

**City of Mt. Vernon, Illinois  
Workshop City Council Meeting  
Tuesday, August 1, 2017  
3:30 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

The Mt. Vernon City Council held a Workshop City Council Meeting on Tuesday, August 1, 2017 at 3:30 p.m. at the Rolland W. Lewis Community Building, Veterans Park, 800 South 27<sup>th</sup> Street, Mt. Vernon, IL.

Mayor John Lewis called the meeting to order.

**ROLL CALL**

Roll call showed present: Council Member Jeff May, Council Member Donte Moore, Council Member Jim Rippey, Council Member Mike Young, and Mayor John Lewis.

**VISITORS/CITIZENS REQUESTS/ADDRESSES FROM THE AUDIENCE**

Mayor John Lewis explained that the persons who signed the Speaker's List were given the choice to speak now or when their topic was discussed. Everyone chose to speak when their topic was discussed.

**REVIEW OF REMAINING 2012 BOND FUNDS AND PROJECT PRIORITIZATION**

City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel presented a chart showing the proposed projects as of July 17, 2017. The total remaining money in the 2012 Bond Fund is \$6.4 million. The total amount of the projects proposed is \$6,936.833 which is \$536,833 over budget.

1. **Armory:** The City received a \$1.5 million State Grant for the development of the Armory. This grant is matched with \$500,000 from the City. Poettker Construction is managing this project and it is ready to go to bid. Bechtel explained that she met with the YMCA of Jefferson County to see if they have interest in leasing the Armory. No word from the YMCA has been received since their tour of the facility. Bechtel stated that there is a market in our area for meeting space, trade events, and conferences, but it is difficult to measure how successful it would be. The City has invested \$600,000 in the Armory for new windows and a roof. She explained that this is a preservation project for the community. Council Member Jim Rippey stated that it is a bottomless pit and recommends not spending another penny on this project. Council Member Donte Moore asked how much it will cost to tear down the building. Bechtel estimated \$300,000. Mayor John Lewis stated that the City should let the \$1.5 million State Grant go. He has spoken with numerous citizens but no one has brought him a plan to take over the Armory. Lewis feels that there are more important projects to fund, but he is not advocating tearing it down at this point. Moore asked where the \$600,000 came from for the windows and roof.

Bechtel said that Tourism provided \$325,000 and the remaining amount came from the ½% Sales Tax Fund. Moore said that the citizens want this type of facility in Mt. Vernon and it would benefit the entire community. If it is decided not to proceed, then the door should be closed and no additional money spent. Council Member Mike Young said that he regrets that the City spent \$600,000 on the building, but it is not wise to spend anymore. He said that nothing shows that people will use the building. Council Member Jeff May stated that if the YMCA takes over the Armory, they will need to make an investment of \$300,000 to \$400,000 and take over the operation of the building. Bechtel summarized that if the YMCA was willing to make the investment and take over operation, the City would continue with the \$1.5 million State Grant and \$500,000 from the bond fund. Bechtel will call the YMCA for their final answer. If the YMCA declines then the project will be over.

2. Park Plaza Demo: For the demolition of the Park Plaza Shopping Center, \$510,000 remain. This is separate from the \$90,000 previously spent for the repair of the wall and roof on the east side of the Post Office. The City received four written proposals for the Park Plaza which will be presented in the future. Mayor John Lewis requested that this be kept as is and the proposals looked at.
3. Aquatic Zoo Parking and Lincoln Park/South Parking: Completed in-house, the design increases parking by sixty spaces. The project has been bid and awarded to Purlan Contracting LLC for \$240,000.
4. Tennis Courts – Lincoln Park (4): The tennis courts were part of a much bigger project that started out at \$1.6 million which was reduced to a project with four (4) tennis courts at a cost of \$450,000. Mayor John Lewis said that it does not make since to build four courts when six courts are needed. He recommended waiting until 2018-2019 to see the City's financial condition. Council Member Jim Rippey asked if the high school or college have responded to the City's request to help fund the new courts. Bechtel replied that she has not met with the high school. Mayor John Lewis said that his opinion is to move the \$450,000 to the 44<sup>th</sup> Street improvements. Council Member Mike Young agreed to place this project on hold and use the funds for the 44<sup>th</sup> Street improvements.
5. City Hall Building Improvements: The City has spent \$200,000 on earlier improvements and an additional \$867,000 is requested for upgrades to electrical, plumbing, and HVACs, reroofing, entry to Fire Station bays and front and west doors of City Hall. This project is moving forward.
6. Summersville Sidewalks: \$450,000 is allocated for sidewalks in the Summersville area. The design has been completed and the City is waiting for one easement.
7. East Last/North Last/Rufus/Peek Storm Sewers: The project has been bid and awarded to Haier Plumbing and Heating, Inc. for \$217,033. The project should be complete by the end of the year.
8. Brownsville/Harlan Storm Sewer: The project has been bid and awarded to Haier Plumbing and Heating, Inc. for \$191,422. The project should be complete by the end of the year.

