

South Holyoke development stalled with drainage concerns

Written by Kyle Arnoldy

Wednesday, 12 March 2014 09:53 -

In an effort to get the ball rolling more quickly with the residential development plan for south Holyoke, attorney Russell Sprague, representing Robin Lake Development, attended the Tuesday, March 4 Holyoke City Council meeting.

RLD had presented a drainage study for the southwest portion of Holyoke and a proposed plan of action for moving forward with development at the Feb. 25 council work session.

At Tuesday's meeting, Sprague stated his hope that council members would agree to retain T.C. Engineering Inc. out of North Platte, Neb., to perform a follow-up to the drainage study. The study would be necessary to determine potential solutions for drainage issues as well as provide insight into expected costs.

RLD's proposed plan includes filling in or shrinking the O'Neal pit, currently used to handle drainage from the southwest portion of Holyoke. A pump station at a four-and-a-half-acre pond nearby would have to be constructed with increased capacity for pumps and pipes in the area for storm water to flow through. Residential lots are planned to surround the pond.

The plan was met with some resistance as City Superintendent Mark Brown voiced some concerns.

"I, for one, say no to that, but I am not an engineer," Brown said. He explained that in a 24-hour event, 1,800 gallons of water is going into the pit, but in a downpour that could accumulate 3 inches in 45 minutes, anywhere from 3,000-5,000 gallons a minute could be draining. "It's going to be a nightmare to control the variations of flows."

Too much stormwater rushing through the pipes could also cause water to rise through storm drains in the areas of Gordon Street and Hale Street on Worley Avenue.

Brown also noted that if the water were directed down an alternative path, the city would have to deepen and widen the ditch line along Evans Avenue to accommodate the increased amount of

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water. The culvert under Johnson Street would also have to be looked at.

Another aspect taken into account by council members involved a possible bike/walking path along Johnson Street. In the past, the council has discussed adding a bike path along Johnson Street that would run from Regent Park to the airport, connecting with the current bike/walking path.

If the bike/walking path is still an option in the future, Brown commented that construction would have to take into account runoff from the street. What was holding street runoff before would have to be able to handle the capacity of the drainage pit as well.

Before discussion concluded, council members approved giving Brown authority to spend up to \$2,000 to retain T.C. Engineering Inc. to review the plans and give suggestions.

Officials report

Brown reported that street crews had been busy with snow removal. He also noted that there had been no power outages since the Feb. 18 meeting.

Holyoke Police Chief Doug Bergstrom reported that from Feb. 13-26 the department had received 53 calls for service, made two arrests, written four reports and issued six warnings.

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Other business

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In other business March 4, the council:

—approved special events permits for Manos Unidas for April 19 and May 17.

—appointed Mary Austin to serve a five-year term on the library board.

—waived the building permit fee for remodeling the interior of the Holyoke Golf Course clubhouse.

—approved a liquor license renewal application for Cobblestone Inn and Suites.

—approved the purchase of a Funbrella for the Holyoke Swimming Pool from Anchor Industries Inc. for a total of \$790.

—appointed Sandy Saylor as the supply judge and Linda Williamson, Sonya Houghtelling, Marianne Sullivan and Cathy Sullivan as judges for the municipal election April 8. Alternate judges are Larry Stein and Linda Willmon.

—set wages for municipal election judges at \$10 per hour and \$12 an hour for the supply judge.

—approved the purchase of a desk and an office chair for a total of \$1,025 from Computers Etc. for the new city office assistant, whose wage was set at \$11 per hour.

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