within the City of Holyoke. The item was on the agenda and Wall wanted to speak about it before the council

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voted.

He suggested the board take a long look at the ordinance and have a chance to get all the information. He also said it would be smart to adopt the ordinance so the city can set the regulations they want, if any. After a roll call vote, the ordinance was adopted unanimously.

Stray population addressed

Holyoke High School students Casey Sage, Chantel Rafert and Heather Duester were present to speak with the board about a project they are involved with in John Ortner's government class. They proposed the idea of an animal shelter to be used to help control the stray dog population in Holyoke and Phillips County.

The students said they are ready to set up a donation and apply for grants along with fund raising. Mayor David Nygaard said it is a worthwhile project and the city would appreciate any help.

Reports of city officials

City Supt. Brown said MP Nexlevel, LLC was scheduled to leave on Thursday, Oct. 22. They have been in Holyoke installing the fiber optic system.

With the recent cold weather and the hard freeze Holyoke received, leaves began falling and the street department began picking up leaves and will continue to do so and will let people know when the last chance will be.

Brown also said the fuel farm at the airport is nearly finished as well as the electrical work in the new city building.

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Police Chief Phil Biersdorfer brought one of two new protective shields to the meeting to show council members. The shields were purchased as part of a Homeland Security Grant. He said they will keep one in Holyoke with the other going to Haxtun.

Biersdorfer also said Holyoke P.D. purchased a bunch of face masks for the officers to use when responding to medical emergencies to help protect against the flu.

Holyoke P.D. picked up three stray dogs in one week and Nygaard said he appreciated Biersdorfer and Code Enforcement officer Dawn Worley with the help they gave in getting the dogs adopted.

Councilman Barry Winckler said he was pleased with the way Holyoke P.D. has stepped up and worked with other law enforcement agencies in the area.

The council tabled two items during the meeting. A donation request from Healing Tree, Addiction Treatment Solutions, Inc. was tabled after the question of how much of a donation was wanted and what the money was going toward.

The consultant fees for the diseased/dead tree assessment was also tabled. Board members agreed to wait and discuss it with the party involved when they attend a future council meeting.

After the meeting adjourned, board members held a work session to discuss dog ordinance and licensing fees.

In other business Oct. 20, council members:

—approved the liquor license renewal for Hometown Liquor.