9. Northbrook Drive Storm Sewer: The project has been bid and awarded to Haier Plumbing and Heating, Inc. for \$160,000. The project should be complete by the end of the year.
10. Rackaway Water Line Replacement: The City is still waiting to receive CXS Railroad's review. Bechtel is hoping to hear from CXS in the next few weeks because their 120-day review period is ending. The line will go under CXS Railroad. The estimated cost is \$150,000.
11. 44<sup>th</sup> Street North Water Line Replacement: This line is located on North 44<sup>th</sup> Street from Drury Inn to Steak N Shake. This project is being in-house designed. The estimated cost is \$200,000.
12. 44<sup>th</sup> Street North and South Curb and Gutter: This overlay project was estimated at \$665,000. Changing the project to curb and gutter is estimated at \$2.1 million. Council Member Jeff May asked for the economic return of this investment. Bechtel replied that there are no projects in hand but the area has high potential. May asked the cost of the deferred maintenance on the City's roads. Bechtel replied that she does not have a number, but the City is falling behind with only maintaining one or two miles per year. May asked if curb and gutter with asphalt was considered. Bechtel said that cost difference is minimal for the extra years of service from concrete versus asphalt. Mayor John Lewis stated that it would cost \$1.6 million for curb and gutter with asphalt. May explained that there is a method to determine the City's economic lift. He wants to see this number to make sure that the \$2.1 million dollars will pay for itself. In not, the City can choose a more modest option and use the money for other projects. Council Member Jim Rippe asked if City roads have been prioritized showing the ones in the most need of repair. Bechtel explained that Public Works Director Matt Fauss keeps a running priority list based on the condition of the road and the amount of traffic. Council Member Donte Moore stated that the City would be spending \$2.1 million dollars on a road that goes to nowhere. Moore said no one has a crystal ball to see if businesses would develop in this area. He feels that resurfacing is a great idea, but the money could be used to fix other problems. Council Member Jeff May stated that the City would need about \$130,000 return per year to pay for the bond investment. May agrees that the road needs to be fixed because of the economic benefit. Mayor John Lewis stated that asphalt is okay if the roadway has curb and gutters. He explained that businesses would be more interested in locating to this area if the roadway has curb and gutters. When businesses open, the City's tax base will increase to allow more infrastructure improvements. Council Member Mike Young stated that activity on the roadway is increasing and there needs to be a compromise to fix the roadway. Council Member Jim Rippe stated that there is no comparison between concrete and asphalt in the long term. Asphalt requires a lot of maintenance. May agreed, but it should be a business proposal that makes sense, because the City should receive back in sales tax and real estate tax whatever is paid on the project. The Council will study the estimates and decide the best type of roadway for the City.
13. 44<sup>th</sup> Street North Lighting: Both Ameren and Tri-County are working on this project to improve the street lighting. This project is estimated at \$10,000.
14. Richview Road Overlay: The cost to overlay Richview Road from 12<sup>th</sup> Street to 42<sup>nd</sup> Street is \$420,000. Rhutasel Engineering and Associates are working on the design.

15. Parking Lanes – Broadway/Main: IDOT is scheduled to overlay Broadway and Main, but they will not overlay the parking lanes unless reimbursed by the City. The estimated cost is \$70,000.
16. Ambassador Road Bridge: The estimated cost is \$200,000. The wooden bridge is in disrepair and traffic has increased due to the high school moving to the area.
17. Lake Terrace/East and West (both lanes): Lake Terrace NE is the main entrance to Walgreens Distribution Center and the Rolland Lewis Industrial Park. The design was completed in-house. The project has been bid and awarded to Rooters American Maintenance for \$201,378.

Council Member Jeff May summarized that if the Armory project and the Tennis Courts project are removed then the total remaining bond projects will run at \$6 million.

