



# **City of Freeport Public Meeting**

## **Re: 3<sup>rd</sup> WARD – TOWN HALL MEETING**

**Boys & Girls Club of Freeport and Stephenson County ♦ 511 South Liberty Avenue ♦ Freeport, IL  
61032**

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**MINUTES  
OCTOBER 12, 2017  
6:00 p.m.**

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A Town Hall style meeting was conducted on Thursday, October 12, 2017, at 6:00 p.m. at the Boys & Girls Club of Freeport, 511 South Liberty, Freeport, Illinois. The topics of discussion included future infrastructure projects within the City of Freeport's 3rd Ward, specifically:

- 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward Improvements that are in process now and for the next 5 years
- Hancock Bridge

City Manager Lowell Crow facilitated the meeting. Alderpersons present included Tom Klemm, Sally Brashaw, and Art Ross. Deputy City Clerk Dawn Pontius was present to take minutes.

Manager Crow opened with a PowerPoint presentation. He presented information regarding the Hancock Bridge assessment that was submitted to the Federal Government for review and stated that it typically takes five (5) years to go through the process. This is a Federal Bridge Program that will cost between \$3.1 to \$3.7 million dollars of Federal Funds. Modern Plating Company is building a new facility; therefore, the funds were released to move forward on the construction of the Hancock Bridge project.

### Road work scheduled or in process

- Street overlay on E. Shawnee to S. Ottawa Ave Intersection
- Street overlay S. Ottawa Ave to E. Wyandotte St.
- Street overlay on 400 and 500 blocks of S. Liberty Ave.
- Street overlay on E Pleasant St
- Patchwork on E. Iroquois Street to S. Kenwood Ave.
- An assessment of the water lines in the areas of Shawnee Street to the Arcade and also part of Adams Ave.

The road work currently being completed will not include construction of new curbs and gutters. However, when the new water mains are built, replacing the current deteriorated water mains, new curbs and gutters will be done with the street construction. The water mains will be replaced based on

assessment, the worst water mains being replaced first and so on. The Gladewood area will be first and then the Adams street area. The City has not done a road assessment for over 10 years. Manager Crow is working with Fehr Graham to complete assessment of all the City streets by the end of this year. Then a plan will be implemented to repair the streets based on the assessment and prioritized accordingly. The current physical year budget had \$280,000 allotted for road repairs. Road repairs come out of Motor and Fuel Tax (MFT) funds received by the City.

The City Manager Form of Government was implemented 5 months ago, within these 5 months Manager Crow stated that he is working to build a Capital Improvement Plan to identify all the streets in the order of which the water mains and sewers are being replaced. He is also hoping to address many of the road issues with this money.

Discussion ensued regarding the type of road repairs being done. Many of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward roads are built on top of bricks, as the bricks deteriorate or crumble under the road the surface road deteriorates. Constituents expressed concerns regarding the type of blacktop patching material being used, it is not lasting longer than 24 hours. The potholes in the streets have damaged their tires and vehicles, stating that the City does not fix the potholes in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward. A comment was made if any patching material remained on the street, it is removed by the snow plow trucks in the winter.

#### Constituents presented concerns and issues in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward

- East Jackson Street road repair
- Old Modern Plating buildings and land site clean-up. This area is a Brownfield Site Clean-up
- Corner of Jackson Street and Hancock visibility is very poor and needs to be addressed
- 800 Block of Benton Street, the lot needs to be mowed and cleaned up
- E. Jackson St and S. Sheridan Ave needs road replaced
- Property north of the Hancock Bridge going north, on the right side, weeds, grass are over grown.
- 509 S. Kenwood - wild animals hamper their area
- E. Fir Street was also mentioned
- 736 E. Iroquois - trees down, weeds, grass are over grown
- 735 E. Iroquois - trees down, weeds, grass are over grown
- Alley behind 700 Block of Miami Ave is full of junk

#### Brownfield Site

Manager Crow addressed the "Old Modern Plating Site" advising this area is a Brownfield Site. *Clerk's Note: The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Brownfields Site Program allows the State to work together with the Municipality or Community to assess, safely clean up, and reinvest in the potentially contaminated or polluted properties.* The remediation process was just completed and is now awaiting clearance from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Once the City receives the clearance of this area, it will be cleaned up and turned into a park. Due that this is a Brownfield Site nothing can be built on the site. This Park will become part of the Pecatonica Bike Path. Through a Grant, State money of \$1.8 million has been set aside to support the Brownfield Site. The path starts at the Tutty's Crossing, runs alongside Hancock Bridge, then out to the end of the City limits into Stephenson County and will extend into Winnebago County. An additional \$2 million of State funds will be used to complete this bike path into Winnebago County, also part of the initial Grant.

