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To: [Mayor and Council](#)
Cc: [Eric Hanson](#); [Brian Day](#)
Subject: Weekly Update
Date: Thursday, March 12, 2020 7:22:45 PM

Mayor and Council:

Despite the primary focus of attention locally, nationally and globally on COVID-19 (Coronavirus), we still have a lot going on! Here are a few highlights to share:

1. Economic Development/Property Development

- a. Wildwood Property – Town staff has been working with some contacts who have an interest in the former Wildwood property, which is the abandoned warehouse in North Normal at N. Main and Kerrick Road. As mentioned in the past, this property is the subject of the North Normal Warehouse TIF and will lose the TIF designation if no activity occurs by November 2020. We are working diligently to try to get some development going in this location. I will keep you posted if anything progresses. Details about the future of this property will be discussed at our upcoming 2-1 Council update meetings.
- b. Africano property at One Normal Plaza – Although the Town and Mr. Africano have had a development agreement regarding the former infirmary building, Mr. Africano has failed to abide by his development obligations. For quite some time, staff has been working with both Mr. Africano and his partners/stakeholders in trying to get the roof and windows replaced in order to improve the overall appearance of the structure. As it currently stands, the structure is a prime “blight” example where a property owner has failed to invest in and maintain the property. In order to accurately assess the situation to determine existing code violations, staff sought a warrant to enter the property and document the violations. Building and Zoning Director Greg Troemel and Deputy Corporation Counsel Jason Querciagrossa completed that process. The next steps will be to issue ordinance violations for code violations. It is likely we will soon be engaged in discussions relative to Mr. Africano dedicating the property to the Town, which was an option identified in the development agreement. Truthfully, there is not a great desire for the Town to possess this failing structure. However, if we do end up receiving this property from Mr. Africano, staff will evaluate options and address with Council. Fortunately, we are not t that point and we hope to get Mr. Africano’s attention through this OV process, possibly motivating him to make immediate improvements. Keep your fingers crossed!
- c. Illinois Fire Juniors – staff has had a couple productive discussions with IFJ regarding their future plans for fields to replace the Central IL Regional Airport fields. I will fill you in during our next Council Update discussions.
- d. IDOT meeting – Mayor Koos, Public Works Director Wayne Aldrich and I met with Representative Brady and representatives of IDOT in Springfield yesterday. IDOT Secretary Omer Osman and 4 of his staff participated in the conversation. We discussed the underpass project, Main Street and West College. We appreciate Representative Brady setting up the meeting for us and found Secretary Osman to be very aware of our projects. We will continue to stay in close contact with IDOT staff to explore funding opportunities for the underpass and W. College. The Main Street

conversation pertained to IDOT including Main Street in their capital plan and our desire to participate in the early stages of design for Main Street improvements.

2. Personnel Matters

- a. Collective Bargaining – Eric is leading the collective bargaining process this year. The two bargaining teams are involved in preparing the Town’s position on various matters relative to IAFF (International Association of Firefighters) and PBPA (Police Benevolent and Protective Association) union negotiations. We will inform Council on details either in a future executive session discussion or via our Council Update meetings.
- b. Leave time – the Town’s fiscal year ends on March 31, which means we are days away from fiscal year end. Therefore, we have many employees using paid leave time that can’t be carried over to next fiscal year! As such, end of March we are historically running lean! Departments will always get the work done but there are lots of folks taking a well-needed break in the next two weeks!!

3. Financial Update – just want to remind you that we regularly track interest rates and our financial status, working closely with our consultants at Mesirow Financial. We are currently evaluating opportunities for bond refunding and will let you know how that progresses. Andrew is working on a variety of options and we are confident there will soon be some great opportunities to take advantage of yield curves and interest rates!

4. Coronavirus (COVID-19) – like everyone else, we continue to track reactions to the virus. A couple issues to note:

- a. ISU’s actions – we understand and support ISU’s decision to extend spring break and delay student return to campus/classrooms. One potential impact is that many of our temporary part-time employees supporting Parks and Recreation and Cultural Arts are ISU students. As such, we are currently surveying these employees to determine their availability and health situation to return to work. If we need to make program changes due to staff absences, it will affect such programs as the Before and After School programs, various classes, and Children’s Discovery Museum programs. We will also be assessing the ability to host our typical Spring Break activities during the upcoming Unit 5 Spring Break. We will notify citizens as soon as decisions are made on program cancellations.
- b. We continue to keep employees aware of information and resources related to the virus. One such resource was distributed today. It is a podcast from the Mayo Clinic. The link follows. I encourage all to listen to this short 22 minute informational podcast. It is very insightful and offers useful information.
<https://newsnetwork.mayoclinic.org/discussion/mayo-clinic-qa-podcast-vaccine-experts-advice-on-covid-19/>
- c. Public Safety and Facilities Management departments are utilizing appropriate PPE and disinfecting/sanitizing procedures to protect themselves and to secure facilities for safe usage for customers. Ambulances, squad cars, Amtrak/bus station, Children’s Discover Museum, etc are all getting thorough attention.

Thanks! See you Monday!

Pam

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