Projects PROPOSED -as of 7/17/2017			
<b>Quality of Life</b>			
Armory	500,000	\$1.5 Million Grant and Poettker- going to bid	
Park Plaza Demo	510,000		
Aquatic Zoo Parking AND	240,000	Awarded to Purlan Contracting LLC	
Lincoln Park /South Parking			
Tennis Courts - Lincoln Park (4)	450,000	Entire Project awarded 2014/suspended 2015 On Hold	
City Hall Building Improvements	867,000	Started - McCoy Howard	
Summersville Sidewalk	450,000	Design complete/ ready to go out for bid	
Total Quality of life/Ec Dev			3,017,000
<b>Infrastructure</b>			
<b>Storm Sewer</b>			
* E. Last/N. Last/Rufus/Peek	217,033	Awarded Haier Plumbing & heating, Inc.	
* Brownsville/Harlan	191,422	Awarded Haier Plumbing & Heating	
* Northbrook Dr.	160,000	Awarded Haier Plumbing & Heating	
<b>Water Lines / Sewer</b>			
Rackaway Water line replacement	150,000	Engineering waiting for RR to review	
44th St. North Water line replacement	200,000	In House Design	
<b>Road Improvements</b>			
44th N and S. Street Overlay	2,100,000	Rhutasal Engineering A In Design ** (Overlay \$665,000)	
44th Street N. Lighting	10,000	Ameren & Tri County In Process	
Richview Road Overlay	420,000	Rhutasal Engineering A In Design	
Parking lanes - Broadway/Main	70,000	IDOT - Committed	
Ambassador Road Bridge	200,000		
* Lake Terrace/ East and West (both lane)	201,378	Awarded to Rooters American Maintenance	
			3,919,833
	6,936,833		
Total Bond Money remaining \$6.4 M	536,833	Over budget	

### DISCUSSION ON AN ORDINANCE REGARDING CHANGES TO THE LIQUOR ORDINANCES

City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel explained that there are a lot of proposed changes to the Liquor Ordinance. After today's suggestion, the proposed Ordinance will be placed on-line. First reading of the Ordinance will be held at Monday night's Council Meeting. Proposed changes include:

1. No more than one license for package liquor sales per company or individual. If a company currently has two package liquor licenses, their licenses would be grandfathered in.
2. Creation of a new "Package Sales Beer and Wine License". This will entitle the Licensee to make package sales of beer and wine only. There will be no consumption sales.
3. Creation of a new "Temporary Special Event Permit License". This will entitle the Licensee to make sales of alcoholic liquor by Licensee who holds a valid license under one of the

other liquor license classifications. The permit license shall be a temporary license which shall be issued for one day and no Licensee shall be entitled to more than twenty-six (26) such temporary daily permit licenses in any one calendar year.

4. All beverages including alcoholic liquors, served for consumption during a special event shall only be served within and consumed from a paper, plastic, or Styrofoam cup or container; no beverage shall be served for consumption during a special event within a glass bottle, cup, or mug or metal can, cup or mug or similar type container.
5. The elimination of the "Sunday Sales" License and fee. License holders will automatically have the permission to sell on Sunday.
6. Creation of a new "Interchange Video Gaming License". This will entitle the Licensee to make consumption sales of beer and wine only. The license shall issue only for establishments situated within a three-fourths mile radius of the point of intersection of the center line of Interstate Route 57 Exit Ramp Number 95 and the center line of Illinois State Route 15, or the center line of interstate Route 57 Exit Ramp Number 94 and the center line of Veterans Memorial Drive, or the center line of Interstate Route 64 Exit Ramp Number 80 and the center line of Illinois State Route 37. In addition, the license shall be issued only for establishments licensed under Section 11.16 of the Revised Code of Ordinances having not less than five (5) licensed video gaming terminals.
7. Creation of a new "Retail Business Customer License". This will entitle the Licensee to make consumption sales of beer and wine; no package sales. The License shall be issued only to a retail business whose primary sales are not the sale of alcoholic liquor or food and for which the sale of alcoholic liquor is only an amenity offered for sale to customers of the retail business.
8. The elimination of the Liquor Advisory Board.

Council Member Donte Moore suggested that for the "Downtown Sidewalk Dining Liquor Permit", it should entitle the Licensee to make sales of all alcoholic liquor, not only beer and wine for consumption.

Mayor John Lewis opened the meeting for public comments concerning the proposed changes to the Liquor Ordinance.

Hank Villani distributed handouts regarding the health effects of expanding liquor licenses to grocery and convenience stores and how the availability of alcohol affects drinking and problems in youth and adults. He was curious as to why the gaming was only allowed at the interchanges and not to existing liquor license holders. Villani stated that Mt. Vernon has nothing to gain by expanding the number of stores selling alcohol. He cited Carbondale's experience on allowing alcohol to be sold at the grocery and convenience stores. According to Villani, Carbondale lost revenue. He spoke on job loss and store closures in the liquor business. He was concerned with underage drinking and employees being trained properly.

