
**City of Mt. Vernon, Illinois
Public Hearing
Announcement of the Relocation Address of the Mt. Vernon Post Office
Monday, April 1, 2019
6:30 p.m.**

Mayor John Lewis called the April 1, 2019 Public Hearing to order at 6:30 p.m. in the Rolland W. Lewis Community Building at Veterans Park.

Present at the Public Hearing were Mayor John Lewis, Council Member Jeff May, Council Member Donte Moore, Council Member Jim Rippey, Council Member Mike Young, City Manager Mary Ellen Bechtel, Assistant City Manager Nathan McKenna, Administrative Asst. Lindsay Burris.

Nancy Lewis, Supervisor at the Mt. Vernon Post Office introduced Vee A. Spikes, USPO-HQ Real Estate Specialist, Gary Rightnowar, Acting OIC, and Shim Barger, Acting Manager of Postal Operations at the Mt. Vernon Post Office.

Vee Spikes explained that tonight's public hearing is concerning the relocation of the Mount Vernon Post Office from 726 Park Plaza.

Items to be discussed are:

- Identify the need for the Alternate Quarters (Retail Space Area)
- Discuss the reason for the Alternate Quarters
- Identify the tentative decision for the retail service and parking
- Identify the potential sites or area, or both, which the Postal Service anticipates analyzing for the new retail service space
- Describe the anticipated size of the new space for the retail services and the anticipated benefits it will offer
- Outline the Proposal to meet this need
- Discuss Market Study
- Solicit written input on the proposal
- What happens if the Post Office makes a different decision?
- Invite questions

The United States Postal Service (USPS) will be relocating the Mount Vernon Post Office from 726 Park Plaza, Mount Vernon, IL 62864 to a site area currently being negotiated with the City of Mount Vernon. The Postal Service relocation is due to the City of Mount Vernon's (current landlord) offer to relocate the Post Office at 726 Park Plaza. If this project is approved, the USPS will issue a new lease agreement for the new land swap project, which will be a continuation of the old agreement from

the 726 Park Plaza location.

The United States Postal Service approval of this project is a win-win for the Postal Service, the City, and the community. The Post Office has been at this location since 2005 and consists of retail operations; including customer service counters, 1,517 lock boxes with approximately 851 occupied (56%). The City notified the USPS on November 6, 2018 of their interest and proposal for a new Retail Post Office site location.

The Mount Vernon facility is an 8-hour Retail Operation. At this time, USPS Business Practices is having no discussion on the discontinuance of this office. Accordingly, the USPS has agreed to work with the City on the proposed new 6,250 square foot building with employee and customer parking.

A recent Market Study indicates that it makes operational and economic sense to terminate the Mount Vernon Post Office old lease and work with the City to modify the facilities footprint, utilities, and tax savings. Re-establishing a new USPS Retail presence is paramount and essential to the Postal Service and community. The USPS Gateway District Office is reviewing the City's offer/proposal for the potential new location, building, employee and customer parking plans.

The USPS Project approval is a major financial undertaking and it requires time for the Postal Service to re-establish presence in the community. Despite major cost reductions, the Postal Service continues to experience significant net losses as mail volume continues to decline from increased electronic communication. As a self-supported government establishment that receives no tax dollars for its operating expenses, the Postal Service must rely on the sale of postages, products and services to generate revenue.

The new "Alternate Quarters" Project (Retail Space) will be at a location to be determined and a decision should be made in six to eight weeks.

The "Relocation Project" consists of securing a suitable substitute location, preparing it for use as a Post Office and then transitioning the postal functions to the new location. The Postal Service will continue operation from the current facility until the new building is up and running. At such time, the customers will be notified of any changes and opening of the new facility.

The Postal Service will consider all written comments received within 30 days until May 1, 2019. The reason for this Public Hearing is to discuss the project with the community. All input from the community residents and officials should be sent to the below address:

United States Postal Service Facilities Implementation
Vee A. Spikes, HQ Real Estate Specialist, Regional Manager
Facilities Implementation Leasing New Space Team
1211 Towanda Ave., Room 135
Bloomington, IL 61701
Email: Vee.A.Spikes@USPS.GOV

The Postal Service will compile and review the community's input and comments for its final decision. The Postal Service will inform the local officials in writing of its final decision, send an initial news release announcing the final decision to local news media, and post a copy of the information in the public lobby of the Post Office. This process will take six to eight weeks after tonight's Public Hearing.

Mayor John Lewis stated that he thought the new location would be announced tonight. Assistant City Manager Nathan McKenna stated that the 30-day comment period is for commenting on a specific location. Mr. Spikes explained that according to Federal Regulation 39 CFR 241.1, this Public Hearing is required to discuss the relocation of the Post Office. The new location remains internal until the 30-day comment period is up.

Mayor Lewis reported that local Post Office employees have been telling the community the new location. City Officials have not released the location.

Council Member Donte Moore asked how someone can make comments without knowing the proposed location. Mr. Spikes repeated that today's Public Hearing is to let the community know that the Post Office is taking action to relocate its retail space.

Mayor Lewis expressed concern about the redevelopment of the Park Plaza being held up due to the relocation of the Post Office and asked to make the process go faster. Mr. Spikes stated the final decision from Washington is needed before the location is announced.

Council Member Jeff May read Federal Regulation 39 CFR 241.1 and feels like the new location can be disclosed. Mr. Spikes stated that since the lease agreement is not finalized the location cannot be announced. When the final decision letter is received, the location can be disclosed.

Several members of the public expressed their annoyance at the nondisclosure of the new location.

Mayor Lewis closed the Public Hearing at 7:05 p.m. Motion by Council Member Jeff May to adjourn this Public Hearing. Seconded by Council Member Mike Young. Yeas: May, Moore, Rippy, Young, and Lewis.

Respectfully submitted,



Mary Jo Pemberton
City Clerk