

Council sets sights on dangerous buildings

Written by Kyle Arnoldy

Wednesday, 15 May 2013 10:24 - Last Updated Wednesday, 15 May 2013 10:25

Holyoke City Council members aimed to reduce the problems caused by uninhabitable and dangerous buildings during a work session after the Tuesday, May 7 council meeting.

Many issues were raised from the April 8 storm that caused damage around town. Concerns for procedures and safety measures were discussed at length, and the city council continues to look for ways in which to minimize danger in the future.

Much of the damage from the storm occurred at the Holyoke Mobile Home and RV Park. The amount of damage was hard to assess as a few of the mobile homes were uninhabited and in poor condition to begin with.

The vacant trailers presented safety issues as some had shattered windows and structure flaws that led to flying debris in the strong winds. Loose trash also poses a potential problem.

City Superintendent Mark Brown identified three mobile homes in the park that meet the criteria as dangerous buildings. All three are abandoned.

Council members explored ways in which to get started legally. Problems they anticipate include determining who is at fault, who owns the lot, who is living in the lot and the proper ways to notify residents and owners at the trailer park of problems that need to be corrected.

City attorney Al Wall also pointed out that in Colorado, during the sale of personal property, personal property taxes must be paid at the time of a title transfer. Many people don't want to pay personal property taxes, so proper procedures are ignored.

Once the police department has determined a structure to be a dangerous building, notices will be sent out to owners. They will be given a time table to fix the problems. If ignored, the city will step in and hire someone to do the job, with the bill going to the owner of the property. If the bill is ignored, the costs will be added to their tax roll. If the taxes are not paid, the owner will lose the property.

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While the removal of the three trailers is completely up to the owner of the property, some of the problems can be alleviated during the citywide cleanup dates. Debris and garbage moved to the alley will be picked up by the city Wednesday, May 15 and Thursday, May 16.

Cell tower regulations discussed

In an effort to keep large, unsightly cell towers out of the heart of Holyoke, council members discussed cell tower regulations.

Brown informed council members that Viaero Wireless has expressed interest in building a few more towers around town to boost their 4G services.

Brown stated that the current height regulations in present zoning should be sufficient. According to height restrictions, the towers could not extend past 35 feet in residential areas or past 50 feet in commercial areas.

City officials report

City workers continue to prepare for the warmer weather. Crews have begun turning on sprinkler systems, mowing and fertilizing. The street department completed crack filling Tuesday, May 7.

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Brown also displayed an early draft for a full hipped steel roof for the Holyoke Mini Park. No date has been set for construction to begin.

Holyoke Police Chief Doug Bergstrom reported that from April 12-May 1, there were 100 calls for service, four arrests, one citation given out, 18 reports written and eight warnings given.

Other Business

In other business May 7, the council:

—waived the building permit fee for Phillips County Commissioners for the proposed parking/storage structure to be located in the 200 block of S. Campbell Avenue.

—approved request from the Holyoke Golf Club Board to waive the building permit fee for re-shingling the clubhouse.

—approved travel request for Holyoke Police Chief Doug Bergstrom to attend the chief conference in Grand Junction.

—donated one youth summer swim pass to the Dragon's Wagon Preschool for their fundraising auction.

—agreed to let the Holyoke swim team use the pool to host a swim meet June 1.

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—donated \$15,000 to the Holyoke Golf Club to help with repairs and maintenance.

—entered into executive session for 15 minutes to discuss the purchase, acquisition, lease, transfer or sale of real, personal or other property interest.

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