Tom Hoffmann, Plaza Liquor Mart, agreed with Mr. Villani about the potential problems of expanding liquor sales. He saw firsthand how this affected the City of Carbondale.

Janet Hassakis spoke on the civility of the City Council and she is concerned about the City of Mt. Vernon. She feels bad about not improving the Armory because there are many possibilities that would benefit the City and its children. She hopes that the Council represents all the citizens of Mt. Vernon.

Mayor John Lewis stated that the City Council is open to all investments in the City. He said that allowing the sale of alcohol in grocery and convenience stores was a major concern during his election campaign. He is trying to bring Mt. Vernon into the twenty-first century without stressing our existing establishments. Businesses have turned away from Mt. Vernon or not expanded because they were unable to obtain a liquor license.

Council Member Donte Moore agreed Mt. Vernon needs to get into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. He spoke with hundreds of people and all but one thought this was a good idea.

Mayor John Lewis said that regulations will be enforced though raising fines. It would not be worth it to serve an underage drinker.

Council Member Donte Moore stated that everyone selling alcoholic liquors are required to have Bassett Training.

City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel provided the Council with a worksheet showing the proposed increase of license fees. She requested feedback from the Council after their review.

### **DISCUSSION ON AN ORDINANCE REGARDING CHANGES TO ZONING GUIDELINES CONCERNING MOBILE/MANUFACTURED HOMES**

City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel explained the changes would apply to mobile/manufactured homes in areas zoned R-M2 (Medium Density Residential and Mobile Home) and R-MH (Planned Mobile Home). This Ordinance would allow mobile/manufactured homes to be placed on single lots. Some other changes are:

1. The minimum setup elevation for a mobile home shall be 32 inches.
2. Each mobile home shall have all wheels, tongues, and hitch mechanisms removed or retracted.
3. Each mobile home shall have a porch at its primary access entrance having a minimum size of not less than 92 inches in width and 60 inches in depth and shall have a porch or deck at its secondary access entrance of not less than 48 inches in width and 48 inches in depth.
4. The base of the mobile home shall be completely enclosed with mortared brick, mortared concrete blocks, a poured concrete foundation on a footing of 1 foot by 1 foot, a basement wall, or other commercial skirting, provided that said skirting shall not be of vinyl, plastic or metal construction.
5. Each mobile home shall have a minimum of two off street parking sites.
6. The pitch of the roof of the mobile home shall be within a range of three-twelfths (3/12) to five-twelfths (5/12) and the mobile home shall have properly draining and functioning guttering encircling the entire roof of the mobile home.
7. Each mobile home shall have lap siding.
8. The mobile homes must have been manufactured not more than 10 years prior to the date of application for a Building Permit.
9. Storm shelters were not included in the R-MH.

Bechtel explained that existing mobile/manufactured homes are grandfathered in.

Reverend Erie Patton asked if the proposed Ordinance rezones a certain area. Bechtel explained that the changes would allow mobile homes to be placed on single lots which are zoned R-M2.

Cort Jones asked if the eight to ten lots which he owns and are currently zoned R-M2 can be used for a mobile home now. City Attorney David Leggans replied that previously the Ordinance prohibited mobile homes on existing zoned mobile home lots. One change undoes these prohibitions. The other changes address the type of mobile homes that can be placed on the lots. Jones asked why the age of the mobile home was changed from fifteen years to ten years. Council Member Donte Moore explained that in 2006 and 2007, mobile homes became safer due to updated regulations. Jones replied that in 1976, the Federal government took over mobile home regulations and there is nothing that he is aware of that changed from 1976 to 2006. He said that the Ordinance should be user friendly, does not help clean up Mt. Vernon, or increase the tax base. Mayor John Lewis stated many citizens are concerned about the placement of mobile homes in their neighborhoods. Lewis suggested that the Council Members discuss this matter with the City's Engineering and Inspection Department to come up with a different number than ten years.

#### **VISITORS/CITIZENS REQUESTS/ADDRESSES FROM THE AUDIENCE**

No comments were heard.

#### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

City Manager Bechtel requested an Executive Session pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2 (c) (11) – Litigation. **Council Member Jim Rippy made a motion to adjourn to Executive Session pursuant to 5 ILCS 120/2 (c) (11) – Litigation. Seconded by Council Member Donte Moore. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, Young, and Lewis.**

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Council Member Mike Young motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Council Member Donte Moore. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, Young, and Lewis.**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Mary Jo Pemberton  
City Clerk