## General Comments

Constituents expressed that over the last several years the City's philosophy had been to invest in only certain parts of the City and not in the entire City. Manager Crow informed the Constituents that he is looking out for the entire City and the City's direction is to repair, fix, and improve whatever needs to be done everywhere within the City limits. The focus is to clean up the City. The City issues about 45 to 60 citations a day to enforce the cleanup process. This process will take time to work through. When the City issues a fine for the deteriorated property, the home is inspected to determine if it is deemed livable or non-livable, then the home owners are given the opportunity to fix up the property to comply with the building and zoning codes. If the property owners fail to comply with the City citations by the deadline, then the City begins the court proceedings to seize the property. This process takes about eighteen (18) months.

A Constituent stated that they had been told they cannot fix up their property because they live in a flood plain. They requested that Manager Crow look into this issue.

## Sidewalks

A Constituent asked what was the process for sidewalks to be replaced or repaired. Manager Crow advised that the City has a "Sidewalk Assistance Program" already in place. The City shares the cost of the sidewalk with residences.

## Future Plans

Manager Crow shared that a complete assessment of the Water Mains had already been completed for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward. A complete assessment of the Sewer System would also need to be done in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward. Plans are to continue to demolish deteriorated buildings throughout the City. The building across from the Fire Station 2 will be demolished by year end. The City is looking into expanding the Fire Station 2 and also adding a sub-station for both the Fire and Police in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward. The City is also looking to install more street lights and switching the current streets lights over to LED lighting throughout the City.

## Flooding

A Constituent stated that the sewer lines gates did not shut during the last flood and this caused the sewers to back up into their homes. An additional concern was that after the flood the land continues to get a "brown crust" on it, even after a rain. In prior floods after the yards were mowed a few times, the grass would turn green and be back to normal. This flood water was different because the "brown crusty stuff" returns on the grass after being mowed. The residents stated that they continue to fight mold from growing in their homes since the flood. Another Constituent stated that they noticed the Park District did a controlled burn around the baseball diamonds in Taylor Park to get rid of the "brown crusty stuff" that is growing on the grass, but they did not do the entire Park. Manager Crow will contact Freeport Park District Director Carey regarding the controlled burn that was done in Taylor Park. The Constituents would like feedback on this issue.

A Constituent stated that in the future when Hancock Street starts to flood, this street needs to be closed earlier because the vehicles driving down the street, splash the dirty flood water onto their front doors.

### Hancock Street Issues

A Constituent stated that the previous road work that was done on Hancock Street is causing structural damage to the houses along this street. Residents are seeing structural cracks in their walls since this was done. The grain trucks that drive back and forth on Hancock Street going to the corn plant, are driving too fast and cause the windows in their houses shake.

A request was made for a speed machine to be put on Hancock Street, Manager Crow stated he would look into this.

### New Direction, New Government

Alderperson Ross addressed the Constituents advising that they are not alone. We want to make things better going forward, but it will not happen overnight and it will take some time. This is the first Town Hall meeting that has been held in the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward. He stated that we got things that we need to get done, but let us work together going forward and leave the past in the past.

### Aspen Tree Trimming

A Constituent stated that the tree trimmers are not cleaning up the branches that they cut off. Aspen Trimming Company is hired by ComEd, the Constituents would need to contact ComEd for these issues.

### Going Forward

The Constituents requested that quarterly meetings be scheduled. The next meeting will be scheduled in January 2018. Flyers will be disbursed at churches and several Constituents offered to help disperse flyers within the 3<sup>rd</sup> Ward.

The meeting ended at 7:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Dawn E. Pontius, Deputy City Clerk