

?New Pekin Town Council look at options for annexation of two areas

Written by

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? The New Pekin Town Council met in regular session on Tuesday, October 21, with all members present. The minutes of previous meetings, all payroll requests, all claims, and all requests for sewer adjustments were approved unanimously.

The Council engaged in a general discussion of the process involved in annexing two areas adjacent to the current town boundaries. The two areas in question are located directly north of the East Washington Schools campus and an area to the southeast of New Pekin in proximately to Voyles Road, Old Pekin Road, and Hurst Road.

Council Attorney, Alice Bartanen, explained the annexation process as it involves notification of residents and land owners along with a general time line as to how long the process would take if the Council decided to proceed. Council President, Gerald Fleming, emphasized that the Council is only exploring the option and that residents in the affected areas should not worry that a decision is going to be made without their input and much deliberation on the part of the Council. Town Manager, Gary Nale, told Council members that residents in the areas under consideration already have sewer and water service from the town and that he thought there would be very little incentive for them to support the annexation idea. If annexed, property owners in the two areas would see their property tax rate increase by 42 cents per \$1000 of assessed value.

The Council members discussed the advantages and disadvantages to the town involved with annexing the two areas. The consensus reached at the end of the discussion was a general belief that the disadvantages outweighed the advantages of proceeding. However, it was agreed to table the discussion until the next Council meeting on November 17.

In other business, the Council set the Halloween Trick or Treat hours for Pekin from 6 p.m. until 9 p.m. on Friday evening, October 31.

The Council also heard a presentation from Rhonda Mills of the Washington County Tobacco Coalition. Mills gave a summary of her organization's goals and results in diminishing the use of tobacco products by Washington County residents. In her presentation, Mills noted that the five largest employers in the county, as well as two school districts, have been declared smoke free zones.

Nale informed the Council members that Pekin did not receive a grant to develop safe walking paths to the East Washington School campus but that he intended to apply next year. Nale cited several reasons why Pekin did not get the grant, one of which is the lack of any existing type of walking path or sidewalk from Pekin to the campus.

Nale also told the Council that plans were on hold for the construction of a Dollar General Store in Pekin. According to Nale, the project is being delayed because of the current problems in the credit markets. Nale expressed optimism that the project would go forward as planned in the near future.

As a final piece of information, Nale told the Council about his efforts to research a specialized camera that could inspect sewer and water lines for damage, eliminating the need to dig up and repair roadways unnecessarily. The cost of the camera is approximately \$6,000.

With no further business to conduct, the Council adjourned until its next regularly scheduled meeting on Tuesday, November 17.